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A study of Polish LDS (Mormon) conversion in two branches in Warsaw, Poland

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Citation

Harrison, P. M. (2021, June 16). *A study of Polish LDS (Mormon) conversion in two branches in Warsaw, Poland*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3188569>

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Author: Harrison, P.M.

Title: A study of Polish LDS (Mormon) conversion in two branches in Warsaw, Poland

Issue Date: 2021-06-16

A Study of Polish LDS (Mormon) Conversion in Two Branches in Warsaw, Poland



Patrick Harrison

Front Cover

The front cover picture is of the Wolska LDS chapel in Warsaw, Poland.

A Study of Polish LDS (Mormon) Conversion in Two Branches in Warsaw, Poland

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van rector magnificus prof.dr.ir. H. Bijl,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 16 juni 2021
klokke 13.45 uur

door

Patrick Harrison

geboren te Bury, Lancashire, Great Britain
in 1966

Promotores: Prof.dr. A.F. de Jong
Prof.dr. W.E.A. van Beek (Tilburg University)

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Contents

A Study of Polish LDS (Mormon) Conversion in Two Branches in Warsaw, Poland.....	1
Acknowledgements	9
Abbreviations	10
1. Introduction.....	11
1.1 Motivation for undertaking the study.....	12
1.2 Background to the study	16
1.2.1 LDS growth and religiosity.....	17
1.2.2 Recruit to temple-goer transformation.....	33
1.2.3 The Poland LDS Mission	37
1.2.4 LDS missionaries.....	40
1.2.5 The Catholic Church influencing politics in Poland	42
1.2.6 The wider social world influencing religious conversion in Poland	54
1.3 Thesis structure	58
2. Literature Review	59
2.1 Religious conversion.....	59
2.2 LDS literature inside the Warsaw LDS world.....	72
2.3 LDS recruitment/conversion	73
2.4 LDS problems in Europe	93
2.5 Conclusion	104
3. Methodology.....	105
3.1 General research issues.....	105
3.2 Philosophical and theoretical influences.....	105
3.3 Research design and methods	108
3.4 Qualitative data analysis	121
3.5 Research credibility	123
3.6 Ethical Considerations	129
3.7 Conclusion	131

4. The Warsaw LDS Field	133
4.1 Warsaw LDS events	133
4.2 Missionary types.....	138
4.3 Recruits and LTIs.....	142
4.4 Convert types	143
5. Pre-LDS Background	156
5.1 Catholic backgrounds	156
5.2 Rejecting Catholic religiosity	159
5.3 Respecting some Catholic religious features	165
5.4 Freer backgrounds.....	166
5.5 Difficult backgrounds.....	168
5.6 Religious searches	171
5.7 Exploring different religions	175
5.8 Prominent background issues	178
6. LDS Social Networking.....	181
6.1 Privately studying the LDS.....	181
6.2 LDS recruitment pathways	182
6.3 Being drawn towards young missionaries.....	189
6.4 Recruited by older missionaries	192
6.5 LDS dynamics.....	194
6.6 LDS behaviour.....	201
6.7 Self-development	204
6.8 Conflicts inside Warsaw branches.....	207
6.9 Conflicts with family/friends	212
7. LDS Religious Training	217
7.1 Recruitment time frames	217
7.2 Religious training during recruitment	220

7.3 LDS scripture, hymns, and music.....	226
7.4 Unique LDS religiosity.....	232
7.5 The Word of Wisdom	240
7.6 Testimonies	243
7.7 Baptism/confirmation	248
7.8 Post-baptismal adaptation and difficulties	252
7.9 Social interaction and religious training influencing recruitment.....	256
8. Wider Issues Influencing LDS Recruitment in Poland.....	259
8.1 Religious conversion in post-communist Poland	259
8.2 Changing religion in post-John Paul II Poland	262
8.3 The EU and PC ideology challenging Catholic culture in Poland	265
8.4 LDS approaches to working in Poland	268
9. The Heart of Polish LDS Conversion	275
9.1 First contact pathways	275
9.2 Interaction and religious training	275
9.3 Pre-LDS background	278
9.4 The Polish socio-political world.....	282
10. Conclusions and Implications	284
10.1 The wider Polish social world.....	284
10.2 Personal background/experience	287
10.3 LDS networking influencing recruitment	293
10.4 Religious training during recruitment	297
10.5 Integrating new converts	302
10.6 LDS religious paths	306
10.7 Polish LDS recruitment/conversion.....	308
Bibliography.....	312
Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Main Issue Focus).....	326

Appendix 2: Examples of Religion-Centred and Social Issue Questions Used	334
Appendix 3: Interview Coding System Excerpt (Religious Search Theme from the Pre-LDS Background Main Issue)	335
Appendix 4: Recruitment Path Theme from the LDS Social Interaction Main Issue	337
Appendix 5: Sunday School Lessons for Recruits/Recent Converts, April-June 2011	343
Appendix 6: Male LDS Baptising Polish Recruits	348
Appendix 7: LDS Baptisms of Three Convert Interviewees	349
Appendix 8: Background Information about Long-Term Investigator Interviewees	352
Appendix 9: LDS Convert Interviewee Types	353
Appendix 10: Convert Interviewee Background Information	354
Appendix 11: Wolska Chapel Home Evening (for People Aged 30+) Activities.....	357
Thesis Summary in English	358
Samenvatting.....	360
Curriculum Vitae.....	362

Acknowledgements

In this section, I would like to mention the key people who helped to enrich my long-term research work and the final product of my thesis. First, I would like to thank all the Polish LDS and Polish LTIs who took part in my research, because without their cooperation, my research would not have been possible. Tied in with this, I would like to thank the Warsaw LDS community for helping me to access a wide range of LDS religious and social events in Warsaw over an extensive period of time. I also thank my wife, Agnieszka Harrison, for translating the interviews done with Polish LDS and LTI participants in Polish into English during the interviews, and for doing the Polish translations of English questions on my structured interview questionnaires.

Regarding the academic side of my thesis, I would like to thank my two supervisors, Prof.dr. Ab de Jong from the Religious Studies department and Prof.dr. Wouter van Beek from the African Studies department at Leiden University, for helping me to refine my work at key times in my thesis. I would also like to thank Prof.dr. D.J. Davies (Durham University); Prof.dr. W. Decoo (University of Antwerp em.); Prof.dr. M.P.A. de Baar (Leiden University); Prof.dr. R.A. van Dijk (Leiden University); and Dr. C.L. Williams (Leiden University) for reading and offering constructive criticism about my thesis.

Abbreviations

ACM (anti-cult movement)	NRMs (new religious movements)
BERA (British Educational Research Association)	PC (political correctness)
BOM (the Book of Mormon)	PO (participant observation)
CTGs (core temple-goers)	POS (Plan of Salvation)
D&C (Doctrine & Covenants)	POGP (Pearl of Great Price)
EHCR (European Court of Human Rights)	SI (symbolic interactionism)
GI (gender ideology)	SSPX (Society of St. Pius X)
GT (gender theory)	TTGs (trainee temple-goers)
LAs (less actives)	YFMs (young female missionaries)
LDS (Latter-day Saints/Mormons)	YMs (young missionaries)
LTIs (long-term investigators)	YMMs (young male missionaries)
LTR (long-term research)	YSA (LDS young single adults organisation)
MTC (missionary training centre)	W (Wolska)
	W/R (Wierzbno/Raławicka)

Throughout this thesis, the writers' first name initials accompany their surnames when they share the same surname with other writers, and an * sign is used to indicate a second piece of work done by a writer in the same year as another one.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, new religious movements (NRMs) are increasingly studied, as some have become “global religions” containing “different characteristics” in “different parts of the world” (Clarke 2006: vi). The “global character of the contemporary world” has allowed many religious belief systems to disembody themselves from their original cultural contexts and move around the world through religions coming into closer contact with each other; modernisation/urbanisation; new scientific/technological developments; economic migration etc. (Ibid). Within this context, the history and size of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) and its international missionary programme occupies an important position in the field of studying NRMs (Givens and Barlow, eds. 2015; Mason, ed. 2016; Annus, Morris, and Östman, eds. 2018). When referring to the LDS in this thesis, I mean the LDS Church which has its headquarters in Salt Lake City; sends many missionaries around the world; and is easily the biggest body of a wider LDS movement through it numbering about 13.5 million members at the end of 2008 (Bryant et al 2014: 756). A smaller, fragmented LDS world is made up of over 100 separate denominations, of which the Community of Christ is the biggest with around 250,000 members, followed by “the Church of Jesus Christ (Bickertonite)” with about 12,000 and Fundamentalist LDS Church with around 10,000 (Ibid). Towards the end of my research, the biggest body of LDS numbers over 16.5 million members worldwide (<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics> accessed 9-05-20).

Through most LDS now living outside the USA, away from the “historic culture” region of Utah, the “new grassroots” of “Mormonism” need to be studied “in small units around the world” to highlight how the latter create “new hybrid identities, practices and understandings” (Hangen 2015: 220-221). The existence of the LDS in different places around the world deserves the attention of scholars, with my research on Polish LDS recruitment/conversion in Warsaw being important because it lies within the Polish context of the LDS Church’s international mission to find new converts. LDS recruitment/conversion is an important sociological topic because any kind of religious conversion may seriously affect the lives of the converts and their families, which necessitates a better understanding of the processes and consequences involved. In this respect, my research explores LDS recruitment/conversion in the wider context of the mainstream Catholic religious landscape in Poland, raising important issues concerning majority and minority cultures and contemporary trends in religious practice and secularisation. It builds up long-term perspectives on the LDS Church and

changes within Polish society/culture, which are important due to the evolving political and religious landscape in contemporary Poland. The latter concerns the strong historical role of the Catholic Church, and issues of secularisation that Polish society is experiencing. Poland is an “interesting case for sociologists of religion” because despite being one of the most religiously/ethnically homogeneous societies in Europe, with “over 90% of the population declaring themselves” Catholic, it may be “undergoing a deep transformation of its religiosity” (Marody and Mandes 2017: 231). While the case of the LDS in Poland only represents the movement of an extremely small number of people, recent LDS emergence and growth there can be viewed as presenting a particular reaction to and reflection of wider religious and political developments, which, as such, justifies my research.

In my study, I examine how Polish LDS converts from two branches (small congregations) in Warsaw, Wolska and Wierzbno/Raławicka, view two journeys. The first, recruitment, refers to religious and social processes that a recruit/investigator (somebody interested in the LDS) encounters with the LDS before joining them. The latter involves receiving baptism by full immersion in water, and not long afterwards, confirmation by a laying on of hands rite from a few male priests. The second journey, conversion, concerns the religious and social processes that converts encounter to become different LDS types (less actives, trainee temple-goers, and core temple-goers) after baptism/confirmation. Besides this, I examine how some Polish long-term investigators (LTIs) maintain contact with the Warsaw LDS without becoming LDS. LTIs are a regular feature inside LDS chapels worldwide.

1.1 Motivation for undertaking the study

Despite my study background being in Literature, Philosophy, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, I have been fascinated by the question of what religious change means since the early/mid-1980s. Back then, in my late teens, I moved away from post-Vatican II Catholicism as I started attending the old Latin Mass as a form of pre-Vatican II Catholic religious practice. This was prompted by seeing Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), an organisation on the periphery of the modern-day Catholic Church that trains priests to say the old Latin Mass, celebrate High Mass in Preston, the UK, in 1983. Being born in 1966, I was brought up on the reformed Catholicism that followed the 2nd Vatican Council (1962-1965), which, for some Catholics, was a time when the Catholic Church started compromising its traditional beliefs through accommodating Protestant-type religiosity (e.g. the priest facing the congregation during the consecration at Mass) and secular ideologies such as liberalism and modernism (Lefebvre

1986, 1988/1994, 1997). By the age of 14, I had lost interest in post-Vatican II Catholicism, as it offered me little spiritual meaning and aesthetic beauty, and became a lapsed Catholic. In contrast, I felt enchanted by the medieval-type beauty and clear Catholic teachings that I encountered at the old Latin Mass with Archbishop Lefebvre. Seeing a traditional Catholic clergyman in old vestments offering High Mass facing east with his back to the people, and listening to Gregorian chant for the first time live made me feel that I was encountering something from time immemorial. After this, I attended the old Latin Mass offered by the SSPX in Manchester between 1984 and 1987, through which I encountered literature that strongly justified the central Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, the belief that the bread and wine literally change into Christ's body and blood during the consecration at Mass. The transubstantiation teaching was maintained by some/many of those who accepted the liturgical reforms that followed the 2nd Vatican Council, but the SSPX gave the teaching more meaning than I had encountered before. Some traditional Catholic literature (e.g. van der Ploeg 1975 in Davies, M. 1979/1993) that I encountered traced the roots of the Catholic priesthood and transubstantiation doctrine back to Biblical texts, and I came to view, for example, that:

- The Book of Genesis 14: 18-21 account about the king priest Melchizedek blessing Abraham/Abram and offering him bread/wine foretold the Catholic sacrament of holy communion instituted by Jesus on Holy Thursday
- The Book of Isaiah 53: 7-12 foretold Jesus being led to his crucifixion in patient suffering as an innocent, lamb-like sacrifice for human sin
- St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (5: 1/5-6, 8: 3, 9: 12) justified a Catholic belief that Jesus replaced ancient Jewish priests, who offered animal sacrifice to God, as the high priest of salvation after his crucifixion.

Moreover, the traditional Catholic literature highlighted that when Catholic priests consecrate bread/wine on their altars, it is Christ himself, as both priest and sacrificial victim, who turns them into his body/blood as a re-enactment of his crucifixion. I found the belief that Christ's crucifixion is re-enacted on Catholic altars to free people from sin mind-blowing, as it offered a more meaningful explanation of transubstantiation than I had encountered before, and still view it as the heart of the Catholic faith.

Despite the above, in my early/mid-20s, I drifted away from Catholicism towards non-religious ideas that I encountered while doing English Literature and Sociology A Levels,

(British pre-university exams) at Bury College of Further Education (1987-1988) and a BA degree in Literature/Philosophy at Bolton Institute of Higher Education (1989-1992) in north-west England. Between 1987 and 1994, I encountered various non-religious outlooks, especially through my interest in late 19th/early 20th century literature. In particular, I became intrigued by the agnostic/fatalist worldview and criticism of institutionalised Christianity in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1892/2003) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895/2003), and D.H. Lawrence's male-female polarity theme in *The Rainbow* (1915/2007) and *Women in Love* (1920/2007). I was also interested in some existentialist literature, particularly Camus' *The Outsider* (1942/1983) and Sartre's *Nausea* (1938/2000), as it promoted the idea that human behaviour is mainly governed by the individual's freely chosen actions, and found Zola's *L'Assommoir/The Dram Shop* (1877/2001) and *Germinal* (1885/2004) fascinating, as they promoted the opposing view that human behaviour is mainly determined by genetic and environmental forces. Consequently, I started believing that human behaviour is influenced by complex interplay between genetic/social forces and a person's free will. However, in my late 20s, the religious seeking/yearning of my early adult years returned. In time, the agnostic outlook on life that I developed through higher education has stood alongside the pre-Vatican II Catholicism I encountered in earlier adulthood. This complex balance of opposing views has since remained throughout my life.

In the mid-1990s, I returned to the old Latin Mass through feeling some kind of guilt and yearning to encounter its beauty again. I attended SSPX churches in Preston (1994-1997); Cracow/Kraków (1998-1999); Herne village, the UK (1999-2003); and Warsaw (2003-2005). From 2005 to the present-day, I have attended the old Latin Mass at the Redemptorist church of St. Clement Hofbauer (Św. Klemensa Hofbauera) in Warsaw. Throughout my practice of pre-Vatican II Catholicism, I have read literature about the medieval Catholic worldview of St. Thomas Aquinas (Lefebvre 1991, Pieper 1962/1991); medieval mysticism of St. John of the Cross (Peers 1943); some traditional Catholic catechisms (e.g. *The Catechism of Pope St. Pius X 1910/1993*) etc. In my mid-50s now, I still attend the old Latin Mass for its clear sacerdotal meaning and the aesthetic pleasure of listening to Gregorian chant.

The LDS enter my story in mid-2007 as, while in my early 40s, I encountered two young female missionaries (YFMs) near the Gdański underground station in Warsaw. After this, I started meeting them at their Wolska chapel, as I found them and their religion fascinating. Through my interest in religion, I soon started reading three books of LDS scripture: the Book of Mormon (BOM), Doctrine and Covenants (D&C), and Pearl of Great Price (POGP), all

written by the founding LDS prophet, Joseph Smith. After this, I found myself reading the following kinds of literature about LDS religious/social issues:

- Official LDS literature (Ballard 1993/2006; Talmage 1915/1981)
- Semi-official LDS literature (Coleman 2003; Millet 1998; Kidd/Kidd 1998)
- Independent academic literature by scholars from LDS and non-LDS backgrounds (Bloom 1992/2006; Bushman 2008; Davies, D.J. 2000, 2003; Gaskill 2008; Givens, 2009; Shippis 1987, 2000).

When I refer to official LDS literature, I mean work published under the official name/logo of the LDS Church, including books of scripture, books written by Church leaders, and articles written and speeches given by Church leaders and members published in the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines. Regarding semi-official LDS literature, I mean work written by LDS Church leaders and members published by book companies connected to the LDS Church without having its official publishing name/logo. Examples of semi-official LDS book companies include the Deseret Book Company and its Shadow Mountain imprint offshoot (<https://deseretbook.com/about> and <https://shadowmountain.com/about/> accessed 12-04-18), and the Bookcraft Book Company which became incorporated into the Deseret Book Company in 1999 (Kratz 1999 <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/688955/Acquisition-of-Bookcraft-Inc-is-finalized.html> accessed 12-04-18). Both official and semi-official LDS literature offer orthodox views on LDS religious/social issues. Throughout this thesis, I integrate official/semi-official LDS and academic accounts together to create a jigsaw puzzle-type picture of LDS religious/social issues, as my work is not a compare/contrast study of LDS and non-LDS accounts.

In particular, Bloom (1992/2006) caught my imagination, as he shows how a non-LDS scholar can be enchanted by LDS religiosity. In response, I started engaging in what the Catholic theologian Phan (2004, 2007) and Polish sociologist of religion Obirek (in Harrison 2009) view as interreligious experience, as I attended LDS Sunday meetings and old Latin Masses simultaneously for several years. Through attending Sunday meetings at both Warsaw LDS branches, some Polish LDS viewed me as a potential convert. While meeting several pairs of YFMs between 2007 and 2008, I did consider becoming LDS, as I valued the opportunities the LDS provided for discussing religious issues, and had uplifting feelings reading and praying about the BOM. However, I refrained from joining the LDS, because it would have caused conflict with family members, and my Catholic faith played a role in

blocking this. Nonetheless, during my Catholic-LDS interreligious experience, which mainly occurred between 2008 and 2012, the opportunity arose to study how Poles move towards LDS baptism and become different types of converts or LTIs in Warsaw.

While Catholicism is the dominant religion in Poland, the LDS represent a small NRM, numbering just over 2,000 official members (<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/poland> accessed 22-09-19). However, having lived in Warsaw, Poland's capital city of about one-and-a-half million inhabitants, since 2003, I am aware of what some Polish sociologists of religion (Mariański 2006; Obirek in Harrison 2009) view as gradual secularisation occurring in bigger Polish towns/cities. This may be due to Poland adopting a more pluralistic outlook since joining the EU in 2004. Despite this, some Polish sociological accounts about religious change in post-communist/post-1989 Poland (e.g. Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006) highlight that while Poles now have more opportunities to choose their own religion, a strong association of Catholicism with Polish national identity may still deter them from exploring other religions. Through practising Catholicism or just valuing it as a symbol of national unity, many Poles still identify as Catholics. Against this background, the LDS have struggled to attract converts which is reflected by the fact that there are no LDS stakes in Poland. A stake is a collection of LDS congregations which contains wards, large congregations with 300+ members, and branches, smaller congregations (<https://www.lds.org/topics/church-organization/how-the-church-is-organized?lang=eng &old =true> accessed 25-02-18). Many, mainly inactive, Polish LDS live in or around Warsaw where the LDS have their only officially-owned chapel in Poland in the Wolska district of the city. In contrast, in other Polish city branches (Łódź; Poznań; Wrocław etc.), the LDS hold their meetings in rented property, with the Raławicka (former Wierzbno) branch in Warsaw having done the same until it officially merged with Wolska in early 2017.

1.2 Background to the study

This section discusses how the LDS originated in the early 19th century; doctrinal similarities and differences between the LDS and mainstream Christians (Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants); and what a conversion journey from being a recruit to becoming a core/established LDS member may involve. After this, I trace how the Poland LDS Mission came into existence in the later part of the 20th century, and discuss the large missionary force that the LDS Church has at its disposal. Finally, I discuss some contemporary Polish academic (mainly sociologist) views on how the wider Polish social world may influence NRM recruitment/conversion in Poland.

1.2.1 LDS growth and religiosity

To examine how the LDS originated, have grown in number, and represent a Christian religion that sits uneasily with mainstream/trinitarian Christianity, I refer to the official LDS account of Ballard (1993/2006), a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, the highest leadership level below the LDS President and his two counselors/assistants; the semi-official LDS accounts of Kidd/Kidd (1998) and Millet (1998); and many independent academic accounts by LDS/non-LDS scholars.

The LDS story starts with Joseph Smith's religious search in early 19th century New York state. This occurred during a time of massive religious and socio-economic change, when many people were seeking a return to the primitive/apostolic Christianity, unhindered by denominational arguments about beliefs, found in the Bible (Millet 1998: 2; Bryant et al 2014: 756). This religious seeking seems to have been mixed with practices related to alchemy, folk magic, freemasonry, and unorthodox religious influences (Shipps 1987: 6-7; Davies, D.J. 2003: 15; Bryant et al 2014: 756-757). Joseph Smith came from a family of non-conformists who explored the hotbed religious atmosphere provided by the Protestant denominations in New York state (Ballard 1993/2006: 31-32; Bloom 1992/2006: 74; Shipps 1987: 6-8). Smith's establishment of his Church in 1830 seems to have been partly prompted by societal dissatisfaction towards mainstream Christian bodies, with some of his family joining the Presbyterians, others remaining aloof from organised religion, and Smith feeling drawn to but not joining the Methodists (Millet 1998: 4-5; Ballard 1993/2006: 31-32; Shipps 1987: 8). While attending Protestant revivalist meetings, Smith worried about the salvation of his soul and questioned which Protestant denomination (Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian) was the correct one (Millet 1998: 5-6; Ballard 1993/2006: 32). In spring 1820, the teenage Smith followed the advice of James 1: 5 from the New Testament, praying to God about which denomination to follow, and the LDS believe that God the Father, accompanied by Jesus Christ, appeared to Smith telling him that no existing Church on Earth represented his true religion (Millet 1998: 6-7; Ballard 1993/2006: 33-35; Davies, D.J. 2003: 2-3). The LDS refer to this episode as the First Vision.

Smith's First Vision provided a doctrinal foundation for the LDS movement, and despite his religious vision evolving over many more years, it pushed the early LDS towards believing that:

- God the Father was a separate person/being from Jesus

- An apostasy (falling away from doctrinal truth) occurred in 1st century Christianity
- No existing Christian denomination had the authority to act in God's name
- A restoration of doctrinal truth was needed for authentic Christianity to return to the Earth
- People could seek religious truth through praying directly to God
- Divine communication had not ended with the New Testament
- Direct revelation from God was returning to Earth through Smith's LDS movement (Millet 1998: 8-9; Ballard 1993/2006: 39; Gaskill 2008: 119-120; Shipps 1987: 2, 2015: 8).

After his First Vision, Smith believed that the authority to act on God's behalf and real Christian priesthood had been missing since the death of the original apostles, which left him waiting for God to restore ancient apostolic Christianity on Earth (Millet 1998: 9). Thus, right from their early 19th century origins, the LDS have rejected the "institutional history" of mainstream Christianity (Shipps 1987: 51-52).

The LDS religion was founded through Joseph Smith's First Vision and later visions which lead him to produce his first book of LDS scripture, the BOM, and to legally found the "forerunner" of the LDS Church in 1830 (Shipps 1987: 1). The BOM first appeared in Palmyra, a small town in New York state, in March 1830 (Shipps 2015: 7). Soon after, it started drawing people towards LDS religiosity and to view Smith as a prophet leader (Shipps 1987: 33, 2015: 8; Bryant et al 2014: 757). The LDS believe that after the First Vision reopened the world to divine revelation, three years later in 1823, an angel Moroni led Smith to find a collection of golden plates containing ancient Egyptian text, and that between 1827 and 1830, Smith translated the text into English to produce the BOM (Millet 1998: 20-21; Ballard 1993/2006: 41-42; Shipps 1987: 9-10). For the LDS, the BOM represents another historical testament of Jesus Christ to accompany the Bible, as it describes:

- Hebrews leaving Jerusalem around 600 BC to find the new promised land of America where many prophets call people to repent for their sins
- A Nephite tribe being reminded to prepare for the coming of the messiah
- Jesus visiting the Nephites (after his ascension in the Middle East) to establish a Christian Church in the Americas
- The Nephites being destroyed in a final battle with their enemies, the Lamanites

- The final American prophet leader Mormon and his son Moroni completing the BOM on metallic plates in about 400 AD.

(Millet 1998: 21-22; Ballard 1993/2006: 42-43; Bloom 1992/2006: 78-79; Shipps 1987: 25-26; Davies, D.J. 2003: 50-51).

The LDS believe that the BOM and Bible reinforce each other's messages, with the BOM helping people to understand many religious questions that the Bible leaves unanswered (Ballard 1993/2006: 44-45). For the LDS, the BOM is the clearer book of scripture through offering doctrines unrevised by any religious authorities, and having only been translated once from the ancient golden plates (Ibid 46-47). In contrast, they believe that the Bible has lost some doctrinal "purity" through the "changes and alterations" of "countless translations" (Ibid 91). Moreover, the LDS view the BOM as a "third testament" which gives the Americas a "new and pure Christianity" free from the historical "creeds and conflicts" that have marked "Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism" (Shipps 2015: 8). Thus, rather than being a "schismatic group" which has broken away from an "existing religious body" through disagreements over religious teachings/practices, the LDS may be viewed as a unique group that formed around a "charismatic figure *and* radical new religious claims" (Ibid 9-10).

While writing the BOM, Joseph Smith started questioning how priesthood authority from God could be gained for performing Christian baptism and other ordinances (Ballard 1993/2006: 52-53; Millet 1998: 9-10). The LDS believe that in 1829, Smith and Oliver Cowdery, Smith's BOM scribe, were praying next to the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Pennsylvania, when they were visited by John the Baptist who laid his hands on their heads to ordain them into the Aaronic priesthood, giving them the power to call others to repentance and baptise them into the same priesthood (Ballard 1993/2006: 53-54; Millet 1998: 10). Cowdery also appears in the opening pages of the BOM as one of three witnesses who claim to have seen the book, written on metallic plates, being held by an angel from heaven. Moreover, the LDS believe that a few weeks after John the Baptist's visit, the apostles Peter, James, and John visited Smith and Cowdery to confer the Melchizedek priesthood on them, giving them the gift of the Holy Ghost and the power to confirm people as members of Christ's Church on Earth (Ballard 1993/2006: 55; Millet 1998: 10; Bryant et al 2014: 758). This higher priesthood allowed Smith and his followers to perform all the "ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ", and gave Smith the authority to restore the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth (Ballard 1993/2006: 55).

After finishing the BOM, Joseph Smith established the Church of Christ in Fayette, New York in 1830 with him being its first prophet leader, and it being renamed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1838 (Bloom 1992/2006: 79; Millet 1998: 10). Early LDS missionaries established congregations around New York state and Pennsylvania, and by 1831, the LDS had two main centres in Kirtland, Ohio and Independence, Missouri (Millet 1998: 10-11). While the early LDS “came together in Ohio and Missouri”, Smith’s “prophet and church president” role “became increasingly visible” (Shipps 2015: 9). Smith, his wife Emma, and many of his “extended family” left New York state for Ohio in January 1831 with members of his “new church” following them (Ibid 11). In Kirtland, “reverence” for the BOM and “devotion to a living prophet set” the early LDS “apart from” their neighbours (Ibid 12). Conflicts in Missouri and Ohio led the LDS to settle near Commerce, Illinois, next to the Mississippi River, in the late 1830s, where they built up a new city, Nauvoo, in the early/mid-1840s (Millet 1998: 11; Bryant et al 2014: 760; Shipps 2015: 15-16). During this period, the LDS Church grew to about 30,000 members and started practising polygamous marriage (Bloom 1992/2006: 79). Plural marriage “was denied publicly” with “its theology” not being “taught to new converts” which resulted in two kinds of LDS religiosity: a “public version” of “primitive Christianity” for the “uninitiated”, and a hidden, “esoteric version” which included polygamy and exaltation, the belief that committed LDS may enter the “kind of existence that God enjoys” (Bryant et al 2014: 760). At this time, LDS missionaries were sent abroad with many especially British converts emigrating to America (Millet 1998: 11; Bryant et al 2014: 760).

Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered in Carthage, Illinois in 1844, as many locals feared LDS political power and polygamous culture (Millet 1998: 11; Bloom 1992/2006: 79). Six weeks later in early August 1844, the Quorum of the Twelve leader, Brigham Young, became the new LDS leader, being known as “President Young” rather than “the Prophet Brigham” during “his long tenure” in charge, because Joseph Smith was the “once and forever Mormon prophet” (Givens 2007: xi-xii). None of Smith’s successors “approach the scope of his creative energy as a thinker”, “system builder”, “revelator” or scripture writer (Ibid xii). The BOM (1830) “is longer than the Quran or the New Testament”; almost all of the D&C’s (1835) 138 sections are written by Smith; and the POGP (1851/1880) is “entirely a product of his writings, translations, and revelations” (Ibid). Between 1846 and 1847, Brigham Young led the LDS trek from Nauvoo to what is now Salt Lake City and Utah (Millet 1998: 11; Bloom 1992/2006: 79; Shipps 1987: 59-60, 2015: 17). Bryant et al (2014: 761) explain that Young “needed converts to colonize” a “new Mormon kingdom” covering a

“western corridor of North America from Canada to Mexico”, so missionary activity “expanded throughout North America and Europe” and was introduced to “Australia, Africa, the Middle East, the Pacific Islands, and elsewhere”. Young’s “tenure” as LDS leader massively exceeded that of Smith, with Young colonising “over 300” towns/cities “compared to Joseph’s handful” and governing a “territory larger than Texas” and 130,000 LDS Church members “at his death” (Givens 2007: xii). While Smith “laid the foundations” of LDS religiosity, Young began shaping the “Mormon experience”, with these “twin pillars” providing the base and impetus for LDS “intellectual and cultural heritage” (Ibid xiii). During Young’s many years as prophet leader, the LDS enjoyed relative autonomy in their Utah homeland, but ongoing struggles with the US government over polygamy and LDS “theocratic power” led to them officially abandoning polygamy in 1890 and Utah becoming the 45th state of the USA in 1896 (Millet 1998: 11-12). After Wilford Woodruff (4th LDS Church President, 1889-1898) “called for the end of polygamy” in 1890, the “most publicly recognizable sign of Mormon difference” disappeared from LDS life (Givens 2007: xvi). Thus, the LDS stopped being “persecuted as an alien presence”, and were “increasingly tolerated” by mainstream American society as they started assimilating into it (Bryant et al 2014: 762). Alongside this, LDS Church leaders started stressing the importance of members attending worship services, practising the WOW, and paying tithing (Ibid 763).

From early on, Joseph Smith’s religious revelations stressed the need to carry the LDS message “worldwide”, with missionaries bringing converts back to “Illinois and then Utah” from England especially in the late 1830s and 1840s and Scandinavia, other European countries, and Hawaii and other Pacific Islands in the 1850s (Grow 2015: 62). Early LDS converts from “North Atlantic” European countries were culturally “assimilable into” 19th century America, but the LDS did not “heavily” recruit from the big “Irish, Italian, and Eastern European immigrations” there (van Beek 2016: 73). Through transporting many foreign converts to LDS heartlands in the USA, the LDS became an “ethnically heterogenous” group there, but had a “perpetually weak periphery” in the countries that early missionaries visited (Grow 2015: 62). In the 1890s, LDS Church leaders started encouraging converts to stay in their own countries, and after building temples outside the USA in the 1950s, the LDS started becoming an international phenomenon (Ibid). After the 1929-1939 Great Depression, the LDS gained converts through spreading “eastward” in the USA (Bryant et al 2014: 763). During the 20th and 21st centuries, LDS growth/expansion has occurred throughout many parts of the world (Millet 1998: 12; Bloom 1992/ 2006: 88). LDS numbers increased from 26,000 when Joseph Smith died in 1844 to 115,000 when Brigham Young

died in 1877; 500,000 in 1919; two million in 1963; four million in 1979; eight million in 1991; and 11 million at the start of the 21st century (Davies, D.J. 2003: 8). The “half-century” after the 2nd World War involved spectacular “growth in numbers of individual and family converts” (Shipps 2015: 20). Through a “wave of pro-American sentiment” and “insistent missionary techniques”, the LDS expanded into Catholic countries during the “first decades” after the 2nd World War (Decoo 2015: 543). Accelerated LDS growth in the late 20th century was mainly brought about through rapid expansion in South America (Davies, D.J. 2003: 8).

In contrast, van Beek (2016: 73) points towards the recruitment of Afro-Americans having been “extremely limited due to” the LDS Church’s pre-1978 “racial restrictions”. Black LDS were denied “access to priesthood and temple rites after 1852” when Brigham Young associated black people with the “seed” of Cain, and the LDS “missionary program” did not proselytise many black people (Mauss 2003: 213-216). Turner (2012) explains that Young thought that black people were “cursed with black skin as punishment for Cain’s murder of his brother”, Abel, in the Book of Genesis, and that some LDS “leaders” after Young believed that the “pre-existent spirits of black people had sinned” in pre-mortality through “supporting Lucifer in his rebellion against God”. For Mauss (2003: 218-219), many LDS leaders and members in the 1950s/1960s had believed that “priesthood restrictions” were Church business “not subject to national policy or criticism”, while the LDS and “other Americans” held “remarkably similar” views concerning “blacks and civil rights” in what would now be viewed as a “racist society”. While other Churches never recruited many blacks for their seminaries, the LDS still stood out as none could be seen in their much bigger male, lay priesthood (Ibid 220-221). As the LDS First Presidency decision allowing all worthy LDS men to become priests was made in 1978, this reassured members of its “divine origin” through it not being made in the 1960s when the LDS were under heavy pressure from the American civil rights movement to make such a change (Ibid 231, 236). Mauss (2003: 236) explains that the 1978 change was prompted by “two kinds of *internal* pressure”, from the “missionary imperative” to spread the LDS faith “throughout the world”, and the LDS having “inadequate scriptural and canonical basis for connecting modern black Africans to an obscure ancient lineage once denied the priesthood”. The “only passage” from LDS scripture which mentions any specific racial “lineage” being “ineligible for the priesthood” is the Book of Abraham 1: 26-27 in the POGP (Ibid 238). While discussing “the origin of ancient Egypt”, Abraham describes the pharaohs as “having descended from Ham, a lineage ‘cursed as pertaining to the priesthood’” (Ibid). Moreover, no LDS scripture “connects the lineage of the pharaohs to black Africans in general” (Ibid). All this was significant for Brazil, “the most

racially mixed nation in the Western Hemisphere” (Ibid 237). Through the 1978 change being made “just weeks before the dedication” of the São Paulo Temple, this negated the need for the LDS to assess the eligibility of priesthood and temple access for many people from mixed racial backgrounds (Ibid).

During the 1970s, the LDS established a “presence” in “Iron Curtain” countries including Poland and East Germany where Freiberg Temple was built in 1985 (Decoo 2015: 544). The “crumbling of communist regimes” in Central/Eastern Europe “a few years later” opened the way for “pioneering missionary work”, but through being viewed as “part of a menacing invasion of alien cults”, the LDS had to face the “power of reinstated national” Churches and resurgent “nationalistic feelings” (Ibid). Most post-communist governments in Central/Eastern Europe drew up “restrictive legislation to impede the spread of nonindigenous religions” (Ibid). However, through “carefully acting within the law”, the LDS “function fairly normally in eastern European countries”, although “economic challenges” often “encourage” young converts/members to emigrate to the USA (Ibid). As already mentioned, nearing the end of my research, the LDS Church has over 16.5 million members worldwide (<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics> accessed 9-05-20). Moreover, Stark (2005: 141) predicts that through accelerated international growth and non-US members now outnumbering US ones, the LDS may number anywhere between nearly 64 and 267 million by 2080.

Many academics find it difficult to determine whether the LDS are Christian, post-Christian, or non-Christian. Shipps (1987) believes that they represent a new religious tradition born out of Christianity similar to how the latter rose out of ancient Judaism. For Davies, D.J. (2013: 2), the LDS are “self-defining Christians” who derive their “identity from the life and influence of Jesus”. Some similarities between mainstream Christianity and the LDS include the belief that people need to be baptised and confirmed to become part of Christ’s Church on Earth; having communion services that commemorate/recall Christ’s Last Supper; referring to Jesus as the saviour of mankind; and valuing heterosexual marriage. Another similarity concerns having sacred religious rites. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches have seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, penance/confession, holy communion, matrimony, priesthood, and the last rites) to impart God’s grace (virtuous influence) on a person’s soul. By comparison, the LDS Church has (sacrament-type) ordinances, lower ones performed in chapels and higher ones inside temples, which sometimes resemble and other times completely differ from Catholic/Orthodox sacraments. LDS chapel and temple ordinances are discussed in detail later in this section.

Both the LDS and mainstream Christians focus on the central figure of Jesus Christ. The BOM introduces an “essentially Protestant Jesus” through its central “ideas of sin, atonement, repentance, faith, obedience, and prophecy” (Davies, D.J. 2013: 8). However, LDS and mainstream Christian concepts of Jesus differ, because LDS religiosity contains “pre-birth appearances of Jesus” (Ibid 176). For the LDS, Jesus is both the first pre-mortal, spirit child offspring of God the Father, and Jehovah, the “prime divine agent of the Old Testament”, the world’s creator on behalf of God the Father (Ibid 68). Givens (2007: xvi) highlights a tension between the LDS viewing mainstream Christians as the “inheritors of a great apostasy”, and feeling “the sting of being excluded from” the mainstream “Christendom” that they reject and believe they correct. Millet (1998: 187-200) points towards the LDS being theologically distinct from mainstream Christians in three key areas: rejecting a traditional Christian understanding of the Trinity; believing in human pre-mortality; and performing baptisms on behalf of dead souls.

The LDS believe in a Godhead of three separate beings (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) that share a common purpose rather than the mainstream Christian Trinity doctrine of three coequal beings sharing one, undivided essence/substance (Millet 1998: 188-189; Gaskill 2008: 43-44; Davies, D.J. 2003: 76). For Paulsen and Boyd (2015: 253), the LDS are “Social Trinitarians” who believe in “three distinct persons” that are “perfectly united in will, action, thought, and love”. Holland (2015: 150) describes the mainstream Trinity teaching serving “to reconcile the monotheism” of the Old Testament with “references to three deities” in the New Testament, while the LDS attempt to harmonise the BOM identifying “Jesus as both Father and Son with more modern revelations” which emphasise his “separate identity as Son”.

For the LDS, people can become divine/perfect like God the Father through engaging in a Plan of Salvation (POS) that covers pre-mortality, Earth life, and post-mortality (Millet 1998: 192-193). This “essential scheme”/“grand narrative” of faith informs all others, similar to how the Trinity dominates “mainstream Christian theology” (Davies, D.J. 2013: 8). However, the two schemes offer different views of Jesus’ role in human salvation (Ibid). The LDS view of Jesus being “the Christ”, the literal son of a “heavenly father”, gains its “distinctive” meaning from the POS “narrative”, and “not, as in Classical Christianity”, from viewing Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as one intertwined deity (Ibid 9). For the LDS, Jesus’ “divine ‘sonship’” is “shaped” at a pre-mortal “heavenly council” where his “divine Father and an antagonistic Lucifer” debate “the best” POS “for human destiny” (Ibid 57). This “divine conclave” deliberates over the Earth’s “creation and humanity’s salvation”, and provides a “rationale” for Christ’s “scheme of atonement” on Earth (Ibid). Through his birth, life, suffering, death,

and resurrection on Earth, Jesus establishes “the Kingdom of God” as an “act of atonement” for people’s “sins” which ensures the “resurrection of all people” (Ibid 9).

In the BOM, the POS is viewed in terms of people attaining “redemption” from sin through Christ’s atonement, and developing faith by freely turning disobedience into “faithful repentant obedience” while listening to “prophet-preachers” (Davies, D.J. 2013: 58). After the BOM, Joseph Smith added an “enlarged” vision of “priesthood power and covenant rites as bases for LDS heavenly exaltation” (Ibid). At this stage, Jesus’ “role” in the POS seems “to diminish”, as people become more completely responsible for “their place in eternity” through being obedient to God within the LDS Church’s “organization and sacred ordinances” (Ibid 9). However, the “importance of kinship and family life” and genealogical research for LDS “society” has resulted in “the idea of Jesus” as an “Elder Brother” being perpetuated in LDS circles (Ibid 4).

In their POS, the LDS believe that God the Father is an exalted/perfected man of flesh and blood (Millet 1998: 188; Bloom 1992/2006: 89, 97; Davies, D.J. 2003: 74). Hence, they view him as a “gloriously embodied person” or “embodied God” (Paulsen and Boyd 2015: 252). In LDS theology, people can become perfect through attaining “progressive maturation” like God the Father and their older brother, Jesus (Davies, D.J. 2013: 73). Bloom (1992/2006: 95) believes that Joseph Smith’s POS and vision of human exaltation represents a return to the “anthropomorphic” God and “theomorphic” people in the early books of the Bible. Smith and the early LDS believed that godhood had to be sought through polygamous marriage that continued in the afterlife where, like God the Father, each LDS man and his wives begot “spirit children” to populate “later universes” (Ibid: 101-107, 125, 128). Not long before his death, while speaking at the funeral of a friend called King Follett, Smith introduced the ideas that “God was once a man” and people “can become gods” (Shipps 2015: 17). The LDS believe that after death, men/women who have received temple marriage for time and eternity “will continue to give birth to spirit children”, and at some “unspecified” time, “will become gods” ruling over “their own kingdoms” (Ibid). Through believing in “embodied deities”, especially a “Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother”, the ultimate goal of committed LDS is to develop an “immortal, perfected, human body which can continue to procreate and work” in the afterlife (Hangen 2015: 211). While mainstream Christians distinguish between God being a divine entity who has always existed and humans being God’s creation made from non-divine substance, the LDS view God and people as being made from the same divine substance, God in exalted form, humans in embryonic form (Davies, D.J. 2003: 80; Givens

2007: xv). Thus, the LDS notion of plural godhood clashes with the mainstream Christian belief that God is an infinitely higher being than humans.

The LDS also believe that Jesus and the Holy Ghost “derive their divinity from God the Father”, being “spiritually begotten” of him “long before” human life began on Earth; that Jesus is the “spiritual and bodily offspring” of God the Father; and that the latter and his Goddess wife are the celestial parents of one big “human family” (Paulsen and Boyd 2015: 249). The idea of God the Father and a Goddess wife producing the body/soul of Jesus in pre-mortality may be blasphemous for mainstream Christians, because they view Jesus as being co-eternal with God the Father. For the LDS, humans are the spirit ““offspring”” of God the Father “in some genetic or quasi-genetic sense”, and spirits are “materially embodied persons, humanlike in form, though invisible to ordinary human perception” (Paulsen and Boyd 2015: 249-250). Unlike mainstream Christians, the LDS believe that God the Father organised the Earth “from chaos, not from nothing”, with “His active agent”, a pre-mortal Jesus, creating Earth and other “worlds without number” (Ibid 250). They also believe that “divine persons” engage in a life of “unending growth and progress” and that God the Father is “eternally” improving in “knowledge and power”, and reject a mainstream Christian belief that “divine perfection” is a “state of static completeness” (Ibid 255). For Paulsen and Boyd (2015: 247), LDS notions of godhood can be defended through reference to the four books of LDS scripture. While the impersonal God of mainstream Christian “philosophers” is “all-supreme, all-controlling, all-determining” and “wholly other, immaterial, immutable”, without suffering, and outside time/space, the “God of the Bible” and “Mormonism” is an ever-changing, flesh-laden, “not all-controlling or all-determining” human figure who endows people with free agency so they can bring about “morally significant outcomes” (Ibid 246).

After the LDS officially ended polygamous marriage in 1890, their pre-mortality doctrine and baptism of the dead temple rite became more significant (Bloom 1992/2006: 119). The LDS believe that before human conception on Earth, people’s souls exist with God where they start making choices and morally developing (Ballard 1993/2006: 68; Millet 1998: 195). For the LDS, long before the Earth was created, people existed as God’s “spirit children” inheriting his heavenly “attributes” in embryonic form and starting to pursue perfection/godhood with varying degrees of success (Ballard 1993/2006: 67-68). They believe that through God being aware that his spirit children could only continue their progress towards godhood by becoming mortal, a plan was made to put this into practice on Earth (Ibid 68-69). Moreover, the LDS point towards a pre-mortal Jesus, the greatest of God’s spirit children, volunteering to visit Earth to live a perfect life and willingly suffer for people’s sins to show

them how they could return to their heavenly origins (Ballard: 1993/2006: 70; Davies, D.J. 2003: 4).

For the LDS, women are of “divine heritage” made in the image of a “Heavenly Mother”, while men are modelled on her celestial husband, God the Father (Hudson 2015: 350). The LDS believe that “human souls are eternally sexed” so faithful LDS married couples can continue procreating in the afterlife, and that only heterosexual marriage “can create” a state of “godhood”, because God has defined marriage as “inherently heterosexual” (Ibid 350-351). In their Adam/Eve story, the LDS “do not believe Eve sinned” or “was punished for her role in taking the fruit” (Ibid 352). The LDS do not view “the Fall” as a “tragedy” which introduced original sin to the world, but as a “great blessing foreordained by God” that allows humans to engage in a pre-mortality, Earth life, post-mortality cycle where they can “progress” towards their “divine destiny to become like” their “Heavenly Parents” (Ibid 353). Moreover, the LDS “celebrate” Eve as “the Mother of All Living”, as “the Fall” led to women being able to bear children, “one of the greatest blessings God” has given to humanity (Ibid 354-355).

An LDS vision of heterosexual interdependency views male and female partners as “equal” helpmates with different but complementary parental roles (Hudson 2015: 355-356). The priesthood is a “man’s apprenticeship to become a Heavenly Father”, while a woman’s “apprenticeship” to become a “Heavenly Mother” involves “pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation” (Ibid 358). The LDS believe that “women should seek education” and receive “spiritual gifts and talents” in “equal measure” to men (Ibid 359). Moreover, LDS men/women must conceive children “within the bonds” of heterosexual marriage to start moving towards god/goddess status in the POS (Ibid 360).

While mainstream Christians have churches/cathedrals accessible to everyone, the LDS have chapels open to everyone and temples that only worthy practising LDS can enter (Ballard 1993/2006: 61; Davies, D.J. 2003: 133). In 1961, the LDS had 12 temples and 20 in 1981, but by mid-2015, they had 144 (Faulconer 2015: 196). While formal, ritualised worship “has rapidly declined in the West, it has rapidly increased” among the LDS through their temple expansion around the world (Ibid). The LDS offer atonement/repentance (salvation from sin) through people receiving baptism/confirmation and attending Sunday Sacrament meetings at their chapels, plus exaltation through committed LDS performing baptism and confirmation rites for dead souls, and receiving eternal marriage and the endowment for themselves and dead souls inside temples (Davies, D.J. 2003: 4-6, 104-105). The Aaronic priesthood runs LDS chapel life, while the Melchizedek priesthood has additional authority to

organise temple rites (Ibid 176-177). For the LDS, the family forms the “basis of exaltation”, as temple-goers discover their family trees to conduct temple rites for deceased ancestors (Ibid 172). However, in non-American mission fields, the LDS have many members who commemorate the atonement of Jesus in chapels, but few who pursue exaltation for themselves and dead relatives inside temples (Ibid 133-134).

The LDS “temple rite” has become “divided into” four separate parts, because “it would take several hours” to perform at one time (Faulconer 2015: 196). First, “baptism for the remission of sins” and confirmation for the “gift of the Holy Ghost” are done for dead people, especially relatives, often by “adolescents” too young to “perform the other parts” of the temple rite, with adults often being the “officiators” (Ibid). For the LDS, dead souls can accept or reject baptisms done on their behalf and can choose whether to be taught the LDS gospel in the post-mortal world or not (Millet 1998: 200; Bloom 1992/2006: 122). The LDS believe that baptism of the dead was practised by the early Christian Church, because the apostle Paul mentions it in 1 Corinthians 15: 29 (Millet 1998: 197; Bloom 1992/2006: 119). Joseph Smith’s baptism of the dead vision is inspired by Malachi 4: 5-6 from the Old Testament, where Malachi speaks about God sending the prophet Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and vice-versa (Bloom 1992/2006: 120-121; Davies, D.J. 2003: 204-205). The LDS believe that Elijah appeared quoting Malachi’s prophecy during a Kirtland Temple dedication ceremony in Ohio in 1836, telling Smith and Oliver Cowdery that they were about to receive the keys of a new religious dispensation from God (Bloom 1992/2006: 120-121). In response, Smith viewed baptism of the dead as the means through which the hearts of the fathers and their children could be turned towards each other, with living LDS being able to start moving towards godhood through providing this means of salvation for dead relatives (Bloom 1992/2006: 121; Davies, D.J. 2003: 206-207). Smith’s notion of baptisms being done for dead people resolves a problem of many people having died without hearing the LDS gospel between Jesus/his original apostles’ time on Earth and Smith’s restoration of Christ’s Church in 1830 (Bloom 1992/2006: 121).

After receiving proxy baptisms/confirmations, dead souls may progress towards godhood through having eternal marriage and the endowment done on their behalf by living LDS ancestors (Davies, D.J. 2003: 210). Before eternal marriage and endowment for the living or dead can take place, the participants receive an “initiator ordinance”, being washed and anointed before receiving “the garment” (Faulconer 2015: 196). The initiates are washed with water and anointed with oil; given prayers/blessings; and clothed in garments covering the chest and lower body (Davies, D.J. 2003: 215). The temple garment symbolises the “coats of

skins” that Adam and Eve received “to cover their nakedness” when “driven” from the Garden of Eden, and offers “spiritual protection” through reminding temple-goers of the “covenants”/promises they make with God during “temple worship” (Faulconer 2015: 197).

The endowment is a “participatory enactment” of the LDS story of the “Creation, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Fall, mortal life, resurrection, and entrance into God’s presence” (Faulconer 2015: 197). Hence, it covers “the creation of the world”, the “origin of humanity”, and people’s “divine destiny” (Ibid). The participants make vows entering into a “covenant with God”, and receive secret names while moving through a “symbolic veil” into the “celestial room” which represents “the highest heavenly realms” (Davies, D.J. 2003: 215). Moreover, Davies, D.J. (2003: 215) describes the husband receiving the rite through someone else playing the part of God, and the husband playing this role during his wife’s endowment, as she receives a name only known by her and her husband who will use it to find her in the afterlife. After “completing the endowment”, the participants enter the “celestial room”, a “bright” place designed for reverent “contemplation and meditation” (Faulconer 2015: 197). The endowment prepares temple-goers for the “conquest of death”, as they reach a higher path directed towards becoming “divine agents” in the afterlife (Davies, D.J. 2003: 215-216).

The LDS distinguish between spouses who receive eternal/temple marriage being sealed together for eternity by Melchizedek priests, and people married in LDS chapels, non-LDS churches, and secular ceremonies only being married for their Earth lives (Ballard 1993/2006: 62; Davies, D.J. 2003: 213-214). Eternal marriage formally completes the temple rite, unifying the spouses as an “eternal unit” (“new Adam” + “new Eve”), “potentially a king and queen in God’s kingdom” (Faulconer 2015: 198). The LDS believe that married temple-goers should have children and whole families must be sealed together in the temple so they can remain together as units in the afterlife (Ballard 1993/2006: 63; Davies, D.J. 2003: 214). Children born to temple-married parents are ““born in the covenant””, “sealed to their parents”, while children born outside the covenant may be “sealed to their parents in a ceremony” similar to eternal marriage (Faulconer 2015: 198-199).

For committed LDS members, temple work involves receiving “knowledge set apart from other kinds of knowledge” which cannot “be revealed to the uninitiated”, so they are “prohibited” from discussing the “temple ritual outside the temple, except in general terms” (Faulconer 2015: 199). While everybody inside the temple participates or officiates in the rites, no “spectators” are allowed because the LDS view the temple as “sacred space” reserved for worthy LDS who wear special clothing, do exclusive acts for themselves and dead people, and learn about divine things away from the world (Ibid 199-200). While mainstream

Christians receive abstract “theological knowledge” and understand salvation as “the removal of sin”, committed LDS believe that their temple life makes “divine life possible” through the “bodily” enactment of the POS (Ibid 200-201). Committed temple-goers may attain a higher identity which changes how they view “their lives and the world they live in”, as they make covenants which “bind” them to God, their Church, and “each other” (Ibid 203, 206).

In some respects, LDS chapel rites resemble mainstream Christian rites. While Catholics may complete a threefold process of receiving infant baptism, having their first confession/holy communion around the age of accountability (7-8 years old), and receiving the Holy Ghost during confirmation a few years later, LDS confirmation takes place shortly after baptism to make people members of the LDS Church and give them the “constant companionship” of the Holy Ghost (Gaskill 2008: 76-77). Catholic priests baptise babies through pouring water on their heads to pardon sin and make them spiritual members of the “Christian community”, while the LDS only baptise people when they are at least eight to make them members of Christ’s Church and remit their sins (Ibid 73-74). When newly-baptised LDS have their sins “washed away”, they promise to continue repenting for their sins and to keep God’s commandments (Ballard 1993/2006: 85-86). The LDS reject a “post-Biblical” act of pouring water over babies’ heads, only baptise by full immersion people of accountable age who know the difference between right and wrong, and reject a Catholic belief that baptism washes away original sin (Gaskill 2008: 75). For the LDS, people are not born sinful because Adam and Eve did not sin but freely chose to leave the Garden of Eden to experience the highs and lows of mortality, the second stage of the POS (Ballard 1993/2006: 82-83). The LDS believe that people are born good/innocent, not responsible for Adam and Eve’s “transgression”, and only become accountable for sin through choosing to do wrong actions as they grow older (Ibid 83). The “historic doctrine” of original sin, “conceived as the root cause of human alienation from God”, teaches that people inherit “guilt” and “vice” from the Fall, with the LDS rejecting this because “God does not hold one individual guilty for the actions of another” (Givens 2015: 261). Despite acknowledging that people are predisposed to sin, the LDS do not view this as a “condition following from a sinful Adamic heritage”, but as the result of people having “imperfectly developed wills” in a world “constructed” to offer “challenge, opposition, and temptation” (Ibid 262). Thus, the LDS believe that people are “born free of sin”/“guilt”, but “succumb to sinful influences” (Ibid).

The LDS and Catholic Churches have similar concepts of penance/repentance. The Catholic sacrament of confession involves a priest acting “on behalf of Jesus”, directing people to say an act of contrition prayer during confession and prayers afterwards to gain

forgiveness for sins and “to draw closer to God” (Gaskill 2008: 81). LDS repentance involves “serious sins” being confessed to a “priesthood leader” who lets the sinner know when he/she has “properly repented” to be forgiven by God (Ibid 82). This process may take place while local leaders interview and assess members for doing callings, entering the temple, going on missions, becoming Melchizedek priests etc. (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 84). Thus, LDS repentance may be more arduous than Catholic confession, as a person’s temple entrance, upcoming mission etc. may depend on it.

Regarding communion services, Catholics believe that during the consecration at Mass, bread and wine are changed into Christ’s body/blood with their appearances remaining the same, while the LDS have a Calvinist-type Protestant interpretation that the bread and water at Sunday Sacrament services only symbolise Christ’s body/blood through his real presence being restricted to heaven (Davies, D.J. 2003: 178). While many mainstream Christian congregations have mainly male, sometimes celibate, professionally-trained clergy, the LDS have all-male lay priests who are expected to know LDS scripture/teachings well and to do official callings in their local chapels (Ibid 180).

The LDS view the Bible, BOM, D&C and POGP as sacred scripture, while mainstream Christians only recognise the Bible as such (Ballard 1993/2006: 44-45; Gaskill 2008: 113; Millet 1998: 19; Davies, D.J. 2003: 43). Protestants mainly focus on the Bible, and the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, despite their “multifaceted faiths in holy writ, apostolic tradition, patriarchal leadership, and saintly mystics”, have not raised “any postprimitive statements to scriptural status” (Holland 2015: 149-150). Hence, mainstream Christian denominations have “consciously rejected” the idea of producing “ongoing streams” of religious “revelation” (Ibid 150). For the LDS, a “closed new Testament” may contain skilful writers, but it looks “ambiguous” and “prone to conflict” through being “frozen in time” (Ibid 153). The four books of LDS scripture have scriptural and canonical status, while First Presidency/Quorum of the Twelve member talks at General Conferences from Salt Lake City have scriptural but not necessarily canonical status (Gaskill 2008: 113). General Conference audiences believe that the “around thirty” speakers, including “fifteen living prophets” from the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, receive “inspiration in preparing their remarks”, so religious revelation is “felt” passing through them (Holland 2015: 152). Thus, LDS members are expected to engage with far more scripture than mainstream Christians who may rarely or never read the Bible.

As Joseph Smith “claimed divine authority to speak for God”, LDS Church leaders started compiling the revelations that he was receiving in 1831, with the first edition of the D&C

being published in 1835 (Millet 1998: 23). Nowadays, the book consists of 138 sections mainly made up of revelations received through Smith, and one official declaration from Wilford Woodruff (LDS Church President 1889-1898) about the LDS ending polygamy and another from Spencer W. Kimball (LDS Church President 1973-1985) about allowing men from all racial backgrounds to become LDS priests (Ibid 23-24). The D&C integrates two streams of religiosity: what the LDS believe in and how they put their beliefs into practice through making covenants with God (Davies, D.J. 2003: 9). The POGP dates back to 1851 when Quorum of the Twelve member and President of the British Mission, Franklin D. Richards, produced a collection of writings by Joseph Smith for British LDS who were short of LDS literature (Millet 1998: 24). In 1880, the LDS voted to accept the POGP as their fourth book of scripture, with it containing additional “doctrinal details” about the Creation, Adam and Eve, the Fall, other Old Testament figures (Enoch, Noah, Moses, and Abraham), and Jesus’ Mount Olives discourse from the Gospel of Matthew 24, all prompted by Smith’s study of the Bible; part of Smith’s 1838 *History of the Church*; and Smith’s 13 Articles of Faith (Ibid). Together, the D&C and POGP take LDS religiosity away from a BOM and mainstream Christian message of salvation based on “repentance, faith and baptism” towards a vision of people engaging in “covenant-making temple ritual” to seek divinity themselves (Davies, D.J. 2003: 34-35).

The LDS differ from non-evangelical mainstream Christians through sharing testimonies about their faith with fellow members, especially at Sunday Sacrament meetings on the first Sunday of each month. LDS testimonies may involve members becoming certain about LDS teachings/practices being true, and revealing this publicly to fellow members through which they may sense “sincerity of purpose” and the Holy Ghost influencing their lives (Davies, D.J. 2003: 179). Pre-baptismal testimonies may be prompted by LDS missionaries encouraging recruits to take up Moroni’s challenge from Moroni 10: 4-5 in the BOM, which invites the reader to ask God directly about the truth of the book (Ballard 1993/2006: 117-118; Shippis 1987: 28). While asking God about the BOM, recruits may start feeling uplifted, believing that the book is true through receiving an “inner sense of new conviction” (Davies, D.J. 2003: 62).

Finally, the LDS differ from Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and some Protestant denominations (e.g. Anglicans, Lutherans) through an absence of cross/crucifix symbolism in LDS chapels and temples. Reed (2011) believes that before the later 19th century, the LDS had little/no antipathy towards the mainstream Christian cross symbol. He points towards LDS women, including one of Brigham Young’s wives and some of his daughters, being

pictured wearing crosses, and “cross jewellery” being worn by some LDS women (Ibid). Thus, the LDS did not inherit a Protestant animosity towards the cross symbol nor an anti-Catholic ethos that was prevalent in early 19th century America (Ibid).

For Reed (2011), the early LDS never condemned the cross because Joseph Smith and other LDS were involved in folk magic and freemasonry which encouraged symbolic use of the cross, and pre-Columbus crosses were “found in archaeological remains”, which, for many LDS, provided “evidence confirming authenticity” of the BOM. Reed (2011) also points towards a Smith family parchment containing a three-cross symbol connected with folk magic and treasure-hunting, while other “magic parchments associated with the Smith family” are covered with crosses. He believes that LDS attitudes towards the cross symbol started to change at the end of the 19th century, as “new generations” of LDS turned away from folk magic and freemasonry (Ibid). This resulted in polarised attitudes towards the cross with Spencer W. Kimball (12th LDS Church President 1973-1985) having had mystical-type apparitions of the cross in early life, while David O’Mackay (9th LDS Church President 1951-1970) “institutionalised” its taboo position in LDS religiosity as an inappropriate “Catholic form of worship” (Ibid). From here, an LDS aversion to the mainstream Christian cross was perpetuated into the 21st century (Ibid). Gaskill (2013: 185) acknowledges that in Reed’s (2012) book, it is argued “rather convincingly” that LDS religiosity “has not always been uncomfortable” using “the cross as one of its symbols”. However, Gaskill (2013: 186) stresses that modern-day LDS “are not expressly forbidden” from using the cross in “personal devotions”, “religious art”, or jewellery. Moreover, he views Reed’s (2012: 37-60) third chapter claim that Joseph Smith and the early LDS used “the cross as a symbol” through being “heavily into folk magic and Freemasonry” as “heavily conjectural” (Ibid 186). For Gaskill (Ibid), the third chapter provides “evidence” that crosses were used in 19th century “Masonry and by some practioners of folk magic”, but fails to show that Smith “introduced the cross as a symbol into Mormonism” through such “influences”. The chapter also overlooks a fact that Smith “never used the cross as a symbol in his public discourse or liturgical rites” (Ibid). Thus, Gaskill (2013: 187) believes that Reed (2012) struggles to support his claim that “early LDS comfort with the symbol of the cross” was mainly down to Smith’s “comfort with folk magic or Masonry”.

1.2.2 Recruit to temple-goer transformation

For the LDS, baptism only represents the beginning of conversion, as new members must become worthy to perform temple rites. While Catholics are expected to attend Sunday Mass

once a week, in 1980, LDS “general authorities” instructed their members to attend Sacrament, Sunday School, and Priesthood/Relief Society meetings every Sunday, with each one lasting an hour (Shipps 2000: 269). In 2019, this was changed to having a one-hour Sunday Sacrament meeting every week, accompanied by a 50-minute Sunday School meeting one week and 50-minute Priesthood/Relief Society meeting the next week, with all these meetings being attended by members and recruits together (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/ldsorg/general-conference/16435000FAQ.pdf?lang=eng> accessed 14-12-19).

For almost all my research, I attended LDS Sunday meetings before the 2019 changes. Kidd/Kidd (1998: 31-39) explain the structure of the LDS Sunday “three-hour meeting block” which existed before the changes. At Sunday Sacrament meetings, LDS members sing hymns, take the bread-and-water communion, and listen to missionary/member talks and opening/closing prayers. Recruits are encouraged to sing hymns and take communion too. At Testimony Sunday Sacrament meetings, members bear their testimonies about LDS teachings/practices, sometimes emphasising their personal experience, and fast for two meals beforehand giving the money they save to the LDS Church. Prior to the 2019 changes, separate Sunday School meetings existed for recruits/recent converts and established converts which immersed participants into LDS teachings. For the third hour, adult men went to a Priesthood meeting and adult women to a Relief Society meeting. Priesthood meetings contain hymns/prayers, deal with priesthood business (e.g. assigning new positions), and strengthen LDS men as family and quorum (formal priesthood) members. Relief Society meetings direct LDS women towards serving their local LDS community and strengthen them as individuals and family members. Recruits sometimes attend Priesthood/Relief Society meetings. On Testimony Sundays, the usual meetings are followed by a communal meal where missionaries/members and recruits socialise together. Recruits/converts may also attend LDS weekday meetings. Chapel Home Evenings are an adaptation of Family Home Evenings where LDS families spend quality time together, and usually include an opening hymn/prayer, lesson/sermon, fun-type games, closing prayer, and “refreshments” (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 181). Institute meetings are catechism-type classes that offer LDS scripture study to anybody interested (Ibid 40).

At least one month before baptism, recruits should start following the WOW from D&C section 89 which mainly involves not smoking and not drinking alcohol, tea or coffee (Davies, D.J. 2003: 181-182). As baptism draws nearer, a recruit must attend an interview with a local LDS leader. If a recruit passes through this interview, he/she can be baptised by a male missionary/member. To become temple-goers, males must join the Aaronic and

Melchizedek priesthoods (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 224-241). The LDS believe that membership of these priesthoods gives LDS men the authority to carry out religious duties in the name of God. In the Aaronic priesthood, boys usually become deacons at 12 which allows them to distribute the Sunday Sacrament; collect Testimony Sunday money (saved through fasting); speak at meetings; and look after chapel grounds. If worthy at 14, boys become teachers through which, alongside performing deacon tasks, they can prepare the communion table for Sunday Sacrament meetings, become home teachers (visiting and teaching fellow LDS), and be ushers at chapel events. Then, if worthy at 16, they can become priests which, alongside performing deacon/teacher duties, allows them to bless the Sunday Sacrament bread/water; baptise people; confer the Aaronic priesthood on others; and help with missionary work. In contrast, adult male converts can become Aaronic priests within a month of becoming LDS.

Worthy young LDS men become elders by joining the Melchizedek priesthood, named after the Old Testament high priest mentioned in a Catholic context in 1.1. The LDS believe that their Melchizedek priesthood is the same one that God gave to Adam; Jesus held and transmitted to his apostles on Earth; was taken away after the deaths of Jesus' original apostles; and was restored through the apostles Peter, James, and John visiting Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1829 (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/melchizedek-priesthood?lang=eng> accessed 3-07-20). Besides performing Aaronic priest duties, Melchizedek priests pass through higher offices and can enter the temple if they have a temple recommend card, usually assigned by a bishop, the male leader of a ward (small group of branches) and stake president, the male leader of a stake (a collection of wards). However, in LDS missions outside the USA, branch and Mission Presidents usually interview members to assess if they are worthy of entering the temple (<https://www.lds.org/manual/preparing-to-enter-the-holy-temple/preparing-to-enter-the-holy-temple?lang=eng> accessed 1-11-17). An elder can be ordained a high priest if he receives a high local or regional LDS leadership position (e.g. bishop or president) or becomes a patriarch who gives mystical blessings to members. When LDS men become Melchizedek priests, they make an oath with God, promising to advance his kingdom on Earth through learning the LDS gospel and serving him by helping to perfect other LDS members. Higher levels of the Melchizedek priesthood include The Seventy quorums (offices devoted to missionary work), the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and First Presidency.

Kidd/Kidd (1998: 82-88) discuss the role that a bishop in charge of a ward, or in the mission field, a branch president may perform, which includes leading other priests; interviewing the leaders of branch organisations; choosing two counselors/advisors; and

approving callings. He may also perform non-temple marriages; ensure all chapel ordinances (e.g. Sunday Sacrament blessings) are performed properly; plan and lead Sunday Sacrament meetings; and start Sunday Priesthood meetings. The president or his counselors should interview members to check if they are moral and faithful enough to attend the temple, male members to assess their worthiness for priesthood advancement, and young people and older couples about their suitability for serving missions. If a branch member is accused of committing serious criminal or immoral transgressions, the president may have to organise disciplinary councils to decide whether to take no action, or put him/her on probation or out of fellowship, and in extreme cases, excommunicate him/her. Finally, a branch president and his two counselors have to interview members to see if they have paid full tithing. The president's counselors often take care of less serious business, such as interviewing young Aaronic priests and female teenagers; supervising auxiliary meetings (e.g. Sunday School lessons); offering and extending branch callings as approved by the president; and leading meetings and branch life when the president is absent.

The Relief Society aims to develop female LDS members. Kidd/Kidd (1998: 102-104) explain how it works. During meetings, women receive religious and homemaking (cooking, craft-making, home finance etc.) lessons which encourage mutual co-operation. The Relief Society is lead by a president usually assisted by counselors who supervise the teachers and content of lessons, oversee the homemaking programme, and organise help for branch members who need it. As new male converts may find the Priesthood set-up intimidating, new female converts may be daunted by the hierarchical structure of the Relief Society.

LDS members are expected to undertake unpaid callings: leading Sunday meetings, teaching lessons, doing administrative/manual tasks etc. Kidd/Kidd (1998: 54-77) discuss how members are given and do branch callings. Local leaders may offer a member a calling after asking questions about his/her life, family, work, testimony/faith, and view of the local LDS community. Converts are given callings shortly after baptism to strengthen their commitment and integration inside an LDS community. As converts may feel intimidated by the tasks and time involved, callings can be turned down, but members are usually convinced of the benefits of carrying them out. After accepting a calling, a member has it sustained/ approved by fellow members who raise their right hands in support of the nomination at a Sunday meeting. In a private meeting afterwards, a ward bishop or branch president puts his hands on the nominee's head to give him/her authority and a blessing from the Melchizedek priesthood to do the calling well. The nominee may then seek advice from local leaders, the person released from the position, and friends, or may look at training manuals to discover

his/her calling duties. A member usually first hears about being released from a calling through a private meeting with a bishop/president, where his/her experiences of the position are discussed, after which he/she is formally released at a Sunday meeting. However, in a small branch, a few established members may do multiple callings to keep the place running.

If viewed as worthy enough, converts may prepare to enter the temple. Kidd/Kidd (1998: 259-263) describe the temple entrance preparation process. A preparation class, which may take place over two months, involves studying temple-related texts, especially from the D&C/POGP. To enter a temple, male converts must receive the Melchizedek priesthood, with worthy men usually becoming elders 3-12 months after baptism. During temple recommend interviews, interviewees are asked questions about following LDS commandments, e.g. practising the law of chastity (no sex outside heterosexual marriage) and WOW, and their belief in LDS teachings. When viewed as worthy, the interviewee receives a recommend card to enter the temple for a year, after which the process needs to be repeated. Different kinds of temple recommend allow non-endowed members to do baptism of the dead; members to be endowed and receive eternal marriage; and endowed members to perform all temple ordinances for the dead.

Finally, Kidd/Kidd (1998: 195-197) discuss how LDS members do family history research in preparation for doing temple ordinances for dead relatives. First, they collect their dead relatives' names, being encouraged to complete at least four generations of family genealogy, starting with themselves and working back in time. To learn about this, members may attend classes or seek help at a family history centre linked to the LDS Church's store of genealogical records in Salt Lake City. After this, they can do temple ordinances for the dead family ancestors they have listed. Through doing baptism of the dead, temple-goers may feel a profound connection with deceased family members. To enter the temple, members must pay tithing, as the LDS believe this has been practised since Biblical times (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 219-221). The tithing rule may often involve members deciding if the 10% payment of their income needs to be made before or after tax, with local LDS leaders not prying into this. For many new converts, tithing will be a massive test of faith, with the LDS advising them to stop buying unnecessary things, and stressing that unexpected financial blessings may occur through paying tithing.

1.2.3 The Poland LDS Mission

Mehr's (2002) semi-official LDS account about the LDS entering Central/Eastern Europe examines how they gained a foothold in communist Poland in the 1970s/1980s and officially

established a Mission in 1990 to seek converts in post-communist Poland. The semi-official LDS account of the Deseret Church News writer, Stahle (2001), and official LDS accounts of the First Quorum of the Seventy member, Neuenschwander (1998); assistant editor of the official LDS *Ensign* magazine, Rollins (1982); and a News of the Church section article from *Ensign* September 1989 address this purpose too.

The LDS gained legal recognition in Poland on May 26th 1977, becoming entitled to own property, conduct religious services, distribute literature, and answer questions, but not proselytise (Mehr 2002: 101-102). In late August 1977, President Kimball became the only serving LDS Church President to enter communist Europe, visiting Poland where he made Fryderyk Czerwiński the presiding elder, as Polish government policy required Church leaders to be Polish back then, and gave a “dedicatory prayer” in Ogród Saski Park (The Saxon Garden Park) in Warsaw for the LDS gospel to be accepted in Poland (Ibid 102-103). Between 1977 and 1979, an older American couple, Matthew/Marian Ciembronówicz (my Polish wife believes that Ciembronowicz/Ciembrónowicz may be more accurate), served as missionaries in Poland, travelling extensively to meet LDS members, and Elder Ciembronówicz baptised 14 converts (Ibid 103-104). In 1978, the LDS acquired their visitor centre on Nowy Świat Street in central Warsaw, where Poles could ask questions and obtain literature about the LDS (Ibid 104). Between 1975 and 1981, the Polish-born convert Maria Krolikowska (my wife believes that Królikowska may be more accurate) translated the BOM into Polish, with full editions appearing in 1981 (Mehr 2002: 100; Rollins 1982).

By November 1981, the Nowy Świat visitor centre was “ready to be dedicated” for missionary service, but in December 1981, the Polish government imposed martial law and outlawed the Solidarity movement, so the centre had to wait to become fully operational (Mehr 2002: 104). After martial law ended in Poland in 1983, Eastern Europe became more accessible for the LDS, as in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev started reforming the Soviet communist system and an LDS Temple was opened in Freiberg, East Germany (Ibid 155). When Ezra Taft Benson became LDS Church President in 1985, entering Central/Eastern Europe became a more focused effort, with the Quorum of the Twelve member (and future Church President) Russell M. Nelson campaigning to get official Missions set up there (Ibid 155-157). In 1985, Hans B. Ringger started serving as a counselor in the Europe Area Presidency that managed LDS operations in Eastern European countries, and in 1989, he became the Europe Area President. Meanwhile, in 1987, Dennis Neuenschwander became President of the newly created Austria Vienna East Mission which sought to introduce young missionaries (YMs) into Central/Eastern European countries “as circumstances permitted”

(Ibid 157). This Mission disbanded in 1992 after helping to establish the LDS Church beyond the Iron Curtain (Ibid 238). After the Solidarity election victory in March 1989, a “revised law on religious liberty” was passed later that year which allowed foreigners to run religious congregations and opened the way for the Poland LDS Mission to be established (Ibid 172). Between 1983 and 1984, Walter Whipple, a Music Professor from Illinois, learned to make violins and speak Polish in Zakopane, southern Poland; met Polish LDS in Warsaw; and unconsciously trained to become Poland’s first Mission President, and between June 1984 and September 1985, an older American missionary couple, Stanisław and Gwendolyn Mazur, taught and baptised Polish converts in Poland (Ibid 109-110). Moreover, between 1985 and 1990, the Mazurs’ replacements, Juliusz and Dorothy Fussek from Salt Lake City, prepared the foundations of the Poland Mission through dealing with public officials and leading early LDS growth in Poland (Mehr 2002: 165; Stahle 2001).

Not long before the fall of communism, YMs started arriving in Poland. The first two, Matthew Binns and Sean Peterson, had to spend their first year of mission service in Chicago, waiting for the Polish government to grant them entry into Poland (Mehr 2002: 167-168). They arrived in Warsaw in January 1988 where at the Nowy Świat visitor centre, the Fusseks helped them to prepare for their first missionary discussions in Polish (Mehr 2002: 168-169; Stahle 2001). When the YMs and President Neuenschwander from the Austria Vienna East Mission met the Polish Minister of Religious Affairs, it was stressed that they could not proselytise, only answer people’s questions (Mehr 2002: 168). After this, the two YMs started receiving visitors, mainly curiosity-seekers and theology students, at Nowy Świat, occasionally visited investigators, and in April 1988, gained their first convert, Zaneta Świercz (my wife believes that Żaneta Świercz may be more accurate), the niece of a recent convert (Ibid 169-170). By July 1988, Elder Peterson was serving with a new companion, John Mitchell, in Wrocław alongside another older missionary couple, the Cieslaks (my wife believes that Cieślaks may be more accurate), while Elder Binns remained in Warsaw with the newly arrived Stephen Thomas (Ibid 171). All this led to 24 baptisms in 1988 and 38 in 1989, with greater numbers of missionaries arriving in Poland in 1989, many having been taught Polish by Walter Whipple at the Missionary Training Centre (MTC) in Provo, Utah (Ibid 172).

In the late 1980s, Urszula Adamska became the first LDS missionary from Poland. Her boyfriend had prompted her to read the Bible and BOM, but she had initially felt uneasy about leaving the Catholic Church behind (Mehr 2002: 170). However, after having uplifting feelings which confirmed her belief in LDS religiosity, she was prepared for baptism by the

Fusseks and became LDS in her early 20s in September 1987 (Ibid). By late summer 1988, she was helping YMs to speak with recruits in Warsaw, and in 1989, she was called to serve the Washington Seattle Mission in the USA (Ibid 170-171).

In 1990, Walter Whipple became the first LDS Mission President in Poland. After meeting Whipple at BYU in Provo, Utah in October 1989, Russell M. Nelson decided that Whipple's previous experience in Poland and Polish language skills made him an obvious choice for leading the Poland Mission (Mehr 2002: 172-173). By early 1991, the Polish government had eased its restrictions on religious proselytising, which allowed YMs to speak freely with people, with their number growing to almost 50 and LDS membership to about 300: roughly 100 converts joining between 1985 and 1989, 100 in 1990, and 100 in 1991 (Ibid 190-191). Back then, Polish LDS mainly resided in Warsaw (central Poland); Katowice, Łódź, and Wrocław (western Poland); and Bydgoszcz and Sopot in northern Poland (Ibid 191). As travel restrictions disappeared, 11 Polish members entered Freiberg Temple in May 1991, including Urszula Adamska who had, during her mission, helped create Polish texts for temple ceremonies (Ibid 191).

On June 15th 1989, around 200 people attended a ground-breaking ceremony led by Russell M. Nelson at the site of the future Wolska chapel in Warsaw (*Ensign September 1989*; Mehr 2002: 172). The Polish LDS Mission, centred in Warsaw, was officially created in July 1990, and the first meeting at the Wolska chapel was held in November 1990, with it being dedicated to serve the Polish people in June 1991 (Neuenschwander 1998; Mehr 2002: 191; Stahle 2001). Also in June 1991, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed in Warsaw while touring Central/Eastern Europe (Mehr 2002: 192). However, by the late 1990s, only 80-100 Poles were becoming LDS a year, and by the end of 2001, there were still only 1,200 LDS in Poland, as Poles found it difficult to break "traditional ties" with the Catholic Church and risked having conflicts with their families if they joined another religion (Ibid 288).

1.2.4 LDS missionaries

Having given a short history of the Poland LDS Mission, I will discuss LDS missionaries, because they are highly visible inside any LDS mission field, often pushing LDS recruitment/conversion forward as shown throughout this thesis. In late 2019, the LDS Church officially stated that it had over 65,000 missionaries spread over 399 missions in the world (www.newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics accessed 21-11-19). Back in the early 1960s, trainees, who had previously "received little training before entering the mission field", started undergoing "several weeks" of "language training" at LDS university sites in

Utah, Idaho, and Hawaii (Bryant et al 2014: 764). Moreover, in 1978, the MTC opened in Provo, Utah, near BYU, where all missionaries started undergoing a “uniform training experience” with long hours of study for “several weeks” before entering the “mission field” (Ibid). In late 2012, the LDS lowered the age for full-time missionaries, with YMMs starting their missions at 18 rather than 19, and YFMs at 19 rather than 21 (Neilson 2015: 188).

Through a well-coordinated mission structure, the LDS leadership in Salt Lake City “can decide where promising converts” may be found worldwide and “deploy” their missionaries “accordingly” (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 219). Smartly-dressed, usually retired, married couples make up about 7% of the missionary force worldwide, with them performing administrative or humanitarian roles in the mission field (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 208; Bryant et al 2014: 756). YMMs, who make up about 75% of all missionaries, are required to dress in suits/ties and YFMs, who make up around 18%, in dresses or blouses/skirts, as prescribed by an official missionary manual (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 207-208; Bryant et al 2014: 756). Despite many YMs coming from North America, more non-American missionaries are entering the international mission field (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 214).

In late 2019, the LDS Church officially stated that it had 11 MTCs in operation (www.newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics accessed 21-11-19). Before attending an MTC, young LDS may spend years saving up to fund their missions, building up excitement/idealism towards their future missionary work (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 218). YMs heading for non-English speaking destinations start learning foreign languages inside their MTCs, and build on this during their missions which are two years for YMMs and 18 months for YFMs (Ibid 208). Inside an MTC, trainees are taught missionary skills, e.g. how to pray continually; be friendly; speak naturally; remember recruit names; politely defend/promote LDS beliefs etc., but may learn little about the culture/history of their host countries (Ibid 216).

When a new missionary starts a mission, he/she works with a same-sex colleague who has usually been in the field for some time (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 210). While introducing people to LDS religiosity, YMs may encounter mockery and rejection, but may perform determined religious salesmen-type roles: turning first encounters into follow-up meetings through taking contact details off anybody who looks interested, and giving whiteboard presentations about their faith in busy city centre spots (Ibid 208-209, 213). Missionaries write official reports about their recruits, and if they visit a recruit in his/her home, they may try to recruit other family members too (Ibid 209, 216). To proselytise recruits, missionaries offer memorised talks, often in a foreign language, about Joseph Smith providing the BOM as additional

scripture to the Bible; LDS baptism; pre-mortality; baptism of the dead; developing eternal families in the afterlife; following the WOW/law of chastity; paying tithing; progressing towards godhood/exaltation through temple work etc. (Ibid 217-218).

1.2.5 The Catholic Church influencing politics in Poland

Sociologists of religion who discuss Poland often focus on a link between “religion and national identity”, and question whether the Catholic Church’s “public involvement” in socio-political issues blocks secularisation from becoming stronger in Poland or not (Marody and Mandes 2017: 231-232). To explore such issues, I will refer to Polish sociologists of religion and philosophers; a Polish commentator on Polish current affairs (Scislowska/Ścisłowska-Sakowicz 2014); an American commentator on Eastern European history/politics (Ramet 2017); and a Canadian Catholic philosopher of religion (Taylor 2007).

Mariański (2006: 86) points towards 95% of the Polish population being baptised Catholics, who, unlike many other Europeans, may still value traditional ties between religiosity, patriotism, and family. Similarly, Borowik (2017: 188) highlights that since the 2nd World War, 90-95% of “adult Poles” have declared themselves to be Catholic. Moreover, Polish Central Statistical Office figures for 2013 show over 33 million people being Roman Catholics; over 500,000 Orthodox Christians; nearly 130,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses; about 70,000 belonging to evangelical-type Protestant groups; over 60,000 being Lutherans; over 50,000 Eastern Rite Catholics; and just under 50,000 belonging to Old Catholic groups (Pasek 2017: 163-165). Thus, despite most Poles being Catholics, other Christian/Christian-derived groups do operate and proselytise in Poland.

During communist times, 23 religious denominations “operated officially in Poland” in 1948, with about 30 being registered in 1980, and 47 in 1988 (Pasek 2017: 163). After communism ended in 1989, new legal/political freedoms allowed all religious minorities “to work without any restrictions” (Ibid). Before 1989, being Catholic was viewed as a political orientation against the “communist regime” which wanted to keep religion away from the “public sphere” (Obirek in Harrison 2009). Despite religion not being visible in the media, it was a key part of family life, and Religion lessons at Polish schools often took place in Catholic churches (Ibid). Other Christian denominations (Baptists, Methodists etc.) were accepted by the communist authorities, as they provided competing versions of Christian belief which helped to discredit all denominational assertions of providing religious truth (Ibid). Despite this, most denominations “preserved autonomy and independence from political interference” (Ibid).

Ramet (2017: 4-6) believes that the Catholic Church's strong political position in Poland and influence on Polish national identity can be traced to several "sources":

- Distant memories of Catholic priests supporting "Polish insurrections against Russian rule in 1830-1831 and 1863-1864"
- Memories of the Catholic Church supporting Poles in the "post-war era", especially from the 1970s onwards
- Older Poles valuing "strict" conservative features of Catholicism
- Recent memories of John Paul II's reign as Pope (1978-2005)
- The Church in Poland being led by long-serving Cardinals of courage and "political acumen", e.g. Wyszyński (1948-1981), Glemp (1981-2006)
- "Catholic religious instruction" being introduced into Polish state schools in 1990
- The Church's active engagement in charity work and social activities.

Of course, many Polish schoolchildren, especially teenagers, will dislike being forced to learn Catholic teachings/practices at school (Ramet 2013: 6). For Obirek (2017: 48), the "longstanding tradition" of identifying Poland with Catholicism dates back to at least the partition of Poland into Austrian, Prussian/German, and Russian territory between 1795 and 1918. During the mid-19th century, the Catholic Church started to view secularisation as "depriving Poles of their national identity" (Marody and Mandes 2017: 232-233). Here, the Church became the centre of a Polish society long controlled by three foreign powers, with "social groups" being drawn to its offers of "strong bonds and trust" which allowed them "to operate in a largely hostile environment", so being Catholic became a sign of "Polish national identity" (Ibid 233). The latter was "reinforced" after the 2nd World War, as Poland became one of the most ethnically/religiously "homogeneous societies in the world", with the Catholic Church providing the "only space where objections to communist rule could be demonstrated" (Ibid). During the 1980s, the Catholic Church in Poland became more involved in politics through offering "institutional support to Solidarity", while John Paul II's outlook and teachings "legitimised the moral validity" of the latter (Ibid 234-235). Towards the end of communism in Poland, religious practice became "not only possible, but even desirable", as the mainly Catholic Solidarity winners replaced the "bad, evil system" of communism (Obirek in Harrison 2009). Thus, the Catholic Church became the most powerful public organisation and "moral authority", and attempted to control Polish people's sense of national identity (Ibid). In Poland, the Catholic Church is now sometimes viewed as an ideological

body that has inherited the role of controlling people from the communist authorities that preceded it (Ibid).

For Obirek (2017: 48), Polish identity based on Catholicism was “understandable” during the Church’s “ideological confrontation” with the communist state, but should have become redundant after 1989. However, Legutko (2018) and Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013) point towards the present-day Catholic Church needing to protect Polish identity from deviant ideologies entering Poland from the West. After communism fell in Poland in 1989, “divisions” between “liberals and social democrats”, “conservatives”, and “nationalists” started to shape “political life”, as the communist ideology that “made these disparate people allies disappeared” (Legutko 2018). With “restored political agency”, the ideological battleground pitches “the left”, which views religion as a “stronghold of obscurantism”, against conservative opponents who defend the Catholic Church in Poland (Ibid). Legutko (2018) stresses that through Poland being an “overwhelmingly Catholic country”, being “conservative” has always involved a “close attachment” to Catholicism, even for non-religious people. While “conservative” and “centrist” political parties accept the “importance of religion in Polish history”, until recently, “left-wing parties” did not attack the Catholic Church/Christianity to avoid “political suicide” (Ibid). For Legutko (2018), Christianity may help preserve nation states, with Poland and Hungary representing a “conservative side” in the “major moral conflicts of today’s Western world” (e.g. concerning abortion and “same-sex marriage”), as their “consistently pro-life and pro-marriage” governments oppose “Western judicial elites” and their “revolutions” against traditional Christian morality. He also points towards Poland and Hungary being “criticized and bullied” in cultural imperialist fashion by American and European “politicians, journalists, academics, artists, film stars, and pop stars” (Ibid). However, Legutko (2018) emphasises that this Western ideological assault on Poland has been unsuccessful, as the presence of many Western ambassadors supporting “homosexual causes” in the Warsaw “Equality Parade” every year has not weakened “strong opposition to legalizing same-sex marriages”, and criticism from the “European Parliament” has not weakened Poland’s “anti-abortion stance”.

Borowik (2017: 202) points towards religious practice in Poland being caught in a tussle between features of traditional and modern societies. Catholic religious practice being handed down from generation to generation is a feature of a traditional society, while a loosening of social bonds and growth of religious diversity is “connected with” society being transformed towards “modernity and post-modernity” (Ibid 200-202). Regarding this, Legutko (2018) discusses progressive groups trying to give Poland a “new liberal-democratic identity”

through “submitting” it to the “enlightened rule” of “local elites and European institutions”, especially the EU. These groups want to give “Polish society” a “mental and social re-education” so it can join and imitate “modern civilization” (Ibid). For Legutko (2018), progressive groups try to eliminate other points of view, and when they lose power through popular votes, they never accept the “democratic results”. In Poland, such groups may use the word “*‘cham’*” (boorish peasant) to stereotype the PiS government and its supporters (Ibid). Moreover, Legutko (2018) highlights that a progressive elite has an “integrationist strategy” to dilute Eastern European identity through the “institutional and cultural framework of a united Europe” which allows European bureaucrats to control “major decisions” everywhere.

Finally, Legutko (2018) discusses how the Iron Curtain blocked Eastern Europeans from following the post-2nd World War changes that “dramatically restructured Western civilization”, with many Poles failing to see that Western civilisation has dissociated itself from its classical Greek roots and Christian history “as if from some burdensome impedimenta”. As a result, Polish conservatives have been shocked to discover that for many Western Europeans, Europe just means the EU and its PC values (Ibid). For Legutko (2018), EU/PC “elites” are trying to create a new European identity with a post-historical, post-national, and post-Christian/post-religious worldview. Thus, in contrast to progressive elites “who identify Europe” with the EU, Eastern European conservatives are now the “truest defenders” of historically-grounded “European identity” (Ibid).

Borowik (2017: 195) points towards Polish conservatives using the term “‘gender ideology’” (GI) to condemn a form of PC which threatens a “biological understanding of sex and the traditional division of family roles”, the “Polish homeland”, and general “humanity”. Regarding this, Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013) distinguishes between philosophy being a search for goodness and truth and ideology being a “tool” to support personal interests “at the cost of” goodness/truth. GI works towards a “victory of opinions and satisfying of egoistic desires” through loud minority groups receiving benefits at the expense of mainstream society (Ibid). While the word “gender” is traditionally used to distinguish different aspects of grammar/vocabulary in language, the word “sex” is used to refer to the “biological sexes” (Ibid). In contrast, GI uses the word “gender” to teach that the human sexes are not defined or created biologically; that people are not born as “male or female sexes”; and that the latter are “created” culturally through “educational process” (Ibid).

For Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013), the belief that people’s “sexual identity” derives from culture rather than nature opens the gate to all kinds of social engineering. He explains that left-wing social engineers live in a limited ideological space detached from the wider

metaphysical domain (supernatural order) of Christianity, and seek to enforce their own “special understanding” of reality upon people (Ibid). GI may be viewed as a “mutation” from traditional Marxists claiming to help “workers and peasants” while “seizing” power/authority for themselves, to contemporary Marxists seeking to help people who are “sexually different” while gaining “totalitarian authority” for themselves (Ibid). For Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013), a negation of relationship with God has produced a “lower and purely physiological” realm of existence where human sexuality is detached from “love and responsibility”, and an unlimited search for “fulfilment and happiness” may result in “distorted” sexual lives. He points towards an assertive/aggressive gay culture promoting its “distorted lifestyle” as an alternative to heterosexuality, and extreme feminists, sometimes lesbians, preaching about freeing women from “motherhood, children, family and men” while referring to “harms and injustices” committed against women (Ibid). Thus, he believes that a “gender war” has been initiated against men in a spirit of revenge (Ibid).

Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013) also stresses that a GI agenda has been imposed on society through GI supporters gaining control of the media, civil service, education system etc., similar to how this was done under communism. He believes that people may become “slaves” through GI promoters/supporters discrediting and destroying any media which expresses opposing views (Ibid). Moreover, he highlights that GI supporters attempt to make their brand of sexual education “compulsory for everybody”, even trying to enforce it on young children, as they believe it should supersede parents having the right to bring children up according to their specific culture and beliefs (Ibid). He explains that GI may stupefy people through maximising the value of sex and minimising the value of having children, as, through people becoming preoccupied with sex, they become easier to control (Ibid). He also emphasises that “gender ideologists” are prepared to imprison people for criticising their ideology, e.g. for acts of “homophobia”, which results in them being excluded “from any criticism”, while their opponents “can be insulted endlessly” (Ibid). Thus, Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013) emphasises that without belief in God, GI supporters block themselves from being “subordinated to any criticism”, as they reject the order of nature “established by God” and create “new laws” as if Gods themselves.

Finally, Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013) discusses how GI creates a social world where there is a “permanent war of everybody against everything”, as minority groups, which lack respect towards each other, compete for power and influence. While communism prompted “economic collapse”, GI may result in the “destruction of the family” and “demographic catastrophe” through mass abortion, with population voids being filled by Muslim immigrants

(Ibid). However, Oko (in Cichobłazińska 2013) believes that Poles have not been “stupefied” or “seduced” enough by GI, and that through being “weaker than God”, the “gender empire” will collapse, like its older ideological relative, communism did.

For Borowik (2017: 189), Poland’s EU entrance in 2004 was the time when Catholic forces in Poland started portraying Western Europe as a degenerate place that served up abortion, broken families, homosexuality etc., with its people accepting this through having good material conditions, entertainment, and a permissive sex culture. She also believes that this was when Western Europe started rivalling or superseding “the Soviet Union” as an “opponent” in Poland, as the Catholic Church continued its post-1989 role as a “guarantor of stability” and “political leader” (Ibid). Moreover, Borowik (2017: 195) points towards the Catholic Church now targeting “gender ideology” as its big enemy, as it fights against “attempts to legalise homosexual unions” and defends the “traditional family”, a “traditional biological understanding of sex”, and “traditional division of family roles”. For Szwed and Zielińska (2017: 117), an allegiance between “religion and politics” against “gender equality” in Poland limits “women’s opportunities in the public sphere” through reinforcing “traditional masculinities as a hegemonic cultural model”. Through examining the “official statements of Polish bishops” and “bishops’ statements” in mainly Catholic “mass media”, they assess how the Catholic Church in Poland “understands the concepts of sex and gender” and “postmodern transformations” regarding “lifestyles, human identity, family patterns, sexuality, and gender relations” (Ibid 119-120).

The Catholic Church “defines gender” in a “binary and complementary manner”, with manhood and womanhood being viewed as “unchangeable” in “nature”, as the “essence” of each stems from “their biological differences” (Szwed and Zielińska 2017: 120). The Church rarely mentions “cultural or historical transformations of gender constructions”, as it views “unchangeable” male and female sexual identities as being divinely designed “to fulfil each other”, and any transgression of these “assigned identities” as denying natural roles “given by God” (Ibid 120-121). Szwed and Zielińska (2017: 121) emphasise that the Church mainly views sexual identity in terms of men and women differing from each other through “nature and biology” rather than cultural constructon, and believes that this reality may get distorted through gender theory (GT) narrowing the differences between the sexes and attempting to make them exchangeable.

For Szwed and Zielińska (2017: 122), the Catholic Church reduces the “model of man and woman” to parental roles of sexually producing and “taking care of children”, so male and female roles are “ascribed to the private sphere”, with no mention of their “public roles in

society". The Church's family-centred "discourse on gender" is "strongly heteronormative", with homosexuality being viewed as disordered and homosexuals seen as the big beneficiaries of gender experimentation (Ibid). Through GT "questioning the natural model of masculinity and femininity", the Church views it as a "serious threat" to heterosexual marriage and family life which it has always defended/promoted (Ibid 123). The Church believes that at a "biological level", GT is an "alien" ideology which promotes "abortion, contraception, homosexual relations" etc., which, at a "socio-cultural" level, leads to a "demographic crisis" and "Christian values" being removed from the "public sphere" (Ibid 124).

Szwed and Zielińska (2017: 124) criticise the Catholic Church in Poland for presenting itself as the only religious organisation "entitled to protect Christian values in the public sphere". They stress that the Catholic Church's "majoritarian status" in Polish society leads to Christianity being "equated with Catholicism", and Poland being viewed as a "homogeneous community of Poles who are Catholics" (Ibid). Moreover, the Church promotes the idea that Catholics in Poland are in danger of being discriminated against through minority groups such as "feminists, non-heterosexuals", abortion supporters, GT "adherents" etc. trying to "pass laws" that support their "interests" (Ibid 125). It also views GT as an "external" ideology related to "leftist movements, feminism, and Marxism/Communism", which, supported by considerable financial resources and influential political lobbies, attempts to impose itself on "Polish society" (Ibid). Thus, the Church views the gender movement as the return/updating of "Poland's communist past", and promotes itself as a "natural and legitimate adversary" to it (Ibid).

For Szwed and Zielińska (2017: 128), the Catholic Church demeans the idea of "gender" through not viewing it as a "scientific concept" but as an "ideology" with a "non-objective"/"distorted view" constructed in the "post-modern world". The Church uses the term gender ideology as a general construct to incorporate movements which it criticises, e.g. "feminists, sexual minorities", pro-abortion groups etc. (Ibid 129). The way the term gender ideology is used in Poland may mirror the way the terms political correctness, postmodernism, cultural Marxism, cultural radicalism etc. are used by some academics (e.g. Scruton and Peterson 2018; Gottfried 2020) and many people in the West to discuss a left-wing macro-ideology that may restrict and control people's freedom and behaviour. Szwed and Zielińska (2017: 129) believe that against a background of fear in Poland, the Catholic Church "presents itself as a hero" defending "endangered values" and traditional "communal forms of life", and protecting the Catholic majority's "civil rights". Hence, the Church seeks state legislation "consistent with Christian morality and Natural Law", and encourages Catholics to defend

“Christian values in the public sphere” (Ibid). The Church believes that “according to the Polish constitution, the state is obliged to protect” heterosexual marriage and family life “against any ideological threats”; support parental rights “to educate children according to their (religious or moral) convictions”; and recognise the “civil rights” of unborn children (Ibid 129-130).

In Poland, the link between Catholicism and Polish identity may be getting weaker, as, despite Catholic religious practice still being visible in social life, it less influences people’s identity (Mariani 2006: 88). A European Values Study (EVS) for the period 1990-2008 highlights that understanding/speaking Polish and having Polish citizenship are now more “important” aspects of “Polish identity” than Polish ethnicity or being Catholic (Marody and Mandes 217: 244-245). Using figures from the EVS study, Marody and Mandes (2017: 235) point towards a “significant decline” in affirmative responses to most questions concerning “individual religiosity” in Poland. The statistics show that while “believing in a personal God” is still the “foundation of Poles’ religiosity”, God has become “less important in their lives”, and less Poles gain “strength and security from religion” (Ibid). However, 65.1-78.5% of Poles still answer affirmatively to such issues, and despite small decreases in Poles believing in God, life after death, and sin, the figures still remain over 70% with belief in God being 96.1% in 2008 (Ibid 236-237). Moreover, the number of Poles who believe in hell rose from 40.8% in 1990 to 69.4% in 2008 (Ibid 237). Despite this, the figures show a dramatic decrease of trust in the Catholic Church being able to give “adequate answers” about “family life” difficulties (20.5% decrease) and “moral problems”/individual “needs” (12.8% decrease), although affirmative answers still lie just above 50%, while the number of people who did not trust the Catholic Church to give “adequate answers” about “social and political problems” went down from 38.3% to 31% (Ibid 238). All this was “accompanied by a decline” in religious practice, as attending Mass once a week dropped from above to below 50%, while once a month remained stable at just under 20%, once a year or less often increased to just over 20% from under 10%, and never attending remained stable at below 10% (Ibid 238-239). This highlights that a “falling frequency” of Poles attending Mass “does not translate into a significant increase” in the number “who never go to church” (Ibid 238). There was also imperceptible change in the percentage of people who viewed it as important to have and attend special religious services such as baptisms, marriages, and funerals (Ibid). All this suggests that while Poles are not “abandoning religion”, with the number of atheists and agnostics not increasing significantly, a “gradual weakening” in identifying with the Catholic Church is occurring (Ibid).

Marody and Mandes (2017: 240) also highlight how the “importance” of religion in Polish “lives” is declining, with it being less important than having friends nowadays. This “decline” is strongest in big cities with over 500,000 inhabitants, while in rural areas, there is a slower “pace of change” (Ibid). Higher educated, well-paid Poles often ascribe less importance to religion, as increasing numbers seek “strength”/“security” away from religion/the Catholic Church (Ibid). Marody and Mandes (2017: 240-241) explain that “modernisation” is prompting a “gradual liberation” of features of “private and social life from the normative influences of religion and the Church”. From the “EVS measurements”, religion is shown to have lost much “importance” in providing a “condition for a happy marriage” and values for “raising children”, and a stance for fighting against a rising justification of “abortion, euthanasia, divorce, and homosexuality” (Ibid 241). However, “trends reflecting” how modernisation undermines the importance of religion in Poland are of “fairly low intensity”, as many Poles still view “themselves as Roman Catholic” and “the number of non-believers” has remained at the “same low level” (Ibid 243).

Mariański (2006: 88) stresses that official Catholic views on marriage, pre-marital sex, and birth control now have much less influence on Poles, while greater individual freedom and cultural curiosity may prompt more Poles to explore non-Catholic religiosity/morality. Obirek (in Harrison 2009) points towards young Poles being uncomfortable with the Catholic Church voicing its teachings about human sexuality in the public sphere, and a wider context of the recent Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI having tried to enforce strict Catholic morality on people, and having failed to foster dialogue with a postmodern/post-ideological world and its relativist/subjectivist values. All this clashes with many younger Poles viewing religion as an irrelevance to their everyday lives, as they focus on imminent cultural, economic, environmental, and socio-political concerns (Ibid). Borowik (2017: 190) describes Poles “born after 1989”, who may have experienced the “openness of the world” through “working abroad”, entering “reproductive age” so future generations of Poles may have a freer approach to religious practice. For Obirek (in Harrison 2009), many everyday people may still discuss religious questions if they are approached in an “open and tolerant way”.

Some young Polish NRM/LDS converts may be hostile towards Catholic teachings, because they had Catholic religiosity enforced upon them by priests and parents in the past, when they can now freely choose and express their own beliefs (Obirek in Harrison 2009). Borowik’s (2006: 311) qualitative research gathers biographical narratives from young Poles who discuss their Catholic experience, Catholic Church personnel, and how the Catholic Church influences Polish society. Her study points towards a growing individualisation of

religious practice, with young Poles practising religion at a slightly lower level than general Polish society (Ibid 312). It highlights younger Poles praising the Catholic Church for being a cohesive factor in community life and containing some approachable, non-dogmatic people (Ibid 318-319). The late John Paul II is respected by young Poles attached to the Catholic Church and others not, but is viewed as a distant, abstract authority whose ideas do not influence their personal lives (Ibid 319). Borowik's (2006: 319-322) young Poles criticise the Catholic Church for not teaching its doctrines clearly and not relating them to real-life experience; its priests being materialistic/hypocritical and detached from ordinary life; and making them feel obliged to attend weekly Mass to avoid being stigmatised by others. Hence, her young Poles seem to feel that they are coerced into practising Catholicism (Ibid 321-322). Finally, they dislike receiving political sermons from priests, fail to find answers to their religious/moral questions, and resent not being treated as free-thinking individuals inside Catholic churches (Ibid 323-324). Mariański (2017: 217) points towards many "especially young" Poles being "convinced" that the Catholic Church "cannot respond" to "burning social, economic and political problems" and the "questions, hopes and fears of young people today". Thus, young "personal consciousness", constructed from many different influences, seems to be replacing "external authorities" as a means of evaluating Christian "dogma" and "ethics" (Ibid).

Obirek (in Harrison 2009) describes Catholic clergy and media in Poland feeling threatened by "multiculturalism" challenging Poland's mono-cultural identity. However, Pasek (2017: 162) highlights a 1938 census which shows that pre-war Poland had a multi-ethnic population, with about 65% of the people being Roman Catholic (Poles); 11.9% Eastern Orthodox (Belarusians and Russians); 10.4% Greek/Uniate Catholic (Ukrainians and Lemkos); 9.5% Jewish; and 2.5% Protestant (Germans). After the 1945 border changes and "communist takeover", the numbers of "religious minorities" decreased significantly through the "resettlement" of Germans and much "territory inhabited by the Orthodox" being cut off from Poland (Ibid 162-163). For Obirek (in Harrison 2009), Poland needs to return to something like its pre-2nd World War, multicultural design to stop nationalist ideologies from spreading in post-communist Eastern Europe, while extreme PC is unlikely to take root there through the Catholic Church keeping it in check. However, Mariański (2006: 81-82) points towards Catholic religiosity being forced to change/adapt as Poland becomes an increasingly pluralist, secular society through importing values from Western Europe. Religious practice in Poland is becoming privatised but not disappearing, as "slow (creeping) secularisation" offers individuals the opportunity to choose their own religion from many options (Ibid 83-

85). An emergent pluralist society is eroding institutionalised religiosity in Poland through offering many Western cultural trends which may prompt religious crises, especially among younger Poles (Ibid 84-85). Moreover, Poland is starting to follow a Western format where religiosity neither disappears nor remains stable, with many people viewing all or most religions as being relatively equal and none absolutely true (Ibid 89).

Since the start of post-communist Poland, the Catholic Church has been criticised for having priests attached to “material goods”; attempting “to recover privileges lost during the communist era”; interfering in “all areas” of “social and political life”; attempting to impose “conservative morality” on society; and “alleged or actual scandals” concerning Catholic clergy publicised by the media (Mariański 2017: 215). This criticism does not indict the Catholic Church’s “religious beliefs”, but its jostling for political power which has started to destroy its “moral credibility” as a “culture of cynicism and distrust” builds up against it (Ibid 215-216). The Catholic Church in Poland struggles to find the “right position and role in a pluralistic society”, as people’s trust in it is “weakened or even destroyed” by external forces and ideologies “hostile to the Church” and “internal forces” e.g. its own clergy (Ibid 216). To counter this, the Church should stop trying “to influence” people’s “electoral decisions” and not try to impose “top-down” moral rules on society, as such moves cause it “more harm than benefit” (Ibid 217). However, Mariański (2017: 18) does not call for the Church to be banished from “civil society”, as since the early 1990s, its socio-political influence has been exaggerated through a “dissemination of fear” against it becoming “fashionable in Poland”.

Scislowska (2014) believes that in a more secular, EU-influenced Poland, many Poles are losing their strength of adulation for John Paul II. She contrasts how his death in 2005 “triggered” massive collective “grief” in Poland, while his canonisation as a saint in 2014 was greeted with “little” excitement there (Ibid). Many Poles now view John Paul II as having been a wonderful person without paying attention to his Catholic theological outlook (Ibid). Obirek (2017: 43) points towards John Paul II being celebrated for supporting the Solidarity workers’ movement in Poland and, alongside former US President Reagan, helping to bring about “the collapse of Soviet communism”. However, Obirek (2017: 45) believes that John Paul II attempted to govern Catholic civil society in an “authoritarian and centralist” manner reminiscent of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958). More than 10 years after John Paul II’s death, his “vision” of the Catholic Church influencing the “public sphere” is still present in most “Polish public debate” about moral/social issues, as, after his beatification in 2011 and canonisation in 2014, he has become the most important moral/religious authority in Poland (Ibid 41-42, 45). For Obirek (2017: 47), “Polish society” had been “eager to accept” social pluralism as a

“logical result of the political transformation” which followed the end of communism in 1989, but while visiting Poland during his (1978-2005) pontificate, John Paul II enforced “his vision of the Church” which led to “Polish Catholicism” influencing political life there. The latter involves Catholic clergy expressing “conservative” attitudes towards “modernity”, and Catholic journalists and other professionals opposing “pluralism”, with religion becoming a “polarising element” in Polish society (Ibid 49). Obirek (Ibid) laments that alongside the Catholic Church failing to implement a “dialogical spirit” desired by the 2nd Vatican Council, in Poland, “a number of texts published by John Paul II” have become the “most decisive guidelines” for influencing Polish socio-political life for the Catholic Church and Polish politicians.

Obirek (2017: 49-50) believes that the legacy of John Paul II has a “polarising” effect on Polish society, with his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia In Europa* (2003) shaping the “attitude” of the Catholic “hierarchy” and some “Catholic media” towards “European integration”/Poland’s EU integration. In this work, John Paul II laments that Europe’s Christian heritage has been undermined through increasing agnosticism and religious indifference, modern people living with little/no regard for God, and the traditional concept of heterosexual marriage being attacked (Ibid 50). John Paul II’s concept of a modern-day ““culture of death”” first appeared in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), where it is associated with falling European birth rates, and has been used by Catholic circles in “Polish public debate” to “stigmatise modern culture” (Ibid 51). However, Leszczyńska (2017: 61, 64) highlights that since 1997, when a group of Polish bishops visited “EU commissioners” in Brussels, Catholic archbishop/bishop statements have often viewed Poland’s “European integration and membership” in EU “structures” in terms of moral/economic “costs and benefits”. The views of Catholic priests in Poland become clear when seeing how they discuss the “main threats and opportunities” of EU membership/European integration in “Church documents” and “statements” in “Catholic magazines” during the 1990s and up to Poland joining the EU in 2004 (Ibid 62). The “main threats” discussed between 1997 and 2004 concern “consumerism, widespread abortion, sex education, birth control, and euthanasia that were associated with the EU at the time”; “national identity”; and “national sovereignty” (Ibid). The main opportunities identified regard “consumer protection” through “EU regulations”, “peace in Europe”, and “Poland’s economic development” (Ibid).

Finally, Grabowska’s (2017: 275) statistical analysis of Polish electoral behaviour between 1989 and 2015 highlights that “religiosity (church attendance)” increased the “likelihood of participation in elections” and influenced how people voted. Between 1989 and

2001, the main competing parties were left-leaning “post-communist” and conservative-type “post-Solidarity sides” (Ibid). From 2005 onwards, the competition has been between weakened left-leaning parties supported by people from different social classes who distance themselves “from the Church”; PO who represent a political “middleground” of “urban middle class” people with “varied attitudes” towards religion; and PiS who represent conservative-type religious and “non-affluent” people (Ibid 275-276). For Grabowska (2017: 276), such voting patterns will not disappear quickly, although this may depend on whether PO preserves its middle-ground outlook or distances itself from “religion”/“the Church” to gain new voters from left-leaning parties.

1.2.6 The wider social world influencing religious conversion in Poland

In post-communist Poland, many new religious groups started appearing after a 1989 religious freedom bill, ratified in 1997 to allow parents to decide what religion their children should follow, introduced legal equality for all Christian denominations and religious associations (Pasek 2006: 181-182). However, despite growing secularism in Poland, the Catholic Church still strongly influences the wider social world. The Polish authorities have a concordat/agreement with the Vatican that officially recognises the higher position of the Catholic Church in Polish culture/history (Pasek 2006: 181; Zielińska 2006: 212). This concordat, “agreed in 1993” and officially ratified in 1998, ensures religious education throughout the Polish school system and “extended state recognition to marriage” in a Catholic church, and gives the Catholic Church “privileged status” (Obirek 2017: 48). In 2004, 15 other Churches or religious associations had less powerful concordats through being historically established and having sizeable numbers of followers in Poland, while the Registry of the Religious Belief Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs contained a list of 144 additional Churches and religious associations (Pasek 2006: 181-182). Similarly, in 2014, alongside the Catholic Church concordat, 14 Churches/religious associations had “separate statutes”; 158 Churches/religious associations were officially listed with “the Ministry of Administration and Digitalization”; and some “faith communities” lay “outside” the Ministry registry (Pasek 2017: 161). Zielińska (2006: 213) stresses that such arrangements maintain different levels of religious status, which may violate an “equality of religions” legal principle in Poland.

For Pasek (2006: 190), NRMs are viewed with suspicion in Poland because of their small numbers and most people knowing little or nothing about them. In “traditional societies” where one religion dominates, NRM members may arouse some “excitement and admiration”

prompting others to join them (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 195). However, when changing religious identity, NRM converts may feel stigmatised through being viewed as traitors by a homogenous society (Ibid). Well-established religions in Central/Eastern Europe are often viewed as institutions that strengthen national identity, and minority religions as foreign threats to traditional society, with well-established religions sometimes campaigning against them (Zielińska 2006: 210, 215). Pasek (2006: 183) highlights that the 1997 ratification of the 1989 Polish religious freedom bill called for closer state monitoring of registered NRMs. Zielińska (2006: 213) discusses a 1997 Interdepartmental Council on NRMs assessing the threat of NRM activities and giving advice to the Polish Prime Minister. Moreover, an Interdepartmental Team wrote a *Report on Some Phenomena in the Activity of Sects in Poland* (Wiktor and Mikrut 2000) which accused NRMs of “psychic manipulation” despite little evidence that much of this happened in 1990s Poland (Pasek 2006: 183-184). This report also accused NRMs of using “love-bombing”, “thought control”, and reward-and-punishment techniques to attract weak-minded converts, and lamented them being able to join the Registry of Churches (Zielińska 2006: 213-214). Pasek (2006: 185-186) points towards Polish courts often restricting the definition of religious associations to a “Judeo-Christian understanding”, and public concern prompting the police to visit and question NRMs in Poland during the late 1990s/early 2000s. Zielińska (2006: 215-216) discusses Catholic-influenced “anti-cult information centers” accusing NRMs of brainwashing vulnerable recruits in the 1990s; victim organisations reinforcing this view in the media; and Catholic press publications condemning NRMs for posing a threat to individuals, wider society, the Church, and a rational scientific outlook on life, without recognising that people may join NRMs through free conscious decisions. For Pasek (2006: 184), the forms of NRM manipulation above occur throughout all areas of social life, e.g. in “politics or advertising”.

Pasek (2006: 187-191) discusses NRMs in Poland in the 1990s/early 2000s being sometimes “denied permission to build their own facilities”, or not being able to rent land or property from local government authorities to hold their religious activities. Zielińska (2006: 218-219) believes that NRMs may sometimes have problems renting land/property through administrative bodies consulting local Catholic authorities for their advice on the matter. Pasek (2006: 190-191) describes conservative political parties linked to the Catholic Church being suspicious of NRMs, and viewing any attempt at weakening Poland’s concordat with the Catholic Church as an attack on the latter. However, Zielińska (2006: 215, 217) points towards some Catholic media/publications having milder stances towards NRMs, e.g. the official Vatican report *Sects and New Religious Movements: A Pastoral Challenge* (Arinze

1991) which views them as a source of reflection on Catholic proselytising process rather than a threat. Still, Polish research/study findings suggest that while some Poles who support religious freedom may view NRMs indifferently, others, including academics, view them as small “self-contained” groups that control recruits through “manipulative techniques” (Zielińska 2006: 217-218). The latter outlook becomes stronger the more an NRM is detached from mainstream Christianity, as Polish society shies away from accepting greater religious pluralism (Ibid 219-220).

A person’s “religious sensitivity” may push him/her to search for more satisfying beliefs/values (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 197). Religious recruitment may occur through NRM members passing on religious content to people which may prompt them to review their own faith and change or extend their religious convictions (Ibid 196). People have different levels of religious interest, and while Catholic priests are often too busy to engage with people who seek to associate their identity with their religion, NRM representatives such as LDS missionaries have more time and inclination to discuss and develop a person’s religious interiority (Obirek in Harrison 2009). Catholic lay people often do not address God directly nor discuss religious ideas together, as they are restricted to formal religious experience in which priestly mediators block them from inner spiritual exploration (Ibid). Borowik (2017: 190-191) explains that “religious socialisation” begins at an early age in Polish families where “prayer, kneeling, participation in church services” etc. become automated as routines and instincts governed by “social control and self-control”. This results in religion being viewed as “something self-evident”, not to be asked/questioned about, so “being religious in Poland, and being a Catholic” are routines like “brushing one’s teeth” (Ibid 191). However, rank-and-file Catholics with an average/ordinary faith are more likely to join the LDS or other religions than doctrinally aware ones (Obirek in Harrison 2009). While many Catholics may not read the Bible, the LDS may encourage people to read the Bible and BOM which may attract people who seek to construct their identity on scripture (Ibid).

NRM converts may experience tension between a sense of betraying family/friends and a feeling of joining something more rewarding/uplifting (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 197). Catholic family/friends may try to bring NRM converts back to Catholicism through accusing them of betraying Polish culture, although they may become resigned to a convert’s new choice of religion in time (Ibid 200). Lack of family support may push converts to become dependent on their new religious community, and to avoid conflict, they may practise old and new religions together, playing different roles for family/friends and new religious group (Ibid). However, when a convert starts developing religious commitment and satisfying

relationships with NRM members, his/her identity may start changing through him/her separating his/her life story into Catholic and post-Catholic episodes (Ibid 198-199). While developing a new identity, NRM converts may criticise their previous religion, viewing their pre-conversion life as an unsatisfying time before finding fulfilment with a new religion (Ibid 199). In contrast, some NRM converts may not judge their pre-conversion lives harshly, viewing their conversion as an extension of previous “religious experience”, as they find a more fulfilling way of satisfying religious and social needs (Ibid 196). If conversion is smooth “like falling in love”, a convert’s previous Catholic biography may be viewed as a useful learning curve, helping him/her to find greater truth with another religion (Obirek in Harrison 2009). Nevertheless, converts may worry about “squandering” their past lives, fearing that their new religious interest may not last (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 199). Still, some converts cope with a painful sense of breaking away from the past through seeing an exciting life emerging from their new religious identity (Ibid).

Many ideas in sections 1.2.5-1.2.6 seem to assume that most people in modern-day Western societies value secularisation. In contrast, Taylor (2007) discusses how secularisation can make people feel uneasy about the modern world. He describes “modern Western” states being “free” from pre-modern political organisation which centred on “some faith in, adherence to God”; Churches now being mainly “separate from political structures”, with religious practice being “largely a private matter”; and people often engaging “in politics without ever encountering God” (Ibid 1). A big feature of secularisation involves public space, as, where once religion “was interwoven with everything else”, social life has now been “emptied of God” in many Western societies (Ibid 2). As a result, Western religious belief and practice is declining with many “people turning away from God, and no longer” attending churches, although some may contrast modern, secular times unfavourably with “earlier ages of faith and piety” (Ibid). The USA presents a unique case, because, despite being one of the first “societies to separate Church and State”, it is the “Western society with the highest statistics for religious belief and practice” (Ibid). However, in most Western countries, secularisation has moved “society” away from “unchallenged”, “unproblematic”, and acceptable “belief in God” to a position where having religious faith is not an easy option “to embrace” (Ibid 3).

Since the mid-19th century, having Christian beliefs has become an “embattled option” in the West, as secularisation has pushed people to a situation where having faith, even for staunch believers, is reduced to being just one “possibility among others” (Taylor 2007: 3) . Through many alternative worldviews being promoted in the West, it may be difficult for

people “to sustain” religious faith, with them feeling peer/societal pressure “to give it up” while mourning “its loss” (Ibid). In Western societies, non-religious outlooks have become “default” options, as people often view them as being more credible than religious beliefs (Ibid 12). A “presumption of unbelief” has “achieved hegemony” in “crucial” environments and ideological state apparatus (academic and social institutions, the media etc.), where it directs many people to become non-believers, even when they are searching for “fullness” of being (Ibid 13-14). However, some people in Western societies may be unsatisfied with the unbelief blueprints of secularisation, seeking fullness of being through exploring religious options.

1.3 Thesis structure

In chapter 2, the literature review introduces theories/ideas from Western sociologists of religion about religious recruitment/conversion and (semi-) official LDS writers and independent scholars about LDS recruitment/conversion. All these theories/ideas shed light on my four main research issues: how the wider Polish social world; a person’s pre-LDS background; LDS religious training; and LDS interaction may help or hinder Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. In chapter 3, I discuss the qualitative research methods/techniques that I used to investigate and interpret how Polish converts move towards LDS baptism and become different types of LDS converts, and how LTIs refrain from becoming LDS. Regarding the Warsaw LDS field where I did my research, in chapter 4, I mainly describe events that take place and different participants who co-exist inside the two Warsaw branches.

During chapters 5-8, I report on themes/topics relating to my four main research issues which emerged from my data; relate these findings back to theories/ideas from chapters 1-2; and discuss how my findings illuminated my understanding of the main issues. I start weaving things together in chapter 9 through comparing/contrasting the opinions of the different Polish LDS convert and LTI groups on the most significant findings from my research. Here, my data interpretation moves away from describing many themes/topics to more strictly defining central principles at play during Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. In chapter 10, I increasingly refer to my own insights gained from working inside the Warsaw LDS field and living in Warsaw, which helps me to build up a final overview/interpretation of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion.

2. Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature that enhanced my understanding of LDS recruitment/conversion and the LDS convert types and LTIs who inhabit the Warsaw LDS field. First, I explore general theories/ideas about religious recruitment/conversion given by Western sociologists of religion. Then, I discuss official LDS scripture and devotional literature used inside the Warsaw branches, and present (semi-) official LDS and academic/independent accounts about LDS recruitment/conversion. I draw on theories/ideas from all this literature to learn about significant issues concerning LDS recruitment/conversion, and to identify where gaps in knowledge exist. All this allows me to construct the main research issues that shape the design of this study.

2.1 Religious conversion

NRMs are viewed suspiciously in Western European secular states, plus Central/Eastern European nations where people may attend mainstream Christian churches regularly. People often distinguish NRMs from mainstream Christian denominations through associating them with “cultural innovation or importation” (Bromley 2016: 20). For some people, NRMs may appear “modern and liberating from stifling cultural traditions”, as an increasing flow of ideas/communication between countries may bring “religious people and potential converts together” in many different ways (Yang and Abel 2014: 148-149). The presence of NRMs in places beyond their original terrain may prompt tension with host societies, but a lack of direct “oppositional stance” from NRMs may lead to them just being viewed as “strange or curious”, because they are “difficult to conceptualize in conventional categorisations of religiosity” (Bromley 2016: 21). Through NRMs being unfamiliar entities in many societies, many people may sneer at them, with few people being drawn to them. Moreover, families may “oppose the religious conversion of family members”, as the “new religion” may “threaten existing family practices” and “solidarity” (Yang and Abel 2014: 151).

Through exploring Western sociological ideas/theories about religious recruitment/conversion, I started viewing it as a complex process which may involve:

- Individuals freely/rationally choosing to adopt the beliefs, behaviour and organisational requirements of a new religion
- A religious organisation pushing recruits towards joining it and converts towards developing inside it

- The wider social world discouraging or tolerating recruitment/conversion
- A person's life experience encouraging or hindering recruitment/conversion.

Hence, I started viewing religious recruitment/conversion as a multi-layered process influenced by many issues. Between the 1960s and 1980s, “micro-level analysis” dominated the sociological study of religious conversion with many research questions focusing on the “kinds of individuals who convert” and how they “are led to convert” (Yang and Abel 2014: 140). In the 1990s and early 21st century, “meso- and macro-level factors” came more into play, with the former emphasising the role of religious institutions and congregations and the latter exploring “contextual factors” that may influence religious recruitment/conversion (Ibid 140-141). Thus, “micro-, meso-, and macro-level analyses” help to build up a “more comprehensive” picture of what religious recruitment/conversion entails, as “no single approach suffices” on its own (Ibid 141-142, 150).

The academic study of religious recruitment/conversion seems to start in earnest with James (1902/1985) who describes converts feeling transformed through gaining uplifting outlooks on life and sometimes healing divided selves. However, before the 1980s, the secularisation thesis “dominated the sociology of religion”, with conversion often being viewed as “deviant behaviour” against an “expectation of declining interest in religion under conditions of modernization” (Yang and Abel 2014: 140). Some sociologists of religion (e.g. Glock 1964) viewed converts as weak-minded individuals who mainly became religious to counter deprivation. For Bainbridge (1992), some recruits approach religions to compensate for having unfulfilled aspirations concerning marriage/children, financial security, strong friendships etc. The idea is that unfulfilled people may seek self-esteem through joining a religion where a sense of failure may be reinterpreted as self-discipline or self-sacrifice. However, Lofland and Stark's (1965) process model of religious conversion represents a watershed moment highlighting that conversion involves “psychological change” and a “restructuring of the convert's social relationships” (Yang and Abel 2014: 142). This model presents several main aspects of religious conversion: personal crisis; moving towards religion to counter problems; religious seeking; “being at a turning point in life”; interacting with representatives of a new religion; weakening existing social relationships; and becoming attached to members of a new religion (Ibid). It “dominated theory construction and empirical testing” inside the sociology of religion “for almost three decades”, uniting deprivation and social influence theories to create a more holistic picture of religious recruitment/conversion (Ibid).

Deprivation theory assumes that people turn towards religion through suffering “bad health or poverty” or feeling a lack of something in life (Yang and Abel 2014: 142). However, no successful religious community can only recruit deprived people, as they will become an overbearing economic/emotional burden (Bainbridge 1992). Converts are not always people who seek solutions for psychological problems, crisis situations, or lack of social acceptance, as many “adequate people with plentiful resources” join NRMs (Chryssides 2016: 26). Some people engage in religious searches to create meaning in their lives. Modern-day religious-seekers may reject traditional, institutionalised religiosity, pursuing direct religious experience, “spiritual wholeness” sometimes associated with health, and “an ethic of authenticity” (Taylor 2007: 506-508). For Clarke (2006: viii), NRMs cater for “growing numbers” of people who seek “spirituality over religion”, with this “self-empowering” spirituality threatening “long established religions” whose identities are shaped by clearly defined teachings/rituals. Religious-seekers may encounter NRM religiosity before meeting any NRM representatives, as since the late 1990s, the internet “has made many more spiritual options” visible to people through allowing NRMs to portray themselves positively without any media or anti-cult movement criticism and to widely advertise meeting times/venues for “enquirers” (Chryssides 2016: 31).

Non-negative features of recruit background may influence religious recruitment/conversion. Despite NRMs being “more likely to attract women than men”, some notable exceptions include the LDS (Chryssides 2016: 26). This suggests that equal numbers of males and females or more males may be drawn towards the LDS. Drawing on Davidman and Greil’s (1993) study of returnees to orthodox Judaism and the study of conversion narratives of undergraduates at a Christian college by Knight et al. (2005), Yang and Abel (2014: 151) suggest that males may be more likely to join a religion as religious-seekers or for religious reasons, while women may be more influenced by family/social relationships. Kent (2014: 319) calls for “gender differences” to be studied in the “phenomenology of conversion” to explore whether “men and women experience conversion differently”. She discusses pioneering research, mainly on secular Jewish converts and returnees to orthodox Judaism (e.g. Kaufman 1991), which investigates the benefits of women practising “conservative religion” (Ibid 312-315). The latter may include a sense of transcending the spiritual emptiness and moral ambiguity of modern secular society; finding men who embrace the traditional male role of being family providers/protectors; finding a profound vision of heterosexuality in traditional gender/sex roles; finding sexual modesty comforting;

experiencing ennobled sex with religious meaning; coming to value differences between the sexes; and no longer being expected to behave like men (Ibid).

Chryssides (2016: 26-27) points towards many people from mainstream religious backgrounds being drawn towards NRMS in the USA, with many Catholics joining the Unification Church ('Moonies') and many people from Protestant backgrounds the Hare Krishna movement. Conversion may more easily occur when there is greater doctrinal "similarity" between the previous religion and new one (Kong and Nair 2014: 72-73). When a person converts from a religion to a "quite different" one, where the beliefs/practices may be "at odds with each other", this may result in social tension/conflict (Ibid 76).

Some people may become religious-seekers through sensing that they suffer religious/spiritual deprivation. For Chryssides (2016: 32), Anglicans are more likely to join NRMs than evangelical Christians "with firm faith", as their mainstream Christian brand may "lack firm theological convictions" and make "concessions to secular values". Paloutzian (2014: 221) discusses how a person's "meaning system" can encourage or discourage conversion. The "social psychological" components at play include "attitudes and beliefs, values; focused goal orientations", general purpose; "self-definition"; and a centre of "ultimate concern". A person's "religious beliefs" may be challenged through encountering another religion and being "encouraged to convert" (Ibid). If his/her initial beliefs are "resistant enough", the "ties" between the meaning system components will "sustain belief and repel the pressure to change", but if otherwise, the "pressure" exerted on them may overhaul other components of the meaning system (Ibid). When a meaning system is "modified in one or more" components, this leads to "transformation", which, if big enough, will result in "religious conversion" (Ibid). If the "whole" meaning system "is replaced by a completely different one", this may be viewed as "dramatic spiritual transformation"/"radical convert" construction (Ibid). Such a process points towards the possibility of a "highly religious" person being drawn towards another religion, even when offered by "cultural outsiders" (Yang and Abel 2014: 149). Drawing on Barker (1989), Chryssides (2016: 32-33) highlights that NRMs may provide religious seekers with opportunities to discuss their religious experience and the meaning of human life/purpose which they may feel deprived of with "unapproachable" mainstream clergymen. NRMs may encourage religious "enquiry" and offer "definite answers" to religious questions, while everyday people or those involved with mainstream religious organisations may not "discuss their spiritual lives" through viewing it as unacceptable to talk about such issues in routine conversation (Ibid 33). Thus, NRMs offer

religious seekers and people with strong spiritual experiences an environment where they can be actively religious (Ibid).

Many sociologists of religion believe that most recruits start socialising with NRM members before encountering and assessing NRM teachings. Despite some people experiencing “conversion in isolation”, religious change often takes place in congregations, as recruits attend “worship practices” and engage in fellowshiping (Yang and Abel 2014: 143). Conversion involves changing affiliation “from one group to another” and “one set” of beliefs/practices to another, and participating in the “interactional routines” of the new group (Ibid 144). People may attain “shared focus”, empathy, and special emotions while engaging in religious/social activities together; communal singing may create “social solidarity”; and meaningful religious practice/fellowshipping may maintain an “ideological and social” environment where people may convert (Ibid). Interaction between people and representatives of a religion may strongly influence conversion, because it gives the representatives “opportunities for persuasion” (Kong and Nair 2014: 72). During such interaction, religious representatives may be geographically mobile as developments in transport and communication “have reduced distances and facilitated the flow of religious ideas” between people (Ibid). People who seek to convert others are more likely to be successful if they are respectful/sensitive towards “local cultural traditions”, and if “freedom of religious expression” is respected in “plural societies” where smaller religious groups can survive and grow (Ibid 73-74). When a society has “little religious diversity” and “lower tolerance of change”, a small religious group’s proselytising activity may cause tension/conflict with wider society through driving “wedges into existing social relations” (Ibid 2014: 75). However, recruits may convert if/when they develop stronger bonds with NRM members than their ties with wider society (Lofland and Stark 1965 in Gooren 2007: 338). Recruits may become or may already be friends with members of a religion who lead them to their first formal contact with it (Bainbridge 1992).

People who are detached from their previous social worlds (divorcees, widowed people, geographically mobile people, young people changing jobs etc.) may be susceptible to NRM recruitment (Bainbridge 1992). Religious congregations may resemble surrogate families, offering comfort to “people without other group attachments” (Yang and Abel 2014: 150). NRMs may attract younger people, especially youths, because they have fewer commitments and more free time (Chryssides 2016: 29). The “personal qualities” of group members may draw recruits towards membership, as religious leaders may prompt their “congregants to create social ties” and a “sense of belonging for recruits” (Yang and Abel 2014: 145). During

conversion in a “multi-ethnic context”, a sense of ethnic identity may be transcended, as a “new and shared religious identity emerges among congregants” (Ibid). However, the “role of identity” in conversion is “difficult to interpret”, as it may be a “key factor” that motivates people to join a religion or a result of “conversion and commitment” (Ibid).

Many NRMs require “considerable commitment of time and energy” from their members, with “new converts” embracing this through having consciously decided to join a group, although some groups may have “criteria for membership that make joining difficult” (Chryssides 2016: 28, 30). Recruits may become submissive through being monitored, nurtured, and sanctioned when immersed in NRM activities and roles by established members (Long and Hadden 1983 in Gooren 2007: 340-341). Anti-cult psychologists believe that NRMs can control the minds of recruits through using techniques that obliterate their rational agency. Singer (1979 <http://www.carolgiambalvo.com/coming-out-of-the-cults.html> accessed 7-07-18) points towards NRMs:

- Providing “ready-made friendships” and “decisions” about a person’s career, courtship/marriage etc.
- Prescribing clear, black-and-white meaning about life
- Demanding complete “allegiance” to their commands/ideas
- Controlling a person’s time and way of thinking
- Deciding which social contacts members should (not) maintain
- Criticising/condemning the wider social world
- Restricting a person’s sex life.

The International Cultic Studies Association’s (ICSA) website (http://www.icsahome.com/infoserv_articles/singer_margaret_6conditions.htm accessed 31-07-09) summarises the clinical psychologist Margaret Singer’s (1921-2003) view on the techniques NRMs may use to control recruits as such:

- Implementing step-by-step, behavioural change without the recruits knowing the full NRM agenda
- Keeping recruits busy, immersing them in a new belief system inside a NRM environment
- Detaching recruits from their social networks and criticising their previous worldviews to make them desire to become model NRM members

- Rewarding recruits who start accepting NRM beliefs/practices, and punishing those who doubt and criticise them with disapproval/rejection
- Prompting recruits to believe that NRM teachings are above any opposing thoughts they have, and encouraging them to modify their behaviour/thinking to become accepted by NRM members.

For Tobias and Lalich (1994: 101-103), NRMs control recruits through pressuring them into adopting their ideas/practices; making them feel guilty about their failures/imperfections and inferior towards NRM leaders/members; and getting them to value emotional responses over logical reasoning.

Despite the points above, the “brainwashing model” of conversion has been rebuked, as, in spite of their “aggressive strategies” and “ardent promises”, NRMs “attract and retain comparatively few adherents” (Cowan 2014: 695). Recruits and converts may disaffiliate if they struggle to commit to a NRM worldview or receive opposition from the wider social world (Bromley and Shupe 1979 in Gooren 2007: 342). If the NRM control factor becomes too excessive, recruits may sense themselves losing their free agency and retreat from NRM involvement. It is also difficult to determine “when brainwashing is not brainwashing” because some non-NRM groups (e.g. “military units” and Catholic monasteries/convents) require “high-control” environments where individuals must submit to the “demands of the group” so the latter can “function effectively” (Cowan 2014: 695). It may be easier/less stressful to leave an NRM than an army unit or monastery/convent (Ibid 695-696). Moreover, through being fixed to a “brainwashing metaphor”, the anti-cult movement is “forced to ignore voluminous research” which highlights “complex social and personal pathways to religious conversion” (Ibid 696).

Some modern-day sociologists of religion study the history, organisation, and ideology of Western anti-cult groups as social movements in their own right. The anti-cult movement (ACM) is criticised for encouraging Western government and state agencies/institutions to restrict the religious freedom of NRMs through accusing them of brainwashing converts. The ACM may be criticised for not distinguishing between potentially dangerous and almost mainstream-type NRMs; only assessing the internal dynamics of NRMs; ignoring their interaction with wider society; and overlooking the possibility that state opposition and harassment may antagonise NRMs (Introvigne 2002: 218-219). Richardson (2006, 2012, 2014) discusses how NRMs may suffer discrimination in some European states. Most Western European nations have “well-established traditions of religious freedom”, with post-

communist countries in Central/Eastern Europe following suit (Richardson 2006: 68). As possibly the “most influential judicial institution in the contemporary world”, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, France tries to ensure religious freedom in Europe (Richardson 2014: 743). The ECHR attempts to enforce “provisions” of “Article 9” from the “European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms” to guarantee “freedom to change” religious beliefs and free expression of religious “worship, teaching, practice and observance”, with all this only being restricted to protect “public order, health or morals” and the “rights and freedoms of others” (Ibid). However, “considerable ambiguity exists in reconciling” such freedoms and restrictions, and “considerable discretion in interpreting and applying Article 9 to specific cases” (Ibid). Besides this, the legal promotion of religious freedom does not always guarantee equal treatment of all religions because NRMs may face conflict in Western democracies through people petitioning their governments to investigate them, and Western nations having established Churches which, having played significant roles in the historical/cultural development of countries, may have privileged positions in them (Richardson 2006: 68, 2012: 46). Richardson (2012: 47) believes that in Poland, the constitutional court rules in a way that affirms the “dominance of Catholic values, offering little solace to minority faiths”, and that state agencies in former Soviet-controlled, Central/Eastern European countries are encouraged by established Churches to exert control over NRMs, especially those from Western nations. All the latter points here seem to mirror the ideas of Pasek (2006) and Zielińska (2006) from 1.2.6.

To assess extreme state harassment of NRMs, Wright and Palmer (2016: 2, 6-8) created a “comprehensive list” of government raids on NRMs that took place in 17 Western countries worldwide over “60-plus years” leading up to their research. They believe that anti-cult activism helped to prompt the raids, as alliances were formed between ex-NRM members and anti-cult figureheads and organisations, and coalitions between these alliances, state organisations, and the media (Ibid 2). The government raids involved sudden/surprise intrusions of armed “law enforcement officials”, sometimes accompanied by child protection workers, emergency medical staff etc., on NRM communities (Ibid 3). In some “Western democracies”, such raids have been routinely used against NRM communities “at least since the late 1980s or early 1990s”, often prompted by “inadequate” threat assessments (Ibid 4-5). Nearly half the raids on Wright and Palmer’s (2016: 10-11) list occurred in France, while very few or none occurred in other Western European countries.

The Western mass movement against NRMs started in the USA during the 1970s in response to many young people joining NRMs there (Wright and Palmer 2016: 11-12). The

early American ACM had Christian and secular counterparts, being made up of social workers, psychologists, disenchanted ex-NRM members, and relatives of NRM converts, an alliance which prompted the growth of an anti-cult industry (Ibid 12). From the 1980s onwards, major American anti-cult organisations started working together and the ACM became more efficient at seeking public support against NRMs through developing contacts with the media and lobbying government officials with its message (Ibid 15-16). During the late 1980s/early 1990s, anti-cult coalition-building initiated by well-organised American activists gained momentum in Western Europe, as big conferences, sometimes attended by ACM figureheads (e.g. Margaret Singer), were held in major European cities (Ibid 16-18). France became the “epicenter” of government raids on NRMs through strong cooperation between French anti-cult groups and high levels of the French state (Ibid 18). A perceived need to monitor/control NRMs in France developed in response to the mass murders/suicides of the Solar Temple group in France, Switzerland, and Quebec in the mid-1990s (Introvigne 2002: 214-215; Wright and Palmer 2016: 19-20). Thus, public/state concerns about NRMs may be triggered when atrocities are committed by a NRM.

Brainwashing theory may also be refuted because recruits often freely guide themselves towards joining NRMs. Recruits and converts come to “more or less identify” with religious groups, as the latter encourage them to empathise with their teachings/practices (Yang and Abel 2014: 146). Upon entering a religious community, recruits/converts encounter a group’s socio-cultural “orientation” and may enact “congregant”/“religious person” roles, with conversion requiring “socialization to a new religious identity” and possibly lifelong religious adaptation (Ibid). Moreover, conversion offers the opportunity to separate oneself from “aspects of a previous group affiliation or identity” (Ibid). Recruits/converts may assess their and other people’s actions inside NRM communities; start using new rhetoric as they sense themselves coming to belong to a NRM; and create their own levels of commitment (Straus 1979 in Gooren 2007: 339; Richardson 1985 in Gooren 2007: 346). They may freely develop their identities, transforming “consciousness” through exchanging “one universe” of religious language use for “another”, and reshape their life stories around a new “master attribution scheme” designed to persuade themselves and others that “genuine transformation has taken place” (Stromberg 2014: 122-124, 127). However, when converts create “narratives” about identity change, what they “say about themselves” cannot be “exact” representations of reality as people have selective memories (Yang and Abel 2014: 146). Converts continue to construct their conversion stories long after joining NRMs (Stromberg 1993/2008). They may reinterpret former worldviews as misunderstandings, as an NRM outlook starts to become the

dominant lens for assessing their feelings and actions/events (Snow and Machalek 1983 in Gooren 2007: 343). Exaggerating a sense of pre-conversion indiscretion may help converts to value their new beliefs over past outlooks on life (Heirich 1977 in Gooren 2007: 340). For Stromberg (2014: 130), religious “transformation” is created more through acts of retelling recruitment/conversion events than the events themselves, as language is used to persuade the narrator and listeners of the authenticity of the transformation. During conversion narratives, converts often focus on overcoming past “sinfulness” with their “language” having the capacity to reshape themselves (Ibid 131). Steigenga (2014: 413) explains that a “new discourse” pitches the convert’s past against his/her present and future, “good against evil”, and “old against new”, with a “new religious identity” being adopted, reshaped and re-embraced in the “retelling” of the conversion story. This discourse often focuses on bad habits and experiences from “the past”, e.g. “fighting addiction” or overcoming medical/psychological issues, while proselytising groups encourage converts “to interpret these factors” in line with group “norms and discursive style” (Ibid). Thus, researchers “must pay attention to” the stage in a person’s “conversion career” and recognise that conversion narratives are “socially constructed and retrospectively reinterpreted over time” (Ibid).

As rational agents, recruits may assess the benefits that NRMs offer (Robbins and Anthony 1982; Richardson 1993). Some people may be “unsatisfied by the forms of spirituality” offered by their “local church”, and may move towards a “chosen spiritual movement” which offers “some alternative” benefits (Chryssides 2016: 31-32). The benefits pursued may include opportunities to stop drug/alcohol abuse and gain moral purpose, psychological stability, and social responsibility (Robbins and Anthony 1982; Stromberg 2014: 130). Some “rewards”, such as “health, success, and well-being”, may not be available to a person, so he/she may turn towards religious organisations to pursue them (Chryssides 2016: 32). Religious institutions may “attract converts” through offering “social support”, which may include providing “educational services, health care, and charitable relief” (Kong and Nair 2014: 74). Conversion may be pursued if it offers “social and economic advantages” when a person’s original religious community “is less well off” (Ibid 73). Hence, conversion may offer people “increased economic opportunities” and upward social mobility (Ibid 75). Religious marketplace theorists (e.g. Iannaccone 1995; Stark and Finke 2000) point towards practical-minded recruits viewing religions like commodities, as they contrast the benefits of acquiring beliefs (e.g. being offered eternal life) and gaining new friends against the sacrifice of time, money and effort involved. Moreover, religious marketplace theory refutes a secularisation theory assumption (e.g. as expressed by Norris and Inglehart 2007) that

Western religious practice has been declining through an increasing separation of Church and state. Secularisation may prompt “religious innovation” as, through operating on equal terms, NRMs may offer “more dynamic otherworldliness” than mainstream faiths (Johnson 2014: 49). Religious marketplace theory explains “religious vitality”, especially in the USA, in terms of “religious pluralism and competition” increasing the quality of religious products offered to people, as “growing religious groups” may have “efficient” organisation and clergy, attractive services/theology, and “effective recruitment strategies” (Yang and Abel 2014: 140, 146). High demands on people’s time/commitment required by “theologically conservative and morally strict” Churches may deter lukewarm/non-committed “free-riders” and draw in people who value a “sense of certainty of salvation” and the “social benefits of a highly committed congregation” (Ibid: 141). However, through Western religious practice becoming a private process of choosing a brand from many options, religious shoppers/tourists may move between different denominations in search of greater benefits (Ibid 146).

Recruitment/conversion may be influenced by recruits/converts being interested in theology; having mystical-type experiences; experimenting with different religions; enjoying group interaction; and being pushed by groups to join them (Lofland and Skonovd 1981). Active-passive recruits may be drawn towards religions during vulnerable times of life, or through family/friend networks; building up relationships with group members; starting to accept some group teachings/practices; changing how they view the world; using different rhetoric; and feeling empowered as a religious role is adopted (Rambo 1998). Moreover, religious conversion often involves significant “events” and a gradual, “unfolding” process over time (Baer 2014: 25). Deciding “to belong to an NRM” rarely involves a sudden “break with one’s spiritual past” or quick “turnaround” in one’s “personal life”, but may involve “self-discovery” and people assessing how the teachings, practices, and organisation of a religion fit into their lives and how benefits offered by a group may outweigh those offered by their “previous faith” or lack of faith (Chryssides 2016: 34). For Paloutzian (2014: 222-223), several factors push conversion forward. First, a person may seek “pleasure”, “purpose”, “basic survival needs”, or an easing of “unpleasant mental or emotional states” (anxiety, guilt, loneliness etc.), doubting that a current outlook on life can take care of such needs (Ibid 222). Second, finding new religious meaning requires contact with an individual or group that offers information/materials about a religious organisation, and the more a person encounters the organisation, the more chance his/her beliefs and behaviour will start changing (Ibid). While changing religious affiliation, a person may have to overcome resistance from family or wider society, with the elation of joining a new religion possibly offering the strength for

this to happen (Ibid 222-223). Finally, religious change must be made authentic through converts attending religious services and practising their new faith (Ibid 223). Recruits and converts may have their worldviews changed as early encounters with NRM representatives turn into regular meetings; they assess NRM outlooks against their own worldviews; and develop enough commitment for their identity change to be recognised by NRM and non-NRM people they know (Gooren 2007: 350-351). Moreover, most conversion theories/models may be criticised for reducing “religion to social-economic or psychological factors” (Ibid 348). Concerning the religious side of things, the LDS may share mainstream Christian beliefs and downplay their unique teachings during early recruitment to make recruits feel comfortable, as offering too much unique religiosity may scare them off (Bainbridge 1992).

Patterns of “affiliation and commitment” may provide “proxy measures of conversion”, as “inner states of mind cannot be directly studied using empirical methods”, which makes it difficult to “distinguish between conversion and commitment” (Yang and Abel 2014: 143). However, recruitment/conversion theories often do not distinguish between different levels of commitment/involvement (Gooren 2007: 349-350). Through conversion being a “personal journey”, it is “impossible” for everybody’s religious faith and practice to be of the “same intensity” (Kong and Nair 2014: 75). Gooren’s (2007: 350) model below pinpoints some levels of religious commitment/participation that may be experienced during a “conversion career”:

- Pre-affiliation: recruits assess how much they value their pre-NRM worldview and the social world they live in while deciding to join a new religious group or not
- Affiliation: recruits join a religious group without this dominating their life/identity
- Conversion: a “change” of “worldview” and “identity” is recognised by the converts themselves and other people
- Confession: converts develop “core member identity”/become active inside a group (e.g. trying to proselytise others)
- Disaffiliation: members start rejecting their religious group.

During conversion careers, converts may move backwards and forwards between the levels of religious commitment/involvement above (Ibid 350-351). For Steigenga (2014: 412), a “conversion as a continuum” model should focus on not only different levels/phases of religious participation, but also “dual membership, passage, minimal conversion, re-conversion” and “apostasy”. When converts become more actively involved with a religion,

an older form of life starts to disappear, as a new “set of ideals” prompts them “to transform themselves and their environment” (Baer 2014: 32). Such converts may “reject or denounce” their “former” beliefs and practices through sensing that they have found the “right” religious “path” (Ibid 32-33). Through their speech and action, committed converts may prompt “less observant members” to pay greater attention to the teachings and practices of their religion (Ibid 33).

Researchers can examine conversion careers through analysing how the “self” is “constructed or discovered” in conversion narratives, with the latter being a “hybrid art” of creating “fiction” and reporting “facts” (Hindmarsh 2014: 359). A conversion narrative may provide a “satisfying form of explanation” to help a person justify his/her conversion, as it contains a wholesome story with a beginning-middle-end structure and “careful *emplotting*” of events by a “storyteller” (Ibid 345). Conversion narratives may be read or listened to through classical “codes”, where characters are viewed as heroes, villains, helpers etc., and the plot may include a “test”, “journey”, “discovery”, “battle” etc. (Ibid 347). During the three-part “structure”, the convert may reflect on his/her progress from an “original situation through a moral transformation to a final situation”, inviting readers/listeners to recognise his/her positive development throughout the story (Ibid 360). However, conversion narratives may promote “social values” embedded in “institutions and power structures” rather than an “individual point of view”, as “their language” may mirror/reflect the “dominant ideologies” of a religious community or wider society (Ibid 350). Conversion narrative analysis may involve assessing the “communication triangle” between narrator, story, and reader/listener, with the “narrative” being viewed as an “act of persuasion” where the narrator tries to push readers/listeners towards accepting “the good” message “implied in the story” and “the way it is told” (Ibid 351). Storytellers select events to explain and ask readers/listeners to empathise/sympathise with “the protagonist” while presenting an “apologia” for the “beliefs embraced by the convert” against those “left behind” (Ibid 351-352). Through adopting the “language” of a religious community, a conversion narrative may strengthen the narrator’s position/identity in the community (Ibid 357). Convert narrators are usually aware that their “sense of agency is only ever partial” with their change being also prompted by “other people” and possibly divine “agency” (Ibid 358). Thus, conversion narratives often highlight “co-agency” between the narrator, the influence of others, and spiritual/divine forces (Ibid).

Finally, Annus and Csepregi (2018: location 3864) summarise that religious conversion is a complex process that may concern “psychology, anthropology, sociology, theology” etc.; “possible stages”; a “range of motifs”; “various factors” that lie “behind it” relating to “age,

social position, mental and psychological states”; and “personality change”. Conversion may start off as an experimental cultural journey, but may develop into conscious change and clear direction which involves negotiating a place in the world and searching for higher meaning (Ibid). It may also be viewed as a search for human belonging through which the “self” finds a “new identity” observed and recognised by “others” (Ibid 3875). Thus, the self-identity construction of religious conversion may be a joint product of internally defining oneself and being defined by others, with all this being nurtured by a person’s “need for ontological security” while journeying towards the future with a sense of the past (Ibid 3887).

2.2 LDS literature inside the Warsaw LDS world

Inside the Warsaw branches, official LDS scripture and devotional literature may help to push Polish recruits towards baptism and becoming staunch or mild converts over time. The official LDS copy of the King James Bible, which contains an additional section explaining the numerous alterations that Smith made to it, is not available in Polish. Hence, if Polish recruits/converts read the Bible, they may often use non-LDS, Polish versions, with some not being aware of Smith’s alterations to the King James Version.

Most Polish recruits will be encouraged to start reading the Polish version of the BOM (Księga Mormona 1981). This may introduce them to a few unique LDS beliefs, such as the ancient loss of a pure Christian religion and people being born without sin. However, the BOM is “largely silent” on many “distinctive” LDS teachings including “celestial marriage, eternal progression, divine corporeality, vicarious work for the dead” etc. (Holland 2015: 153). Despite this, the BOM’s main appeal may lie in its recurring pleas for people to repent for their sins; develop a simple faith in Christ; and get baptised by immersion in water. This direct offer of a new spiritual life, where LDS baptism is viewed as cleansing repentant sinners of previous wrongdoings, may push recruits towards a sense of gaining moral/spiritual renewal.

The D&C and POGP are joined together as one book in Polish: *Nauki i Przymierza. Perła Wielkiej Wartości* (1981/1989). The 138 revelations in the D&C mainly deal with early LDS Church growth, organisation, and movement, and the establishment of LDS temples and their rites. Recruits may encounter revelation 89 from the D&C if/when they are directed to practise the WOW to cleanse their bodies for LDS baptism. The POGP includes Joseph Smith’s Book of Moses and Book of Abraham which contain details about the LDS belief in pre-mortal souls existing before conception on Earth, and his account of the First Vision and how he produced the BOM. Many Polish recruits may not encounter much of the D&C and

POGP before LDS baptism, as their unique religious content may cause confusion during recruitment.

Before the worldwide changes to the LDS Sunday service schedule in 2019, when recruits attended Sunday School classes for investigators/recent converts, they encountered *Gospel Principles* (1978/2009)/*Zasady ewangelii* (2009). This book introduces unique LDS teachings about Jesus being chosen to be the saviour during pre-mortality; the creation of the Earth; Adam/Eve; people being able to pray directly to God the Father; and Joseph Smith restoring Christ's early apostolic Church on Earth. Moreover, it defines LDS recruitment/conversion in terms of recruits repenting and being baptised/confirmed, and converts taking the Sunday Sacrament to help retain their baptismal covenant/promise to obey God's commandments. It also discusses how converts may start perfecting themselves through practising the WOW and law of chastity, paying tithing and monthly fast offerings, and doing missionary work. Finally, it describes how LDS members may do family history research and temple rites to lead them towards becoming gods in the afterlife. If recruits attend Sunday Sacrament meetings, they will encounter the Polish LDS hymn book which was *Hymny, oraz Pieśni dla dzieci/Hymns and Children's Songs* (1982) when I attended the Warsaw branches. They may become comfortable with LDS religiosity through reading and singing Polish translations of LDS hymns, such as "Come, Come, Ye Saints" ("Chodź, Chodź Mój Bracie") and "How Firm a Foundation" ("Jak Mocna Podstawa").

2.3 LDS recruitment/conversion

I combined official and semi-official LDS accounts together because they express similar views about religious and social factors that prompt LDS recruitment/conversion. I found articles by LDS Church leaders from the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and First Quorum of the Seventy, and regular LDS members in the official LDS magazines, *Ensign* and *Liahona*, on the official LDS Church website (<https://www.lds.org/?lang=eng>). Besides this, an older male missionary from Wolska gave me a copy of the official missionary guidebook, *Preach My Gospel (D&C 50:14): A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004). I also found two semi-official LDS accounts in books written by First Quorum of the Seventy members (Cook 2000; Coleman 2003).

Preach My Gospel (2004) is designed to help YMs teach recruits five lessons concerning:

1. Jesus giving his first apostles priesthood authority to preach his full gospel and perform ordinances; a falling away of Christian truth occurring shortly after their

deaths; and Joseph Smith restoring Christ's full teachings and Church about 1800 years later

2. The POS: God creating human souls during pre-mortality; Adam/Eve losing their immortality but returning to God through choosing to obey His commandments on Earth; Jesus' crucifixion/atonement cleansing people from sin if they repent and work towards returning to God through becoming active LDS; and three levels of post-mortal reward being offered according to LDS commitment/worthiness on Earth
3. Recruits/converts confessing sins directly to God; becoming born again through emulating Christ's sinless behaviour and becoming LDS; strengthening faith through receiving the Holy Ghost as a companion during confirmation; and renewing baptism covenants/promises with God through taking the Sunday Sacrament
4. Recruits/converts obeying the 10 commandments, WOW, and law of chastity, and examining their conscience to take the Sunday Sacrament worthily
5. Recruits/converts doing family history research to prepare for doing temple rites for themselves and deceased family members (to work towards becoming gods themselves).

This book contains a scheme of religious content like *Gospel Principles* (1978/2009), and advises YMs to direct recruits to fast for special blessings, trust in God to answer their questions, and feel the Holy Ghost as a gentle inner voice guiding their deepest thoughts/feelings. It also recommends that if necessary, recruits may be prompted to undertake Moroni's challenge (Moroni 10: 4-5) which involves praying directly to God for a confirmation/testimony of the truth of the BOM and, by implication, LDS faith.

Coleman (2003: xiii, 9) points towards previous religious experience providing a foundation upon which LDS religiosity may be built. Recruits may use doubts about their pre-LDS beliefs as a prompt to investigate LDS teachings (Ibid 13-17). Coleman (2003: 13-14), himself, recalls being drawn to LDS religiosity through struggling to accept Catholic teachings about priestly celibacy, and God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost being the same essence/substance.

From the First Quorum of the Seventy, Burton (1985) stresses that to become LDS, recruits need to become "born again" through leaving sinful lives behind, entering the family of God through repenting, and living in accordance with God's laws, and Rector, Jr. (1975) points towards recruits reaching a point where they must decide to become LDS or not. The latter explains that besides being impressed by missionary/member behaviour, recruits must

experience inner conversion through having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; accepting the BOM as scripture; praying directly to God; repenting (replacing pride with humility); and committing oneself to the LDS faith. Hence, LDS baptism should involve new converts promising to change into something better through humble prayer and developing faith (Ibid). From the Quorum of the Twelve, Ballard (2000) describes recruits being directed towards baptism through agreeing to read the BOM, praying about it, and seeking to find out if Joseph Smith is a latter-day prophet or not. The Holy Ghost may then change a recruit's heart/mind through giving him/her a spiritual confirmation that LDS religiosity is true (Ibid). From the First Quorum of the Seventy, Coleman (2003: 64-67), a convert from Catholicism, had developed a desire to know whether LDS religiosity was true or not, and upon undertaking Moroni's challenge, received an "electrifying experience" and profound sense of "relief and peace" which removed all his doubts about the LDS faith. Another First Quorum of the Seventy member, Cook (2000: 1-2) had, as a pre-teenage LDS, developed the desire to gain a testimony and "received a personal confirmation of the truthfulness" of the BOM/LDS religiosity. The last two accounts suggest that a desire to know whether the BOM and LDS religiosity are true or not may help to prompt a testimony, and that testimonies may be received before or after baptism by recruits/converts and members born into the LDS faith, and may be profound/mystical-type experiences. While pre-baptismal testimonies may involve asking God whether the BOM/LDS religiosity is true or not, post-baptismal ones may involve asking God about many different features of LDS religiosity.

The Quorum of the Twelve member, Bednar (2007) stresses that being cleansed through the ordinances and covenants/promises of baptism/confirmation is only the beginning of LDS conversion, as converts must become purified through following Jesus' example of aligning one's motives and actions to the will of God the Father. This involves making spiritual progress through receiving ordinances and honouring covenants "administered" through the "authority of the Melchizedek priesthood" (Ibid). After the cleansing of baptism, converts can live more perfect lives through becoming temple-goers who work towards attaining godhood status for themselves and others (Burton 1985).

Some (semi-) official LDS accounts discuss how the LDS may befriend recruits before revealing their beliefs later on. LDS networking often precedes religious training, as members may recommend family/friends as potential converts to missionaries, and missionary-member teams may assess what recruits need to do to reach baptism (Coleman 2003: 41-43). Former Oregon Mission President, Eberhard (1974) advises members to approach non-LDS families through discussing shared interests and then inviting them to LDS social events. Moreover,

only after a rapport has been established, should non-LDS families be given BOM testimonies, offered missionary lessons, and prompted to attend religious events (Ibid). Former Associate Editor of *Ensign*, Anderson (1977) assesses the findings of an LDS Church Missionary Department study conducted by Gordon C. Whiting and M. Richard Maxfield on 226 converts baptised in the USA in July 1975, and discusses three stages of LDS recruitment:

1. "Preparation", when many recruits, who may have explored other religions, already pray to God, gain a positive impression of LDS members, and seek personal development/fulfilment
2. "Introduction", when members try to gain a recruit's trust through discussing common interests, direct him/her towards LDS religiosity through giving stories from personal experience, and sometimes participate in recruit-missionary discussions
3. "Conversion", when recruits start reading/studying and praying about the BOM, attending Sunday meetings, and desiring to behave like LDS members.

This view of LDS recruitment suggests that pre-LDS religious searches may occur, followed by LDS contact and recruit-member/missionary interaction, which may prompt recruits to pursue self-actualisation through receiving religious training. Former LDS Church President Hinckley (1999) believes that missionaries and members have a responsibility to find recruits; teach them about LDS religiosity; baptise them; and strengthen their faith through providing fellowshiping and religious training. Hinckley (1999) and Ballard (2000) encourage members to be worthy role models, using their testimonies and faith to help recruits and new converts develop strong beliefs themselves. They also stress that branch organisations should monitor recruit progress at understanding LDS scripture and attending Sunday meetings.

The Quorum of the Twelve member (and future first counselor of the First Presidency), Oaks (2003) stresses that member referrals of recruits to missionaries is a more cost-effective way of proselytising than media campaigns or missionary number increases. However, he points towards some studies in the USA/Canada, done by the LDS Church's Research Information Division, showing that member referrals of recruits to missionaries have dropped dramatically, despite over 50% of baptisms coming from this source. Despite member-recruit/recent convert interaction needing to start before and intensify after baptism to counter early convert drop-out syndrome, the issue of missionaries receiving fewer recruits from member referrals shows that many members may not share their beliefs/testimonies with other people

(Ibid). Hinckley (1999) points towards new converts often struggling to adapt to LDS cultural and language norms through lacking friends to answer their questions and callings to integrate them into an LDS community, which may push them back towards their previous social worlds. For me, Polish recruits/new converts may encounter integration problems, as some Polish core members may be indifferent or hostile towards them through feeling that their elite-type status may be threatened by newcomers who may develop into core members themselves.

I joined academic LDS and academic non-LDS accounts together to avoid inferring that any were biased in favour of or against the LDS. Besides this, it is sometimes impossible to ascertain whether LDS scholars are practising LDS or non-LDS scholars are from non-LDS backgrounds. I found my academic literature on university study sites, and in social science anthologies, books, journals, magazines, periodicals, theses/dissertations etc. The scholars I refer to are Economics, Literature, and Religious Studies lecturers, and historians, journalists, sociologists of religion etc. Most are theoreticians but five refer to their own empirical research which explores LDS recruitment/conversion in different European settings: Farrin (2009) in north-west England; Nabozny (2009) in Poland and the Ukraine; Trigeaud (in Giordan 2009) and Rigal-Cellard (2018) in France; and Annus and Csepregi (2018) in Hungary. All five incorporate some form of qualitative interviewing with small numbers of LDS converts into their studies. For example, Annus and Csepregi (2018: location 3854) did 10 “semi-guided” interviews, with five men and five women, as the “primary source” for a “micro-level analysis” of “the ways” in which LDS conversion “came about”; “changes in daily practices” in the converts’ “lives”; and resulting “changes” in their “self-perception and identity construction”, with “discourse analysis” of the interview texts focusing on the “experience of conversion” as a process. Trigeaud (in Giordan 2009) also used long-term participant observation (PO), while Rigal-Cellard (2018: location 3648-3668) gave her converts (and people born into the LDS faith) a seven-point questionnaire to complete; discussed the issues with some French LDS and investigators who never completed the questionnaire; and gave another questionnaire to a few missionaries to complete. Besides this, I refer to Gooren’s (2008) reflections on his past research on Central American LDS recruitment/conversion, and Busse-Spencer’s (2008) informal PO research on cultural issues concerning Russian LDS converts in Russia.

Concerning the wider social world influencing LDS recruitment, secularisation, with its features of modernisation, urbanisation, rationality, social science etc., may prompt traditional religiosity to decline (Stark 2005: 95-97). Regarding this, van Beek (2005: 27-29) discusses

modern-day Holland having “small, isolated, but stable religious communities”, like “small islands in a secular sea”, as a “welfare-oriented society” has replaced a religious one. Other European countries have “similar situations”, sometimes through Catholic and other mainstream Christian clergy “displacing other-worldly goals in favour of this-worldly objectives” (Ibid 28-29). In contrast, American church and school “networks” provide the “main venues” for “educational and recreational programs”, but in Europe, such “functions” are often “unconnected to the religious sphere” (Ibid 29). Through much “European culture” lying “beyond the realm of religion”, active church membership has to be explained (or even hidden), as church non-affiliation is often taken for granted (Ibid). Moreover, being a member of a “small and unusual group” (e.g. the LDS) requires a “double explanation”, as being “religious” is more acceptable than belonging to a “sect” (Ibid).

For van Beek (2005: 30-31), Dutch LDS members accept a “permissive drug policy”, same-sex relationships/marriages, the “regulation of abortion”, “careful practices” of euthanasia etc., and sit uncomfortably with “LDS Church policy” on such issues. Official LDS opposition to such practices in Europe may result in a “public relations disaster” with surrounding non-LDS societies, as many Europeans may believe that permissive laws restrict “moral vices” while prudish restrictive policies encourage them (Ibid 31). Thus, the LDS Church may represent a “non-European orthodox church” in a “secularized environment”, using traditional moral fundamentalism as a defence mechanism against secularisation (Ibid 32).

Stark (2005: 98-99) believes that increasing secularisation in Europe may create the conditions necessary for NRMs to supersede and replace conventional Churches if they are allowed to compete in open religious marketplaces. The LDS may gain converts in pluralist Western societies, where mainstream religions often struggle to meet people’s spiritual needs, through offering serious moral guidelines and religious commitment (Givens, T.L. 2007*: 208-212, 215-217). For Millet (2007: 171-172), the LDS offer an alternative worldview to the moral relativism of “post-Christian” society. Recruits may view the WOW and laws of chastity and tithing as higher moral standards; start valuing LDS teachings/scripture; receive a testimony; and become integrated inside an LDS community (Ibid 172-173, 182-184). Farrin’s (2009: 59-61) British LDS converts point towards most white British people being indifferent to or disillusioned with established religion, or being (non-church going) believers without belonging, as mainstream Christianity no longer influences their sense of cultural identity. Her converts contrast apathetic/lukewarm British forms of mainstream Christianity with their experience of gaining “more purposeful” spiritual lives with the LDS (Ibid 61-62).

Thus, the LDS may offer healing to people suffering from a lack of certainty about life and damaged selves and relationships in a “rapidly changing postmodern” world (Keifert 2004: 267-268). Nabozny (2011: 78-79), who compares/contrasts the recruitment of Polish and Ukrainian LDS converts, identifies four kinds of “shoppers” who use a religious marketplace: careful buyers who examine every detail of a religious product before buying into it; focused ones who only buy something that corresponds exactly to what they have been looking for; casual ones who come across a religious product and give it a try; and impulsive ones who buy a religious product spontaneously but grow tired of it quickly.

Regarding pre-LDS background, Givens (2007*: 207-220) refutes a deprivation theory assumption that NRMs mainly appeal to impressionable/vulnerable, lower-educated people, as the LDS attract rational-minded recruits through offering higher levels of personal commitment/sacrifice; religious revelation; order/sanity; strong religious leadership/moral guidance; and meaningful friendships. Concerning this, all Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4019) Hungarian LDS converts spoke about having searched for “something spiritual to guide their actions” and “give them direction”, and having met LDS missionaries during “taxing periods of life”. Most had felt a “void” that needed filling and had searched for “answers to existential questions”, with secular activities having been “unfulfilling” (Ibid 4054). One group of the converts viewed their pre-baptism and post-baptism values/behaviour as “the same”, with some having always had significant “friendships” with non-LDS and others having “felt excluded from mainstream society” through never having drunk, smoked, or partied the way “their peers” did (Ibid 4019). In contrast, another group clearly valued their LDS life higher and as a chance to correct mistakes from pre-LDS times (Ibid 4028-4036). Moreover, all the converts valued a sense of otherness “based on religious affiliation” and distance “from other Hungarians”, and identified with the LDS more than with their own “ethnic or national” identity (Ibid 4036). Rigal-Cellard (2018: location 3774) points towards her French LDS respondents creating “their own Mormon culture”, and valuing it above “their national identity”. Unlike American LDS, the French LDS respondents are not “super patriots” with strong national identity (Ibid 3766-3774). Moreover, they refuse to view themselves as “belonging to an *American Church*”, not being drawn towards an “American mirage of wealth and happiness”, and having “no urge to migrate” to the USA (Ibid 3774).

Before LDS conversion, some of Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4063-4071) Hungarian converts had drunk alcohol “occasionally”, none had taken drugs, but most had drunk tea or coffee. Most had had active hobbies and socialised with friends, and all except two had “maintained friendships” with non-LDS “after conversion” (Ibid 4071). Moreover,

most “came from broken families”, with about half having seen “their parents divorce” during childhood, “giving accounts of numerous conflicts and stressful situations” (Ibid 4045). Through “family troubles”, some had carried “fears and anxieties”, with an aspect of ““forgiveness”” from their LDS faith having helped them to feel more at peace (Ibid 4045-4054). Only two were married when baptised LDS, but half were at the time of their interviews, with most spouses being LDS, while the still single converts wanted to start families, but “found it difficult” through a “lack of young people in their congregations” (Ibid 4054-4063).

Eliason (1999: 142-143) believes that a person’s previous religious experience may influence his/her LDS recruitment. Trigeaud’s (2009: 267-273) three-year PO study of LDS religion classes in Paris, which gathered information about the recruitment and retention of French converts aged 18-30 and involved interviewing 14 converts whose average age at LDS baptism was just over 18, addresses this issue. Her mainly active converts mostly come from atheistic, non-practising Catholic, and believing without belonging backgrounds, although a few had stronger religious experience such as having dropped out of training to become Catholic priests (Ibid 270-272). From Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3668) 35 French LDS questionnaire-fillers, 16 were ex-Catholics; five had no religious background; nine were second-generation LDS and one third generation; one ex-Protestant; and only six were the sole LDS members in their families. By comparison, from Annus and Csepregi’s (2018 location 3906) Hungarian LDS converts, those who indicated “previous religious affiliation” were all (mainly “inactive”) Catholic. Hence, their Catholic faith “transmission” had been “unsuccessful”, which helps to explain “their continued search for the transcendental” (Ibid 4063). For Stark (2005: 65-66), the more a person internalises a religion’s “capital” (teachings, prayers, hymns, rituals etc.), the less chance there is that he/she will change religion, as losing a sizeable religious investment may be psychologically painful. Nabozny (2009: 81-83) highlights that a lack of attachment to a previous religion may help to prompt LDS recruitment, as before joining the LDS, some of his Polish and Ukrainian converts had only visited Catholic or Orthodox churches on special occasions. Regarding this, Rigal-Cellard (2018: location 3766-3774) discusses the converts from her respondents often crossing over from no religious or low committed Catholic backgrounds to “very demanding” LDS religious practice. All this may imply that having little/no previous religious experience makes LDS recruitment easier, but may not help produce committed converts.

Some LDS converts may retain positive attitudes towards a previous religion, not trying to discredit it. Ex-Catholic, Givens, F. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014) discusses the

possibility of modern-day LDS engaging at an “interreligious level” through looking at what “other faiths” have to offer. At an LDS Sunday meeting, she, herself, once suggested that “it might be helpful for people to attend Mass 2-3 times” before going to the temple, “because Catholics do liturgy and symbolism extraordinarily well”, to which she received a mixed reception.

Concerning LDS religiosity influencing recruitment/conversion, Shipp (1994/2001: 65-66) describes early converts accepting Joseph Smith’s emerging scripture, religious teachings, prophet status, and directives for restoring an ancient/apostolic Church and priesthood on Earth. After the LDS officially gave up polygamy in 1890, recruitment/conversion started becoming more based on recruits/converts becoming well-integrated into an LDS community (Ibid 73-74). Some LDS practised polygamy from the early 1840s onwards, with the LDS officially believing that the Bible and BOM teach that monogamous marriage is God’s standard formula for regulating human reproduction, except for periods of human history when God declares otherwise (<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-and-families-in-early-utah?lang=eng> accessed 12-07-18).

For van Beek (2016: 92), “American exceptionalism is gradually disappearing from” LDS religious “discourse”, although many American LDS, including leaders, retain “substantial exceptionalist views”. On the official LDS website, the “American location of the Garden of Eden” is difficult to find, plus the idea of “America’s chosenness has disappeared” from missionary lessons, as “such notions” are viewed as “untenable”/“no longer useful”, “simply fade out”, or are not “openly discussed” (Ibid). Rigal-Cellard (2018: location 3801) points towards modern-day LDS “erasing” earlier teachings that may be “too weird or too American” in a quest to become an “exclusively Christian Church” or “the best” one. Moreover, one missionary who she interviewed acknowledged that the LDS focused on teaching a “generic Christian message” (Ibid). For Mauss (2008: 43-45), the LDS may attract more international recruits/converts through narrowing their religious identity down to emphasising fundamental teachings about the Godhead; Jesus’ atonement/resurrection; the apostasy/restoration; Joseph Smith’s “divine mission”; “continuous revelation”; the POS; and the LDS priesthood and its ordinances/covenants. Decoo (1996: 105, 114) believes that many durable European converts may leave their mainstream Christian backgrounds behind through receiving and valuing core LDS teachings about the First Vision; BOM; restoration of an early/apostolic Church; POS etc. However, even such optimum amounts of LDS religiosity may make recruits feel uncomfortable about moving away from mainstream Christian or other worldviews.

Some of Rigal-Cellard's (2018: 3694) French LDS respondents discuss religious reasons for becoming LDS, with about a third of them highlighting the LDS claim to be the restoration of a "true Church". Trigeaud (2009: 279-282) points towards LDS missionaries teaching a universal, religious lesson programme to recruits, and LDS communities encouraging new converts to commit themselves to practising the WOW, paying monthly tithing, bearing testimonies at Testimony Sunday meetings, and engaging in communal activities. For Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3934) Hungarian converts, "religious education" from missionaries started occurring during "home visits" which lead to LDS baptism. This process introduced "potential converts" to LDS teachings, "rituals and social practices", with them receiving "answers to their questions" and being impressed by the "rational nature" of LDS teachings and all their "issues" being "addressed in a sensible manner" (Ibid 3934-3943). Gooren (2008: 363-365) discusses Costa Rican converts from his "1990 study of an LDS ward in San José" (Gooren 1991) receiving six baptism lessons where missionaries discussed the POS; Joseph Smith/the BOM; Christ's resurrection; the apostasy/restoration; Smith's First Vision; pre-mortality; the WOW/law of chastity; living like Christ; LDS baptism; and the conditions for becoming LDS (repentance, following LDS commandments etc.). The recruits were urged to read and pray for a testimony of the BOM, and were asked about possible baptism dates later on (Ibid 364-365). Moreover, giving recruits a free copy of the BOM in Spanish and "subtly" pressuring them "to make the next appointment soon" (a few days afterwards) was an "important part" of the proselytisation "strategy" (Ibid 364). The recruits "often complained" about not having enough time to do their "'homework'", such as reading texts from the Bible and BOM (Ibid). However, while discussing his study of the "meaning of LDS membership in contemporary Central America" (Gooren 2000), Gooren (2008: 379-380) highlights that Guatemalan recruits/converts started valuing a sense of "being different from other people" through being immersed in religious/social activities and strict moral rules.

For Givens (2007*: 212-220), people may be drawn towards Joseph Smith's approach of directly communicating with God; the BOM offering modern-day revelation/scripture; the logical details of the POS; and a sense of receiving inner religious experience. Recruits/converts may be impressed by the LDS having a lay male priesthood; sharing duties/speeches at meetings; offering convictions about faith at (especially Testimony) Sunday meetings; directly seeking and praying about religious truth; and pursuing exaltation/divinity inside the temple (Keifert 2004: 258-260, 264-267). The LDS may attract recruits/converts through their view of post-mortality offering a sense of certainty about becoming reunited with "loved

ones” after death, which may compare favourably with the “this-worldly” concerns of many mainstream Christian Churches (Davies, D.J. 2000: 254-256). Converts may gain a profound sense of security through developing a temple identity with a clear view of pre-mortal, Earth, and post-mortal life which compares favourably to having a rootless, postmodern life (Ibid 257, 263-264). Thus, the eternal purpose that accompanies LDS temple-goer status may counter a sense of meaninglessness that characterises much contemporary Western life.

Nabozny (2009: 53-54, 66-67) points towards an active search for God/truth, discussions with missionaries, and LDS scripture prompting recruits to become interested in LDS religiosity and sense that they are gaining fuller teachings not offered by mainstream Christianity. He highlights three main steps of LDS recruitment: receiving religious training from missionaries, deciding to live by LDS religious/moral standards, and getting baptised LDS (Ibid 84-85). Two-thirds of Nabozny’s (2009: 86) 18 Polish converts joined the LDS within six months of LDS contact and just over two-thirds of his 17 Ukrainian converts within three months, and a third of his Polish and around a quarter of his Ukrainian converts joined after nine months or more. This suggests that while LDS recruitment is sometimes a short, possibly emotion-driven process, other times, it may be longer and carefully thought out.

Farrin (2009: 24) distinguishes between six of her British LDS converts searching for religious truth and three gaining a sense of communal belonging as they moved towards LDS baptism. For her six religious truth-seekers, recruitment was mainly a solitary internal activity between themselves and God, with LDS religiosity being more important than social relationships and negotiating issues with others (Ibid 24-25). These converts, whose recruitment was sometimes fast and other times gradual, highlight the following kinds of experiences:

- Developing a need to know whether LDS religiosity is true or not
 - Asking big questions about life through reading the BOM
 - Feeling the need to become LDS after receiving a sense of LDS truth
 - Finding answers to big questions through the POS
 - Valuing the WOW lifestyle
 - Feeling the reality of God through LDS prayer life/spiritual experience
 - Sensing that they had been selected to become LDS by God
 - Having profound feelings towards LDS religiosity
- (Ibid 27-33).

Overall, the truth-seeker narratives point towards the converts finding a true religious path, gaining an intimate relationship with God, and being in awe of LDS religiosity through viewing it as a living reality. Annus and Csepregi (2018: location 4106) point towards their Hungarian LDS converts gaining “ontological security” through them firmly believing in God, “His Mercy”, and “providence”, and their lives becoming “less stressful and materialistic”. They also gained a “more loving and caring” form of life, believing that God would help them when they were in need and attaining “moral and spiritual strength from this knowledge” (Ibid). In particular, they valued regularly “praying” and “studying the scriptures”, which they viewed as the “foundation of their faith” and “relationship with God” (Ibid 4115). Thus, the British and Hungarian converts’ sense of self-transformation above may support James’ (1902/1985) transcendental-type account of religious conversion.

While receiving a sense of gaining contact with God through prayer, recruits may feel that the LDS religion is being confirmed as true (Nabozny 2009: 64). Regarding this, Eliason (1999) discusses how testimonies may fit into an LDS recruitment/conversion scheme. He believes that the analysis of convert narratives/stories, often told at Testimony Sunday Sacrament meetings, can reveal the religious motivations for LDS recruitment/conversion and social events through which the latter takes place (Ibid 139-142). For Eliason (1999: 142-143), convert testimonies often contain the following thematic structure which mirrors official LDS accounts about Joseph Smith’s First Vision:

1. Sensing a lack of correct religious knowledge
2. Starting to search for religious truth
3. Receiving a confirmation that a true religious path has been found with the LDS
4. Adversaries attempting to pull the convert away from recruitment/conversion
5. Sensing a connection with God through LDS involvement.

In this model, religious anxieties and searches pave the way to LDS recruitment/conversion. Conversion narratives may show that through “humble study and prayer”, anybody “can receive direct revelation” confirming that God exists and that the LDS Church and scripture are true (Eliason 1999: 145). Through many contemporary religious-seekers valuing profound intuitions over traditional religious doctrines, they may be inclined to accept any uplifting responses they have towards Moroni’s challenge as validating the BOM/LDS faith (Mauss 2008: 22-25).

Converts may offer testimony stories about crossing over into LDS membership to encourage others to do so and to strengthen their own LDS faith/identity, while styles of testimony may vary according to the audience, time allowance, and formality or informality of the setting (Eliason 1999: 144-145). When addressing non-LDS, some converts may use humour/self-deprecation or play down the spiritual aspects of their conversion to avoid being accused of self-righteousness, melodrama, and manipulation (Ibid 145). Like Stromberg (1993/2008, 2014), Yang and Abel (2014), Steigenga (2014) etc. from 2.1, Eliason (1999: 144-145) points towards converts adapting/reconstructing their conversion stories long after joining a religion.

From those of Rigal-Cellard's (2018: 3685) French LDS respondents who were converts, most were prompted to become LDS through gaining a testimony, with them giving "long explanations about their innermost motivations", possibly influenced by an "American custom of testifying publicly on one's faith". For Stark (2005: 26-27), the receiving of religious revelation may involve no more than people becoming certain about what God wills them to do on Earth. Gooren (2008: 367) discusses a "typical Mormon *conversion*" process in Central America, where about half the converts do not receive dramatic testimonies, as a sense of "truthfulness" about the BOM, Joseph Smith being a prophet, and the LDS being Christ's Church on Earth are built up over time. Such long-range testimonies may occur through converts coming to accept the authority of the LDS priesthood, and strengthening their commitment to LDS religiosity through performing callings and gaining friends in their LDS community (Ibid). Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3978) Hungarian converts spent "on average", six months studying LDS scripture before baptism, with them all revealing that "their conversion was a long, gradually evolving experience". It involved "being fully immersed in" the LDS faith, "thoroughly understanding and following" LDS teachings, and "identifying with the complex" worldview that LDS religiosity offers (Ibid). Through their "long, gradual, complex" conversion processes, the converts acquired a "series of intricate changes" in their lives (Ibid 4130). Only one convert recalled a dramatic moment during which a "strange feeling" went over her that she interpreted as feeling "God's presence in her soul" for the "first time" and the "completion" of her conversion (Ibid 3978). Dramatic forms of revelation may involve people interpreting intense perceptions as gaining direct contact with God (Stark 2005: 38-39). Through it being scientifically impossible to show if religious revelations occur or not, they cannot be explained away as delusion, fraud, or compensation for suffering deprivation (Ibid 27). All this may suggest that while some LDS testimonies may be short and dramatic pushing recruits towards baptism, others may occur

gradually after baptism through converts reflecting on how their lives have benefitted with the LDS over time.

Givens, F. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014) points towards LDS “faith journeys” inevitably containing “problematic issues”, so LDS members with strong testimonies need to support those without them. Givens, T.L. (Ibid) discusses a distinction in D&C 46: 13-14 between some LDS receiving the gift of “knowledge that Jesus is the Christ” (Saviour) and others having a gift of believing, although none of these states have higher value. Givens, F. (Ibid) explains that LDS members who get less clear answers about religious issues are in no way less faithful, as a “baptismal covenant” commands members to “help each other” with their burdens while following Jesus as the Saviour. For Givens, T.L. (Ibid), having “spiritual gifts” like testimonies involves some people being able to hear “the voice of God” better than “others”. People may not hear God speaking to them through “environmental”, “cultural, or personal” factors which give them “differing capacities to hear” his voice “when it comes” (Ibid). Some people cannot control the “tempests” in their hearts/souls to create “space” for God’s “voice to be heard” (Ibid). Sometimes, they may not know what they are “listening for”, expecting to receive “dramatic” messages/experiences, when God may communicate through providing a profound “stillness” in the soul (Ibid). God may answer people’s prayers in “many ways”, with some people not having learnt how “to decipher” this (Ibid). Despite the LDS faith containing “absolutes”/“non-negotiables”, people’s “grasp of truth is seldom crystal clear”, with them having to “struggle along” without a “complete and comprehensive grasp of the planet” (Ibid). Thus, people “vary” in the forms and strengths of “testimonies” that they have, and the certainty of belief they have towards different LDS teachings (Ibid).

For Givens, T.L. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014), there is “room” inside the LDS Church for people who do not have a “burning testimony” of the BOM and view it as being allegorical and uplifting, but not historical truth. However, he believes in the “historicity” of the BOM, and stresses that it is “difficult to maintain an intellectually consistent position that denies it” due to Moroni’s promise that people can ask God about the literal truth of the book (Ibid). Despite this, viewing the BOM literally is “not a temple recommend question”, so the LDS Church leadership does not feel that not accepting the historicity of the BOM is a “non-qualifier” for LDS membership (Ibid).

Givens, F. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014) believes that many testimonies given at Testimony Sunday meetings are a “flat” procession of “platitudes” which lack “authenticity” through “nothing” being truly “felt”. In contrast, “bearing authentic testimony” necessitates a higher “participatory” role where the “real self” speaks about having certain and uncertain

knowledge, hopes, and longings for things to be “true”, which prompts everybody to feel “uplifted and edified” (Ibid). For Givens, T.L. (Ibid), LDS speakers may positively “appeal to history”; “set context”; make “contrasts and comparisons”; and not present themselves as a “voice of authority” nor use an inappropriate “tone”. He highlights a false common view that the LDS Church is a “monolithic entity” and “megaphone” with “one dominant message and tone”, as even “among the Quorum” and “leadership”, there exists a “symphony” of widely varied “voices” (Ibid). Thus, he believes that there is much more space for “variability of interpretation and nuance” than is often thought, which means that all LDS members “have the power to nudge” LDS “culture” in different directions (Ibid).

For Givens, F. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014), the LDS have lost a “time” when all people “had their chance to speak” at Sunday meetings, with a “schoolroom environment” having “culturally crept” into the latter. In LDS Sunday School lessons, the teacher is now “supposed to have all of the answers”, while only being a “lay person” with “no more historical knowledge of the beginning of the Church” than anybody else (Ibid). Through the LDS being a “lay Church”, its members need to recognise that some people are less “aware” of LDS history than others, while conversations at Sunday classes can be made “authentic” through members carefully critiquing “what is being said” rather than directly criticising a leader or teacher (Ibid).

Finally, Givens, T.L. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014) discusses a point made by Brigham Young about the importance of Joseph Smith providing “doctrine” that can “save” people. He stresses that rather than finding fault with Smith’s character, people need to embrace his saving doctrine, and should “join a faith” not “because of the man”, but the “keys or powers” which he “has served as an instrument to restore” a faith to the Earth (Ibid). Thus, any inappropriate behaviour by Smith is “irrelevant” to a person’s “faith and the doctrines of the Restoration” (Ibid).

Concerning LDS networking, Stark (2005: 66-67) believes that converts who stress that religious motivations dominated their recruitment towards a group may inaccurately reinterpret past events through present-day religious interest. Drawing on Eberhard (1974), Stark (2005: 79-80) points towards LDS members befriending recruits and introducing them to missionaries, as social interaction underpins recruitment to baptism. Exemplifying this, 11 of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3668) French LDS respondents had joined the LDS through contact with family members and three through friends. About a third had been “evangelised” by mainly American missionaries, and the missionary questionnaire-fillers felt that being American was a big “asset” because French people had never had “Americans in their lives”,

so it was viewed as a special event to interact with them (Ibid 3676). Two-thirds of the respondents denied that the “American origins” of the LDS and encountering American missionaries was a big influence on their LDS membership, but this was “belied by various explanations” to other questions (Ibid 3676-3685). Four believed that the “kindness and youth” of the American missionaries had been a “factor of seduction” and 23 had never felt any “suspicion” towards them, but four had been irritated by them assuming to be “the best” although they “liked the message” that the missionaries carried (Ibid 3685). All Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 3916) Hungarian converts “had encountered” the LDS faith “through missionaries”, with “their baptism” being the “direct outcome” of missionary “proselytizing efforts”. The converts had been drawn to their “overall first impression” of the missionaries, viewing them as “young, energetic, happy, optimistic, relaxed, and self-confident people” who offered a joyous rather than “overly serious” image of religion (Ibid 3925). Some had been “impressed” by the missionaries leaving their “families and homes behind” and sacrificing “time and money” to seek converts, and the LDS performing “religious duties” with “true devotion, obedience, and honesty” (Ibid 3925-3934). Annus and Csepregi (Ibid 3934) believe that for some recruits/converts, such things may restore “faith in faith”. After their “initial contact” with missionaries, the Hungarian converts were gradually immersed into the LDS faith after “talking in general” and “becoming acquainted”, which “established the basis” of the missionary-investigator relationship (Ibid).

When a person becomes friends with more people from a different religion than his/her own, he/she may join it (Stark 2005: 64). Young adulthood is a pivotal age for religious recruitment, as young adults may be geographically/socially mobile and open to changing “their social networks” (Ibid). Half of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3694) French LDS respondents acknowledged that an American dream attraction, promoting the values of “material success, comfort” and the potential for “anybody” to get rich, was a “major factor of conversion”, but claimed that this had not influenced themselves. However, one stressed that this was the case with 50% of “youth” conversions (Ibid). Before becoming LDS, some respondents had hated what they viewed as an American “superiority complex” and “crass culture”, but, as converts, they could see some “positive points”, as they had a love-hate/gratitude-suspicion attitude towards Americans “in general” (Ibid 3712-3721). All this highlights that a religious group cannot be separated from its “surrounding culture” (Ibid 3712).

Keifert (2004: 256-264) discusses LDS communities welcoming outsiders in a respectful, engaging way; offering meaningful interaction, strict moral codes, and the opportunity to

build/enhance family lives; and being open about how money is handled. Recruits may gain a sense of “belonging” to an LDS community, with an uplifting “social context” pushing them towards baptism (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 221-222). The LDS have built up “street cred” through being a “community-based” Church where members serve and help each other (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014). Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 3943) Hungarian LDS converts viewed their “pre-baptism visits” to “local congregation events” as a “powerful” experience of the LDS being a “welcoming and inclusive” community, especially when a person had previously “felt rejected by or excluded from other groups”. For some of the converts, the LDS community was “like a family” offering “love” and a “sense of safety, warmth and acceptance”, as they saw that general “believers”, not only missionaries, were “kind, happy, and content” people who maintained high “values and norms” (Ibid). The converts viewed their “congregation as an extended” or surrogate family, valuing Sunday and social activities for encouraging togetherness and cooperation (Ibid 4097-4106). Thus, they valued a social “matrix” which fostered a “strong sense of belonging and security” supported by “transcendental” practices, and believed that the LDS faith and community could guide people “to achieve a happy and balanced life” (Ibid 4106, 3943). However, for two converts, the LDS were not “overly idealistic”, but a “real community of people” with inevitable shortcomings (Ibid: 3951).

LDS communal activities may be attractive, as they require more time/commitment than the one-hour-a-week, formal worship requirement of many mainstream Christian denominations (Givens, T.L. 2007*: 218). The LDS may offer socio-economic benefits to “relatively poor” converts around the world, through which the latter may develop personal autonomy, self-discipline, family values, managerial skills, and economic stability (Davies, D.J. 2000: 252-253). Recruits/converts may make cost-benefit assessments while choosing to adopt LDS norms above those of wider society (Stark 2005: 62). For McBride (2007), LDS interaction encourages converts to compete for benefits and positions of high achievement within the LDS Church’s corporate-type structure. The LDS may direct recruits/converts to assess the costs of offering their time/money against the benefits of receiving spiritual/social rewards from them (Ibid 399).

An LDS community may push recruits towards baptism with them coming to accept the same goal (Trigeaud 2009: 266). The LDS may motivate recruits to investigate them, maintain contact with them, and decide to join them, and to move from “outsider” to “insider” positions (Nabozny 2009: 70-71). Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4115) Hungarian LDS converts felt themselves changing through becoming “less critical and annoyed” and

“more open and accepting of others”, increasing their “self-esteem”, and gaining “new skills” through performing church callings/duties. Such personal development can improve the converts’ “position in the outside world” and “quality of life”, and give a sense of “eternal progression”, as “church-related activities” replace their “hobbies and leisure-time activities” (Ibid). For all the Hungarian converts, the benefits of LDS conversion outweighed the costs, with the WOW being viewed as a positive “investment” (Ibid 4082). Keifert (2004: 261-262) stresses that the WOW’s emphasis on good health is a strong selling point for recruits/converts. Nabozny’s (2009: 65-66) Polish and Ukrainian converts value it for giving them moral discipline/self-control. Practising the WOW reduces the likelihood of cancer and leads to longer lives, while the law of chastity and a common LDS Church view that the “new morality” of the modern, secular world is “old-fashioned immorality” may be attractive for recruits/converts (Marks and Beal 2008: 261, 265). All Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4082-4097) Hungarian converts found LDS commandments “liberating”, as they provided moral “boundaries” which protected them from doing bad things. The LDS faith gave them a “framework” for setting “feasible personal goals”; creating a “vision for their future”; and applying higher “meaning to their earthly existence” (Ibid 4097). The converts who had LDS families valued family-centredness and togetherness, and “regularly praying together” (Ibid).

Nabozny (2009: 55-62) highlights that his Polish and Ukrainian converts were motivated to become LDS through wanting to know more about the LDS Church (curiosity); attending free LDS English lessons and religious presentations afterwards; being lead towards an LDS chapel by family/friends; gaining new friends in a warm social atmosphere; experiencing uplifting emotions; and sensing that LDS involvement was right for them. However, less positive experiences included family opposition to them joining the LDS, and some converts not informing their families of their decision to become LDS (Ibid 59-60). Moreover, European LDS converts may be accused of deserting an “original culture” to join an ““American religion””, as the LDS retain American “historical-geographical, ideological, and behavioural” features (Decoo 2015: 551). Thus, relatives may view the “conversion of a family member” as a “betrayal” of “cultural heritage” (Ibid 554). British convert, Givens, F. (Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014) discusses how her Catholic-LDS conversion has resulted in “devastating” family dynamics which remain unhealed many years afterwards. She describes being haunted by a kind of “familial loss”, sensing that she is an “embarrassment” to her Catholic family, with them never mentioning her LDS conversion and sometimes even forgetting about it (Ibid).

In Europe, many LDS converts may find it difficult to develop “plural identities” to navigate LDS and non-LDS spheres of life (Decoo 2015: 556). American LDS may not understand how much self-sacrifice and tension with a mainstream culture is involved when a person becomes LDS in Europe, as many converts may feel uncomfortable or stigmatised through the LDS often being viewed as an American sect there (Decoo 1996: 99). During recruitment/conversion, Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 3951) Hungarian converts “received positive vibes and support” from the LDS, their “newfound external group”, while being “judged in various ways” by family/friends which was “equally important”, as it created an “external definition of their selves”. Through having “pre-conceived notions” about the possible response of “former social network” members to their recruitment/conversion, the converts “had chosen not to discuss their meetings” with LDS missionaries “with other people” (Ibid). Most “remained silent” about becoming LDS after baptism, but became more “open”/“vocal” about their faith in time, “as part of their conversion process” (Ibid 3960). When informed, most family/friends “accepted” their conversion, although immediate responses included the converts encountering a “general lack of knowledge” about the LDS, with family members sometimes expressing “concern” over a relative joining a Church “not traditional in Hungary”, and the converts sometimes being called “crazy” (Ibid). Only family members who were “practising Catholics” strongly “opposed their conversion”, immediately viewing it as “extremely problematic and distressing”, and trying to convince the converts that the LDS were a cult that brainwashed people, still practised polygamy, and wanted “to rob” them of their money (Ibid 3960-3969). Concerning wider Hungarian society, some converts viewed themselves as marginalised others, and valued the “mainstream, average” friends who never challenged them for becoming outsiders (Ibid 3969-3978).

Farrin’s (2009: 25) three communal belonging converts felt the importance of interacting with LDS and non-LDS as they made decisions and moves towards becoming LDS. They were more concerned about being accepted by the LDS community and wider society than seeking religious truth, as they sought to harmonise an “innate knowledge” of God with LDS teachings/culture (Ibid). Farrin (2009: 33-40) discusses the converts:

- Having conflicts with family members
- Being impressed by LDS relatives, and the LDS practising what they preached and believing in their teachings
- Criticising mainstream Christians for being apathetic and hypocritical

- Engaging in soul-searching interaction with LDS missionaries and non-LDS family members
- Believing that their LDS lifestyle has real-life purpose
- Valuing LDS members for giving answers about complicated questions concerning life
- Worrying about being labelled strange for having LDS beliefs
- Participating in LDS communal activities, even doing callings before becoming LDS
- Feeling that they belonged to a big LDS family.

Besides this, Farrin (2009: 33) has difficulty structuring her communal belonging convert narratives according to Eliason's (1999: 142-143) five stages of LDS conversion.

Annus and Csepregi (2018: location 4115-4124) conclude that like "other post-socialist states in Central Eastern Europe", in post-communist Hungary, some people may assess different religions and "ideologies" to try to find a "new framework to guide" their lives/ actions and to create a "basis for their newly constructed world". They believe that the converts' gaining or regaining of a "sense of ontological security" has resulted in their personalities/attitudes being "transformed", which influences their behaviour, way of thinking, "level of confidence" etc. (Ibid 4130). The "life stories" and trajectories of "the self" in the convert interviews attempt to "logically" connect "pre- and post-conversion lives into a feasible continuum" (Ibid). The convert "story tellers" construct a "marked boundary" between themselves and Hungarian non-LDS, with their sense of being different being reflected in "their social practices" (Ibid). Before conversion, most viewed "their occupation" as the most significant feature of their identity, followed by "the self" (Ibid 4139). After conversion, an "identification with their faith" was more central to "their identity" than the self, with "nationality, occupation, gender and age" becoming "far less significant", as their conversions became more "complete" (Ibid).

Keifert (2004: 265-267) discusses the LDS providing two main levels of religious activity: one where members settle for having active chapel lives, and another where they have additional temple lives. The LDS may induce commitment through creating meaningful benefits/rewards for converts to pursue (McBride 2007: 396-397). New converts may move towards becoming temple-goers through practising the WOW and paying tithing; becoming part of an unpaid priesthood/leadership; performing callings; paying other members home visits etc. (Ibid 404-409). The LDS may operate like a corporate investment structure, offering Sunday chapel meetings to everybody, additional home visits and pastoral support to

all members, and additional temple rites and possibly Church employment to worthy/high-contributing members (Ibid 408-409). They may assess convert compliance with group standards during home visits, calling and family tithing interviews, and routine branch interaction, and may try convincing recruits/recent converts that higher commitment yields greater rewards (Ibid 410-412). In response, some converts will rise through the ranks to become core temple-goers, and others not.

Gooren (2008: 381-384) distinguishes between the following (Central American) “‘ideal-typical’” LDS convert categories:

- “Core members”: fulfil all duties; may hold local leadership positions; are family-focused; have many LDS friends; are “eligible” for temple recommends and seek spiritual progress
- “Affiliated members”: are regular chapel-goers; seek moral development; do not perform duties required for temple attendance
- “Inactive members”: identify as LDS but may struggle to practise the WOW and do callings; have conflicts with other LDS; rarely visit LDS chapels
- “Apostates”: may have joined another Church; returned to their previous one; or “disaffiliated from organised religion altogether”.

During my PO/interview work, this model helped me to divide my Polish LDS converts into LA (less active), TTG (trainee temple-goer), and CTG (core temple-goer) types, as I needed to capture the different “religious experiences and beliefs” of elite and marginalised LDS members (Hangen 2015: 210). This involved seeking information about a “wide base” of LAs, “thinner layer of active members” who engaged in chapel activities without attending the temple, and a “tiny” group of “committed leaders” (Decoo 2015: 556).

2.4 LDS problems in Europe

In the USA, the LDS are a sizeable, well-established Christian “denomination”, a serious religious institution in a highly developed country, but in many non-American settings, they are “anomalies on the religious scene” (van Beek 2005: 18). Decoo (2015: 544) points towards there having been 486,000 European LDS in 2011, with only 18% of the British LDS, who make up 38% of European members, practising their religion. Europe is the oldest LDS international colony but “not the most successful”, with “stagnating growth” and declining numbers (van Beek 2005: 26). Stewart Jr. (2008: 336) collected data from LDS

mission offices, members, and missionaries in 20 European countries in 1999, which suggested that in some parts of post-communist Central/Eastern Europe, convert retention was lower than 30%, with Poland possibly being around 20%. Decoo (2015: 544) believes that the percentage of LDS practising their faith in post-communist, Central/Eastern European countries may be just above 10% as early high activity rates “first measured in small new units” have shrunk over time as “units” have grown “but former converts” have disappeared. For van Beek (2005: 36), stagnating/declining LDS numbers in Europe may be prompted by secularisation disinclining people towards religious practice; European people valuing their own cultures above the American features of the LDS; and the “diminishing status” of the USA in many people’s minds.

Many factors may contribute to the LDS retaining few converts in Europe, and tension with the wider social world may be a big issue. Despite religious freedom in Europe, some governments operate a two-tiered or multi-tiered system where established religions receive privileges while religious minorities are marginalised (Mauss 2008: 8-10). This has resulted in NRMs like the LDS, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Scientologists being targeted by anti-NRM groups from the mid-1990s onwards (Decoo 2015: 547). In “former communist countries”, early “openness” towards “pluralism” was supplanted by “historically dominant” Churches regaining “ancient” roles as “unifying” forces in society and national culture, and politicians accepting this to “advance ideological conformity” instead of “unruly diversity” (Ibid). However, through entering countries legally and “being upfront” with authorities, the LDS have had “relatively few hurdles to overcome” with officialdom in Europe (Ibid). Nonetheless, “for the outside world”, the LDS still represent “the religion of polygamy” (van Beek 2016: 91). Annus and Csepregi (2018: location 3845) explain that despite the “clear visibility” of LDS missionaries, Hungarians know “precious little about” the LDS which may make them appear “suspicious”. Many Hungarians have their views of the LDS “shaped” by “mainstream historical churches”, with the Catholic Church viewing the LDS and many other of the 260 religious groups listed on a “2001 Census” as cults (Ibid). After the change from “socialist state structure to a democratic one in 1989-1990”, and the emergence of a “new ideological marketplace”, the big “Catholic and Reformed churches” reclaimed “power and a prominent public voice”, while “new religious communities” emerged to compete with established religions for converts (Ibid 3814-3826). Moreover, “political and religious beliefs became” intertwined through religious and ethno-national groups being closely associated together in public consciousness, which happened in “other former socialist countries” too (Ibid 3826). In Hungary and other Central/Eastern European, former communist countries, the

governing powers' "political preference" for "traditional Christian churches" made it difficult for "new religious communities" to be accepted, while the "last socialist government" in Hungary had freely allowed "minority religions" to enter the country (Ibid 3835). Despite this, the LDS have maintained "steady growth" in Hungary, being "centred in Budapest" and "present nationwide" with 4,474 members and "one stake, five wards, and fourteen branches", but no temples (Ibid 3835-3854).

Some religious groups may gain meaningful fringe status in difficult foreign settings through allowing local customs to fuse with their religious/social practice (Mauss 1994: 209). In contrast, with its American origins, the LDS Church "has remained a dominantly American cultural institution throughout its history" (van Beek 2016: 73). Rigal-Cellard (2018: location 3630) points towards "all religions" being "marked by the culture" where "they are born", with the LDS displaying more American "cultural influences" than "any other religious group" that originates from the USA. She discusses how the LDS exhibit several American cultural influences (Ibid 3630-3648). A "democratic vision of priesthood" from Protestantism is "enhanced" in the LDS Church, and the LDS concept of the "possible divinization of man" amplifies the American "self-made man image" that portrays people going West "to conquer the land" and gain power which is "sacralised" in American "national discourse" (Ibid 1630). Through the BOM, the LDS are the "first religious group" to assert in writing that America is the "New Zion" (Ibid 3640). The early LDS had the obligation to gather in an "American Zion" before official LDS authorities told them "to remain wherever they were" to spread their Church around the world, and the Articles of Faith in the POGP refer to the "American continent" being the "locus where the New Jerusalem" (new holy land) "will be built" (Ibid 3640-3648). Finally, the LDS have an incredible American gift for "colonizing" difficult territories, e.g. turning Utah desert land into a "fertile oasis" (Ibid 3648).

Stark (2005: 118) believes that the "Americanism" of the LDS, visible through the "presence" of many young American missionaries around the world, may help to draw in recruits/converts through American culture being admired in many parts of the world. For Decoo (2015: 554-555), the LDS Church's "American ethos" may attract non-Americans, and the universal design of "chapels and temples" may provide "worldwide unity". However, many non-American converts may have problems through their societies associating the LDS with American culture (Mauss 1994: 205; Stewart Jr. 2008: 348). Through being viewed as an American religion, the LDS may sit uncomfortably with "various host societies" (Stark 2005: 119). The "identification" of the LDS with an American "capitalistic ethos" may prompt an "anti-American reaction" towards them "overseas" (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 220). The LDS

may be associated with an American ethos which values “opportunities” being given to individuals to pursue “personal development”/“happiness”, and promotes the “power of individual talent and hard work to attain prosperity” (Decoo 2015: 552). While European LDS in “leadership positions” may adopt such views, other members may interpret them less positively through having experienced other religious outlooks which revere “abnegation and submission” (Ibid). Thus, LDS conversion may require European converts to learn to value “self-actualization” over self-sacrifice (Ibid).

Other factors contributing to the LDS retaining few converts in Europe may concern the “satellite status” of the LDS Church outside the USA, which makes it a “different” entity from the American “core region” Church (van Beek 2005: 18). In the international LDS missionary field, a yearning for “self-sufficiency and autonomy” is felt much stronger than in the USA (Ibid 19). European LDS may value the “norms” of their own “society” and country above “those of the LDS Church” (Ibid 20). Despite this, international LDS are expected to adopt the American LDS colonizer’s “culture, view of the colony as an area to be developed”, and economic and “knowledge” superiority (Ibid 15). In this two-tiered system, the LDS metropolis in Salt Lake City controls the production of “lesson materials” and scripture translated for international LDS churches, even for the “huge Spanish-speaking” area (Ibid 20-21). However, throughout the “years of expansion, from 1980 onwards”, international LDS churches have increased in number and “leadership potential, though by varying rates in different areas” (Ibid 17). Some strong ones have become economically self-sufficient like American ones, with capable “local leaders” (Ibid). Despite this, decisions about “top leadership” positions, “building and missionary policies”, and “stake formation” in the international field are still controlled by the US “core region”, which has “retained financial and political control” over everything (Ibid). The American metropolis views the LDS Church as an “undivided whole” with “one dominant blueprint for organization” which is applicable to any kind of cultural background, no matter where the “branch, ward, or stake is grounded” (van Beek 2016: 72). Such strict “uniformity”/“standardization” can be seen in “hierarchical priesthood structures”, “meetinghouse plans”, “priesthood ordinances”, “Sunday School lessons” etc., and “local temple presidencies” do not influence the most minor “details of decoration” or features of “ritual” (Ibid).

For van Beek (2016: 72), even the LDS male “uniform” (smart dress code at church meetings) is “standardized”, and no matter where someone visits an LDS church, they will recognise the “basic church architecture and layout” and official “pictures in the corridor”, and attend lessons taught with the “same curricular materials everywhere”. From the 1990s

onwards, the LDS have promoted a “gospel culture” based on the POS and God’s commandments, with living prophet teachings outweighing any “quandaries of cultural diversity”, and all members being expected to share common values, expectations, and practices (Ibid 78). This approach condemns “all activities” that fail to replicate an American “model of membership”, and pushes young LDS to serve missions, “then marry and raise children while active” in the Church (Ibid). This “ideal” view of LDS culture is “restricted” to the “dutiful performance of certain church commandments and expectations”, and LDS worldwide are prompted to follow American host culture “customs”, without any “meaningful directives” or adaptation for different “social customs and manners” (Ibid 78-79). As “regular LDS meetings follow strict liturgies”, this blocks “cultural variety in worship” and a “diversity of local forms” from emerging (Ibid 88). Uniform use of “organ and piano” at LDS church services does not follow “any gospel principle”, but rather the “puritan heritage of the Restoration” (Ibid). Moreover, the LDS Church only promotes family values relating to traditional American LDS culture, based on a monocultural assumption that “everybody knows and agrees what family is” (Ibid 89). Thus, the American LDS “perception of unity” amounts to a “uniformity in rules” (Ibid 91).

Through their uniform worship practice, church architecture, music, and appearance sitting uncomfortably with foreign cultures, the LDS may struggle to find and retain converts (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 387-388; Glad 2009: 163-164). For Stewart Jr. (2008: 349), American missionary behaviour may block the LDS from building up indigenous congregations in international settings. Neilson (2015: 185) contrasts LDS missionaries “handing out” religious literature on “busy streets” with some Protestant missionary organisations offering “educational or social welfare services”. While the LDS mainly rely on young, inexperienced American/foreign missionaries to serve their missions, Protestant groups recruit many local missionaries and have mission leaders with high levels of cultural/linguistic understanding and extensive training in theological, economic, educational, and health issues (Glad 2009: 159-162). Besides this, “institutional prudishness” pushes LDS men to wear white shirts, an “outdated clothing fashion” from “corporate America” (van Beek 2005: 23). Uniform LDS missionary dress codes and chapel design may compare unfavourably with Catholic missionaries adapting their appearance and behaviour to fit in with native norms in Africa (Glad 2009: 162-165). The Catholic Church has, since the 1960s, allowed “national or regional leadership” to initiate “cultural adaptations” into religious practice, and such manoeuvres could be explored by the LDS (Decoo 2015: 555). Having a Christmas Eve service in LDS chapels would be appreciated by European converts from mainstream

Christian backgrounds, but “such incursions” into LDS “territory” are usually refused through not matching “predetermined standards of acceptability” (Ibid 554).

For Givens (2007: 242), LDS chapels are “distinctive”, uniform “simple brick” constructions with “few details and a simple steeple”, which all “bears the label, but not the architecture, of sacred space”. With very few “exceptions”, LDS chapels “have no stained glass, religious art, icons ... and never any crosses, crucifixes, or altar” (Ibid 245). LDS religious services may lack “quietude and reverence” through many young children attending them (Ibid 246). In contrast, LDS temples are “radically demarcated as sacred spaces”, with “children and many members” not being allowed access to the “holiest LDS rituals” (Ibid). LDS temple-goers experience both “temple reverence and meetinghouse familiarity and openness” (Ibid). Plain-looking LDS chapel design was reinforced in 2002 by a “Worldwide Meetinghouse Standard Plan” that gave uniform building “guidelines for urban, suburban, and rural areas” (Ibid). For a Church “as rapidly growing and fiscally prudent as the LDS”, using money well outweighs “aesthetics” when considering chapel-building design (Ibid).

American behavioural norms dominate LDS missions as “white middle-class Americans” often lead international churches also attended by “American families living abroad” and “older missionary couples” (Decoo 2015: 552). Besides this, non-American missionaries have their interaction “shaped by Americans”; Mission Presidents are usually from the USA or are “Americanized”; and visiting American or Americanised “authorities” provide “role models” for international communities (Ibid). American behavioural “patterns” that dominate international LDS satellites include:

- Informal contact between the sexes and different age groups
- Calmness “approaching strangers”
- Assertive facial expressions, long/firm handshakes, hugging, and excessive smiling/eye contact
- Jovially/informally “conducting meetings”
- Children not being controlled during meetings
- Excessive praise of others
- Elegant dress codes that homogenise appearance/behaviour
- A “corporate, managerial style of doing things”.

(Ibid)

As local leaders and “church employees” are usually people whose personalities, professions, and clothing match a certain “corporate, managerial style”, they become “role models” for other members to emulate (Ibid). Thus, with its American features and “expansion to other parts of the world”, the LDS Church may be viewed as an ““American world religion”” (Decoo 2015: 553).

Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3748-3757) French LDS respondents associate the LDS Church with many American features, including family home evening; missionaries with accents and “uniforms”; a detailed “cataloguing of information”; “data processing”; “genealogical technology”; active but “easy-going organization”; celebrating “American feasts”; “openness and tolerance”; “slides and videos” about the USA; “American traditional dances”; and “free English lessons”. For van Beek (2005: 20, 22), the American LDS parent Church’s “corporate culture” helps to maintain its “cultural hegemony” around the world. LDS international “expansion” has prompted “internal growth” and the rise of a “multinational board of directors”, with many kinds of “specialists” populating the “administrative offices” of the American parent Church and little focus on “ecclesiastical work” (Ibid 17-18). Through this international corporate context, the “personal charisma” of LDS leaders has become routinised and recognised by LDS members worldwide (Ibid 18).

For van Beek (2005: 22), the corporate features of LDS missionary organisation include “numerical goal-setting”, a focus on getting baptisms, and “small power games between missionaries” competing for leadership positions “inside the mission”. Examples of American administrative routines include “job rotation”; running “efficient meetings”; office-type, interpersonal formality; “reporting on stewardship”; and “deference to authority” (Ibid 20, 22). As an “integral part of church administration”, job rotation reflects an American cultural feature of individuals often changing jobs/careers without feeling any “change” or reduction of “personality” (van Beek 2016: 74). However, job rotation does not fit all “cultural definitions of power” (e.g. in Africa), as having a “powerful position” for a “limited time” may be “hard to swallow” (Ibid). People in positions of power/authority may “integrate the position into their personality” which shapes how they view themselves and how others view them (Ibid). Being released from a powerful position may involve “loss of personhood”, which may amplify the “cognitive and emotional costs” of LDS membership (Ibid). While job rotation builds up and retains a “large body of experienced administrators” for multiple purposes in American LDS chapels, in places outside the USA, it may create a “large group of inactive members with formerly high-profile positions”, which reduces the “prospects” for the LDS to become stronger in “local areas” (Ibid). Thus, being released from an LDS calling/job

outside the USA may result in “loss of power”, “face”, and “identity”, as international LDS members may not view high local positions as “temporary stewardship”, but as “high-profile” status (Ibid).

Concerning a common accusation that the LDS Church controls its members’ lives, van Beek (2005: 24-25) discusses the LDS having to fill a “void” they have “created by separating converts from their old environment”. Being LDS is often viewed as having a “way of life”, not just a “faith” (Ibid 25). American LDS life has followed a “general American movement” towards becoming “more secularized”, so an LDS “belief system” can be followed without disrupting “mainstream American culture” (Ibid). In contrast, international members may be strongly influenced by an “official” LDS “ideology”, with them believing that “their way of life” should be “markedly different” from their non-LDS “countrymen” (Ibid). The “minority situation” of non-American LDS in their countries blocks the creation of a “supporting Mormon culture, with guidelines for both living and bending the rules” (Ibid 25-26). International LDS members in “minority situations” are markedly “different from” surrounding non-LDS, “without a fully organized, supportive Mormon culture” or “total way of life” to help them, and can see LDS “Americanisms” clearly through the “differences of their own culture” (Ibid 26). In European LDS churches, whole family conversions are “extremely rare” and religious/social life tends to be dominated by second/third generation members (Ibid). Thus, the LDS in Europe are a “small, inward-looking denomination”, invisible from “the outside”, as local “leadership” simply passes through “successive generations of insiders” (Ibid).

Many Europeans, including LDS members, may find the LDS Church’s “pro-American” cultural feature unsettling, especially given that the USA views itself as the “policeman” of a post-1989/post-communist world (van Beek 2005: 34). In the 20th century, the expansion of the LDS Church accompanied the expansion of US “influence and power”, mirroring the growth of the early “Christian Church” inside the “Roman Empire” (Ibid 33). The creation of an “American political and security umbrella for the non-communist world” made it easier for “LDS expansion” to be accepted, and for the LDS Church to be viewed as an “economic role model” and “material success story” alongside its “spiritual message” (Ibid). However, despite Americans often being viewed as “nice people”, since the fall of communism in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the USA has become more viewed as a warmonger than a “liberator”/ “peacekeeper” through instigating and engaging in “colonial wars” in different parts of the world (Ibid 34-36). The USA has also lost “credibility” as a centre of power through “attempting to define” what terrorism, fundamentalism, “democracy”, and “liberty” mean for

“the rest of the world” (Ibid 35). Thus, the LDS Church’s “uncritical acceptance of any American policy” may be an “obstacle” to new member commitment (Ibid 35-36).

Busse Spencer’s (2008: 413-418) PO study of an LDS branch in Novosibirsk, Siberia examines how Russian converts respond towards LDS organisational structure, religious teachings, and American cultural features. Between 1999 and 2000, she attended a Novosibirsk branch which had problems with “growth and retention”, with only about 25 members attending Sunday meetings, and through becoming “acquainted with members”, she gained “insights” into “attitudes and events” and developed an “authentic understanding” of local member opinions about LDS growth problems (Ibid 417, 424). She highlights that LDS missionary friendliness towards a constant turnover of Russian converts in Novosibirsk clashed with Russian culture, as many Russians had atheistic outlooks; associated the Orthodox Church with national identity; valued straightforward faith over doctrinal knowledge; had negative views of Western culture; and had fewer close friendships than Americans (Ibid 418-422, 429-431).

For Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3730) French LDS respondents, French people are “too materialistic, proud, individualistic, selfish, unruly, spiritually dead, or too intellectual”, and “sometimes too strongly Catholic (or not enough)” for them to become LDS easily. The respondents stress that rather than mistrusting the USA, French people like their food/drink too much to adopt a “strict healthy diet”, are too “attached to their traditions”, and are suspicious of “any novelty”, rejecting the LDS as a “figure of modernity” (Ibid). Concerning the central “place held by America” in the BOM and the 10th LDS article of faith about creating a New Zion/New Jerusalem in America, over half the respondents were “not bothered” by America having a “special place” in “God’s Design”, with most finding reasons to defend this idea, e.g. viewing America as “young and pure” (Ibid 3730-3739). Thus, “when doctrinal requirements were at stake”, the respondents defended “God’s choice” of America as a special chosen land (Ibid 3748). However, a third of them refused to see any connection between the LDS and USA, other than “mere historical foundation” (Ibid). While assessing the future of the LDS in France, the respondents pointed towards the growth of non-American LDS limiting American cultural features, and favoured “greater autonomy” for “foreign stakes” (Ibid 3757).

Mauss (2008: 55) highlights that missionaries and members (aged 18-30) of the YSA, an official LDS young (usually single) adult group, may invite young adult recruits, who are not tied to any religious/social norms, to LDS branches for Family Home Evening and Institute meetings and social/sporting events where YMs and YSA members may proselytise them. At

LDS free English lessons, missionary teachers explain their “ultimate purpose” at the start of each lesson, teach English, and invite anybody interested “to remain” for religious discussions afterwards (Ibid). These lessons may allow the LDS to proselytise young, well-educated, ambitious recruits who may be open to non-mainstream ideas and experiences. However, the LDS also quickly recruit many easily available, young single, sometimes marginalised people; low-income families; modestly-educated people; and non-European immigrants which may increase convert numbers but not durable members (Decoo 1996: 100-101; Mauss 1994: 213, 2008: 17). Converts who struggle to overcome smoking/alcohol addictions and sexual behaviour outside the law of chastity (e.g. pre-marital sex) may become inactive quickly (Stewart Jr. 2008: 352-353). Besides this, the LDS eternal marriage teaching may cause many divorced, part-member family, and unmarried European members to feel uncomfortable and disappear from small LDS communities (Decoo 1996: 106-108). Moreover, the financial/legal and marital/personal problems that deprived converts bring with them, and the unrealistic expectations about LDS life that they sometimes hold, may be off-putting for established members (Ibid 101). Thus, difficult circumstances/situations (being divorced, single parents, old and single etc.) may hinder some LDS converts from becoming established members.

Stewart Jr.’s (2008: 355) research highlights that many LDS converts read less than 10 pages of the BOM and attend Sunday meetings “twice or less” before becoming LDS. Such converts may become disenchanted/disillusioned as the excitement of recruitment/baptism is followed by arduous or seemingly pointless membership routines (Decoo 1996: 108-109). Stewart Jr. (2008: 355) describes recruits from high-retaining missions reading LDS scripture daily, attending religious meetings for at least a month before baptism, and forming stable relationships with “active members”. For Decoo (1996: 113), recruits/converts need to be integrated into LDS communities before and after baptism to help them deal with conflicts with family members, and to receive undemanding callings just after baptism to not feel overwhelmed. However, LDS member routines may have become off-putting for converts through an official LDS move in 1980 which incorporated weekly activities into a three-hour Sunday schedule, and LDS communal life may struggle to flourish outside the USA (Shipps 1994/2001: 76-77). Keifert (2004: 260) points towards testimonies at Testimony Sunday Sacrament meetings being predictable and “rhetorical”. Gooren (2008: 372) discusses young, authoritarian, Central American LDS leaders not delegating authority effectively, which may lead to Sunday School teachers just following instructional manuals and new members passively accepting rather than discovering LDS teachings/practices for themselves. Drawing

on O'Dea (1957: 120), Gooren (2008: 366-367) highlights that the new Central American LDS converts he observed often lost contact with influential missionaries quickly, while having "to deal with" local leaders, pay tithing, and offer prayers/testimonies at meetings. When they received time-consuming callings, this either "raised their self-esteem" and strengthened their integration/commitment or pushed them towards "inactivity" (Ibid 367).

Quick recruitment journeys may encourage free-riders (passive benefit-seekers) rather than sincere-minded investigators to become LDS (Stewart Jr. 2008: 354; Glad 2009: 156-157). Busy professional people may be encouraged to investigate LDS religiosity on audio-visual media in their own free time and, if necessary, over a long time (Decoo 1996: 110-113). However, the LDS may be forced to quickly recruit converts to sustain their congregation numbers, as they confront declining birth rates; attract more female than male members throughout all age groups; do not have enough males to fill local leadership positions; and many single members, especially "international women", struggle to find LDS spouses (Stewart Jr. 2008: 344-346). Thus, a small number of established members may constantly observe new converts entering the LDS field and quickly disappearing.

For Stewart Jr. (2008: 346-347), LDS growth needs to be based on missionary-member teamwork and having more local missionaries. However, LDS branches may fail to support recent converts through poor teamwork between missionaries and local members (Glad 2009: 157). Decoo (1996: 106) warns that overzealous established members, who may scorn watching television and listening to non-religious music, only read LDS scripture, and reject non-LDS academic study, may put recruits off baptism and new converts off becoming durable members. Moreover, converts may struggle to integrate into international LDS communities through sensing that birthright LDS view them as second-class members (Shipp 1994/2001: 80-81). For Mauss (2008: 15), LDS growth may be hindered by some members having to spend too much time and money travelling to meeting places. To fight against losing numbers in international settings, LDS missionaries need to develop effective methods of sustaining contact with recruits/converts who live in rural and small urban places (Stewart Jr. 2008: 343). Through attempting to build big congregations in large cities that are less reliant on foreign missionaries, the LDS may be slowing their international growth (Ibid 341-342). Busse Spencer (2008: 424-427) describes five branches in Novosibirsk, a city of around one-and-a-half million people, being assimilated into three larger properties of uniform design. Despite some members disappearing through disliking the less homely atmosphere of larger institutional branches and more expensive journeys to city centre locations, many

converts were recruited through established members becoming more welcoming towards outsiders.

2.5 Conclusion

My search for theoretical and empirical literature has enhanced my understanding of how recruits may move to LDS baptism and become different convert types. These issues may concern many factors such as age; pre-LDS background; deprivation; benefit-seeking; individual choice-making; LDS religious/social conditioning; and the wider Polish social world. In my literature search, I mention five modern, empirical studies which investigate LDS recruitment/conversion in European countries (Farrin 2009; Nabozny 2009; Trigeaud in Giordan 2009; Annus and Csepregi 2018; Rigal-Cellard 2018). However, I encountered no empirical studies which deal with recruitment to LDS baptism, the construction of different LDS convert types, and LTIs refraining from LDS baptism in modern-day Warsaw (or anywhere else). Thus, my research aims to fill this gap.

3. Methodology

3.1 General research issues

My research investigates how Poles are recruited to LDS baptism, and how different LDS types are constructed after baptism and LTIs refrain from becoming LDS. It discusses the various religious and social events that take place and how different types of participants co-exist inside the Warsaw LDS field. Moreover, it assesses how pre-LDS background; LDS religious training; LDS interaction; and the wider Polish social world may foster or hinder LDS recruitment/conversion. In this chapter, I discuss how my qualitative data collection instruments explored all these issues; which philosophical and theoretical perspectives influenced my interpretive approach; how I designed and implemented my research; and how my investigative role played out during the research.

3.2 Philosophical and theoretical influences

While quantitative researchers try to generalise their findings from persons to populations, interpretive researchers seek to uncover multiple perspectives to attain a wide understanding about their research issues (Spickard and Landres 2002: 1-2; Charmaz 2008: 126-127). Interpretivists believe that a “constant process of becoming” in human life cannot be examined statically in a laboratory, because data will be missed that emerges in “lived experience as a process” (Herman-Kinney and Verschaeve 2003: 217). Through viewing humans as “dynamic, constantly changing” entities, interpretivists use qualitative research methods across time and space to build up their findings (Ibid). In this sense, I used participant observation (PO) and interviewing to collect and analyse “minute details” about my field participants, to attain thematic information indicating “what kind” of Poles come to practise different forms of LDS faith or remain non-LDS inside the Warsaw LDS field (Spickard and Landres 2002: 1-2).

To create meaning from the events I observed and the information I gained from interviewing participants, a symbolic interactionist perspective underpinned my long-term stay inside the Warsaw LDS field, with the participants’ actions and opinions/perceptions having a central position in my analysis (Charmaz 2008: 127). This involved highlighting the actions and processes through which Polish LDS converts and LTIs, as active reflective beings, create and negotiate meanings to construct their (non-) LDS identities (Ibid 189). Symbolic interactionism (SI) is a microscopic sociological technique which assesses how individuals in everyday situations create/recreate their social worlds through using symbols:

speech, body language, pictures etc. (Quist-Adade 2018: 17). SI emphasises how social actors co-construct their social worlds through “joint interaction” with other people, and rejects a determinist view that individuals are dominated/controlled by social structures such as the state, family, social class etc. (Ibid). The American social psychologist Herbert Blumer coined the SI label at the University of Chicago in 1937 (Ibid: 18). SI only became a “prominent theoretical perspective in American sociology” during the 1960s, as two schools evolved with opposing views: Blumer’s Chicago School and Manford Kuhn’s University of Iowa School (Ibid 18, 26). Both schools agree that people are symbol-users who create their social worlds through interacting and taking on roles (Ibid 18). While the Chicago School stresses that humans are not controlled by social or psychological forces, and can create their destinies through becoming powerful “actors” in sometimes “spontaneous”/“unpredictable” ways, the Iowa School emphasises that people attain core selves shaped by powerful social structures which make their behaviour predictable (Ibid: 18-19). The Chicago School stresses that individuals are freely changing entities, while the Iowa School emphasises that human personality and social organisation are shaped through interaction being “constrained” by core selves and social structures (Ibid 19).

The two main SI schools have different approaches to investigating and building theory about the social world (Quist-Adade 2018: 19). While the Iowa School adopts a “scientific, quantitative research methodology” and “more deterministic” view of human behaviour, the Chicago School adopts a “humanistic, qualitative research methodology” focusing on the free/rational agency of people and how individuals socially develop through small group interaction (Ibid 19-20). In general, SI explores how interaction is negotiated as people use symbols and interpret the meaning of each other’s actions in interpersonal situations through “naming, categorizing, and orienting themselves to objects”, while viewing “themselves as objects” and creating “self-image” by responding to others (Ibid 20). It points towards social reality being created through symbols being used to produce a “shared frame of meaning” which results in human behaviour being organised and interpreted in ever-changing patterns of work/business, family, leisure, religious practice etc. (Ibid). SI highlights that humans assign meaning to situations together by calling on beliefs/values from past experience, which creates ongoing inter-subjective reality through which people adapt their behaviour “to meet the needs” of “immediate social” environments (Ibid 20-21). Thus, SI views social reality as not being pre-existent but created/recreated through individual selves constructing meaning together through using symbols (Ibid 21).

SI studies how individuals work out appropriate forms of behaviour through “imitating” other people and adopting roles in “small-scale interpersonal relationships” (Quist-Adade 2018: 21-22). While role-playing, people become objects through “seeing” themselves “from the subjective perspective of others” (Aldiabat and Le Navanec 2011: 1066). Stable enduring conceptions of the self may be developed through people using their minds to picture themselves as objects in social situations and other people’s minds (Quist-Adade 2018: 22; Aldiabat and Le Navanec 2011: 1064). As symbols are combined together in countless ways, interactive communication is formed through language shaping “thinking and perception”, creating human consciousness, and functioning as a “repository and source of meaning” (Quist-Adade 2018: 23-24). Aldiabat and Le Navanec (2011: 1065) point towards objects being categorised into “physical objects” (church, temple etc.); “social objects” (recruits, converts etc.); and “abstract objects” (goodness, sin etc.). For SI, “everything in life” has “multiple meanings” as “all objects” and “abstract ideas” are assigned “names” during social interaction (Quist-Adade 2018: 24). People’s minds produce ideas/opinions through thinking, with everybody being able to “interpret the symbols” of shared language and to assess the role of others, which results in people finding “new meaning and different perspectives in life” (Ibid). Thus, SI shows how people “make decisions and form opinions” to construct “social reality” together (Ibid).

SI highlights that human minds are constructed through people interacting with others and their inner selves (Quist-Adade 2018: 24). While rehearsing for future action with others, individuals carry out internal reflections to restrict inappropriate and select appropriate forms of behaviour (Quist-Adade 2018: 24; Aldiabat and Le Navanec 2011: 1065). This process intensifies when individuals negotiate the meaning of social reality with people they are “emotionally and psychologically committed” to (Quist-Adade 2018: 25). An SI approach to studying social interaction involves observing how participants “assign shared meanings to the objects and symbols they encounter” in “joint actions”, and how “shared meanings” and individual “selves” are “created, recreated, contested”, and negotiated/renegotiated “to facilitate interaction” in groups (Ibid 28-29). Social interaction does not always result in “human well-being”, as people receive “rewards and costs” (Aldiabat and Le Navanec 2011: 1065). Societies are made up of many different kinds of social worlds constructed through the symbolic interaction of countless selves and others, with only the “grounded empirical world open to observation” allowing researchers to investigate such phenomena (Quist-Adade 2018: 29).

When social interaction is viewed through only the researcher's eyes and meaning is created by his/her interpretation, the term constructivism comes into play (Crotty 1998: 58). Constructivists/constructionists believe that there is no objective truth waiting to be discovered, as meaning arises through individual minds reflecting on what they observe and groups of minds negotiating the meaning of shared interests together (Crotty 1998: 8-9, 58; Grbich 2006/2013: 7). They highlight that people construct meaning in different ways even when focusing on the same phenomenon (Crotty 1998: 9). However, constructivists reject an extreme subjectivist view that meaning is only imposed on research by the researcher himself/herself, stressing that it is co-created through ongoing interplay between the researcher, research issues, and participants (Ibid). For constructivists, meaning is created through "interplay between subject and object", with it not being simply "imposed on the object by the subject" (Ibid). Constructivists view social reality as "fluid and changing", with research "knowledge" being "constructed jointly" through interaction and "consensus" between the researcher and researched group (Grbich 2006/2013: 7). The "understandings" that researchers "impose through interpretation" are created by frames of meaning "derived from their own life experiences", and an intersubjective "reconstruction of views" is formed through researcher interaction with others (Ibid). I created my understanding of my main research issues through negotiating their multiple meanings as an ongoing interpretive process with Polish LDS converts and LTIs in Warsaw.

3.3 Research design and methods

Researchers create "procedures" to measure a "construct's" (central research question's) "conceptual definition" (Neuman 1994/2014: 207). This "social measurement" requires researchers to talk with people and observe their behaviour (Ibid 206). While using various methods to measure different aspects of a "specific conceptual definition", researchers operate within "practical constraints" concerning time, participant availability etc. (Ibid 207). Through all research being different, every research project requires a unique methodological approach/design (Crotty 1998: 13-14). For Steigenga (2014: 414), "measuring religious change requires a methodology" that captures multiple "causal factors and gradations of conversion". Qualitative interviewing "must be complemented with" PO to "capture the complexities of conversion careers", while "non-converts" must be interviewed to not miss "half of the story" (Ibid). I employed PO to empirically document actions/behaviour and events related to Polish LDS recruitment/conversion, and interviewed converts and LTIs to discover what LDS recruitment/conversion meant to them. Both my data collection methods

were open to adaptation for pursuing less visible events, actions/behaviour, and opinions concerning my main research issues.

O'Reilly (2009: 2-3) distinguishes between ethnography being a “methodology”, a set of ideas and criteria for conducting research rooted in the Chicago School of Sociology; PO being a “method” of data collection; and fieldwork being a “period of primary data collection” in specific locations as part of the research process alongside the literature review, data analysis, write-up etc. Ethnographic fieldwork involves gaining access to a field; finding participants; developing an insider role; leaning towards participation or observation; developing rapports with participants; finding gatekeepers (participants who offer wider access inside the field); retaining an impartial perspective; and avoiding going native (Ibid 3). Authentic inductive research “evolves in design” throughout a study and involves maintaining contact with participants; watching what happens and listening to what is said, and asking questions (combining PO and interviewing); acknowledging the role of theory in making grounded generalisations about findings; acknowledging one’s researcher role; and considering historical/macro factors (Ibid).

Throughout research work, access to a group must be “negotiated and renegotiated” with different people (O'Reilly 2009: 6). Gaining access is rarely a one-off, official routine, as it requires a constant striving to maintain ““cultural acceptability”” with participants and gatekeepers at different locations (Mulhall 2002: 310). When I started my research in early 2008, I had been an investigator inside the Warsaw LDS field for six months, so becoming a researcher meant that I had to change my role inside an environment I was already familiar with. My new role involved observing and assessing the “relationships, processes, and social categories” of people at both Warsaw LDS branches (van der Waal 2009: 31). I had to monitor the “way people move, dress, interact and use space” to develop an understanding of “how particular social settings” inside the Warsaw LDS field “are constructed” (Mulhall 2003: 307). My new role was greeted with suspicion from some participants who never felt the need or desire to participate in my research (O'Reilly 2009: 6-7). In response, I stressed that I was an independent researcher and explained my research issues to anybody who would listen, and, through using non-elevated/non-intimidatory language, convinced some people that my research would be “worthwhile” to take part in (Ibid 7).

PO allows interpretive researchers to enter the everyday interaction of a group to seek the trust of its members and be initiated into their shared “values, routines and social meanings” (Layder 1993: 40). Ethnographers may “spend several years” getting to know a research environment through repeatedly listening, watching, questioning, thinking etc., to make

greater “sense” of the participants’ lives there (Spickard and Landres 2002: 2-3). Meaningful research portrays “the natives” from an inside perspective built up over several years with a group (Ibid 3). PO aims to capture data in “natural circumstances” and settings where people operate, and to show how the “physical environment” influences behaviour (Mulhall 2003: 307-308). It can complement interviewing by providing a check on whether people “actually do” what they “say they do”, and, as an “ongoing dynamic activity”, it can assess “continually moving and evolving” processes that are being studied (Ibid). Moreover, PO can show how the “spatial organization of activities” reveals different categories of people (Ibid 308). The assigning of “socially relevant space” highlights the different levels of status in a community (van der Waal 2009: 31). However, the ethnographic approach of getting inside a community to study natives may be open to criticism, as “mere presence” does not “ensure insight”, with it not being completely possible to “see the world” through other people’s eyes (Spickard and Landres 2002: 4). Ethnographers may be accused of “mixing their own thoughts and concerns with those” of their participants (Ibid 5). Interview and PO data is “subject to” the researcher’s “interpretation”, as he/she chooses what to observe, who to interview, and how the resulting information is filtered and analysed (Mulhall 2002: 308). A rigorous methodology and routinised data collection may combat researcher “bias” through ethnographers justifying how they know what they know (Spickard and Landres 2002: 5). This may be done through fieldworkers transcribing interviews to increase their knowledge of a topic, constantly reflecting on what they see/hear in the field, and deciding how to develop this through further data collection (O’Reilly 2009: 14).

I did PO periodically between January 2008 and December 2019, with it becoming less intensive after 2012. My early PO role involved initiating an “ongoing process” of pursuing “meaning” related to my main research issues (O’Reilly 2009: 6). My initial aim was to visit as wide a range of Warsaw LDS religious/social events for as long as possible (Fetterman 2010: 39). My PO was not strictly focused but did seek information concerning my main research issues to develop a detailed picture of the Warsaw LDS world, and through observing easily accessible Sunday meetings, I was able to seek out more events (O’Reilly 2009: 6). For example, I soon started attending LDS baptisms at Wolska to take note of the people there, order of events, and forms of missionary/member-baptised person interaction that occurred. After this, I attended some weekday events for recruits/recent converts at Wolska. At Monday Chapel Home Evening and Thursday Institute meetings, I documented how different forms of action/behaviour may help to draw recruits and recent converts further into the Warsaw LDS world. Such smaller “private settings” allowed me to observe and get to

know participants at closer quarters than larger “public settings” (O’Reilly 2009: 7). Thus, my PO alternated between bigger public and smaller private events so I could collect varied data.

Researchers must decide how close they should get to participants and situations in their field (Neyland 2008: 80). Regarding Gold’s (1958) traditional categories of PO roles, I never enacted a complete participant role of joining the LDS and concealing my research motives, as this would have deceived my participants (Layder 1993: 40). I also never joined the LDS with the participants being aware of my research, as this would have negated the “distance” from the Warsaw LDS organisation necessary to produce an ethnography (Neyland 2008: 81). On the other hand, I never enacted a complete observer role, because I needed to build rapports with participants, find interviewees, and gather interpretive data for assessing my main research issues (Neyland 2008: 81; Dawson 2010: 175; Davies, C.A. 1999: 71). To not disturb natural dynamics/relationships between field participants, I adopted a half outsider-half insider role on the periphery of both Warsaw LDS branches, steering slightly in favour of an observer role (Neyland 2008: 81). I increased and decreased the “stand apart” aspect of my PO role, as, depending on the situation, I sometimes needed distance and other times interaction with participants (Mulhall 2003: 307). The latter involved developing a “social network”, and interacting with missionaries and Polish converts and recruits to gain access to many different religious/social events (Davies, C.A. 1999: 71-72). Through observing many events, I got to know multiple actors at “frontstage” and “backstage” settings across the Warsaw LDS world (van der Waal 2009: 33). While doing this, I tried to conform to LDS appearance, behaviour, and language norms (Fetterman 2010: 46-47; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 66, 79; O’Reilly 2009: 10). However, I never dressed in a suit and tie to avoid being accused of mimicking male LDS dress codes. Similar to Neitz (2002: 39-40), who never took communion with the Catholic groups she observed, I refrained from taking communion at LDS Sunday Sacrament meetings, as it may have been viewed as a sign of me “belonging” to the Warsaw LDS community and “believing” in their religion. Thus, I avoided crossing over a line of what was unwise/uncomfortable for a participant observer to do inside the field (Ibid 39).

Throughout my research, I sensed that the participants who I developed positive rapports with knew about my researcher role without this dominating “their minds” (O’Reilly 2009: 9). However, I did encounter barriers to accessing some events, and blending into the background of the Warsaw LDS set-up became difficult as more participants became aware of my research, non-Polish “ethnicity”, and Catholic background (Ibid 8). I never hid the latter, because I felt it would have deceived my participants in some way. Moreover, I accepted that

access to some sensitive areas of the field would be turned down (O'Reilly 2009: 8). This happened when I requested to observe a Sunday Relief Society meeting at Wolska, and (the Poland Mission) President Engbjerg gave me permission, but the Wolska Relief Society President blocked the move, so I dropped the idea. After a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 3-01-10, the Wolska Relief Society President, a middle-aged Polish woman, told me that she was suspicious of non-LDS doing research on the LDS because they wrote negative things. Hence, she did not distinguish between non-LDS writers who indicted the LDS and others who wrote about them in a balanced way. After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Raławicka on 15-01-12, an American, middle-aged, male branch leader told me that nobody liked being observed, and gave me (the Poland Mission) President Nielson's telephone number so I could discuss the possibility of attending YSA Institute meetings at Raławicka. Here, I felt that access to a sensitive part of the Warsaw LDS world was possibly being debated or obstructed "in subtle ways" behind the scenes (O'Reilly 2009: 9). Both episodes above helped me to recognise that some situations were "'off-limits'" to me (Mulhall 2003: 312).

Despite creating distance from participants to avoid the threat of going native, I did build some close friendships, and two Polish male converts became gatekeepers. Stefan from Wolska lent me the Mehr (2002) book about Polish LDS history, while Damian from Wierzbno/Raławicka offered insights about how the Warsaw YSA operated. Without these "key informants", my study would have been "poorer" (Neyland 2008: 83). My two gatekeepers and some older/younger missionaries informed me about upcoming Warsaw LDS religious/social events. However, at a Vietnamese restaurant on 31-05-11, Damian revealed that some Polish LDS converts may have opposed my research because I was friendly with Stefan, and at the Bierhalle bar, Arkadia shopping centre on 4-06-11, Franciszek, a convert interviewee from Wolska, told me that a prominent Polish LDS member at Wolska may have been suspicious of me due to my friendship with Stefan. Thus, I recognise that working with my gatekeepers may not have always worked to my advantage.

During my PO work, my choice of narrative note-taking technique depended on how comfortable I felt at Warsaw LDS events. At Sunday meetings, baptisms etc., I sat at the back of the congregation in non-intrusive positions, making notes in small notebooks about the activities and speeches which took place. Shortly afterwards, at home, I placed my notes on one side of Microsoft Word file data tables, and added reflective/interpretive comments on the other side. At less formal events like Testimony Sunday meals, I did not write anything to

avoid drawing attention to myself. Instead, I wrote reports onto Microsoft Word file data tables soon afterwards to limit the inaccuracy of my storytelling.

My “extensive field notes” commented on as much interaction and as many participants as possible, with my long-term observation scheme not being strictly unstructured/open-ended or structured/closed-ended (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 219-220). The observation scheme contained features of “structured observation”, as I made notes about “physical and verbal behaviour” with a “predetermined” focus on my main research issues (Mulhall 2003: 306). It also focused on standout features of the Warsaw LDS field, especially the types of events that take place and participants that co-exist there. While assessing events periodically over many years, I noticed recurring actions and processes and came to understand the roles performed by different participants, as Polish recruits were led to LDS baptism, different types of converts were constructed, and LTIs remained non-LDS. Through distinguishing between dominant and passive converts, I recognised where most were positioned in the hegemonic structure of the two Warsaw LDS branches (Charmaz 2008: 22-23). While monitoring Polish male converts working as (assistant) branch leaders and leading events, I saw how they operated below a mainly American/foreign leadership but above less active Polish converts in the Warsaw LDS status hierarchy.

The PO data gathering and analysis procedures were time-consuming, and I sometimes sensed myself collecting masses of unconnected data (Royce and Kemper 2002: xxix; Charmaz 2008: 23). From the start, I managed such difficulties through having an idea of what “minimum core data” concerning my main research issues needed to be collected (Royce and Kemper 2002: xxix). I was cautious about noting down any non-formulaic Polish speech during events/meetings, because, with my intermediate level of Polish, I did not want to record any inaccurate information. Polish is thought to be more difficult for native English speakers to acquire than many other European languages (<https://www.state.gov/m/fsi/sls/c78549.htm> accessed 25-04-19). However, my intermediate Polish did allow me to gain some information from non-English speaking participants in short, informal conversations, as I do speak Polish in basic/everyday situations as a second language.

My note-taking seemed to be intrusive for some participants possibly irritated by my extended stay inside the Warsaw LDS field (Mulhall 2003: 312). At a change of Poland Mission leadership event at Wolska on 13-07-10, Roman, an LTI non-interviewee from Wolska, told me that the LDS would be less suspicious if I was less open about my research. After two baptisms at Wolska on 16-04-11, Paweł, a convert interviewee from Wierzbno/Raławicka, joked that my Western sense of freedom was viewed with suspicion by Poles

who had had their identity infiltrated by Bourbons, Hapsburgs, Germans, and Russians over the last few hundred years. At our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 31-05-11, Damian (Wierzbno/Raławicka gatekeeper) told me that some LDS criticised me for taking up space and missionary attention and blocking conversion numbers when I was writing in notebooks at meetings. Moreover, he acknowledged that the LDS may have wanted me to get aggressive with them so they could call the police and stop my research. At the same place on 20-04-12, Damian revealed that the Polish LDS would be less suspicious if I was Polish, and feared me writing something negative about them. At a meeting with two YMMs on 22-12-11 at the LDS Nowy Świat site, one acknowledged that he had observed some hostility towards me at a recent Christmas (“Wigilia”) party/carol singing event at Wolska. Such antipathy towards my non-LDS researcher role appears to mirror Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: 3658) experience where many French LDS refused to complete her questionnaires; disapproved of her “inquisitiveness”; and were suspicious of her doing a “scholarly study” about them.

Another problem concerned Polish participants being unaware of the purpose and procedures of qualitative research. At an LDS General Conference session screening from Salt Lake City at Wolska on 5-04-09, Marek, a convert interviewee from Wierzbno/Raławicka, told me that researchers needed to interview a large sample of participants for statistical analysis to take place, while my research was trying to drill into the souls of a small number of Polish LDS. Through having sensitive research issues and many participants not knowing the value of qualitative research techniques, I felt myself being viewed as a “provisional insider” from participants who accepted my academic intent; “potential real-insider” from others viewing me as a potential convert; and “counterfeit insider” from some who felt threatened by my outsider role/status (Dawson 2010: 177-180). Some participants seemed to accept my researcher role until my “novel presence in the setting” started wearing off (Charmaz 2008: 21). While some participants grew more distant the longer I stayed inside the field, others sometimes made me feel welcome and other times not. I tried to manage such problems through maintaining trust and positive relationships with participants (Mulhall 2003: 312). This involved initiating conversations in English or Polish, with some converts and most LTIs being friendly and non-antagonistic towards my researcher role. At a ‘Szkolenie Dla Nauczyciela Ewangelii’ (Course for Gospel Teachers) meeting at Raławicka on 28-01-12, a female convert non-interviewee from Wierzbno/Raławicka asked me if my research was a “hobby”, and smiled when I told her that I felt God through Eastern Orthodox and pre-Vatican II Catholic music. Inside the Warsaw LDS field, I had many friendly conversations like this which balanced out the suspicion that some Polish LDS felt towards

my research. In hindsight, for my note-taking, I could have jotted down shorter phrases to reduce the level of suspicion towards my researcher role (Mulhall 312).

Interviewing individuals allowed me to access the “private realm of ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings” of Polish converts and LTIs concerning what they did in certain circumstances and “how they felt about” their actions (O’Reilly 2009: 21). Between 2008 and 2012, some participants agreed to be interviewed, giving me opportunities to gain thematic information about my main research issues. My options for getting/selecting interviewees was relatively limited, as my rapport-building had to overcome a certain amount of suspicion towards my researcher role. Despite this, I managed to interview representatives of “important divisions” within the Warsaw LDS field, including quiet/shy converts (O’Reilly 2009: 22). I did 28 recorded interviews with 27 Polish LDS converts, 27 individual interviews (two converts received both semi-structured and unstructured formats) and one married couple interview, and five recorded interviews with individual LTIs. Twelve convert interviewees (seven males/five females) and two male LTI interviewees were from Wolska, and 15 convert interviewees (seven males/eight females) and three male LTI interviewees from Wierzbno/Raławicka. The interviewees came from a wide age, educational, and occupational range, which allowed me to gather many varied opinions about my main research issues (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 50). Of course, I do not claim that the opinions of my 27 Polish convert interviewees represent the much higher number of Polish LDS converts who live in or around Warsaw and other parts of Poland, or that my five Polish LTI interviewees represent the countless numbers of recruits who encounter the LDS in Warsaw/Poland without joining them.

My interviews gathered Polish LDS convert opinions about my main research issues for contrastive analysis. While it is difficult for participants to influence a researcher’s eyes during PO, it is easier for them to influence the direction of discussion during interviewing (Mulhall 2002: 308). Moreover, while PO builds up a general picture of research issues, interviewing may provide specific pieces of information within the picture (Ibid). During semi-structured interviews, researchers ask “predetermined” questions and listen to answers with a “specific purpose in mind”, trying to attain certain kinds of information (Herman-Kinney and Verschaeve 2003: 230). Semi-structured interview questions may elicit a wide range of “relevant data”, but not all interviewees may understand the questions in the same way as the interviewer (Ibid).

In 2008, I recruited 17 Polish LDS converts for semi-structured interviews. First, an older American male missionary from Wolska found me some established Polish converts from

both Warsaw LDS branches to interview. Then, Stefan (Wolska gatekeeper) found me more varied Polish convert interviewees, including less active members, from both branches. At a change of Poland LDS Mission leadership event at Wolska on 13-07-10, Stefan told me that Franciszek, a convert from Wolska, “wouldn’t mind” being interviewed. Previously, I had asked Stefan to see if Franciszek would be interviewed, as he did not fully conform to strict male LDS dress codes. My selection of interviewees was at first “opportunistic”, restricted to established members offered to me as ideal types, but afterwards, Stefan led me towards more “hidden groups and individuals” (O’Reilly 2009: 22). Thus, I went beyond a limited receiving of idealised images given to outsider researchers, as Stefan almost worked as a co-researcher finding me varied converts to interview (Mulhall 2002: 309; van der Waal 2009: 32). However, as all cultures have “their own systems of status and prestige”, through working with some Polish LDS converts rather than others, this may have bred some resentment which may have blocked me from gaining more interviewees (Royce and Kemper 2002: xxx).

Between 6th March and 14th September 2008, I did semi-structured interviews with seven converts from Wolska, four males (Bruno/Dawid/Radek/Stefan) and three females (Barbara/Edyta/Gabriela), in side-rooms at Wolska. Six were done after all Sunday meetings had ended, and one while a Thursday Evening Institute meeting for recruits/recent converts was taking place. Four were conducted in English and three in Polish with my Polish wife doing the Polish-English translation simultaneously. Two converts were advanced English speakers (Dawid/Stefan) and two intermediate (Barbara/Edyta). Between 10th February and 23rd November 2008, I did semi-structured interviews with 10 converts from Wierzbno/Raławicka, four males (Marek/Michał/Paweł/Romuald) and six females (Alicja/Alina/Dagmara/Jola/Marysia/Weronika). Eight took place in side-rooms at Wierzbno: five after all Sunday meetings had ended, two just before them, and another on a Saturday afternoon with only the interviewee and myself inside the building. Besides this, one took place at Wolska after an African LDS baptism, and another outside the Wolska building on a Saturday morning. Seven interviews were conducted in English and three in Polish with my Polish wife again doing the Polish-English translation simultaneously. Four converts were advanced English speakers (Alicja/Jola/Marek/Romuald), two upper-Intermediate (Alina/Paweł), and one intermediate (Michał).

All the semi-structured interviews took place not long after they were offered, as there was no guarantee they would remain available later on. At this time, in the first year of my research, I had my four main issues in mind but not fully thought out. As a novice researcher, I created 31 focused questions, with a few containing 2-3 different features, relating to my

four main issues (see Appendix 1). My Polish wife translated the 31 questions into Polish, and Stefan (Wolska gatekeeper) replaced a few terms with specialised Polish LDS language e.g. *świadek* for testimony. The resulting question sheet contained 15 social issue and 16 religion-centred questions in English and Polish. The social issue questions elicited convert opinions about all four main issues, while the religion-centred ones prompted opinions about the LDS religious training and pre-LDS background/experience issues.

From the social issue questions, the ones about the wider social world probed for information about Poles having more freedom to choose their own religion in post-communist and post-John Paul II times. The wider social world questions also sought opinions concerning how the contemporary Western macro-ideology of political correctness and the EU may be challenging traditional Polish culture. My questions about pre-LDS background/experience sought information concerning whether the converts had always been interested in religion/theology; had looked for something more from their previous religion; had believed in their previous religion's teachings; and if they could see any similarities between their previous religion and LDS religiosity. A few personal information questions at the end of the interview sheet sought details about the interviewee's name; occupation; geographical mobility; and Warsaw branch they attended.

My questions about LDS interaction probed for information about the Polish converts' sense of Christian social participation with the LDS; how they viewed other people since becoming LDS; whether they had felt a need to overcome alcohol; and their impression of male and female roles in LDS family life. In contrast, my questions about LDS religious training sought information about the converts being attracted to unusual/fascinating aspects of LDS religiosity, and being obedient to God's laws through adhering to LDS religiosity. They also probed for views on LDS music; baptism lessons with missionaries; unique religious teachings; praying directly to God the Father; LDS baptism, scripture, testimonies, and temples; Joseph Smith/other LDS leaders; and Sunday Sacrament meetings.

Despite the amount of research questions, my semi-structured interviews did elicit some recruitment/conversion stories, and the questions about temples proved invaluable for working out the different types of Polish LDS converts I was dealing with. However, after recording/transcribing the interviews, I could see that while some converts had used the questions to reflect on significant recruitment/conversion experiences, others had struggled to respond with some questions being omitted through lack of time (Layder 1993: 41). Appendix 2 shows the different religion-centred and social issue questions that a few of the Polish converts received during their semi-structured interviews. I constructed many predetermined

questions to cover as many aspects of my main issues as possible (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 152; Herman-Kinney 2003: 230). This enforced many prior concepts onto the research, so I sometimes struggled to get through an appropriate amount and balance of social issue and religion-centred questions. Interviewee answers were sometimes reduced to a mechanical superficiality, especially when time was limited, as too many questions blocked “in-depth responses” (O’Reilly 2009: 20). Nonetheless, the interviews yielded thematic information about my four main issues.

To counter the problems mentioned above, I did 11 unstructured interviews with 12 Polish LDS converts, seven from Wolska and five from Wierzbno/Raławicka. These interviews contained no “prespecified sets of questions” which gave me more time and freedom to “generate questions in situ” (Herman-Kinney and Verschaeve 2003: 230). The converts were invited to discuss important features of their recruitment/conversion stories, and themes emerged naturally rather than being forced into play (Charmaz 2008: 32; O’Reilly 2009: 21). Under less stressful conditions, the interviewees reflected on their pre-LDS backgrounds and many of the LDS religious training and social issues that came up during semi-structured interviewing. Through encouraging convert storytelling and asking in situ questions, I managed to elicit reflective responses, even from passive interviewees (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 27-28; Fetterman 2010: 41-42).

Six unstructured interviews with converts from Wolska occurred between 27th March 2009 and 15th August 2010. Five took place in side-rooms at Wolska, four after all Sunday meetings had ended and one after a Sunday Sacrament meeting, and the other on a Friday evening at my flat. Five one-to-one interviews were done in English, four with advanced English speakers (Stefan/Dawid/Lech/Martyna) and one with an upper-intermediate speaker (Franciszek). A husband-wife (Wojciech/Zofia) interview came about through the couple insisting on being interviewed together with their teenage daughter doing the Polish-English translation simultaneously for her mother, while her father occasionally spoke (intermediate) English. In small group interviews, researchers can gather varied opinions about themes/issues through the participants responding towards each other’s views (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 239). However, the Polish-speaking wife dominated my husband-wife interview, with her husband sitting quietly in the background. The data was mainly constructed on the wife’s terms, the accuracy of which depended on the quality of her daughter’s Polish-English translation skills. The daughter was an advanced English speaker so the interview proceeded smoothly.

Five unstructured interviews with Wierzbno/Raławicka converts occurred between 30th May 2010 and 29th January 2012. They took place in various locations: a Wierzbno side-room after a Sunday Sacrament meeting; a Raławicka side-room after all Sunday meetings had ended; a convert's workplace on a Friday afternoon; a convert's flat after she had attended a Christmas Party at Raławicka on a Friday evening; and my flat on a Sunday evening. The interviews away from the Wierzbno/Raławicka branch building were uninterrupted, with the interviewees looking relaxed. Three interviews were done in English with two advanced speakers (Celina/Damian) and one upper-intermediate speaker (Józef), while the interviews with Patrycja and Szymon were done in Polish with my Polish wife doing the Polish-English translation simultaneously.

At Warsaw LDS events, it was easy to recognise recruits, as they often wore less formal clothes and were flanked by YMs especially if they were viewed as heading towards baptism. The constant turnover of short-term investigators at Warsaw branch meetings appeared to be equally divided between males and females of varied age. To avoid causing conflict, I never interviewed any recently arrived recruits, but did interview a few LTIs as they attracted less attention from YMs through offering little prospect of becoming LDS. The LTIs I encountered at both Warsaw branches were almost entirely middle-aged, single males.

Between December 2008 and November 2010, I did unstructured individual interviews with five male LTIs, two from Wolska (Adam/Witek) and three from Wierzbno/Raławicka (Bogusław/Maczek/Tomasz). Four interviews took place in the second half of 2010 after I had built good rapports with a few LTIs at both Warsaw branches. At Wierzbno/Raławicka, I got to know Maczek who introduced me to Bogusław and Tomasz. All these were practising Catholics who felt comfortable with my Catholic background. I interviewed Witek in a cafe, and the four others individually at my flat. Again, away from the Warsaw LDS branches, the interviewees looked relaxed. The interviews with Adam and Witek were done in English as both were advanced English speakers, while the three others were carried out in Polish with my Polish wife doing the Polish-English translation simultaneously.

As already suggested, some converts interviewed at the Warsaw LDS branches may have felt inhibited about what they could say about complex/sensitive issues concerning their recruitment/conversion experiences. In contrast, the converts and LTIs who were interviewed away from the Warsaw LDS branches may have felt freer speaking about my main research issues. Regarding the interviews themselves, I encountered the following kinds of problems:

- The data collection, transcription, and thematic coding/analysis procedures were time-consuming.
- Some interviewees lightly touched on many issues, while others offered more details about fewer topics.
- Defensive LDS party-line responses and non-party line answers given to please a non-LDS researcher were impossible to safeguard against (O'Reilly 2009: 21).
- Some interviewees may have been unaware of or unable to describe their strongest motives for joining the LDS and becoming different convert types, or becoming LTIs (Corbin and Strauss 2009: 29-30).
- My British nationality, non-LDS status, quite tall height, bearded face etc. may have hindered access to some interviewees and affected the outcomes of some interviews (O'Reilly 2009: 11; Herman-Kinney and Verschaeve 2003: 230).
- Some female interviewees may have felt uncomfortable with a male interviewer, while some male ones may have feared that their "self-disclosure" would prompt a "loss of public persona" (Charmaz 2008: 27-28).
- Some details may have been lost through some interviewees using English as a second language, and through the Polish-English translation process when interviewees spoke Polish (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 35).

Despite such problems, some interviewees did open up, especially during unstructured interviews, with me being "open-minded about their way of life" (O'Reilly 2009: 11). Through my wife having worked in the English department at the University of Warsaw for many years; having lived in the USA and UK; and being proficient in English and Polish, some detail will have been lost in live translation, but not much. However, information gained from interviews cannot be viewed as entirely accurate, because, as mentioned in 2.1, narratives about the self and past events are "subject to revision with each new telling" (Davidman 2002: 19). As a narrative account is constructed through researcher-interviewee interaction, its "representation in textual form is shaped and limited" by the interviewee's willingness in particular situations to tell certain stories and language ability "to construct the story" (Ibid). Over time, the interviewee's personal situation and view of past experience change, inclining him/her "to recall and tell different stories" about the same phenomenon (Ibid). Through converts not recalling past experiences perfectly, they may exaggerate the religious or social features of their recruitment/conversion at different times after joining a religion. Thus, I neither deny nor affirm the validity of the interviewee accounts, with the

comments and stories of my Polish convert interviewees providing meaningful recollections of and views on LDS recruitment/conversion, and my Polish LTI interviewees on why recruits may remain interested in the LDS without joining them.

3.4 Qualitative data analysis

Between 2012 and 2014, I increasingly recognised that I had collected enough information about my main research issues, and needed to organise my data in an “accessible” way to provide “detailed information and some general observations” about the theoretical “significance” of what I had “uncovered” (O’Reilly 2009: 14). This involved coding (sorting, organising, and summarising) my data for readers to see the thematic patterns that had emerged, and theorising through connecting higher concepts to the data to “draw conclusions” that could be “generalised in some way” (Ibid 13-14). Hence, I followed a “scientific model” of collecting/analysing data and presenting the findings, with an awareness of my main issues directing these procedures (Ibid 15). The “collected data” raised “questions about theory” which lead to more data collection/analysis and an “ongoing development of ideas” (Ibid). This involved “people, settings, groups and themes” being “included or excluded” according to access issues and my decision-making concerning levels of interest and importance (Ibid).

Through transferring my PO data from notebooks to Microsoft Word file tables, I created 918 pages of data between 2008 and 2013 and much less afterwards. This process was most intensive between 2010 and 2012 when I collected 630 pages of PO data. Alongside this, I transcribed my 28 interviews with Polish LDS converts onto Microsoft Word file tables which produced 862 pages of data. My coding system involved assessing masses of PO and interview data for views concerning my four main issues, through which “my own impressionistic ideas” developed a coherent picture of my participants and the Warsaw LDS organisation (Humphreys and Watson 2009: 50). I labelled topics/themes and sub-themes (with dimensions/features) to the data as I uncovered findings related to my four main issues, and, over time, I was able to link concepts together that emerged from the data (O’Reilly 2009: 34-35; Grbich 2006/2013: 61-62). My data analysis system operated through interpretive interaction between myself (the researcher), the PO/interview data, and theoretical ideas that framed the research from the literature review and which emerged from the data analysis itself (O’Reilly 2009: 35). As my “word-by-word, line-by-line” analysis started, I allowed the data “to speak for itself” and to guide my attachment of “researcher-designed labels” (Grbich 2006/2013: 62, 66). The PO and interview data tables contained

transcription on one side and short “descriptive comments” regarding my four main issues on the other side to develop “insight” and “segmentation” of data (Grbich 2006/2013: 61). This labelling process involved assigning phrases that highlighted features of LDS recruitment/conversion and doing memo-writing which reflected on the meaning of the labels (O’Reilly 2009: 36; Grbich 2006/2013: 61).

My interpretive coding system grouped similar thematic patterns together as building blocks (O’Reilly 2009: 35-36; Grbich 2006/2013: 61). From my mass-scale PO and interview data, I created new tables to store similar thematic sections of data together (O’Reilly 2009: 39; Grbich 2006/2013: 61). As I noticed recurring themes/topics and sub-themes (with dimensions/features) related to my four main issues emerging from the data, I created Microsoft Word file tables for each main issue, and transferred blocks of coded data onto them. For example, significant data concerning LDS religious training was transferred to a corresponding coding table. In total, I produced 168 pages of PO data coding and 276 pages of interview data coding, containing ordered thematic information with similar phenomena and opinions being grouped together. For each main issue coding table, the themes/topics were constructed as phrases, while the sub-themes within the themes/topics and dimensions/features within the sub-themes were sentence-type structures. This inductive analysis system allowed me to build up thematic families in refined data (Charmaz 2008: 187; Corbin and Strauss 2008: 159-160). Through recognising common patterns and irregularities of opinion concerning my four main issues, I was able to construct a framework of coherent ideas (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 253-254).

In chapters 4-8, I use quantity expressions (*few, a few, several/some, quite a few, many* etc.) to discuss the frequency of interviewee views on themes/topics and sub-themes related to my main issues. Through my Polish convert interviewees not being asked the same and different amounts of questions, the quantity expressions only represent convenient descriptive tools. Appendix 3, an excerpt from my coding system, shows how some significant sub-themes (ii, v-viii) were grouped inside the religious search theme/topic (from the pre-LDS background main issue), and how many features/dimensions were grouped inside the sub-themes. Throughout my coding system, I used numbers to order the themes/topics and Latin numerals the sub-themes, without numbering the dimensions/features.

I also transcribed 95 pages of Polish LTI interview data. Through this being much smaller than the convert interview data, I did not create any smaller data tables. Instead, I coded my LTI interview texts through refining significant reflective comments into themes/topics, sub-themes, and dimensions/features in the initial data tables. In this way, I collected similar and

contrasting LTI opinions about my four main issues to compare/contrast with those of my Polish LDS convert interviewees.

After completing my data analysis, I was satisfied with the breadth of themes/topics, sub-themes, and dimensions/features that emerged concerning my four main issues, but felt that I needed a more clearcut expression of similarities and differences of opinion between the different types of Polish convert and LTI groups. In response, at the end of chapter 5, which examines pre-LDS background data, I reflect on what kind of recruits my different types of Polish LDS interviewees were before LDS baptism, and LTIs were at the time of their interviews. This involved making interpretations about what kinds of believers, deprivation sufferers, benefit seekers, religious seekers etc. the Polish converts and LTIs were before getting involved with the LDS. I also assess my findings from chapters 6-7 again, and at the end of chapter 7, make interpretations about which kinds of religious and social motivations had prompted different types of Polish LDS convert interviewees to become LDS and LTI interviewees to remain non-LDS.

Finally, I produced another set of Microsoft Word file data tables to compare/contrast different Polish convert type and LTI group views on the most spoken about topics. Here, 134 pages of coded data were created as for each main research issue, I gathered information together in separate tables for the core temple-goer, trainee temple-goer, and less active convert and LTI groups. Altogether, 16 (4x4) data tables were created to compare/contrast frequency of opinions concerning the most spoken about topics within and between the different Polish LDS convert and LTI groups. Appendix 4 shows how for the recruitment path theme/topic (from the LDS social interaction main issue), sub-themes were grouped together under three titles (1-3). Within the sub-themes, the main dimensions/features were also grouped this way (i-iv). While discussing this more explicit compare/contrast analysis of different Polish convert type and LTI group views on the most spoken about topics in chapter 9, I again use frequency expressions to report my findings.

3.5 Research credibility

For a researcher to attain qualitative credibility, “internal validity” necessitates “prolonged engagement” and building up “triangulation” in a field of study (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009: 26). Triangulation involves combining “multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, and inferences” in a study (Ibid 32-33). Researchers need to make native views and the “social context” of their “ethnographic enterprise” known (Spickard and Landres 2002: 10). My long-term research (LTR) incorporated many visits to

Wolska and Wierzbno/Raławicka to capture the “pace” of everyday communal life and “extraordinary” events at these sites (Royce and Kemper 2002: xv). LTR allows researchers to highlight that “*change and persistence*” are “regular features of human society” that have an impact on “the societies being studied” (Ibid xv-xvi). LTR varies according to the “length of time” spent studying a culture and duration “between field trips”, and has varying “goals” and forms of “dynamic” at “different times” (Ibid xvi). Between 2008 and 2012, I did interviews whenever I could, while my PO gained momentum between 2010 and 2012, when I entered the Warsaw LDS field more regularly, and then tapered off into brief periodic and isolated visits to the field, the last of which occurred in late 2019. My LTR went beyond a “single year” of fieldwork to capture the ongoing processes of people's lives, as I collected an “extreme diversity of information”, monitored people's responses to events, and included different “voices” over many years (Royce and Kemper 2002: xvii-xviii, xxi). I built up my “understanding” of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion through observing how the Polish LDS community changed shape across time and space (Ibid xxiii). For example, I recognised and documented the “motivations, strategies, processes and consequences” of young Polish LDS converts migrating to the West, especially the USA, to “better their lives”, which may have been missed through “short-term” study (Ibid xxiv). LTR may make the members of studied communities feel they are “something special”, and researchers may become “unofficial historians for the cultures” they study through ““history”” being “represented” by their “fieldwork” (Ibid xxv-xxvi). Spending “years in the field”, learning how to analyse key issues concerning “another culture”, allows researchers “to mature as professional anthropologists” and “competent ethnographers” (Ibid xxvii).

Charmaz (2008: 182-183) discusses general criteria for assessing constructivist grounded theory studies. “Credibility” means becoming familiar with the research setting and topic, and having sufficient data to support the findings and a comparison/contrast technique built into the research. “Originality” involves offering the readers a “new conceptual” shape and “theoretical significance” to “challenge, extend, or refine” understandings of research issues. “Resonance” requires emerging themes and concepts to offer other researchers meaningful views of the “studied experience” and the participants insights about their lives and social worlds. “Usefulness” involves offering meaningful interpretations of the main issues to help future researchers investigate similar and other areas of study. Overall, my research is a long-term, interpretive process which conceptualises what is “meaningful” about Polish LDS recruitment/conversion in Warsaw, as a “valuable contribution” to academic study (Charmaz 2008: 183).

Neuman (2014: 212) explains that for qualitative research, reliability and validity are “ideas that help to establish the truthfulness, credibility, or believability” of research findings. The qualitative notion of reliability requires researchers to use a “variety of techniques” to record data “consistently” (Ibid 218). Through studying ongoing “unstable” processes, researchers must show how “changing or developing interaction” between themselves, the people studied, and their main issues matures “over time” (Ibid). Qualitative researchers accept that “different researchers” will uncover different findings, because data collection is an “interactive process” in an “evolving setting” with a “unique mix of measures that cannot be repeated”, and that data analysis is an interpretive/selective process (Ibid). Thus, the “diverse measures and interactions” of researchers can “illuminate” different aspects of the same “subject matter” (Ibid).

The qualitative notion of validity concerns achieving “authenticity”, with researchers having to provide an “inside view” of the “lived experiences of the people” they study and a “detailed account of how” they “understand events” (Neuman 2014: 218). This involves connecting “understandings, ideas, and statements about the social world” with what “actually” occurs in it (Ibid). For Neuman (2014: 220), three features of “research measurement process” establish qualitative validity. First, a researcher’s “truth claims” need to be “plausible”/“understandable” through him/her using “persuasive descriptions” that reveal “genuine experiences” with “empirical data” (Ibid). Second, his/her “claims gain validity” (are supported) through many small “pieces of diverse empirical data” accumulating to “create a heavy weight of evidence” (Ibid). Third, “validity increases” through researchers constantly searching through “diverse data” and considering the “connections among them”, and developing a “web of dynamic connections” between mass diverse information (Ibid). Thus, while validity required me to capture the “essence” of the abstract, “not easily observable” construct of Polish LDS conversion, the notion of reliability prompted me to construct research methods to make it more “concrete”/“observable” (Ibid).

Inside the Warsaw LDS “empirical world”, I used “measurement” techniques to observe and conceptualise my central construct, Polish LDS conversion (Neuman 2014: 205). Throughout my study, I turned this research question/issue into a more “precise conceptual definition” through observing phenomena “directly”, reading other views on the topic, and thinking things over (Ibid). My purpose was to create a theory, a web of interrelated concepts about Polish LDS conversion through gaining “new insights” and creating “clear, unambiguous definitions of concepts to develop sound explanations” (Ibid).

To gain an appropriate “mental picture” of Polish LDS conversion, I constructed my literature review, and empirically measured and refined my understanding of this picture through collecting and analysing data (Neuman 2014: 207). Through collecting “various definitions” and “related ideas” about religious/LDS conversion, I recognised that this construct could be divided into two main ideas: recruitment, moving towards LDS baptism, and conversion, different convert types being formed after LDS baptism (Ibid 206). I also realised that my Polish LDS recruitment/conversion construct applied to individuals and groups, as different types of Polish converts and recruits co-exist inside the Warsaw LDS field (Ibid). Moreover, I became aware that four main issues may prompt or hinder Polish LDS recruitment/conversion: LDS religious training; LDS interaction; pre-LDS background/experience; and the wider Polish social world.

Neuman (2014: 208) explains that operationalisation “connects” theory, which contains “many abstract concepts, assumptions, definitions, and cause-and-effect relations”, with “empirical measures” that focus on real people, situations and events “to indicate the presence or absence of a construct as it exists in concrete, observable reality”. Qualitative operationalisation “often precedes” conceptualisation, with “definitions” being created out of ““working ideas”” through “data collection and analysis” (Ibid 209-210). Interpretive analysis of qualitative data involves developing “new concepts” and linking them together “to create theoretical relationships” (Ibid 209). Researchers “may draw on ideas from beyond” their data and blend these pre-existing concepts with ones that emerge “during the data collection process” (Ibid 210).

From the many themes/topics that emerged from my data, I looked for higher concepts through narrowing my enquiry down to finding the “most significant issues”, and looking back at earlier data when “something of interest” required “greater exploration” (O’Reilly 2009: 15-16). My interpretive approach went beyond reporting (recording/listing) events through identifying and assessing “structured routines and relationships” inside the Warsaw LDS field, and creating a conceptual framework that may be “relevant to understanding similar settings”, such as LDS mission fields in other Polish cities or post-communist, Central/Eastern European countries (Ibid 16-17). To build up my theoretical framework, I applied “sophisticated” concepts which matched the phenomena I observed (Ibid 17). Theory development involves creating well-defined models that can be used to enhance “exploration and understanding of the social world” (Ibid). While constructing a theoretical framework, researchers assess how well their concepts fit “what” they experience/observe in the field (Ibid). To create my theoretical framework, I linked my main issues to some “broader

processes” that readers can recognise (Ibid 25). Despite having to “make generalisations” from a “small sample size”, I managed to find “concepts that explain complex phenomena” and developed “theoretical explanations” which connected the “concepts together” (Ibid 26).

Through assessing the cultural/critical theory concept lists of Edgar and Sedgwick (1999) and Crossley (2004), I became aware of higher/interesting concepts (institutionalisation, marginalisation, social mobility etc.) that existed in my PO/interview data, and created summaries at the end of my empirical chapters 4-8 which referred to such concepts. I also connected these concepts with the mimetic theory of Girard (Girard 1979/Williams ed. 1996; International Association of Scholars of Mimetic Theory, <https://violenceandreligion.com/mimetic-theory> accessed 20-03-20; Bailie on Coffin 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrLwPWDZSHY> accessed 20-03-20). Girard’s theory of human relations highlights that human purpose is not an autonomous project of desiring something, but a process of desiring what others desire (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7). Such imitative desire may strengthen a person’s belief in the value of pursuing something, increasing the potential for conflict with rivals who compete for the same goals (Ibid 7-9, 12). Girard’s concept of scapegoating points towards conflicts being resolved through group members uniting against others, who are viewed as committing transgressions against group rules and are symbolically sacrificed (blamed and excluded) for committing disunity, to restore peace/unity to the community (Ibid 10-14). In contrast, the “biblical” narratives “side with the victims”, especially Jesus in his crucifixion, with scapegoating being viewed as “vengeful consensus” against an innocent person who is persecuted by jealousy, malice etc. (Ibid 16-17).

Humphreys and Watson (2009: 40) stress that “intensive *fieldwork*” must be followed by a “written ethnographic account”, which, for me, involved introducing my personal background, the main issues, field, and participants, and uncovering the participants’ views on the main issues. No write-up can be completely true, but “some accounts are truer than others” through better preparing someone to enter or observe the “area of life being studied”, and allowing those already involved in it to better understand their lives (Ibid 53). However, ethnographic accounts often transmit “disinterested” visions about locations and “natives” (Spickard and Landres 2002: 9). In contrast, my goal was to write a realist-type account with confessional features about my role in collecting and interpreting data about Polish LDS recruitment/conversion in Warsaw (Van Maanen 1988/2011). This involved creating meaningful views of the location, fieldwork timescale, “research strategies, entrance procedures etc.”, and a “diary” concern about what I saw, heard, and thought concerning the

participants I studied (Ibid 47-48). Besides focusing on what different groups of Polish LDS converts and LTIs routinely say and do inside the Warsaw LDS field, I show different, individual participant perspectives on life, with my “retelling” of “informant stories” allowing “unique experiences” to be heard (Ibid 48-50). Through self-reflection, I question the “accuracy, breadth, typicality”, and “generality” of my “cultural representations and interpretations”, acknowledging that “equally useful” ways of studying, displaying, and understanding “accumulated field materials” exist (Ibid 51).

Instead of imposing external (“Marxian, Durkheimian” or “Freudian”) macro-theories on my research, I allowed my field data to direct fresh theory construction, and gained “interpretive authority” through creating a “multivocal” text where meaning was assigned to events through many different eyes/voices (Van Maanen 1988/2011: 51-53). For Van Maanen (2009: 17), “structuralist tales” may be criticised because “much of the theory” accompanies researchers into the field, pushing the enquiry into “particular directions”. Such tales may be accounts about “nonelites for elite readers” (Spickard and Landres 2002: 8). In contrast, “post-structuralist tales” may portray reality as a “fragile social construction” built up through “numerous lines of sight and interpretation”, and view texts as “persuasive fictions” and extreme ones as “ideological” (Van Maanen 2009: 17). They may also incorporate “textual innovation, disorder”, wavered meaning, and “open-endedness”; focus on “stable entities” breaking down, “boundaries that structure identity” collapsing, and normative concepts of the world being destroyed; and highlight “incompleteness and uncertainty”, as the studied world is always “in flux” without stable meaning (Ibid 18-19). Hence, post-structural tales may be “partial” texts without a coherent picture of the group studied (Ibid 19). For Davidman (2002: 19), ethnographic accounts can only be “partial” tales, because they are created and limited by the “subjectivities” of the authors and participants, with “biographical construction of identity through narrative” being an “ongoing process”.

In particular, Van Maanen (2009: 19) criticises “advocacy” accounts which zealously address “major wrongs in the world”. Structural and advocacy tales may express a “broad grievance” about others suffering “unjustly, often unknowingly” and being unable to do anything about their situation (Ibid 20). While clearly stating which “side” the researcher supports, advocacy tales rely less on external theory to explain how “wrongs” may be corrected (Ibid). Thus, advocacy tales contain a “moral stance” which highlights what “certain evils” have done “in the world”, and prescribe how things may be rectified. (Ibid). In contrast, I never joined the Polish LDS, nor adopted an “active partner”/“advocacy” role, because once

such a position is adopted, it is “impossible to step back and claim the impartial role of observer” (Royce and Kemper 2002: xxi-xxii, xxx).

Finally, realist accounts may contain confessional features to show how the researcher decided on “what details to include or omit”; how to present/summarise data; which “quotations to use” etc. (Van Maanen 1988/2011: 73). Researchers may “demystify” their PO through discussing “infiltration” into group manoeuvres; “fieldwork rapport”; how challenges were “overcome”; and how the fieldwork affected them (Ibid). Realist accounts should discuss “epistemological problems” common to “social science”, as my methodology section here tries to do (Ibid 74). In my thesis, I try to integrate a first-person account of how I went about building up my research with a third-person reporting and assessment of my PO and interview data. A researcher may attain authorial “intimacy” with his/her readers through showing that he/she is a “personal character” who overcomes successive trials to represent a social world his/her way (Ibid 75). Confessional fieldworkers rarely portray themselves as “unadventurous” types that wait around for great discoveries to happen, but as adventurers who outfox others that “withhold important information”, block access to places etc. (Ibid 76). Overall, confessional realist tales show how the researcher interacted with the studied group; acknowledge “personal biases”, “flaws”, and “bad habits”; and develop an “ironic self-portrait” that “readers can identify” with (Ibid 75). Instead of adopting an “omnipotent tone”, they discuss how difficulties and disorder were turned into a “coherent account” (Ibid). Through ethnographic accounts about a group’s behaviour, beliefs, and rituals being “constructed” in the field, researchers should show how they “came to understand” such phenomena by presenting “new ways of seeing things” which may “spark insight” into their readers (Ibid 76). This involves focusing on how a local culture negotiates the “idiosyncratic personalities of people with the work of the community”; the “rituals” and “communal celebrations” that surround “important points in people’s lives”; and how people find a “place” and “identity” inside a small group “within larger, impersonal, sometimes hostile contexts” (Royce and Kemper 2002: xxxiii).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Throughout my research, I was aware that certain ethical issues needed to be addressed, such as those highlighted in the *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* document published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011). First and foremost, I informed the participants who I encountered that I was studying Polish LDS recruitment/conversion in Warsaw. However, there was no guarantee that the participants understood my

research purpose despite it being explained to them, as people interpret things in different ways (Mulhall 2002: 309).

The BERA guidelines require researchers to secure the voluntary, informed consent of participants, with the latter understanding and agreeing to their involvement without feeling any coercion/pressure (BERA 2011: 5). To help meet this requirement, I informed all my interviewees that their “anonymity and confidentiality” would be “respected” (Reddy 2014: 115). I refrained from using an interview consent form because this may have increased suspicion towards my non-Polish/non-LDS identity. A “prescriptive approach to ideal ethical practice”, through which researchers may ask all kinds of participants to sign written consent forms, may hinder them from collecting data to assess “social reality”, as many participants may be frightened of official forms (Mulhall 2002: 309). It is also impossible to get consent from all participants in a “large and busy” setting like the Warsaw LDS field, and to say in advance what might be observed during PO and discussed during interviews (Ibid). Inside the Warsaw LDS branches, more or less everybody knew who I was and what I was doing which led to various positive and negative responses towards my researcher presence. The Polish sociologist of religion, Obirek (in Harrison 2009), and Lech, an established LDS member from Wolska, requested and received interview transcripts. After interviewing Lech on 21-06-09, he gave me his email so I could send him the transcript. All the other interviewees did not ask for transcripts, as some implicit trust between researcher and participants was necessary for my research to move forward. Of course, I realised that through having “access to” confidential information that others were not privy to, I was obliged to not break the trust of my participants, e.g. to not reveal any sensitive information about them to others (Spickard and Landres 2002: 8).

Out of respect, I attempted to humanise Polish LDS converts given that they may be viewed as “social outsiders” in Poland (Spickard and Landres 2002: 7). In particular, I was sensitive towards less active converts who may have felt “marginalized” in their Warsaw LDS community (Royce and Kemper 2002: xxxi). I worked on creating an accurate picture of all my informants/participants, because how I portrayed them would influence how mainstream readers view their otherness and how my informants/participants view me and themselves (Spickard and Landres 2002: 9; Royce and Kemper 2002: xxvi). This involved constructing a non-judgemental narrative which satisfied mainstream society’s “curiosity” about a group of “others”, and did not misrepresent Polish LDS converts and LTIs (Spickard and Landres 2002: 9). I developed a “subtly nuanced” empathy through using my own “emotional knowledge” about religious seeking, and other issues such as parental divorce, to help

understand how “others” may seek and sense themselves finding religious truth (Davidman 2002: 19). My approach respectfully investigated the various experiences that converts and recruits/LTIs had inside the Warsaw LDS field, which were not always positive/rewarding, and LDS efforts to create space for themselves in a changing Polish social world. Through this approach, I accessed some complex/nuanced accounts about life from those who I interviewed and informally chatted with inside the Warsaw LDS branches (Davidman 2002: 20). A “power relationships” issue forced me to nurture a “reflexive understanding” of how I “positioned myself” towards Polish LDS converts and LTIs in Warsaw (Reddy 2014: 116). This is why I changed from semi-structured to unstructured interviewing, as, during the former, some Polish LDS converts may have felt intimidated by the questions about LDS religiosity, possibly viewing them as a test.

All my PO and interview data, which was transferred onto Word File tables, was stored securely inside my Warsaw flat, ready to be used in the data analysis. To follow protocol on confidentiality, I replaced all the participants’ names with pseudonyms (Corbin and Strauss 2008: 31). Of course, my pseudonyms may not protect participant identity from insiders in the Warsaw LDS field, as any covering code can be decoded. For example, I was able to decode the identities of some Polish converts from Nabozny’s (2009) study of Polish and Ukrainian LDS converts. However, my pseudonyms do not force anyone to know who is in my thesis, and provide a level of anonymity which cannot be decoded by occasional visitors to the Warsaw LDS field, plus, while informants/participants need to be respected, not everybody wants to remain anonymous. Moreover, if pseudonyms are impossible to decode, the participants may be viewed as fictional/unreal, which may invalidate research work.

Finally, another power issue involved me as a Catholic interviewing some Polish LDS converts who had previously been Catholics about their Catholic-LDS change process. However, through not being involved with post-Vatican II Catholicism for many years, I never felt inclined to criticise anybody else who had moved away from it. During my research, my practice of pre-Vatican II Catholicism was lukewarm (e.g. hardly going to confession and holy communion) so this also blocked my Catholic background from interfering with my researcher role. Nonetheless, my Catholic background may have offered a barrier against becoming LDS myself.

3.7 Conclusion

In this interpretive study, long-term PO helped me to understand the many religious/social events which take place and different types of recruits, converts, and missionaries that co-

exist inside the Warsaw LDS field. Alongside this, informal chats and qualitative interviewing allowed me to gain convert opinions about recruitment to LDS baptism and becoming different types of LDS members, and LTI views on not becoming LDS. Through adopting a constructivist approach, I interpreted the interview data from the perspectives of the Polish LDS convert and LTI interviewees themselves. During my research, I monitored and adapted my researcher role, as I became aware of the different positions that my participants/informants held inside the two Warsaw LDS branches (Reddy 2014: 118).

4. The Warsaw LDS Field

This chapter draws on my PO and interview data to introduce the Warsaw LDS field so the readers can better understand the experiences and perceptions of the participants in this study. Overall, I discuss the many religious/social events and types of LDS missionaries, Polish LDS converts, and LTIs that I encountered inside the two Warsaw branches.

4.1 Warsaw LDS events

In the chapel, the wooden interior was freshly polished. There was no altar, like an old Quaker hall, some Methodist churches I'd visited. The bare wood made the chapel dull, but Sister Felton was pleasant, not an act.

(my first visit to Wolska in summer 2007 from Harrison 2012: 12)

Wolska chapel is situated in west Warsaw, a 20-25 minute bus journey from the city centre. Until November 2010, the second branch was located at Wierzbno, four underground stops from Warsaw city centre, while between late 2010 and early 2017, the Raławicka site was one stop nearer the city centre on the same metro line. From the outside, the Wolska chapel building is an uncomplicated “brick construction” with a “simple steeple”, and inside, there are no “crosses, crucifixes, or altar” (Givens 2007: 242, 245). The Wolska grounds contain a car park, basketball court, and big lawns. The main hall inside the building can be extended for big events through a partition being removed. With the partition in place, the hall can hold about 80 people, when removed, 200 plus. On the front stage, members sit and give speeches at a microphone stand, while the congregation sit on long wooden benches facing the stage. Surrounding the hall, side rooms are used for smaller Sunday and weekday meetings, baptism lessons, family history research etc., with one containing a baptism pool. The front hallway contains pictures of temples, free official LDS magazines/leaflets, and, in a glass case, copies of the BOM in many languages. The building also contains a kitchen and toilets. In contrast, the Wierzbno and Raławicka locations were rented parts of larger buildings, and resembled Wolska on a smaller scale inside.

Between 2008 and 2012, I did PO at many routine religious events, including 37 Sunday Sacrament meetings at Wolska and 34 at Wierzbno/Raławicka at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning. LDS chapel life contains little solemn ritual, but during the communion service shortly after the start of Sunday Sacrament meetings, two male priests bless the bread/water, and 2-4 other males pass it round the congregation on trays. At the Testimony Sunday

Sacrament meetings, usually held on the first Sunday of a month, the communion service is followed by missionaries/members giving testimonies on stage. The Sunday Sacrament meetings I attended contained short opening/closing prayers, hymn-singing, and speeches/testimonies which varied between party-line, rhetorical formulas and stories about how the LDS faith had helped people during dramatic or difficult episodes and stages of their lives. While some speeches/testimonies were uninspiring formulas, others related the speaker's real-life experience to the LDS faith, making the congregation feel "uplifted and edified" (Givens, F. on Givens/Givens, FairMormon 2014). Between 2008 and 2012, I also attended 23 Sunday School lessons for recruits/recent converts at Wolska and 13 at Wierzbno/Raławicka, and three midweek Institute lessons for recruits/recent converts over 30 years of age at Wolska. At all these lessons, I saw how the participants received religious training from missionaries/members and studied LDS scripture/teachings. At the Sunday School lessons, the BOM followed by the Bible and D&C were used more than the POGP, with texts from these books often being integrated together for study. In some lessons, the recruits/recent converts mainly listened to the teachers, and in others, more freely interacted and gave opinions. The participants were generally praised for giving LDS party-line answers but not for offering opposing ideas. Thus, people were sometimes denied the "chance to speak" at Sunday School meetings, with a "schoolroom environment" (top-down teaching-learning system) providing a passive reception of religious doctrines, while at other times, conversations were more "authentic" with members assessing each other's ideas (Givens, F. on Givens/Givens, FairMormon 2014).

I attended some less regular, routine religious events which included six conferences at Wolska: Warsaw branch conferences; Warsaw district conferences (including LDS members from Łódź); and all-Poland conferences. These conferences were attended by 150-200 LDS members, showing that special events could prompt high turnouts. I also attended three bi-annual, LDS General Conference session screenings from Salt Lake City at Wolska, with English-Polish translation being provided by Polish established members, which drew low turnouts. At a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 15-01-12, a new, middle-aged, American branch President revealed that a three-month, LDS teacher development course would be starting on Saturday 28-01-12, with three one-hour sessions, dinner at the end, and everybody being welcome to attend. I attended the first day of this *Szkolenie Dla Nauczyciela Ewangelii* (Course for a Gospel Teacher), and saw LDS Sunday School teachers from Warsaw giving and assessing each other's presentations.

The regular, non-routine religious events I attended were mostly baptisms at Wolska, which mainly provided new converts for both Warsaw branches. I interviewed three converts (Weronika/Patrycja/Damian) from Wierzbno/Raławicka who I had observed being baptised. I also saw reactivated converts leading some baptism events. At the baptism/confirmation of a Polish woman in her 30s on 31-09-09, I saw another Polish woman in her 30s being reactivated back into the Wolska branch through leading the proceedings. The Polish woman who got baptised had met two YMMs while staying in hospital next to the mother of an established member from Wolska. This may support a deprivation theory view that people can turn towards religion through suffering “bad health” (Yang and Abel 2014: 142).

At Wolska, I attended some special religious events which included the screening of the LDS Church President Hinckley’s funeral from Salt Lake City on 2-02-08, and visits to Warsaw by two members of the Quorum of the Twelve, L. Tom Perry in August 2008 and D. Todd Christofferson in March 2012. These events were well-attended showing how Polish LDS revered their mainly American religious leaders as modern-day apostles, and how the “personal charisma” of LDS leaders may be routinely valued by LDS members worldwide (van Beek 2005: 18). For the Christofferson event, a huge hotel conference room was booked in central Warsaw for two days, and several hundred guests received high-quality buffet food after the Sunday 4th March session had ended. During the Saturday 3rd March session, a Polish male established member from Wolska spoke about arrangements for the guests to return to their hotels in the evening and to catch coaches back to different Polish cities the next day. For me, all this may suggest that the event, which had brought missionaries/members from all over Poland together, had been mainly funded by LDS forces outside Poland.

The routine social events that I attended included two Testimony Sunday meals, one at each Warsaw branch, where people ate food together after religious meetings on the first Sunday of the month, and five Chapel Home Evenings (see 6.5) and two Friday film nights hosted by older missionaries at Wolska. I also attended some special social events at Wolska, including some musical ones (see 7.3). At President Engbjerg’s leaving party/President Nielson’s induction as the new Mission President on 13-07-10, a male, middle-aged, recent convert sang and played keyboards on an improvised stage at the back of the main hall. The most eye-opening special social event I attended was a *Wigilia* (Christmas time) meal at Wolska on 19-12-08, where members/missionaries entertained each other with carol-singing, amusing anecdotes etc. Outside the building, I saw two Polish established members arguing with a Polish man I had never seen before who became my first LTI interviewee, Witek, the day after. This episode showed the tension that sometimes existed between Polish LDS

converts and LTIs, with the converts possibly feeling annoyed by the sceptical presence that LTIs may bring into the Warsaw branches. Other special social events that I attended at Wolska included a midweek *Mormons and Jews* presentation by Mark Paredes, an American LDS convert from Judaism, on 9-10-09; a Saturday evening family history centre presentation by Marek and Romuald, two of my convert interviewees from Wierzbno/Racławicka, on 15-05-10; and a Friday evening Ryan Miller (American volleyball player) fireside event on 21-01-11 about how his LDS faith had enhanced his sporting career. After his speech, Miller was surrounded by several young Polish LDS, with such events showing that the Warsaw LDS could offer a clean, entertaining social life, although they seemed to occur less often after the Engbjergs had left the Poland LDS Mission in mid-2010.

During 2012, I first started sensing that I had collected enough data to write something meaningful about my main issues, so I stopped doing interviews and reduced my field visits to start focusing on writing my thesis. Between 2013 and 2017, I attended seven routine religious events and three baptisms. I also saw a few special religious events including President Nielson's leaving fireside at Wolska on 22-06-13, and Dieter F. Uchtdorf (First Presidency counselor) leading a conference at Warsaw Marriott Hotel on 15-06-14, where he had his photo taken with many people while leaving the meeting hall with his entourage. Similar scenes occurred during L. Tom Perry's visit in 2008 and D. Todd Christofferson's visit in 2012 showing that LDS leaders from the USA made themselves accessible to rank-and-file members on big occasions. Every few years, LDS religious leaders from Salt Lake City visited Poland, and appeared to revitalise the members' faith there. Through seeing that a 25th anniversary of the Poland Mission weekend event would be taking place at Wolska in late June 2015 on some Polish LDS friends' Facebook sites, I attended two social events on Saturday 27th June and a religious one on Sunday 28th June, where I saw quite a few Polish established members, including some of my interviewees, but none of my less active convert or LTI interviewees.

The only event I attended in 2016 was a religious fireside led by the new (and first Polish) Poland LDS Mission President, Mateusz Turek, on Saturday July 30th. Turek was in his mid-30s and married to a German wife with three children. Before arriving in Warsaw, the Tureks had lived in Dortmund, Germany (www.lds.org/church/news/eight-new-mission-presidents-called-to-serve-beginning-in-july-2016?lang=eng accessed 28-08-17). At the fireside, President Turek alternated between speaking Polish and English, and I was surprised by a low turnout, as I had often heard Polish LDS members calling for a Polish LDS leader in Poland.

When Stefan (Wolska gatekeeper) revealed that the Wolska and Raławicka branches were being officially joined together at a Wolska Testimony Sunday meeting on 5-02-17, I felt compelled to attend the event. This event may have represented a defeat for the LDS, as at a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament Meeting on 29-04-12, President Nielson had revealed that the LDS were thinking of buying a property for the “Warsaw two branch”, but more members were needed for this to happen. During the branch unification event, I again saw quite a few of my established member interviewees but no less active member or LTI ones. This seemed to show that only a few established members had remained within the Warsaw LDS set-up over the years, as enthusiastic young converts often moved abroad, sometimes becoming established members in the USA, while less active converts and LTIs often disappeared and were sometimes reactivated. I also saw testimony-givers delivering stories of faith based on real-life experience or rhetorical formats emphasising the truth of the BOM, Joseph Smith being a prophet etc. Despite the meeting attracting 130-140 people, I did not recognise that many faces, and some I did recognise were from different branches in Poland. However, I saw the usual assortment of young American families, new-looking converts, younger/older missionaries, and a few casually-dressed recruits. Moreover, I hardly noticed President Turek who was on stage amongst mainly Polish, male established members, while his German wife was almost hidden amidst Polish women playing with their young children near the back of the hall. With the American/foreign missionaries and American families being dispersed amongst the congregation, Polish males may have been heavily involved in running the Warsaw LDS set-up and possibly the Poland Mission too. This may point towards the American metropolis control of international LDS churches, as described by van Beek (2005, 2016), being slackened.

Between 17th November and 1st December 2019, I paid my last visits to Wolska where I saw that Sunday Sacrament attendance varied between 100-120 people. Again, I saw quite a few established member interviewees from my research, but no less active convert or LTI interviewees. Moreover, only two meetings were now held on Sunday morning: the Sacrament meeting, followed by Sunday School lessons on the 1st/3rd Sundays of the month and Priesthood/Relief Society meetings on the 2nd/4th Sundays. All types of converts and recruits were invited to these meetings together, with youth groups and younger children having their own lessons based on the new format. Further details about the new LDS Sunday service format, which started in January 2019, can be seen in an official LDS Church document (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/ldsorg/general-conference/164350>)

[00FAQ. pdf?lang=eng](#) accessed 14-12-19), and about recent general changes in LDS Church outlook and organisation in Riess (2019).

During my PO, I saw how the Poland LDS Mission was part of an American-centred, international LDS organisation. Different levels of power/authority were visible when LDS leaders from Salt Lake City visited Warsaw every few years. During (Quorum of the Twelve member) D. Todd Christofferson's conference at the Radisson Hotel on 3-03-12, he was on stage with a German Europe Area President; the Nielsons; the Polish President of the Katowice branch; and two Polish branch leaders from Wolska. The LDS international image was also visible when American/foreign guests spoke at Warsaw LDS events. At a Warsaw District Conference on 17-03-13, the visiting Spanish speaker, Faustino Lopez, sat on stage at Wolska alongside the Nielsons, an older female missionary, and two Polish established members. For me, this showed that the LDS sometimes tried to present a more European/less American image for Polish LDS to identify with, which may again point towards American LDS corporate control, as discussed by van Beek (2005, 2016), being slackened. However, visits from Western European, LDS guest speakers may make some Polish LDS feel that they are set below both American and Western European LDS status.

4.2 Missionary types

In the Warsaw LDS field, I quickly recognised the different missionary types described in section 1.2.4. The Poland Mission President (LDS leader in Poland) spent much time visiting LDS branches around Poland. Besides President Turek (1916-1919), I encountered the Danish President Engbjerg (July 2007-July 2010), and American Presidents Nielson (July 2010-July 2013), Edgren (July 2013-July 2016), and Chandler (2019-). President Chandler and his wife had previously been missionaries in Poland (<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/2019-mission-presidents-called-to-australia-poland-mexico-and-more?lang=eng> accessed 28-11-19). LDS Mission Presidents change every three years, and on 13-07-10, I saw a formal changeover at Wolska. At the back of the main hall on a small stage, the outgoing Engbjergs were sat with their teenage daughter alongside the new Mission President Nielson and his wife from Las Vegas and a middle-aged, British man, who had served as an LDS theology authority during the Engbjerg Presidency, and his wife.

I also saw older American/foreign missionary couples working at both Warsaw LDS branches, sometimes as leaders at Wierzbno/Raławicka, who gave speeches translated into Polish by YMs or Polish established members at Sunday Sacrament meetings and baptisms. During the Nielson Presidency, I noticed that older American and Australian missionary

couples were leading YSA Institute meetings on Thursday evenings at Raławicka. Such missionary couples seemed to offer the value of their life experience inside the Warsaw LDS branches (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 208; Bryant et al 2014: 756). Pairs of single, older American missionary sisters ran the Family History Centre at Wolska, which LDS and non-LDS use to find details about deceased relatives. However, at a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 15-01-12, an American, middle-aged, male branch leader announced that the members at Wolska needed help running the Family History Centre. The older American sisters were being replaced by local LDS members who would staff it four hours a day after receiving appropriate computer training, with this offering a perfect opportunity to do family history research.

In Warsaw, I encountered YMs who were clever, earnest, good-looking, outgoing etc., and others less so. They mainly came from the USA, especially Utah, but some were from Finland, Germany, Britain etc. (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 214). The YMMs outnumbered the YFMs, with some of the latter naturally attracting male converts. At my flat on 4-06-10, Damian (Wierzbno/Raławicka gatekeeper) showed me the blog sites of some young and older missionaries who were serving or had served in Warsaw/Poland, and revealed that a few young ones were cousins. Moreover, at our Vietnamese restaurant meeting place on 20-04-12, Damian showed me a blog site written by President Nielson's wife (<http://nielsonsinpoland.blogspot.com/>, accessed 15-05-19) which he viewed as "too cheesy", because it "vomited rainbows" about the Poland LDS Mission. I often heard the word "cheesy" being used by Polish YSA members from Raławicka to describe American missionaries/members, especially those from Utah, who they viewed as naive and straight-laced. For me, this highlights that YMs in particular may be mocked by not only non-LDS, but also some young Polish LDS inside the Warsaw branches.

I sometimes saw YMs seeking recruits in city centre, catchment areas: outside the central underground station, at the University of Warsaw main gates on Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, and on Nowy Świat Street where the LDS site mentioned in section 1.2.3 is situated (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 213; Mehr 2002: 104). At LDS Sunday meetings, I saw YMs socialising with recruits and converts, sometimes guarding/shepherding recruits who were heading towards baptism. They also gave speeches at Sunday Sacrament meetings, especially when new to a branch, and sometimes hosted Sunday School lessons for recruits/recent converts. The Sunday School teachers, who were sometimes Polish LDS members, often prompted the mainly Polish recruits/recent converts to look at chapters from the *Gospel Principles* (1978/2009)/*Zasady Ewangelii* (2009) coursebook mentioned in section 2.2 and

texts from LDS scripture. Appendix 5 shows the activities and participants that I observed at four Sunday School lessons, two at each Warsaw branch, for recruits/recent converts between April and June 2011. During the lessons, I saw YMs mixing with recruits and recent and reactivated converts, and giving model answers about LDS religiosity. YSA members enacted similar roles at both Raławicka Sunday School lessons but not the Wolska lessons, giving the Raławicka lessons a more dynamic vibe.

During baptism events at Wolska, I saw American/foreign YMs giving speeches and singing in small groups, and YMMs and Polish male members baptising recruits possibly as a reward for helping to recruit them. From the 13 Polish baptisms shown in Appendix 6, I interviewed three of the baptised people (Weronika/Patrycja/Damian) during their first year as converts. Appendix 7 shows that at their baptisms, I monitored interaction between mainly American YMs, Polish converts, and those about to be baptised. Fresh converts often took some time to return to the main hall after being baptised in a side-room, possibly highlighting how emotionally draining LDS baptism can be. Family relatives were present at Weronika and Damian's baptisms, but not Patrycja's. When no relatives attended baptisms, it possibly suggested that the baptised person was experiencing some family conflict about deciding to become LDS, or had not told his/her relatives about his/her baptism.

At a Wolska Sunday Sacrament Meeting on 3-01-10, President Engbjerg announced that the number of YMs at Wolska had been reduced from sixteen to six, as part of an official LDS policy of sending less missionaries to Europe and more to other parts of the world. In my flat on 8-10-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) highlighted that the number of YMs in Poland had decreased from just over 100 to about 50, and that baptism numbers were falling under President Nielson. All this suggests that the LDS leadership in Salt Lake City had reassessed "where promising converts" could be found and had deployed their missionaries "accordingly" (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 219). Through my PO, I saw that YMs received on-the-job training which strengthened them as core members and increased their chances of finding LDS spouses back home after their missions. During a Family History Open Evening at Wolska on 15-05-10 hosted by Marek and Romuald (Wierzbno/Raławicka convert interviewees), Damian (W/R gatekeeper) joked that YFMs had to be "strange" if they were still not married at twenty-one. Through being privy to American-Polish LDS interaction on Facebook, I saw that many American YMs received temple marriage not long after returning home from Poland.

Besides missionaries, I saw young, mainly American LDS families attending Wierzbno/Raławicka while the fathers were usually working in Warsaw. Two young American men,

ex-missionaries in Poland, attended Wierzbno/Raławicka for a few years: one with his American LDS wife and children, the other, a convert from Catholicism, with his Polish convert wife and children. Similarly, I saw an American married couple, ex-missionaries in Poland, and their young children attend Wolska for a few years. I also saw ex-missionaries, who had recently served in Poland, passing through Warsaw with their parents or colleagues from their mission. At a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 22-04-12, a former YFM and her parents spent time having their pictures taken with Polish LDS. American YMs seemed to tour Poland with family members to celebrate completing their missions as a rite of passage into adulthood. The observations here may support Decoo's (2015: 552) point about international LDS churches being attended by "American families living abroad", which helps American behavioural "patterns" to dominate international LDS communities.

During opening/closing prayers and speeches/testimonies at Sunday Sacrament meetings, I saw missionaries, Polish converts, and young Poles born into the LDS religion sharing an in-group language which seemed to strengthen their LDS identities. This language included rhetorical phrases, e.g. "Prorok Józef Smith" ("The prophet Joseph Smith"); "Jezus jest Zbawicielem" ("Jesus is the Saviour"); "Jezus jest moim/naszym bratem" ("Jesus is my/our brother"); and "Księga Mormona jest prawdziwa" ("the Book of Mormon is true"). One phrase here points towards Jesus not only being referred to as a Saviour, but also an "Elder Brother" in LDS circles (Davies, D.J. 2013: 4). The general in-group language here may point towards Polish LDS converts transforming their "consciousness" and identity through using new religious language, reshaping their life stories around a new "master attribution scheme", and persuading themselves and others that "genuine transformation has taken place" (Stromberg 2014: 122-124, 127).

Finally, adherence to LDS dress codes inside the Warsaw LDS branches involved most members wearing smart clothes at religious events and sometimes informal clothes at social events, while recruits dressed informally most of the time. This seemed to show that the Warsaw LDS had a "standardized" uniform, especially for male members, at their religious meetings (van Beek 2016: 72). When recruits started dressing formally, e.g. Maczek (LTI interviewee) wore a blue suit/tie at a Warsaw District Conference on 21-03-10, this appeared to signal that they were considering LDS baptism. Occasionally, formal dress codes were customised by recent converts or less active members. At a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Raławicka on 1-05-11, a middle-aged, male, recent convert with dyed white hair wore an oversized suit and kipper tie, while his middle-aged wife had long multicoloured hair

and wore dark, Gothic-type clothes. All this contrasted with the more sober appearance of most LDS at the meeting.

4.3 Recruits and LTIs

Throughout my PO, I saw recruits entering and disappearing from the Warsaw LDS branches. Outside missionary earshot, I spoke in English and/or Polish to short-term recruits who spent a few weeks or months inside the Warsaw LDS field. I met Jacek on 26-06-11 at Raławicka after a Sunday School lesson for recruits/recent converts. He was in his early 30s, married with children, a sound engineer by trade, and had always lived in Warsaw. Having taken care of his family's material and emotional needs, he was exploring different religions with this being his third visit to Raławicka after two YMMs had stopped him on the street. Hence, Jacek appeared to be a religious-seeker, with the LDS offering him opportunities to discuss his religious experience and the meaning of life which he may have felt deprived of in the wider social world (Chryssides 2016: 32-33). He was unaware of the Wolska branch, and thought that it would take him about a year to decide whether to join the LDS or any other non-Catholic religion or not. Moreover, he wanted to assess what the LDS religion was like in practice when all the politeness and smiling had disappeared, and felt that LDS friendliness was a ploy for gaining converts. Jacek knew about the pre-1978 exclusion of blacks from the LDS priesthood, but believed that this was due to the general American discriminatory culture of the time, out of which the LDS arose (Mauss 2003: 218-219). He disliked the idea of paying tithing, but was unaware that most Polish LDS skipped this, and wanted to ask the LDS more demanding questions when he visited them at Raławicka the following week. Thus, Jacek's growing assessment of the pros and cons of getting involved with the LDS may support the rational benefit-seeker/religious marketplace theories from section 2.1. Shortly after meeting Jacek, I went to Britain for five months, and when I returned, I never saw him again inside the Warsaw LDS world.

At the Warsaw LDS branches, I encountered some LTIs. Appendix 8 contains background information about the five Polish LTIs that I interviewed. At the time of their interviews, Bogusław had been visiting Wierzbno/Raławicka periodically for seven years and Maczek six years, and Tomasz continually for about a year. Adam had been visiting Wolska on-and-off for about 15 years, and Witek for 12-15 years, although he rarely visited Wolska now. Only Maczek first encountered the LDS as a young adult, in his early 20s, while the others had been in their 30s or 40s. All five came from (semi-) professional backgrounds, although Witek and Bogusław were unemployed at the time of their interviews. This may imply that

the LTIs' (semi-) professional status may have prompted them to assess LDS religiosity/ interaction cautiously and to refrain from becoming LDS. All five were unmarried which may suggest that their curiosity was partly prompted through having enough time to investigate the LDS thoroughly. Moreover, their long-term connection with the Warsaw LDS world offers support for the rational benefit-seeker theory from section 2.1.

4.4 Convert types

While assessing my PO and interview data, I used Gooren's (2007: 350; 2008: 381-384) religious conversion career and (Central American) LDS type models as guides to divide my Polish convert interviewees into three types (see Appendix 9). At the time of their interviews, all the Polish converts were at least chapel-goers, but over time, it was difficult to put some neatly into convert type categories, because they moved between different levels of religious involvement (Gooren 2007: 350-351). Shortly after I had interviewed Szymon (Wierzbno/Raławicka) and Franciszek (Wolska), they disappeared from the Warsaw LDS field, possibly becoming disaffiliates. Moreover, if I had interviewed more regular chapel-going, non-temple goers like Józef (Wierzbno/Raławicka), I would have made a separate category for them. Despite such issues, from my 27 Polish LDS convert interviewees, I came to view 13 as core temple-goers (CTGs), five as trainee temple-goers (TTGs), and nine as less actives (LAs) (Gooren 2008: 381-384).

At the Warsaw LDS branches, I monitored convert attendance/involvement at Sunday meetings and other events, especially between 2008 and 2012, and assessed interview data which focused on temple attendance/activity in order to categorise my interviewees as LAs, TTGs, or CTGs. Male converts at both Warsaw branches were directed towards climbing the Priesthood ladder and female converts the Relief Society ladder, which seemed to be connected to receiving callings from local leaders announced during Sunday meetings (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 224-241, 102-104). I saw Polish converts performing (non-) demanding branch activities which may have helped create their different LDS identities over time. As many converts disappeared and new ones appeared, many seemed to struggle with branch demands. This may point towards American-type "job rotation" causing a loss of face/status when individuals are relieved of (high) calling positions in international LDS communities (van Beek 2016: 74). It may also highlight that NRMs attract and retain "comparatively few adherents" which indicts a "brainwashing model" of conversion (Cowan 2014: 695). However, despite few Polish converts becoming CTGs, I saw some young adults, especially YSA members, becoming TTGs before attaining CTG status later on. Polish CTGs often gave

speeches at the Warsaw branches, and some male ones, especially at Wolska, were local leaders and middle-managers in a top-down American/foreign-Polish member system of organisation. Thus, CTG status indicates a measure of success in the Warsaw LDS world. This may show that LDS interaction encourages converts to compete for benefits and positions of high achievement within the LDS Church's corporate-type structure (McBride 2007).

Mainly from my interview data, I discovered that 11 of the 12 Wolska convert interviewees had temple experience, while the other was preparing to enter the temple for the first time. From Wierzbno/Raławicka, 11 had temple experience, another was visiting the temple for the first time on the day of her interview, while the other three, all LAs, had no temple experience. Attending the temple in the past was no indicator of being a CTG, as such status requires continual temple attendance over many years. For me, eight Wolska and five Wierzbno/Raławicka convert interviewees were CTGs, as they were active at chapel events and known to be regular temple-goers. At Wolska, I saw Dawid, Radek, Wojciech, and Lech serving as leaders (e.g. leading religious meetings), and Martyna and Zofia attending Relief Society meetings. Besides this, Stefan and Martyna did translation work at meetings, Lech lead Sunday School meetings for recent converts/recruits, and Bruno, who attended the temple on his own, blessed the bread/water at Sunday Sacrament meetings and attended Sunday Priesthood meetings. From Wierzbno/Raławicka, Romuald and Marek did translation work at Wolska and Wierzbno/Raławicka meetings, Michał blessed the bread/water at Sunday Sacrament meetings, and Romuald and Marysia lead Thursday Evening Institute meetings for recruits/recent converts aged over 30 at Wolska, with Michał sometimes attending them. Marysia also attended Relief Society meetings and Alicja taught Sunday School classes for young children at Wierzbno/Raławicka.

For me, five young convert interviewees from Wierzbno/Raławicka were TTGs. Jola, a driving force in the Warsaw YSA, had attended the temple longer than any other TTG through having become LDS as a child. Damian was an active YSA member and highly visible at both Warsaw branches, while another YSA member, Celina, did translation work at Wierzbno/Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meetings. Weronika and Dagmara did not seem to be (heavily) involved with the YSA, but regularly attended Sunday Sacrament and other LDS meetings/events. Still, the YSA organisation seemed to be an engine room for creating TTGs destined for CTG status, as shown later on in this thesis.

Finally, I came to view nine of my convert interviewees as LAs. Edyta, Gabriela, and Barbara from Wolska and Alina, Patrycja, and Paweł from Wierzbno/Raławicka all seemed

to fluctuate between periods of chapel attendance and non-attendance. When I interviewed Franciszek (Wolska), he revealed that he had been a temple worker in the USA many years ago, but was now retreating from the LDS in Poland through not understanding or following “Church commandments”; finding it impossible to find a “nice” girl; disliking the BOM; and viewing the POGP as a farce. Towards the end of 2010, he seemed to have disappeared from Wolska altogether. At the Bierhalle bar, Arkadia shopping centre on 4-06-11, Franciszek confirmed that he had broken contact with the LDS. Szymon (Wierzbno/Raławicka), a recent convert who had given speeches at Sunday Sacrament meetings and lead Sunday School lessons for recruits/recent converts, disappeared after a short while. In contrast, Józef (W/R) attended chapel events regularly, and sometimes lead baptism services at Wolska for new Polish converts destined for Wierzbno/Raławicka. During his interview, he revealed that he had never visited the temple which made me view him as a regular chapel-attending LA.

At a Wierzbno Testimony Sunday dinner on 4-09-10, Damian (TTG) told me that the LDS temple provided a weird attraction for Polish converts. Inside the Warsaw branches, Polish CTGs seemed to become especially passionate about their faith when organised group trips to Freiberg Temple were coming up. At a Wolska Priesthood meeting on 2-05-10 hosted by Bruno (CTG), a discussion about a 3rd-7th May trip to Freiberg Temple was dominated by CTGs, while a few LAs sat in the background. Following this, at a Wierzbno Sunday Sacrament meeting on 13-06-10, Elder Harding announced that the next Freiberg Temple trip would be during the last week in July, and that people could contact Romuald (CTG) if interested.

In the interview data, a few CTGs discussed their temple preparation experience. For Radek, the temple was “worth doing everything to get in”. Lech had first entered it after reading a “lot of books” and scripture, and Dawid had done a “special course” where local leaders had provided important materials and temple-goers had offered advice about what to expect inside the temple. Dawid had also met his branch President a “few times” to get answers to some important questions, as his “goal” of visiting the temple had become clear during his first year of LDS membership while learning “a lot” from the D&C/POGP which had not been “easy to read or understand”. A few months before first visiting the temple, he had noticed a “real difference” between “ordinary” chapel-goers and members who had recently returned from the temple. Despite the temple-goers behaving “normally” a few weeks afterwards, Dawid had wanted to see how people changed at the temple. In contrast, Weronika (TTG) had not compiled her “full family tree” yet, but she was making her first trip to Freiberg Temple, to do baptism of the dead for some relatives, after her interview with me.

From the LAs, Alina had gathered the “required data” of her ancestors, except for an uncle she had overlooked, as the LDS had told her that many people had died without the opportunity to join the “true Church”. However, Józef had never visited the temple despite wanting to do so, but believed that with the LDS, it was enough to follow Jesus and God and to refrain from sin. During his first attempt to visit the temple, he had felt “completely ready”, but a week before an organised trip, a “sister” with a “big calling” and “ironic smile” had told him that a temple visit was impossible due to him not having done a preparatory course. This had been like a “shot in the heart”, and Józef had since made about 10 unsuccessful attempts to visit Freiberg Temple, with him now lacking the confidence to seek a temple recommend and his own spiritual advancement. Szymon discussed his life as a recent convert without mentioning the temple. He was currently spending 5-6 hours a day studying LDS history and theology through reading mainly non-LDS and ex-LDS writers, as he believed that official LDS publications often contradicted each other through the LDS not having coherent doctrines. However, Szymon was having “mystical experiences” while giving blessings to other Polish LDS converts, with “really strange things” happening, such as people turning red like “on fire” and his hands looking like they had been “burnt by an iron”. He was helping both Warsaw branches with “anything practical”, but through him believing that the BOM was only “evangelically true”, local leaders were discouraging him from speaking to other members about LDS teachings. Despite believing that he would “always be spiritually Mormon”, Szymon expected to be excommunicated because he was judging the LDS Church too critically. Thus, Szymon’s case may suggest that when recent converts are too inquisitive and question/doubt features of LDS religiosity, they will not be directed towards the temple, while convert acceptance of LDS teachings/practices will increase the likelihood of being pushed towards the temple.

The discussion above points towards Polish LDS converts having to do a preparation course and family history research before entering the temple (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 259-263). All this may intimidate recent converts, as family history research is time-consuming and requires skill at genealogy, while the temple preparation course may involve digesting a lot of LDS scripture/teachings. Many recent converts may not expect to encounter such extensive training after a pre-baptismal honeymoon period.

Some Polish converts pointed towards why few Polish LDS became CTGs. Lech (CTG) believed that despite family history research and missionary work pushing converts towards entering temples, “unworthy” people were not allowed to “defile” the only places where God could be fully encountered on Earth. Paweł (LA) explained that through Freiberg Temple only

being open to “true believing brothers and sisters”, he had been able to detach himself from “bad things” and “bad minds” there. Dawid (CTG) highlighted that some Polish converts blocked themselves from entering the temple through not paying tithing, while he had managed to pay it straight after becoming LDS despite having borrowed money from his parents to help pay off a mortgage on a flat at the time. For Dawid, such miracles had happened a few times during his LDS life. Zofia (CTG) criticised some “half the way” converts for stunting their spiritual growth, as not paying tithing blocked them from performing and understanding higher covenants made with God inside the temple. Wojciech (CTG) believed that his family’s tithing payment, whether large or small, was justified through their faith in the “true Church” and the blessings they received from their temple work. He stressed that anybody who viewed tithing as being “about business” did not have any real faith or understanding of what temple work was about. For Celina (TTG), the low number of temple-goers in Poland was due to not all Polish LDS being able to afford to pay tithing or to travel to Freiberg. Zofia acknowledged that for people with tight budgets, paying tithing might be difficult. From the LAs, Patrycja emphasised that many Polish LDS could not pay tithing, which was not “obligatory” anyway, because they were “too poor”. Moreover, she got “quite angry” when during their meetings, the LDS preached about paying tithing and giving Testimony Sunday offerings. Franciszek had had “no problem” giving the LDS 10% of his earnings in the USA, where he had felt part of a supportive group and had been able to “deduct” his tithing money “from the tax” system there. He was currently not paying tithing through not being “fully satisfied” with the LDS set-up in Poland, where he viewed the three Sunday meetings as “three useless hours”. Szymon joked that Polish tithing payments were not enough to cover “one room’s rent” in Poland, so “Utah Mormons” had to invest lots of money to keep the Poland LDS Mission going. Moreover, Józef viewed it as a “not normal” situation when each year in Poland, “44 people with recommendations” returned from Freiberg believing that they had gained “some special secrets” about temple ceremonies. He also believed that many Polish LDS, including himself, suffered from an identity crisis through not having any Polish “real leader” or “full Mormon” to model their spiritual growth on.

The discussion above highlights that in international mission fields, many non-American LDS commemorate the atonement of Jesus inside chapels, but few pursue exaltation and other ordinances for themselves and dead relatives inside the temple (Davies, D.J. 2003: 133-134). Some comments suggest that paying tithing to gain temple entrance may unnerve converts (Kidd/Kidd 1998: 219-221). Through many Polish LDS being unable or unwilling to give

10% of their gross or net earnings to the LDS, they may feel offended or stigmatised at not being allowed to enter the temple. In contrast, some Polish CTGs may feel proud about paying tithing, being immersed in higher LDS religiosity, holding callings, and performing temple rites, and may criticise LAs for making limited or no progress at entering the temple and disappearing from chapel life. Damian (TTG) claimed that regarding Wierzbno/Raławicka, only the American branch President and President Nielson knew if Polish LDS were paying “tithing or not”, and that they did not care about this because they did not speak Polish. He believed that when Polish LDS did not pay tithing and could not hold callings or visit the temple, nobody looked down on them. Moreover, Damian revealed that as a “poor student”, he did “multiple callings” at both Warsaw branches, so he did not have to pay tithing to attend the temple, because the LDS viewed him as a young person who offered a lifetime of religious service. Damian also stressed that he would happily pay tithing in the future if he was rewarded with a “sweet job” in the USA through his “Mormon influences”.

Damian’s case above shows that some young Polish LDS converts may compensate for not paying tithing through doing multiple callings, and may sense that temple advancement can increase their prospect of receiving long-term rewards from the LDS. In response, some LAs may resent missionaries and CTGs encouraging young converts to quickly become temple-goers, and there may be conflicts between Polish temple-goers and non-temple goers inside the Warsaw branches. In this atmosphere, young Polish converts who seek benefits/rewards from the LDS are more likely to become CTGs than older converts, as the LDS seek fresh young clients to invest in their religious organisation. All this suggests that young Polish LDS converts are often bigger benefit-seekers than older ones, because they have longer lives ahead to plan for and act upon.

Quite a few CTGs discussed uplifting temple experiences. Dawid had first entered the temple as a Melchizedek priest about a year after baptism, and had been confused until realising that temple knowledge had to be learnt through the “heart”. Lech viewed his first temple visit, where he had been told to expect a “totally different world”, as the “most spiritual” episode of his life, because he had “really” felt God there. During Alicja’s first temple visit, she had felt safer and more at peace than in her “own bed at home”, as she had sensed herself going through a veil to a “weird but perfect world”. Martyna, who had first visited the temple before serving a mission in Britain, had had “mixed feelings” entering it, as she had not known “what to expect”. Her “conversion story” involved many “feelings”, and, inside the temple, she had always felt God trying to show her something, with her faith being strengthened by a sense of peace that she had felt nowhere else on Earth. Martyna’s temple

career had helped her to overcome many temptations and challenges, and to retain her faith through giving her a “bigger perspective” on life and clarifying the meaning of LDS scripture/teachings. While visiting Freiberg Temple, Marysia had learnt more about LDS religiosity, and had felt great peace and the “presence of the Lord and the Spirit” in contrast to the “noisy and chaotic” world outside. Unlike most Polish temple-goers, who focused on attending Freiberg Temple, Marek had visited many LDS temples where he had experienced peace/tranquility and profound detachment from everyday life. Romuald explained that through the “Spirit of God” being more present in the temple than anywhere else on Earth, temple-goers naturally felt more “at peace” there.

From the TTGs, Damian had not seen any “aliens” or “halos” during his first temple visit. As a teenager, Jola had been taught about temples being “special places filled with the Spirit”, and when older, she had felt God’s “presence” inside the temple. On her first visit, she had been prompted to do a test to see if she could continue thinking about everyday things while inside the temple, and she had gained a “testimony” as her mind had detached itself from all earthly things. Despite having been a “bit anxious” before first visiting the temple, Dagmara had felt like “hugging” it once there, as it had given her “so much calm and peace”. Celina had felt herself being “sort of reconverted” through encountering “the Spirit literally” inside the temple. Having seen pictures of LDS temples, Weronika expected a “big experience” and “spiritual atmosphere” at Freiberg Temple, where she was heading after her interview with me.

Most of the Polish temple-goers above talk about experiencing something profound/uplifting inside the temple, possibly viewing the temple rites that they do for themselves and dead relatives as higher religious fulfilment. Through LAs and non-LDS not being allowed inside temples, CTGs may value a sense of operating in an exclusive religious domain, and may gain such satisfaction from this that they continually thirst for religious growth inside the temple. This may point towards temple-goers attaining a “new identity” which changes how they “see their lives and the world ” (Faulconer 2015: 203). However, on a tram from Wolska to central Warsaw on 4-10-14 after an LDS General Conference session screening from Salt Lake City, Damian (TTG) told me that visiting the temple was nothing extraordinary which may suggest that temple attendance can become routine like chapel attendance for some temple-goers.

A few temple-goers discussed the general meaning of temples and temple ordinances. Jola (TTG) believed that temples were positioned somewhere between heaven and Earth, and that unlike Old Testament temple rituals, LDS temple ordinances did not require any animal

sacrifice to symbolise Jesus' future suffering, as he had already suffered on Earth. For her, temple ordinances helped the LDS to acquire the religious understanding necessary to work towards returning to God the Father in the "highest heaven". From the CTGs, Michał echoed Jola's points about LDS temples being somewhere between heaven and Earth, and temple ordinances helping people to gain the knowledge to return to God. Marysia stressed that all temple ordinances performed for oneself and dead people were sacred, and Alicja defined them as outward acts (covenants/promises) made with God. Romuald explained that while Old Testament temples had had "special meaning" for ancient Jews, LDS temples offered more religious knowledge (e.g. about the creation of the world) and modern-day opportunities for making sacred covenants/agreements with God. For Marek, LDS temple work involved doing "pure service" for oneself and dead people, which meant learning higher things and not serving God through acts of idolatry. Thus, the views here suggest that committed Polish temple-goers seek higher religious knowledge, experience, and identity, which changes how they "see their lives and the world they live in", as they make covenants which "bind" them to God, their Church, and "each other" (Faulconer 2015: 203, 206).

Radek (CTG) pointed towards the apostle Paul justifying baptism of the dead in the New Testament. Jola (TTG) viewed this rite as being "nothing new", with Alicja (CTG) explaining that Paul's 1 Corinthians 15: 29 showed that baptism of the dead was around during Christ's time. Romuald (CTG) recalled baptism of the dead being a "new concept" for him, as the Catholic Church had said nothing about it, and he discussed a Pentecostal Church article that he had read about 1 Corinthians 15: 29 which acknowledged that early Christians had done baptism for dead souls. He stressed that while Pentecostals did not understand the "entire idea" of baptising dead souls, the LDS had a full religious revelation that souls in a post-mortal world could choose to accept temple ordinances done on their behalf on Earth or not. Thus, during recruitment/conversion, the Polish temple-goers here have probably been taught the LDS belief that baptism of the dead was practised by an early Christian Church, as the apostle Paul mentions it in the Bible (Millet 1998: 197; Bloom 1992/2006: 119).

Quite a few temple-goers talked about doing baptism of the dead. Jola (TTG) had a testimony that baptism of the dead was like "normal baptism", as it offered deceased people "wonderful things". From the CTGs, Lech viewed family history research and performing temple ordinances for himself and dead relatives as two of the biggest LDS religious attractions. For Marysia, baptism of the dead gave deceased non-LDS the chance to learn about LDS religiosity in the afterlife. Moreover, Zofia stressed that LDS temple rites could only be properly understood by the people who did them. Dawid highlighted that committed

LDS felt a need to do baptism of the dead for their “closest family” members and often experienced special emotions while doing it. Michał believed that his baptism of the dead work was true, because he had felt the spirit world present on Earth while doing it. In the near future, Alicja was going to do baptism of the dead for her grandparents who were “being taught in the spirit world”, where they could pray and think about whether to accept the LDS religion or not. She had not known her grandparents but wanted “to give everybody a chance”, even though her dead relatives might refuse her temple work. Stefan had learnt something new inside the temple many times, and had experienced special feelings of “gratitude” while doing baptisms for dead relatives. Dawid had visited the temple for over 10 years, but did not “understand everything” about the sacred ordinances performed there. During a recent temple visit, Zofia had sensed that some of her deceased relatives were not ready to receive baptism of the dead. Thus, some CTGs here talk about feeling a profound connection with or the presence of deceased ancestors and family members while doing baptism of the dead.

At a Wolska Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts on 2-01-11, an old male LA (non-interviewee), who was being reactivated, told me that he had visited Freiberg Temple twice. A few LA interviewees revealed that they had done baptism of the dead and other temple ordinances. Paweł, who had become LDS seven years ago, valued all temple ordinances as additional “ingredients, rituals” of the LDS faith, and had done baptism of the dead to give his parents/grandparents the opportunity to believe in this faith. Edyta, Gabriela, and Alina had all visited the temple once. Edyta, who with her husband had been LDS for three years, had done baptism of the dead for deceased relatives, and had felt special childlike emotions while encountering people smiling in a “quiet, clear” setting. She and her husband had also received eternal marriage to enhance their civil and Catholic marriage. Gabriela, a convert for five years, had felt “in awe” doing baptisms and eternal marriage sealings for deceased family members, meeting special people at the temple who had made her feel like “on a pedestal”. Alina had visited the temple “three months after” becoming LDS three years ago when she had been a “smaller spiritual person”, doing baptism and confirmation for dead relatives and feeling excited like how she would “feel in heaven”. Despite this, Alina feared doing the endowment rite, as it involved promising to build God’s kingdom on Earth through which a person would receive more blame and punishment if found sinful, so she believed that people had to be “more adult” to understand it. Franciszek had received the endowment and done “many things” as a temple worker in Boston (USA) many years ago. He praised some committed LDS married couples for believing in the temple ordinances that they

participated in, but criticised others for just receiving eternal marriage to enter the celestial kingdom, the highest part of the LDS concept of heaven reserved for temple-active married couples. Barbara had been a convert for a year and was making her first visit to Freiberg Temple in a few weeks' time, where she expected to receive special teachings, calm feelings, and blessings for her upcoming marriage to a CTG in Warsaw. The LA cases here highlight that converts may enter the temple, then move back towards non-temple goer status, or may move backwards and forwards between different levels of religious involvement during their conversion careers (Gooren 2007: 350-351).

From the TTGs, recent convert Weronika revealed that while the LDS wore smart church clothes for preparatory meetings inside the temple, "special clothes" were worn for doing baptism of the dead. She viewed the latter as a "nice idea" because it allowed people from the post-mortal world to choose whether to accept their proxy baptisms or not while being "taught the gospel" like the LDS on Earth. Moreover, she had heard stories about some LDS having dreams where they had seen dead relatives yearning to receive the LDS gospel. Weronika did not know much about eternal marriage or the endowment, because she had not "really researched" them yet. Dagmara had visited the temple recently to do baptism for dead souls who were "being taught somewhere out there" in readiness to accept or reject their proxy baptisms, while Celina had visited the temple once to do baptism of the dead, but had not been there since through being busy at work. Celina wanted to receive eternal marriage and the endowment despite the fact that she had found it difficult to believe in "that stuff" before visiting the temple. Despite being LDS since childhood, Jola had not done all the temple ordinances, but regarded "getting married for eternity" as especially "sacred". Damian was thankful for not having received the endowment yet, as, despite being a "Melchizedek priesthood holder", he did not have to fully commit himself to the LDS and could "do whatever" he liked provided that he did not "kill or rape anybody". He explained that if he received the endowment, he would become privy to the "whole truth", so if he committed "even a light sin", he might get excommunicated.

I attained background information about my 27 Polish LDS convert interviewees mainly from my interview data (see Appendix 10). From both branches, most CTG/TTG interviewees became LDS before 30 and most LA interviewees after 30, which suggests that young converts may become temple-goers more easily through having less life experience to devalue/overcome than older converts. This may point towards NRMs more easily attracting younger people, especially youths, because they have fewer commitments and more free time (Chryssides 2016: 29). At their interviews, well over half the converts were (semi-)

professionals, with the rest being non-professionals or students, and one unemployed. As most of the CTG interviewees were (semi-) professionals, this may suggest that their long-term temple-goer development may have coincided with long-term occupation-building. Moreover, having an instinct for seeking personal development and social success may have pushed their LDS careers forward, which may support the rational benefit-seeker theory from section 2.1.

At the time of their interviews, seven of the convert interviewees were married. Four were CTGs (two married couples) and three LAs, one married to an LA husband and two to non-LDS spouses. This may suggest that LDS temple marriages are more likely to maintain CTG status. From the 20 single converts, I saw that 11 got married and one engaged later on. From the CTGs, three males got married and started having children with LDS wives (two Polish/one Ukrainian) in Warsaw; a female married and started having children with her American LDS husband in Warsaw before they moved to the USA later; and another female married a recent Polish male convert in Warsaw. Three TTGs got married in the USA and settled there: two females found husbands (one American/one Polish) and a male married and started having children with a Brazilian LDS wife. Another female TTG married and started a family with a Dutch, possibly non-LDS, husband in Holland, and another got engaged in Britain. Finally, a male CTG and recent female convert who became an LA got married and divorced. What stands out here is that while some Polish converts married LDS spouses and built families in Warsaw/Poland, some younger ones attained LDS marriage in the USA. This may highlight that young temple-goers are on the lookout for LDS spouses to receive eternal marriage with, following an LDS command to have children and create families sealed together in the temple so they can remain together as units in the afterlife (Ballard 1993/2006: 63; Davies, D.J. 2003: 214). Hence, they may seek eternal marriage because it unifies the male and female spouses as an “eternal unit” (“new Adam”/“new Eve”), “potentially a king and queen in God’s kingdom” (Faulconer 2015: 198). However, my findings show that LDS marriage does not always last, as one male CTG interviewee had been divorced from an inactive LDS wife for many years, and I saw another marry and get divorced from a recent Polish female convert who became an LA. Besides this, two LAs were divorced or separated from non-LDS spouses, one a male single parent with two teenage daughters, the other a woman with two adult daughters. Finally, a male CTG had a young son from a previous unmarried relationship with a non-LDS woman; a male LA was courting a non-LDS woman; and a male CTG, male LA, and female LA were still single. All this suggests that personal circumstances may block Polish converts from becoming CTGs, but not always.

From the CTGs, Michał had lived in Britain, France, and Holland before becoming LDS in Poland. Stefan had lived in Spain for a year, then Los Angeles for four years where he became LDS before returning to Poland as a missionary. After becoming LDS in Poland, Martyna and Alicja had served missions in the UK. From the TTGs, Jola had lived in France, Ireland, and Sweden after becoming LDS in Poland, while Damian had encountered the LDS in the UK before joining them in Warsaw and serving a mission in the USA. Franciszek (LA) had become LDS in Poland, and had been a temple worker for two years in Boston, the USA. Barbara (LA) had lived in Belgium for a year, then the USA for three years before becoming LDS in Poland. The three CTGs who served missions above may have strengthened their religious commitment through their missionary work. For Damian, who first encountered the LDS in Britain, and Stefan, who joined them in the USA, the LDS may have looked like a surrogate family offering comfort to geographically mobile “people without other group attachments” (Yang and Abel 2014: 150). Finally, Martyna and Dawid (CTGs) often travelled between Wolska and their home in Łódź, as Dawid worked in Warsaw, while Bruno (CTG) travelled to Wolska from a village some distance outside Warsaw, as did Paweł (LA) to Wierzbno/Raławicka. This may suggest that some Polish converts who travel long distances to attend a Warsaw LDS branch may value the self-sacrifice involved, while others may not.

To summarise, inside the Warsaw LDS field, recruits/converts encounter a counterculture with customs different from those of wider Polish society. As a hybrid product of LDS globalisation in a Polish environment, this field contains intercultural interaction between different groups/types of participants with various forms of identity. Here, I can see a big divide between Polish CTGs/TTGs and Polish LAs and LTIs, as highlighted below:

<u>Polish CTGs/TTGs</u>	<u>Polish LAs and LTIs</u>
Gaining acceptance from the LDS through submitting to their authority	Maintaining mild LDS or non-LDS identity through resisting LDS authority and receiving low recognition
Accessing LDS networks, occupying greater space	Accessing less LDS networks, occupying less space
Accepting LDS orthodoxy, gaining religious fulfilment, developing missionary-type zeal	Partly conforming to, deviating from, or remaining sceptical of LDS religiosity
Investing more time/energy, becoming institutionalised	Investing less time/energy, not becoming institutionalised

Seeking benefits/rewards and gaining positions of power/control	Not seeking benefits/rewards, lacking power
Mirroring/imitating American LDS identity	Not mirroring or imitating American LDS identity

This divide may be viewed in terms of Girard's scapegoat concept, with CTGs/TTGs possibly uniting against LAs and LTIs, blaming them for disorder and disunity in the Warsaw LDS community (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 10-11). Thus, while CTGs/TTGs may feel satisfied, fulfilled, and valued, LAs and LTIs may feel marginalised and rejected, sensing that they are "irritating" obstacles inside the Warsaw LDS field (Ibid 11).

5. Pre-LDS Background

In this chapter, I assess my PO and interview data for information concerning the pre-LDS backgrounds of my Polish LDS convert and LTI interviewees, and discuss several themes/topics which emerged from the data. After this, I evaluate what kind of unique, multidimensional recruit each Polish convert interviewee seemed to be before LDS baptism and each LTI interviewee was at the time of his interview. During chapters 5-8, I occasionally refer to Catholic academic commentators (Whitehead 2000; Taylor 2007; Ripperberger 2016, 2018; Miller 2017; Marshall 2020; Frankini and Coulombe 2020) to add some significant points to the discussion.

5.1 Catholic backgrounds

At Raławicka metro station before a Sunday Sacrament meeting on 29-04-12, Damian (TTG), who was setting out for his mission in Tacoma, Washington the following day, revealed that his mother and grandparents had stopped practising Catholicism many years ago, although his mother sometimes thought about returning to it. In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts discussed their Catholic backgrounds. First, a few spoke about previously practising and believing in Catholicism. As a child, Jola (TTG) had believed that the Catholic Church was true. From the CTGs, Romuald felt that he had received “most of what he should have been taught” during Catholic Religion classes at school and in further education. When Catholic, Bruno had worshipped Pope John Paul II as a “direct descendant of St. Peter”, and Marysia had gone to Mass trying to put what was said there into daily life. Dawid had attended Mass every Sunday believing that the Catholic Church was true, but had felt that a special relationship between God and man was possible elsewhere. All this may suggest that Polish LDS converts from practising Catholic backgrounds may be helped to become temple-goers through having the experience of following a previous religion. It may also highlight that not all Polish LDS converts condemn their previous religious experience through them acknowledging that “other faiths” may offer something positive (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014).

Second, quite a few converts had unpleasant memories from their past Catholic lives, especially concerning being forced to attend Catholic churches as children. From the LAs, Paweł had yearned to choose his own religion during childhood, and Gabriela, who had been brought up by Catholic nuns through some alcohol problems in her family, had resented being forced to attend a Catholic church against her will. Alina’s mother had forced her to attend

Mass, and she had had her first holy communion somewhere between the age of eight and eleven. Despite losing interest in Catholicism and her belief in God through watching movies with non-believers, Alina had still gone to Mass, because her mother had been worried about people thinking they were “weird”. Patrycja’s grandmother had pushed her into attending a Catholic church in Chełm, eastern Poland, which she had stopped visiting in time. Martyna (CTG) recalled standing outside a Catholic church during Mass, having only been there on her parents’ instructions. Celina (TTG) had been forced to receive Catholic confirmation as a child when she had never felt religious at all, and she thought it was strange that the Catholic Church still viewed her as Catholic when she had chosen to become LDS. The comments here point towards some Polish LDS converts being hostile towards Catholicism, because they had it enforced upon them by priests and parents in the past, when they can now freely choose and express their own beliefs (Obirek in Harrison 2009). Like those of Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: locations 3906, 4063) Hungarian LDS converts who had been “inactive” Catholics, the Polish converts above received an “unsuccessful” Catholic faith “transmission”, which may have pushed them to search for “the transcendental” elsewhere. Most of the Polish converts with bad memories of being forced to attend Catholic churches above are LAs, which may suggest that some find it difficult to become CTGs through having negative or little pre-LDS religious experience. They may mirror those of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3766-3774) French LDS respondents who went from having no religious background or low commitment forms of Catholicism to encountering “very demanding” LDS religiosity. Moreover, they may be religious experimentalists who refrain from submitting to the teachings/practices of any religion, preferring to be religious on their own terms.

Third, a few converts spoke about losing their Catholic faith at an early age. From the CTGs, Radek had become atheistic at 12 years old. Like “almost all small children in Poland”, Lech had been baptised Catholic, had attended Catholic Religion classes at school, and had received “nice presents” at his first holy communion. His grandmother, who had played a big role in bringing him up after the death of his parents, was a devout Catholic and “very good woman”. However, Lech had stopped practising Catholicism at 9-10 years old, after his first holy communion, through not being “interested” in it. From the LAs, Barbara’s family had not attended Mass regularly, but a “very religious aunt” had taken her there. Despite this, she had stopped attending Mass while “very young”, after her first holy communion, as she had stopped believing in “Catholic rituals”. Józef, “like most Poles”, had been brought up Catholic, but rather than feeling what it meant to be Catholic, he had only been conscious of abstract religious knowledge. During his mid-teenage years, his mother had

pushed him towards an academic approach to life, and he had excelled at Maths and Science at school, being the best in class at Catholic Religious Studies too. At 20, Józef had joined the Warsaw Military Academy during communist times, where ideological pressure had made it impossible for anybody to be Catholic openly, so he had stopped believing in God and had adopted a hedonist view and way of life. Some comments above suggest that a late childhood/early teenage phase after first holy communion may be a time when some Catholics in Poland stop practising their faith, possibly through them not seeing much further religious development to aim for. This may point towards a connection between Catholicism and Polish identity getting weaker, as the former less influences the latter (Mariański 2006: 88).

Fourth, a few converts recalled only visiting Catholic churches on special occasions. From the LAs, Gabriela had attended them for baptisms, weddings, and preparing her children for first holy communion. When only 10, Paweł had rebelled against a Catholic priest trying to control rather than religiously develop him, telling him that he would pray and attend church whenever he wanted, not out of obligation. After this, Paweł had only visited Catholic churches on special occasions like Christmas, when he could feel God through singing Christmas carols. Dagmara (TTG) had become detached from her Catholic family background while very young, having only gone to Mass on special holy days to conform to a tradition she did not feel part of. For the converts here, losing interest in Catholic religiosity at an early age may have made them open to LDS religiosity, but a lack of previous religious commitment may have inclined two to become LAs. This may again suggest that some LAs are religious experimentalists who like to practise religion freely, not controlled by any organisation, with lower levels of previous religiosity making it easier for people to change religion, and less committed Catholics being more likely to join the LDS than committed ones (Stark 2005: 65-66; Obirek in Harrison 2009; Nabozny 2009: 81-83).

From the LTIs, Witek had lost his Eastern Orthodox faith before leaving school, while the four others were from Catholic backgrounds. Bogusław had strong Catholic “views” through having an MA in Catholic Theology from a “Papal theological department” for priests and laymen in Warsaw. He was interested in LDS religiosity/culture, but his knowledge about “ancient Jewish history” and the Bible blocked him from becoming LDS. Some years ago, Tomasz had attended a “world festival for young people” led by John Paul II which had “strengthened” his Catholic faith and prayer life. Moreover, he did voluntary work for PiS, a mainstream political party known for defending traditional Catholic culture against Western PC ideology (Islamic-flavoured multiculturalism, abortion, same-sex relationships etc.) which has become more visible in Poland since it joined the EU in 2004. Maczek had an MA in

Theology from the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Catholic University in Warsaw, but he disagreed with Catholic beliefs about priestly “celibacy”, adoring Mary, and “the liturgy”. He was fascinated by the LDS, and had discussed their beliefs/practices with Catholic priests and Protestant clergymen, so he seemed to be an interreligious explorer. Adam had received first holy communion and marriage within the Catholic Church, but had “never really prayed” or believed in Catholicism, and had not practised it for many years. Hence, Bogusław’s strong Catholic background may make him impervious to LDS conversion, while Tomasz’s quite strong Catholic background may make him slightly prone to it, and Maczek’s more sceptical Catholic faith more inclined to it. However, Adam’s long-term, lapsed Catholic status may imply that a lack of religious experience can sometimes block rather than prompt a straightforward route to LDS membership, and that Adam may be seeking social benefits rather than religious fulfilment from the LDS. Thus, Adam’s case may support the rational benefit-seeker theory from section 2.1.

5.2 Rejecting Catholic religiosity

At Wolska on 10-02-08, the freshly-baptised Weronika (TTG) was surrounded by YFMs, and a YFM introduced me to a Polish, middle-aged, female convert who had spent many years in Britain, and was now living in Warsaw with her British LDS husband. In the 1980s, this convert had been alone without work and praying for help in London, and had attended a Catholic Mass in Polish seeking empathy for her alienated/isolated life, but had felt sick at the impersonal nature of the ritual, crying outside the church and begging God for help. A few days later, two YMMs had knocked on her door promising her blessings if she became LDS, and she had valued their friendliness. She had then become LDS and found a job as a swimming pool attendant in London which she viewed as a blessing for her conversion. At a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Raławicka on 1-05-11, John Paul II’s beatification day, she told this story to the congregation. This account shows that I sometimes encountered Polish LDS converts who were hostile towards the Catholic Church, with it being difficult to judge whether this hostility had been mainly built up before or after joining the LDS.

During a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 15-06-08, a YFM told me that a woman in her mid-20s who was leading the meeting had neither believed nor disbelieved in God when Catholic. For me, this reflects a common situation of many people being suspended somewhere between religious belief and unbelief. At the Engbjerg leaving/ Nielson Mission leader induction event on 13-07-10 at Wolska, a middle-aged, female convert from Wierzbno/Raławicka told me that she was much happier being LDS for

a year than when she had been Catholic. Moreover, after a Sunday School meeting for recruits/ recent converts at Wolska on 19-06-11, an old male LA condemned the Catholic Church for being intolerant during the Crusades, Inquisition, Reformation etc. On 26-06-11, after a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Raławicka, Jacek, a male recruit in his early 30s, revealed that his religious search had been prompted through being dissatisfied with the boring/predictable nature of the Catholic Mass. After another Sunday School meeting at Raławicka on 15-01-12, while giving me her mobile number for arranging an interview, Celina (TTG) told me that she could not understand Catholic religious rituals. Moreover, after a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 22-04-12, Damian (TTG) and Alina (LA) started challenging me about Catholic teachings on priestly celibacy, the Trinity etc., with several other LDS gathering round. At a private meeting with an older American missionary couple, the Jensens, at Raławicka on 28-06-12, my non-LDS friend Małgorzata told Elder Jensen that she felt attracted to Islam because she disliked Catholic priests being mediators between people and God. Thus, some comments above may point towards recruits using doubts/ misgivings about their pre-LDS religious experience as a prompt to explore LDS teachings (Coleman 2003: 13-17).

In the interview data, many Polish LDS converts spoke about rejecting Catholic religiosity. First, quite a few believed that the Catholic Church lacked something. From the LAs, Barbara, Gabriela, and Paweł felt that the social atmosphere in the Catholic Church was not right, although Gabriela could not explain why. Patrycja had disliked “all the kneeling and standing, the kind of penance”. She recalled kneeling and praying inside a Catholic church many years ago, while a priest had been kneeling “with a pillow” to make himself comfortable. Barbara believed that the Catholic Church had lost a sense of Jesus’ goodness and modesty through having “too many rituals”. For Paweł, many Poles felt embittered about having to pay to get married and have baptisms inside Catholic churches. He believed that the Catholic Church had poor contact with people, as it did not impose any strict religious rules and promoted a never-ending cycle where priests encouraged women to tolerate their husbands’ bad behaviour and men to improve their fatherly roles, as it needed baptisms and people attending Mass to get money to survive. From the CTGs, Michał had never empathised with Catholic rituals, and Lech highlighted that many Poles disliked having to pay to get married and have baptisms inside Catholic churches. For Dawid, the Catholic Church’s poor contact with its members was mainly through having too many members worldwide. Stefan thought that any religious practice may be better in smaller groups, but stressed that non-truthful religions prompted boredom and disobedience through lacking spiritual purpose.

Thus, while a sense of the Catholic Church lacking authentic religiosity may have helped to push the CTGs to find meaningful religiosity with the LDS, the LAs may still be searching for religious fulfilment. This again suggests that some LAs are religious experimentalists with little/no inclination to become CTGs.

Second, quite a few converts recalled receiving passive religious experience from the Catholic Church. From the CTGs, Stefan had been an “average person” through inheriting Catholicism from his parents; not being required to do much; going to Sunday Mass to fulfil “some duties”; and feeling an unfulfilled need “to read or study the Bible”. Dawid remembered Catholic priests not telling people to read the Bible at home, as they had just read it at Mass, denying people the opportunity for “personal progress”. Lech recalled that Catholic religiosity had been “quite boring” for him as a child, but he recognised that Sunday Sacrament meetings were unexciting for LDS children too. Nonetheless, he believed that there was nothing “saintly or spiritual” about the Catholic Church. Through disliking Catholic rote prayers, Zofia had started praying directly to God to see “if he was really there”. Dawid had also prayed directly to God to find a more uplifting way of worshipping him. From the TTGs, Jola’s childhood Catholic religious practice had been a “Sunday one day a week thing”, where she had learnt nothing through “just sitting and listening” inside a church. Celina had found Catholic Masses “very boring” with the priests just reading things, not using “their own words”, and Dagmara contrasted Catholics saying “ready-made” prayers with the LDS addressing God directly. Celina believed that while many Poles just “sat pretty” inside Catholic churches, LDS members were stricter in religious practice, not following the instructions of “non-Biblical Popes and bishops”. Edyta (LA) contrasted her previous 40 years as a Catholic, which had involved passive Sunday activity and no private reading of the Bible, with her never having felt “so good” as with the LDS. Most converts here are CTGs/TTGs which may suggest that memories of passive Catholic religious practice have helped them to value the active religiosity they have encountered with the LDS and to become temple-goers. All this may point towards people being drawn towards the LDS trying to directly communicate with God; seeking and praying about religious truth; promoting inner religious experience; and sharing convictions about faith at their religious meetings (Givens 2007*; Keifert 2004).

Third, a few converts talked about not understanding Catholic teachings/practices. From the CTGs, Stefan had tried asking a Catholic priest about “many things” that he had been unsure about. Zofia had started thinking about the meaning of the Catholic priesthood, and through not really understanding Catholic teachings, she had felt a need to get closer to God.

Jola (TTG) had not understood Catholic priest sermons, and had disliked the “passive” communion service where people had just sat down. From the LAs, Gabriela had felt that infant baptism was wrong, and had disliked people pressurising her to have her children baptised Catholic. Alina had not understood the meaning of her first holy communion; had felt guilty for her sins at confession; had had nightmares about Judgement Day and being burnt in hell; and had prayed hard not to sin again. From the above, Jola may have not understood Catholic religious teachings/practices, because she left Catholicism behind when only nine years old, while the others may have not understood them through explanations not being easily available for lay people in the modern-day Catholic Church. In contrast, the LDS offer access to missionaries and Sunday School meetings through which LDS religiosity may be understood over time. This may suggest that people can find more fulfilment with smaller religious groups that have organised teaching-learning systems like the LDS than with mainstream groups where religious purpose may get lost amongst the masses.

Quite a lot of converts spoke about never having understood the Catholic transubstantiation doctrine. From the LAs, Alina, Edyta, and Gabriela had all taken it for granted, while Paweł had believed in it as a child for “family reasons”. Alina recalled being taught by a Catholic nun at school that during the consecration at Mass, the bread/wine were transformed into Jesus’ body/blood through a “top secret” that most people could not understand. Edyta explained that receiving holy communion was the most respected part of the Catholic religion, and that as a child, she had been encouraged by her mother to be especially “good for this moment”. Dagmara (TTG) had been told that her first holy communion involved receiving “Jesus’ body”, but nothing beyond this. From the CTGs, Marek had never related transubstantiation to the “eternal scheme of things”; Stefan had been aware of it without understanding it; and Romuald could not recall it being taught during Catholic Religion classes 30 years ago. Dawid had believed that Catholic holy communion was “sacred and important”, but had not understood transubstantiation because nobody from the Catholic Church or Religion lessons at school had explained it. Marysia had not attached any “significance” to the doctrine because nobody had explained it to her, even though she had wanted to know more about it. Thus, many converts here recall the transubstantiation doctrine from when they were Catholic, but cannot remember receiving any clear explanation/justification of it. This may imply that some might not have moved away from Catholicism had they been given significant explanations about transubstantiation.

A few temple-goers emphasised that they had never believed in transubstantiation when Catholic. From the CTGs, Radek had heard about transubstantiation from a Dominican monk

but had not “taken it in”. Dawid had always viewed the bread and wine at Catholic holy communion as “just symbols”, and felt that if Catholics did not believe that they became Jesus’ real body and blood, it was easier for them to change religion. Jola’s (TTG) mother had taught her as a child that the bread and wine at Catholic holy communion were “just symbols”, so for Jola, it did not matter whether bread or “cake” was used, because it was only symbolic action. Expanding on Dawid’s view, I sense that if Catholics reject the transubstantiation teaching and accept a symbolic interpretation of holy communion, this may make them open to exploring Protestant forms of Christianity and NRMs derived from Protestantism such as the LDS.

Fourth, a few converts discussed how a Catholic priest intermediary role blocked Catholic lay people from gaining a closer relationship with God. From the LAs, Edyta had felt distant from God through Catholic priests approaching him on her behalf. Paweł recalled that even as a child, he had sensed that the intermediary power/role of Catholic priests was “strange”. He viewed them as an unnatural “caste” of men that imposed teachings/practices on others, and preferred the freer relations that he encountered with the LDS. Dawid (CTG) had attended Catholic churches regularly seeking a better “connection with the Saviour”, but had sensed that “higher teachings” about gaining salvation had been reserved for the clergy. He had been confused by many “strange” and “unnecessary” things like priests wearing old vestments and using incense, the rituals being performed exclusively by priests, and the congregation being a passive “audience” that sometimes focused on the priest instead of God. In contrast, Dawid had always believed in having a direct relationship with God, and stressed that rather than controlling religious rituals, Catholic priests should focus on serving people. Celina (TTG) could not understand why Catholic priests and nuns were celibate, giving up their sexual lives to follow God, when they could get married and have families. Overall, the converts above view the gap in religious experience between Catholic priests and lay people as a big problem, without mentioning the distance in religious knowledge and practice between CTGs and LAs. For me, very few Catholic males have enough conviction to become priests, and only a small percentage of LDS outside the USA are committed enough to become CTGs, as in most “churches”, small numbers of core believers are surrounded by less zealous, heterodox congregants (Taylor 2007: 518-519).

Finally, a few converts criticised the Catholic sacrament of confession. From the CTGs, Radek had been unsatisfied with a cycle of telling his sins to a “stranger”, saying some prayers as penance, and repeating the same sins again. Stefan recalled going to confession, the priest saying a “few things”, and everything being promised as fine, and rejected the Catholic

notion of people having their sins forgiven through them feeling contrite at confession. For Lech, people could not have their sins pardoned through discussing them with somebody they did not “really know”, because a Catholic priest suggesting “some prayers” did not stop the sins from being repeated. From the LAs, Edyta could not understand how a Catholic priest could mediate between her and God about her wrongdoings during one-off confessions, because making amends for wrongdoing was a lifetime process. Paweł pointed towards Catholic men believing that they could attain salvation through going to confession on Sunday, being bad to their wives and drinking alcohol during the week, and starting the same cycle the following Sunday. For him, such ritualistic forgiveness was the philosophy of a man-made Church, as he had only superficially sensed forgiveness while attending confession as a child. Thus, the converts above associate Catholic confession with a never-ending cycle of people sinning, being superficially forgiven, and no meaningful spiritual change taking place. Like many (but not all) practising Catholics, while attending confession, the (ex-Catholic) LDS converts above may have failed to purge themselves of habitual sin through not having strengthened their will enough to amend their lives (Ripperberger 2016).

Two LTIs criticised Catholic religiosity. Long-time lapsed Catholic, Adam, had disliked attending Catholic churches and had never really felt Catholic. Maczek still attended Mass but viewed Catholic teachings on priestly celibacy, Mary, and the Mass as “strange”, and disliked the Catholic Church in Poland leaving itself open to being “attacked by atheists” for its involvement “in politics”. Moreover, he explained that while a “one-hour Mass” once a week was enough formal religious experience for some Catholics, others sought more substantial religiosity through attending Oasis (a popular Catholic group made up of official religious and lay people in Poland) meetings, going on pilgrimage to Catholic holy sites, or exploring non-Catholic religions. Regarding this, I see some Catholics travelling from different parts of Warsaw to attend the old Latin Mass, and others seeking religious/spiritual fulfilment through attending Mass at monastic order (Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan etc.) churches, especially in/near Warsaw Old Town. This religious/spiritual seeking also seemed to be at play when I attended the two Warsaw LDS branches, as Poles sought greater religious/spiritual fulfilment inside and outside the Catholic Church.

In this section, Polish LDS converts talk about the Catholic Church lacking religious purpose and positive social dynamics, and providing boring/passive, non-spiritual experience. They also recall not understanding Catholic teachings/practices; being blocked from directly accessing God through Catholic priests performing intermediary roles; and confession providing superficial spiritual development. All this may point towards Catholic priests often

being too busy to engage with people who seek a stronger religious identity, and Catholic lay people often not addressing God directly, not discussing religious ideas together, and having their religious practice stunted by priestly mediators who block them from gaining direct contact with God (Obirek in Harrison 2009). It may also highlight that recruits can use their doubts about pre-LDS beliefs as a prompt to investigate LDS teachings, and that such doubts may be amplified through interacting with the LDS (Coleman 2003: 13-17).

5.3 Respecting some Catholic religious features

In the interview data, a few temple-goers spoke about respecting some aspects of Catholic religiosity. Jola (TTG) felt that “good things could be learnt” inside the Catholic Church. From the CTGs, Stefan’s Catholic grandmothers had taught him to pray to God “to be thankful for things”, and he had enjoyed listening to some sermons from Catholic priests. Dawid had been taught Catholic religious and moral principles by his parents who believed in them, which had set a good example of how to behave and “make good decisions”. Romuald highlighted that some Poles respected the late Pope John Paul II’s role in Polish history. Alicja, who had never been Catholic, loved John Paul II as “one of the best people that walked the Earth”, respecting the intelligent concern he had shown towards all humanity. However, she believed that a post-mortal John Paul II would be uncomfortable about Catholics praying to and worshipping him rather than God. Lech had “good feelings” towards the old Poles who attended Catholic churches despite them saying “many bad things” about other people. He explained that many had fought for freedom in Poland during the 2nd World War and afterwards, and that they felt connected to the Catholic Church and Poland as one entity. Thus, some converts here seem to point towards Poles valuing the Catholic Church for giving cohesion to Polish social life (Borowik 2006: 318-319).

Two CTGs viewed their past Catholic religious experience as a useful foundation upon which their LDS lives had been built. Dawid believed that almost all Christian Churches shared a fundamental “base” of belief (e.g. in the Ten Commandments), and that he had received about 70% of religious truth from the Catholic Church with the LDS adding 30% to give him a “whole faith”. Martyna’s parents had taught her the Catholic faith and sent her to Sunday Mass, but she had had no problems accepting LDS teachings, even those that opposed Catholic beliefs. The two cases here may suggest that viewing LDS recruitment/conversion as an extension of one’s previous (Catholic) faith may incline some converts towards becoming CTGs. They also highlight that some converts may rationalise their conversions in terms of finding a more fulfilling way of satisfying religious needs, and that when conversion is an

enjoyable process, a previous Catholic biography may be viewed as a useful learning curve (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 196; Obirek in Harrison 2009). This may point towards some Polish LDS converts operating at an “interreligious level”, acknowledging that Catholicism had offered them something meaningful (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014).

The three LTIs who were practising Catholics appeared to use their Catholic outlooks to assess LDS religiosity. When Tomasz had heard his YMMs and Wierzbno/Raławicka members speaking about “Jesus”, he had felt reassured encountering something he was familiar with from Catholicism. However, when he saw no crosses or crucifixes at the Warsaw LDS chapels, and that the LDS prayed differently from Catholics, he started feeling uncomfortable. Tomasz refused the YMMs’ first invitation to attend an LDS baptism, because he believed that baptism was a “once in a lifetime” event, and felt uneasy that the person who was to be baptised was probably a Catholic already baptised as an infant. He also felt uncomfortable at receiving silence from the LDS whenever he expressed Catholic beliefs about the Trinity being “three persons but one God” and Mary being the Mother of God. Bogusław respected LDS moral teachings for being “very similar” to Catholic ones, but could only tolerate and not accept the LDS Church’s different theological outlook according to a 2nd Vatican Council directive to view non-Catholic religions as having some “grains of truth” in them. He had refused LDS invitations to join them, because, like Tomasz, he could see no reason for being baptised twice. As committed Catholics, both these LTIs may have viewed the idea of being baptised twice as sacreligious (Marshall 2020). Through having studied ancient Jewish history and the Bible, Bogusław could also see that the LDS focused on the BOM and rarely mentioned the Bible. In contrast, Maczek had spoken to Catholic and Protestant clergymen about the LDS, and valued Catholic and LDS claims to have priesthoods inherited from Christ himself, while Protestantism contained “no real kind of priesthood offices”. While Bogusław and Tomasz’ committed Catholic outlooks may block them from becoming LDS, Maczek seems to value Catholic and LDS religiosity equally, which may make him prone to becoming LDS or remaining a religious experimentalist. Thus, the LTI views here may highlight that more committed Catholics are less likely to become LDS than average ones (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Stark 2005: 65-66).

5.4 Freer backgrounds

After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 19-06-11, an old, male, reactivated LA told me that his wife was Catholic, but he had been Lutheran, then atheistic before becoming LDS 20 years ago. In the interview data, a few Wierzbno/

Raławicka converts spoke about coming from mixed/open religious or non-religious family backgrounds. During Alicja's (CTG) early childhood, her parents had been Buddhist, something "unusual in Poland". However, first her sister, then her mother, who had separated from her father, "turned Catholic". Alicja believed that her mother had done this to "get a job" and "do things" like send her children to school. Weronika's (TTG) parents had never pushed her towards any religion, encouraging her to make her own decisions about such matters. Nevertheless, during childhood, one of her grandmothers had taught her to say Catholic prayers and taken her to a Catholic church. From the LAs, Patrycja had been Catholic during childhood but believed that she was from a mixed/open religious background as besides Catholics, she had been surrounded by Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists during her life. Despite coming from non-religious, non-Catholic, or mixed religious family backgrounds, the converts above have still felt the Catholic Church's presence in Polish society. For Alicja, the latter pushed her mother into becoming Catholic, which may have inclined Alicja to look for religious fulfilment elsewhere, and to become a staunch member of another religion. Alicja's views may support the idea that in "former communist", Central/Eastern European countries, "historically dominant" Churches have regained old roles as "unifying" forces in society and national culture, with politicians allowing this to "advance ideological conformity" instead of "unruly diversity" (Decoo 2015: 547). They may also point towards growing secularism and legal equality for all religious associations in Poland not affecting the Catholic Church's strong influence on society through it being commonly viewed as having a higher position in Polish culture/history than other religions (Pasek 2006: 181-182; Zielińska 2006: 212). Despite this, Weronika and Patrycja seem unthreatened by and almost impervious to the wider Catholic world.

Szymon (LA) came from a family where religion was never mentioned. His father had given up Catholic religious practice upon becoming a Polish army officer, and his mother's father had been a "big communist official". He recalled being the only child to not attend Religion classes at junior school, and a Catholic priest telling the other children that he would go to hell. In response, Szymon had pressured his mother to buy him a Bible and he had tried to show that it was false. However, he had become "fascinated" with it, and without becoming Catholic, he had written articles about Christianity, especially St. Francis of Assisi. Hence, Szymon seems to have explored Catholicism/Christianity through becoming interested in the surrounding Catholic environment and responding to a religious void in his family. Regarding the latter, Szymon may mirror most of Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 4054) Hungarian LDS converts who felt a "void" that needed to be filled and searched for "answers

to existential questions”, as secular activities proved “unfulfilling”. This may support a prominent idea from section 2.1 that some people become religious-seekers to counter a sense of religious/spiritual deprivation and create higher meaning in their lives.

From the LTIs, Witek was brought up Eastern Orthodox. In Poland, over 500,000 Poles are Eastern Orthodox making it the second largest religion there (Pasek 2017: 164). Witek’s family originated from an eastern Polish city which had many more “Russian churches, 16 or 17”, than Warsaw. Witek had lost interest in religion during his “youth” while trying out different experiences. Before getting involved with the Jehovah’s Witnesses at 20, Witek had been interested in “electrical and electronic things”. Young Orthodox Christians may have difficulty retaining their religious identity in Poland, as it is often associated with many Polish people’s arch-enemy, Russia. In contrast, Catholicism and mainstream Protestantism are positively associated with Western Europe, while Protestant-derived NRMs, such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and LDS, may be viewed as exotic/exciting or threatening American religions. Thus, some Orthodox in Poland may convert to Catholicism to feel more accepted by wider society, or may join Protestant-derived NRMs through curiosity-seeking. This may support the idea from section 1.2.6 that despite growing secularism in Poland, the Catholic Church still heavily influences society which makes members of other religions feel uncomfortable.

5.5 Difficult backgrounds

After a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 18-12-11, Damian (TTG) told me that some of the women with children present were single mothers and others the wives of non-LDS. At our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 20-04-12, Damian revealed that many Polish members in Warsaw tried getting money from the LDS, with single mothers being a massive economic/emotional burden. He also informed me that a single mother had been baptised recently, and that a teenage daughter of a Wolska CTG family close to the Nielsons had started studying at BYU in the USA. After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 8-01-12, Adam (LTI) told me that he disliked encountering strange people at Wolska, especially a male LTI that became LDS later on who reminded him of a school he had worked at for students with learning difficulties. Moreover, Adam believed that the Polish LDS functioned like a self-help group and mutual appreciation society. After a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 22-07-12, I saw Igor, the long-haired/bearded LTI boyfriend of a female LA, and a male friend of his arrive at Raławicka wearing jeans and smelling of alcohol. As they entered the kitchen, a YMM and African long-term convert

looked uneasy. Then, in the hallway, Igor told me that his LDS girlfriend needed help, because she had psychological issues and was out of her mind in bed at home on the outskirts of Warsaw. Before I left Raławicka, Igor's friend came into the hallway with an old Polish LDS woman, and Igor smiled possibly thinking that the LDS would help his girlfriend. The PO accounts above suggest that many Polish converts and recruits seek different kinds of help and rewards from the Warsaw LDS, as both deprivation and benefit-seeking influence Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. This may support Bainbridge's (1992) point that some recruits do approach religions to compensate for unfulfilled aspirations concerning marriage/children, financial security, strong friendships etc.

In my interview data, quite a few Polish LDS converts spoke about coming from difficult backgrounds. From the CTGs, Stefan was 11-12 years old when his parents had got divorced, with the "painful separation" of just living with his mother and younger sister having replaced his happiness with both parents. Alicja's parents were divorced, and despite being close to her sister and her mother always offering "lots of love", she believed that broken families produced dysfunctional societies, as people struggled to be "good" if they were not taught "righteousness" at home and school. Lech lost his parents in a tragic accident when only four, and was raised by his grandmother and two sisters, especially missing his parents as a teenager. From the LAs, Gabriela had left Warsaw as a child to live in orphanages in "quite a few" places through "some alcohol problem" in her family. When her father had married a new wife, she rejoined him to live in the Mazury Lake District, north-east Poland for five years before they returned to Warsaw. Thus, the converts from broken families here may value the Warsaw LDS offering a comforting/compensatory, family-type ethos. Their comments seem to mirror those of Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 4045-4054) Hungarian LDS converts who "came from broken families" and carried resulting "fears and anxieties", with an aspect of "forgiveness" in the LDS faith having helped them to feel more at peace. The suffering described above may also mirror that of Miller's (2017) seventy Catholic storytellers who reflect on the long-term, painful effects of parental divorce that were forced upon them as children. These effects may include suffering "anxiety disorder", feeling distant from God and burying anger for a long time, and questioning whether broken selves can ever be "fixed or healed" (Ibid 221-224). In section 10.2, I discuss how my Polish LDS converts may have experienced a religious healing process similar to that of Miller's (2017: 219-242) Catholic storytellers.

Several converts spoke about having interpersonal/social problems before becoming LDS. From the CTGs, Michał had been less "industrious" at work and bad at relating to people;

Alicja had been a loud “rebellious kid” with a Mohican hairstyle; and Lech had a young son from a past, unmarried relationship. Bruno had been “very handsome, and a good dancer, fighter, and sportsman”, having modelled himself on Elvis Presley to stand out from the crowd. He believed that he had done “things better than others”, and had sensed “something great” awaiting him in the future. Despite having lacked respect for women, Bruno had searched for a pure woman, but finding a “virgin” had proved elusive, and only with the LDS had he discovered what “real femininity” was. The CTGs here seem to have overcome their problems which may highlight how religious converts can feel uplifted (James 1902/1985; Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 199). They may also mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4115) Hungarian LDS converts who felt that they had gained personal development and a higher “quality of life” through becoming LDS.

From the LAs, Gabriela’s husband and Patrycja’s ex-husband had had alcohol problems, while Paweł was a single parent with two teenage daughters. Szymon revealed that the Wierzbno/Raławicka branch contained four “not psychologically sound” converts who needed medical treatment. He explained that through having an inclusive ethic, the LDS had a duty to baptise and support “mentally unstable” people despite them bringing problems. During my PO, I encountered a few converts who seemed to have psychological problems, with the Warsaw LDS branches appearing to gently include them rather than encouraging them to become temple-goers. This may point towards the LDS recruiting some easily available, sometimes marginalised people, low-income families, and modestly-educated people which may increase convert numbers but not durable members (Decoo 1996: 100-101; Mauss 1994: 213, 2008: 17). Again, this suggests that some recruits do get involved with the LDS to counter unfulfilled emotional/security needs and to transform a sense of failure into a feeling of self-discipline/self-achievement (Bainbridge 1992). However, Maczek (LTI) stressed that he had lost an initial impression that many Polish LDS were “lower educated” people “with problems and complexes” through meeting Józef (LA) who, despite having “some weaknesses”, was a “visiting university lecturer” who organised hospital “applications” for EU “grants”. Thus, Maczek saw that the Warsaw LDS recruited successful people alongside less successful ones.

Amongst the LTIs, Tomasz had first met LDS missionaries a year ago when he was not in “good psychological condition”, like many people, being depressed about some problems. Adam had first encountered the Warsaw LDS in the mid-1990s while feeling “a bit lonely” after spending “some time in England”. Back then, he had known some other Polish recruits through attending English lessons at Wolska, including the middle-aged, male LTI, Roman,

and a “crazy man” who had long since disappeared. For Adam, some of these recruits had been “outsiders” or “drop-outs”, but “not tramps”, while others, like Roman and himself, were divorcees, with Roman’s ex-wife having become LDS before they got divorced. Despite still seeing some recruits from years ago such as Roman, Adam knew very little about their work or personal lives. All this suggests that the Warsaw LDS may attract some drifter-types who may be detached from the wider Polish social world.

5.6 Religious searches

At a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wierzbno on 13-06-10, a Polish female, young adult host gave her LDS conversion story, with an American YFM translating it into English. The host had started looking for God when only six years old and had met LDS missionaries at eight, but had declined their offer of baptism. However, through developing her mind at school, she had started to understand the concept of LDS baptism and had agreed to become LDS when nine years old. Interestingly, this story points towards young children being able to assess the merits of a religion.

In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts spoke about different aspects of pre-LDS religious searches that they had experienced. First, several stressed that they had always believed in God. Patrycja (LA) had always believed in “God and Jesus” and said the Our Father prayer. Bruno (CTG) had always been interested in God; had felt God’s presence throughout his life; and had never been able to understand how people could be atheists. Alicja (CTG) had always believed in God and having a “good and honest” family life, but had not wanted to join any religion. Moreover, Paweł (LA) recalled communist forces in Poland teaching that religion was the “opium of the people”. However, through being aware of logical truth in Mathematics, and sensing that God had helped him to do many things and had protected him throughout life, he had always believed in and been interested in the idea of God. Despite already believing in God, two CTGs had not searched for religious truth. Bruno (CTG) had not felt a need to search for any religion beyond Catholicism through already knowing that God existed. Stefan (CTG) had been disappointed by much Catholic religious practice lacking real belief and commitment, but had not known what other religion he wanted. For the converts here, having belief in God may have made them open to getting involved with and seeing something special in the LDS, as an agnostic or atheistic worldview did not need to be overturned.

Second, a few converts talked about looking for God and higher meaning in life. Before meeting the LDS, Weronika (TTG) had felt a need to look for God rather than religion;

Michał (CTG) had been looking at “other planets”, searching for God, and trying to find a better life on Earth; and Alina (LA) had been interested in “many Churches” while asking philosophical questions about life. Despite being LDS for three years, Alina had not found any big answers to her philosophical or religious questions. Nevertheless, she valued some “secret doctrines” in the POGP, especially the idea of there being “other worlds” which she had read about in some “fantasy books” before becoming LDS, when she had been sad at finding no entrance to these worlds. Overall, the converts’ search for God and higher meaning in life here may have inclined them to interpret the LDS offer of giving religious answers about life positively.

Third, a few converts recalled being interested in religion from an early age. From the CTGs, Michał had always been fascinated by religion/theology, and religion had always been important throughout Marysia’s previous Catholic and current LDS life. Alicja had questioned what religion was about at an early age when she had met some friends of her parents who were from various religious backgrounds, but she had never joined any religion before the LDS, because there had been too many to choose from. Alina (LA) had become interested in religion while very young and more so as a teenager. Thus, through having maintained an interest in religion from an early age, these converts may have been open to investigating LDS religiosity when the opportunity arose.

Fourth, a few LAs spoke about becoming interested in religion during adulthood. This happened to Barbara during her university years, while Józef’s growing interest in religion as an adult had prompted him to look for a religious community to join. In communist Poland, Józef had developed a top career in Econometrics, and, as part of an academic movement, he had organised conferences/seminars and published articles. Behind the official Marxist line in his academic thinking, Józef had secretly criticised the socialist worldview of the time through obtaining illicit academic material from the West. Moreover, he had started sensing that his academic view of the universe, with all its systematic structure, was incomplete without the idea of there being some “higher intelligence”. Hence, Józef had become convinced that there had to be some kind of God. Before first meeting LDS missionaries four-and-a-half years ago, Józef’s desire to follow a religious path had intensified through his sense of guilt at having been an immoral person. Paweł had also started exploring religion as an adult. When Poles had started gaining freer access to information in post-communist times, he had become curious why people believed in different religions. For Paweł, many religions controlled rather than enlightened people through prescribing books for their followers to read. He had read books and articles to discover why religions such as Islam caused wars

through their ideology, and believed that Islam had “strange” authoritarian leaders and scholars who controlled their followers by imposing strict interpretations of the Koran on them. Paweł believed that not all religions could be true, as some waged war on others as “imperfect” organisations influenced by human intrusion and economic interests. Despite recognising that there were “good and bad people” in every religion, Paweł compared level-headed LDS Church leaders favourably with authoritarian, non-LDS religious leaders. Thus, Józef and Paweł developed their interest in religion as adults, searched for religious truth, and joined the LDS. However, through Barbara and Paweł being periodically inactive converts and Józef a non-temple goer, these three LAs may be religious experimentalists who are still open to exploring other outlooks on life, which may block them from becoming CTGs. Like many of Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4054) Hungarian LDS converts, Józef and Paweł attempt to fill a “void” through searching for “answers to existential questions”. This may again support the idea from section 2.1 that some people become religious-seekers to counter a sense of suffering from religious/spiritual deprivation and create higher meaning in their lives.

Fifth, a few converts talked about not being interested in religion/theology before encountering the LDS. This was so for Gabriela (LA) and Dagmara (TTG), while Radek (CTG) had become atheistic at 12 despite being brought up Catholic. Jola (TTG) had “skipped” Religion lessons at school through disliking a “mean nun”, and had only been Catholic “by tradition” until she was nine when she followed her mother into becoming LDS. However, she stressed that back then, she had been too young to be interested in religion. Celina (TTG) was grateful to the LDS for prompting her to become interested in religion and God, something she had not experienced with the Catholic Church. Thus, the converts’ uneventful Catholic experience or lack of interest in religion may have helped to draw them towards meaningful religiosity offered by the LDS. Despite this, Adam (LTI) had never felt religious, sensed God’s existence, or prayed with the Catholic or LDS Churches. This suggests that the LDS do not always elicit religious interest from lapsed Catholics or other recruits who may pursue social benefits rather than religious truth with the LDS.

Sixth, a few converts spoke about seeking greater knowledge of the Bible before encountering the LDS. From the CTGs, Martyna had read and believed in the Bible as a Catholic teenager. When Catholic in his mid-20s, Stefan had felt something being missing from his life through not having read the Bible beyond “some parts” of the New Testament. To gain more religious purpose and a “different relationship with God”, he had bought a Polish Bible and started reading it carefully one “Christmas or Easter”. Romuald had attended

Mass and learnt about such things as the Ten Commandments when Catholic, but had started viewing things differently when he had read the Bible as a young adult. With the Bible, he found a “spirit” of scripture and early apostolic church organisation/duty that he had not encountered at Mass which had had no impact on him beyond Sunday. From the LAs, Szymon had read the Bible while still practising Buddhism, and Patrycja had received a famous Polish version of it from her daughter or workplace which contained a sentence about God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost being separate entities. The CTGs above may have started leaving Catholicism behind through sensing a need to read the Bible which they felt they had been deprived of. This may point towards many Catholics not reading the Bible, while the LDS encouragement of people to read the Bible and BOM may draw in Catholics who seek to construct their identity on scripture (Obirek in Harrison 2009). However, Bogusław (LTI) lead Bible study meetings at a Catholic church in Warsaw which may suggest that if people look for Bible study within the Catholic Church, they can find it.

Seventh, two CTGs discussed how they had sought more religious commitment than that which they had experienced with the Catholic Church. Despite not having followed “some others” in attending non-Catholic churches, Dawid had prayed to God to find the “true religion” so he could worship him better. Stefan had looked for greater religious obedience through disliking Polish Catholics smoking, not putting their beliefs into practice, and not listening to the guidance of priests. His religious search had started in Spain between 1987 and 1988, where, while being away from his family, he had strengthened a desire to know God properly and be more obedient to him. Thus, both converts here started yearning for something more than what they received as Catholic laymen, which may have inclined them to be impressed by committed forms of LDS religiosity.

Finally, two Polish converts recalled searching for religious truth within the Catholic Church itself. After being atheistic as a teenager, Radek (CTG) had returned to the Catholic Church resolving to change his life, and had started going to confession, but meeting YMs had put an end to this. Despite not being Catholic, Szymon (LA) had read about medieval Catholic mysticism when only 11-12 years old, and had applied to join a Carmelite seminary when nineteen. In contrast, Marek (CTG) and Celina (TTG) had not searched for religious fulfilment inside or outside the Catholic Church, having possibly been apathetic towards religion through receiving non-stimulating Catholic religious practice. However, from the LTIs, Maczek discussed how lay people may seek greater religious commitment within the Catholic Church in Poland through joining the Oasis movement or going on pilgrimage to religious sites. Besides this, Bogusław and Tomasz seemed to be satisfied with their Catholic

religious practice. This suggests that while some Poles do not find religious fulfilment with the Catholic Church, others do. Of course, this may depend on which Catholic churches people attend/explore, with some parish churches being uninspiring, while some religious order (e.g. Dominican) churches may have youth groups, catechism classes, a welcoming atmosphere etc.

In this section, Polish LDS converts and LTIs discuss religious search issues which may point towards some modern-day Poles feeling free to break away from their Catholic backgrounds through having a “religious sensitivity” that prompts them to seek satisfying belief/value systems elsewhere (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 197). However, this section also shows that some Polish LDS converts were initially not interested in religion/theology and never sought religious truth from the Catholic Church before encountering the LDS, which may highlight that LDS recruitment is easier when less pre-LDS religious investment needs to be overturned (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Stark 2005: 65-66; Nabozny 2009: 81-83).

5.7 Exploring different religions

Filip, a casually-dressed, bearded, middle-aged man, attended Wolska events for a few months between late 2008 and early 2009. After the baptism of a middle-aged woman on 3-01-09, he told me that he respected the LDS belief about people being able to develop into gods, because he was an “Elohim”, a god himself. He showed me an address card for a Unification Church (‘Moonie’) meeting place in Warsaw, and another card with his name “Elohim Filip” on it. At my flat on 8-10-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) revealed that he attended services with an evangelical Christian group which studied the Bible, and that he valued the friendly contact with the people there. After the Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 8-01-12, Adam (LTI) told me that he attended an evangelical Christian church. All this suggests that some recruits/LTIs explore different NRMs and evangelical-type Christian groups through accessing a kind of religious marketplace network in Warsaw.

After the Raławicka Sunday meetings on 19-02-12, a middle-aged, male LA (non-interviewee) told me that he valued all religions for teaching morality, which he had discovered while conducting a religious search in his mid-20s before becoming LDS. Nonetheless, despite having nothing against Catholicism, he disliked Catholic priests. After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 27-01-13, a YMM revealed that Karol (LTI non-interviewee) had studied many religious texts, believed in a universal idea/application of religion, and had investigated the LDS seven years ago. Karol, who was in his early 30s and wearing a suit/tie, told me that he had explored Islam and Eastern

Orthodoxy. Despite the beautiful music, he viewed the Orthodox Church as an autocratic religion, and having read the Koran, he found it and Islamic psychology strange. Karol had been brought up Catholic without this meaning much, as he disliked an overemphasis on doctrine, and was now seeking religious fulfilment in the heart rather than the head through exploring shamanism. All this points towards some recruits sensing religious/spiritual deprivation, searching for religious truth, and encountering the LDS (Eliason 1999: 142-143; Chryssides 2016: 32-33).

In my interview data, quite a few Polish converts spoke about exploring non-Catholic religions before joining the LDS. A few talked about encountering and being interested in non-Catholic Churches and Christian-derived NRMs during religious searches. While still attending Mass, Stefan (CTG) had visited non-Catholic churches that his friends had invited him to. In 1990, he had been in Los Angeles with a Polish friend he knew from Spain who had been reading the Bible and meeting Jehovah's Witnesses. While Stefan had appreciated the Jehovah's Witnesses' serious-minded message, his friend had stopped the meetings and lead Stefan towards reading the BOM and meeting YFMs. From the LAs, Szymon had encountered Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Pentecostals, and Patrycja Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Baptists. Through her multi-religious experience, Patrycja believed that all religions were similar. Her ex-husband had been taught the Baptist religion by his grandmother as a child, and Patrycja had attended a Baptist chapel with him and their two daughters during early marriage. She had appreciated a Baptist clergyman getting her shopping, as she had been unemployed and her husband an alcoholic, and had found the prayers in different languages "funny". Despite not being impressed by people from various Churches, Józef had been interested in the Amish religion before meeting YMs on the street. He acknowledged that if he had met any Amish back then, he might be Amish now. All this may point towards religious practice becoming a private process of choosing a brand from different options, and religious shoppers/tourists moving between different denominations in search of benefits (Yang and Abel 146). As the LAs above engaged with and were interested in different evangelical-type Christian Churches and Christian-type NRMs before joining the LDS, they may still be religious experimentalists which may block them from becoming CTGs.

From the LTIs, Maczek criticised the Orthodox Church for not following the Catholic Pope as the Christian leader of "apostolic succession", being created for "political reasons", and containing "too much symbolism and opulence", and rejected Protestantism for not having a "real kind of priesthood" with the "right offices". In contrast, he praised the Catholic

and LDS Churches for their claims to have priesthood offices dating back to apostolic Christian times. However, Catholic and Protestant clergy had advised Maczek to avoid the LDS because of their non-mainstream Christian teachings. When Witek had been 20, his mother had invited the Jehovah's Witnesses to their home believing that he would appreciate their calmness/politeness, and he had started studying the Bible with them. After 17 years with them, Witek had become curious about "many other things" concerning religion and history during which time he encountered the LDS. From the above, Maczek seems to be a long-term religious-seeker within Christian-type boundaries, while Witek has explored the Jehovah's Witnesses and LDS for long periods of time. Thus, they may be long-term religious experimentalists who are willing to check out Christian-derived NRMs in Warsaw.

Quite a few converts talked about being previously interested in non-Christian religions. From the LAs, Barbara had read books about Buddhism, and Józef had always respected Buddhists for their "strong morality". Szymon had been in contact with a mountain village community of Polish Buddhists, and had taught others about Buddhism and Hinduism as a teenager despite never being "officially initiated" into these religions. He had also written about Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity as an "intellectual, non-spiritual process", and had visited a Warsaw mosque "many times" through admiring Islam as a monotheistic religion. Alicja's (CTG) parents had been Buddhist during her early childhood; Michał (CTG) had explored the monotheistic religions (Islam, Judaism, and Catholicism) without finding fulfilment; and Weronika (TTG) had read a book about Judaism. For me, it is unsurprising that some converts here had been interested in Buddhism before becoming LDS, as both religions share a strong onus on self-development. All this suggests that if recruits are not culturally inhibited, they can explore the main non-Christian religions in Warsaw.

Finally, two LAs talked about being involved with esoteric forms of religion before encountering the LDS. When Alina had first met the LDS at their English lessons in Warsaw, she had been a member of a Church "opposite to any Christian" one, Anton LaVey's Church of Satan, while Barbara had spent six months exploring the Rosicrucian religion. After attending some lessons/meetings, Barbara had decided to join the Rosicrucian movement, but had lost interest when turned down for membership. Thus, these LAs explored hidden-type religions at the margins of society, so joining the LDS may represent a step back towards engaging in mainstream religiosity.

In summary, pre-LDS background may influence Polish LDS recruitment/conversion in several big ways. First, older age (greater life experience) may block LDS baptism and CTG status, while younger age (less life experience) may encourage recruitment/conversion. Older

people from lower socio-economic backgrounds may not become CTGs through not seeking long-term benefits (deferred gratification). Second, professional experience may help prompt LDS membership and CTG status, because people with refined social skills may make LDS friends quickly, access LDS networks easily, negotiate social space well, and be accepted by the Warsaw LDS. Having professional experience may help recruits/converts to be recognised as valid social participants, and allow them to seek socio-economic rewards and high status in the Polish and international LDS worlds. However, as globalisation offers Poles more religious and ideological options, making it more difficult for Catholic customs to be handed down through the generations, some deprivation sufferers do enter the Warsaw LDS field without much likelihood of becoming CTGs. Non-acceptance of the wider Catholic and secular worlds in Poland may prompt religious searches which may lead to people with eclectic/heterodox religious views entering the Warsaw LDS field. While recruits from everyday practising Catholic backgrounds may be ripe for LDS institutionalisation through having some experience of accepting religious authority, religious experimentalists may openly disagree with LDS views and risk being alienated/marginalised inside the Warsaw LDS field. Moreover, Girard's (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 10-14) concept of scapegoating may come into play. For example, deprivation sufferers and religious experimentalists may be viewed as disturbing group unity through not becoming CTGs, and criticised for not desiring the power/status that CTGs have or not being able to attain it.

5.8 Prominent background issues

In this final section of the chapter, I will assess what type of recruit each convert was before LDS baptism and each LTI was at the time of his interview through focusing on prominent background issues that influenced their LDS involvement. As mentioned in 4.4, my research suggests that TTGs/CTGs may often be recruited under 30 and LAs and LTIs above 30, with less life experience allowing easier journeys to LDS membership and CTG status. Alongside this, there seems to be four other, prominent background issues.

First, quite a few CTGs had been practising Catholics when they first encountered the LDS. Radek had returned to Catholicism after an atheistic phase. Wojciech, Marek, and Romuald had been practising Catholics, and Bruno and Marysia committed ones. Stefan had practised Catholicism with doubts and Zofia and Dawid while seeking closer connection with God, while Martyna had only attended Mass through her parents' instructions. In contrast, Lech had been a non-practising Catholic, Michał a disillusioned one, and Alicja a non-Catholic who seemed to loathe the Catholic Church. All this suggests that previous Catholic

religious practice may help some recruits to become LDS and CTGs. From the TTGs, Jola had practised Catholicism as a child; Dagmara had only attended Catholic churches on special occasions; Damian and Celina had been indifferent to religion; and Weronika non-Catholic. This seems to imply that nowadays, many younger Polish converts who become temple-goers may be indifferent to religion before encountering the LDS, while many Poles who became LDS and temple-goers while young some years ago may have been practising Catholics. From the LAs, Ewa had been a practising Catholic; Gabriela and Paweł had only attended Catholic churches on special occasions; Barbara, Alina, Józef, and Patrycja had been non-practising Catholics; and Szymon non-Catholic. Thus, while quite a few CTGs had been practising Catholics, most TTGs and LAs had been minimal practising or non-practising Catholics. From the LTIs, Bogusław was a staunch Catholic and Tomasz a committed one; Maczek a practising Catholic with doubts; Adam a non-practising one; and Witek non-Catholic. This suggests that Catholic religious practice may sometimes block recruits from becoming LDS.

Second, some converts had been religious seekers. From the CTGs, Stefan had explored non-Catholic churches and Michał the main monotheistic religions; Radek had been a Catholic revert; Dawid and Zofia had searched to get closer to God; and Alicja had been interested in religion without joining any. While still Catholic, Stefan, Martyna, and Romuald had started reading the Bible privately to gain greater awareness of God. Hence, some CTGs had been internal God and external religion seekers and Bible readers which highlights that religious seeking/God seeking sometimes precedes Polish LDS recruitment. While most TTGs had not been religious seekers, most LAs had been so. Despite coming from non-religious families, Barbara had read about Buddhism and attended Rosicrucian meetings, and Szymon had been involved with Buddhism and Hinduism and interested in many religions. Hence, their religious seeking may have been geared towards filling religious voids. Before encountering the LDS, Paweł had read about different religions for many years, and Józef had been impressed by the Amish and the moral development aspect of Buddhism while looking to purge himself from a sinful past life. Patrycja had encountered a few Christian religions and NRMs before the LDS, and Barbara and Alina had been involved with exotic religions at the margins of mainstream society. The religious seeking of the LAs above may have blocked them from gaining the LDS commitment necessary to become CTGs. From the LTIs, Maczek has explored different Christian denominations and NRMs; Witek had been brought up Eastern Orthodox and involved with the Jehovah's Witnesses for many years; Bogusław and Tomasz seem interested in comparative religion; and Adam disinterested in religion. This

may suggest that both religious interest and disinterest may block recruits from becoming LDS.

Third, some converts had suffered various forms of deprivation. From the CTGs/TTGs, Lech lost his parents during early childhood, while the parents of Stefan and Alicja got divorced while they were young, with Damian and Jola coming from one-parent families too. Moreover, the latter four converts come from maternal one-parent families. All this may suggest that coming from families without two parents, suffering a sense of deprivation, and seeking family-type belonging can push converts to become temple-goers. From the LAs, Paweł was a single father, and Patrycja had had problems with an alcoholic ex-husband. Gabriela came from a broken home; had lived in orphanages as a child; and she and her husband had had alcohol problems, so she valued the WOW rules for steering her away from alcohol. Here, the LAs' sense of deprivation may have held them back from seeking CTG status. Given the value the LDS place on eternal marriage, Romuald, Michał, and Bruno (CTGs) may have been deprivation sufferers, as they were unmarried in their 40s at the time of their interviews. Attaining full LDS communal belonging depends on a convert's marital status, because if converts remain single, they are deprived of temple marriage and eternal family building. Thus, there seems to be two types of CTGs: temple-married ones with LDS spouses/children and single ones. Besides this, all five LTIs were unmarried, with four being over 40 and two unemployed which may suggest that they are deprivation sufferers with plenty of free time to explore the Warsaw LDS field.

Fourth, some converts and LTIs appear to be benefit-seekers. Dawid (CTG), Weronika (TTG), and Gabriela and Alina (LAs) had first encountered the LDS through attending their free English lessons. Adam (LTI) had also attended such lessons over the years. Moreover, Damian (TTG) seems to be a big benefit-seeker, because as a recruit inside the Basingstoke and Warsaw LDS branches, he had attended events for free food, and as a recent convert, he aimed to gain educational, employment, and marital rewards from the LDS. However, Franciszek (LA) was dissatisfied/disillusioned as the LDS in Poland did not receive the rewards/benefits that the LDS in the USA gained. Nonetheless, three TTGs/YSA members (Celina, Damian, and Jola) went on to receive temple marriage with LDS spouses in the USA which may point towards them being long-term benefit-seekers. This may suggest that serious benefit seeking involves young Polish converts looking for and gaining adventurous LDS lives in the USA.

6. LDS Social Networking

This chapter assesses my PO and interview data for information concerning LDS interaction influencing Polish LDS recruitment/conversion and LTI curiosity. Several main themes/topics emerged which are discussed below.

6.1 Privately studying the LDS

A few Polish LDS converts spoke about privately studying the LDS over many years as part of a religious search, or checking them out on the internet after first encountering LDS missionaries/members. Paweł (LA) explained that through it now being easier to attain information about many issues from the internet and television channels in Poland, Poles could choose what kinds of information to focus on. However, he had first heard about the LDS about 30 years ago during communist times, having read books and spoken with Western contacts about them. Having discovered the LDS through his own curiosity, he viewed them as one Church amongst many others. A few years ago, Paweł's interest had intensified through seeing on the internet that the LDS were officially organised in Poland. Szymon (LA) had received the BOM and D&C from YMMs in Warsaw 10 years ago, and had met some YMMs recently, knowing more about LDS religiosity than them, as he had privately studied LDS scripture/teachings over the intervening years. Both LAs here seem to have studied the LDS for many years as part of a private religious search, one before meeting the LDS, the other after briefly encountering them. They seem to support Farrin's (2009: 27-33) point about an internal search for religious truth being more important for religious seekers than interaction/negotiation with other people. However, Paweł and Szymon's long-term interest has not lead to them becoming CTGs, which may suggest that having too much religious interest/enthusiasm can sometimes block converts from gaining such status. During a "break" from seeing the LDS, Maczek (LTI) had read some books by a priest from the Polish National Catholic Church (independent from the Roman Catholic Church) about the LDS which had made him "fascinated" about how they "behaved". Like Paweł and Szymon, Maczek had strengthened his interest in the LDS through privately reading about them. Thus, the cases here highlight that despite the influence of the wider Catholic world in Poland, some Poles may look for more satisfying religious beliefs/values (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 197). They also show that Ostling/Ostling (2007: 221-222) and Stark's (2005: 79-80) point about LDS converts gaining a sense of communal belonging before developing serious

religious interest overlooks the possibility that some converts may learn about the LDS through engaging in religious searches before encountering them.

After becoming curious about an LDS man (her future husband) at work, Barbara (LA) had urged her brother to print anything he could find about the LDS on the internet, so she could check them out from different perspectives. Then, one evening, she had read many perspectives about the LDS being a “sect” or not. Celina (TTG) had started meeting her YMs on a basketball court in her hometown, Szczecin, in north-west Poland. This led to her assessing positive and negative accounts about the LDS on the internet which had helped to overturn her initial negative views about them. When Damian (TTG) returned to Poland from the UK, where he had met the LDS, he looked at anti-LDS literature on the internet before seeking the LDS out in Warsaw. After a month back, he attended an LDS General Conference screening from Salt Lake City at Wolska, after which his recruitment to LDS baptism ran smoothly. The converts here seem to have felt a need to check the LDS out on the internet before getting more involved with them, as reassurance against them being viewed as a sect in Poland. Thus, the cases here may point towards many Poles and Polish social institutions viewing NRMs negatively (Pasek 183-191; Zielińska 2006: 213-220).

6.2 LDS recruitment pathways

At my flat on 8-10-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) talked about his ex-wife and daughter being inactive LDS, and how he used the Family History Centre at Wolska as a local internet cafe. Despite feeling the presence of God with the LDS, Roman did not have the time/commitment to join them. At a five-baptism event at Wolska on 19-02-11, I saw an American YFM looking after Damian’s (TTG) two young nieces alongside his mother and sister. Moreover, on 16-04-11, just after a few baptisms at Wolska, I discovered that Damian had baptised his mother, and Michał (CTG) had baptised a male LTI (non-interviewee) who had investigated the LDS for about 10 years, with the baptisms having attracted a bigger turnout than any Sunday Sacrament meeting. At a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 18-12-11, I saw Paweł’s (LA) teenage daughter sat with a YFM, and at another such meeting on 15-01-12, I saw her sandwiched between two YFMs who were tickling her. Not long afterwards, on Facebook, I saw that she had been recently baptised LDS. At Raławicka metro station before a Sunday Sacrament meeting on 29-04-12, Damian revealed that despite the Nielsons’ attempts to draw in his maternal grandparents, the latter would not be attending Raławicka that day, his last Sunday before setting off for his mission in Tacoma, Washington, or any other Sunday, as they stayed in bed till 11am every Sunday. After a

fireside with an American guest speaker, Elder Richards from the First Seventy, at Wolska on 14-10-12, a middle-aged male LA (non-interviewee) told me that he had first encountered YMs at his sister's house, though his sister had never converted and had broken contact with the LDS 20 years ago. On 26-01-13, I attended the baptism of a middle-aged Polish man performed by his recently baptised friend at Wolska, and the following day, I saw his confirmation there. The PO shots above point towards family or friends leading recruits towards LDS contact (e.g. through introducing recruits to missionaries) and baptism, and social interaction underpinning recruitment to LDS baptism (Eberhard 1974; Stark 2005: 79-80).

In my interview data, many Polish converts spoke about being guided (or guiding others) towards LDS contact. First, a few recalled being directed towards the LDS by friends or acquaintances in Warsaw. In the late 1980s, shortly before the Poland LDS Mission was officially established, Zofia (CTG) had started asking an "intelligent" friend why she had become LDS, with the latter explaining that she had not changed faith, only her Church. While listening to her friend justifying the LDS Church's doctrines, organisation, priesthood, and "clean environment", Zofia had felt many inner questions being answered. From the LAs, Franciszek joined the LDS in the early 1990s, shortly after the Poland Mission had started. He had first met them through a non-LDS friend telling him about them giving the BOM away free. Patrycja had first encountered the LDS about 15 years ago when an English woman had brought a child to a nursery where she had been working. She had then attended an LDS dinner, met some new people, and got some addresses, but had not seen any LDS again until meeting two YMMs in Warsaw recently. Barbara had become interested in the LDS recently while helping some autistic and abused children at work with a male colleague who was LDS. On a works vacation, her colleague had helped her to deal with an aggressive patient, given her the BOM, and discussed many issues, which had prompted a relationship to develop. Barbara's curiosity had grown when another workmate had told her that her colleague could not attend her birthday party on a Sunday because he was LDS. Moreover, through her colleague's encouragement, Barbara had started reading the BOM, which she had enjoyed, and she had accompanied him to Wolska to listen to an LDS guest speaker from the USA, to see how he got on with other LDS members. At this event, she had enjoyed such powerful friendliness with YFMs that she had decided to visit Wierzbno with her colleague the following Sunday. From the above, Zofia seems to have been drawn in by her friend's rationalisation of LDS teachings/practices, and Barbara by a mystique surrounding her colleague being LDS. Franciszek's eagerness to get a free copy of the BOM may point

towards the LDS being viewed as an exotic religion in early post-communist Poland when Poles started encountering more foreign cultures. Patrycja's initial LDS contact was less dramatic, as she had met them without thinking much about them afterwards.

Stefan (CTG) had been directed towards the LDS by a Polish friend in Los Angeles after living with him in Spain for 10 months. In Los Angeles, Stefan's friend had stressed the value of reading the Bible fully, especially while meeting Jehovah's Witnesses. Later on, this friend had given Stefan a copy of the BOM which he had read in English. In spring 1990, Stefan's friend had invited him to start meeting YFMs, which Stefan had done every second/third Thursday despite his friend dropping out. He had then become "hooked" to the YFMs as friends before developing an interest in LDS religiosity later on. Through becoming interested in the LDS in Los Angeles, away from his family, where the LDS may be viewed as a mainstream religion rather than a sect, Stefan encountered favourable social conditions for LDS recruitment/conversion. During a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Raławicka on 1-05-11, Stefan retold his story above, and the visiting mother of a mother from a young American LDS family at Raławicka spoke about knowing Stefan from his time in the USA.

Second, a few Polish temple-goers spoke about being directed towards the LDS by family members. Jola (TTG) recalled being in a Catholic children's choir and begging her mother to watch her at Mass with the latter only pretending to do so. When her mother had admitted that she was attending a non-Catholic church, Jola had begged to go with her, through which she met the LDS for the first time. From the CTGs, Lech's uncle had encountered the LDS while doing construction work in Austria. His eldest sister had met them while working in Austria too and had found an LDS branch in Łódź, their home city in western Poland, where his other sister had started having baptism lessons, and he had started meeting YMs for fun as a teenager. Martyna's older sister had become interested in the LDS during a period of illness through a no longer active LDS friend; had started attending LDS meetings in 1990; and had investigated them for some time before joining them. At 15, Martyna had not even been interested in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir visiting Poland, but at 16, she had started accompanying her sister to an LDS chapel. Hence, the three temple-goers here were led towards first meeting the LDS by older female family members at a young age which suggests that their limited life experience made them open to being guided towards LDS membership. During the mid-1990s while in his mid-40s, Adam (LTI) had returned to Warsaw after "some time in England", and his non-LDS father, who had always been "interested in novelties", had encouraged him to visit Wolska chapel "less than half a mile" from their home. Moreover, Stefan (CTG) had arranged for his sister to be visited by YMs in

Warsaw through which her and her family had become LDS. This suggests that being guided towards the LDS by a non-LDS relative will not involve the same strength of encouragement as being networked by an LDS relative.

The Polish LDS accounts above point towards some Polish converts being guided towards LDS contact through LDS friends and relatives rather than religious interest (Bainbridge 1992; Stark 2005: 79-80). These converts mirror the 11 of Rigal-Cellard's (2018: location 3668) French LDS respondents who joined the LDS through the influence of family members and three through friends.

Third, two female LAs discussed how their children had followed them into becoming LDS. Edyta's pre-teenage daughter had become LDS but her young adult son had decided against it, which she and her husband respected. After Gabriela had become LDS, her two pre-teenage children did likewise a few months afterwards. However, I saw that when Edyta and Gabriela started becoming inactive, their children followed suit. In contrast, Stefan's sister's (CTG non-interviewee) teenage daughter went studying at a BYU site in the USA. This may suggest that Polish married couples who invest in long-term LDS career development can attain educational rewards for their children, and that CTG status may be maintained by Polish converts seeking and gaining long-term benefits from the LDS. Again, this supports the rational benefit-seeker theory from section 2.1.

Fourth, a few Polish converts spoke about first meeting the LDS at their free English lessons. Stefan (CTG) had not attended such lessons because none had been available in Los Angeles many years ago. In Poland, Dawid (CTG) had seen them advertised on the internet, had attended them at an LDS chapel, and had then agreed to have baptism lessons with YMs. Weronika (TTG) had attended her first LDS English lesson in Warsaw, and immediately afterwards, two YFMs had invited her "to speak about Jesus" in private. Similarly, Alina (LA) had attended a presentation about the LDS religion after an LDS English lesson. Despite initially arguing against LDS beliefs/values, she had gradually started accepting them. At Alina's English lessons, the American YMs had been little older than herself and friendly towards her at a time when she had not been "really nice". Alina now believed that both the YMs and the Holy Ghost had played a part in her change of heart towards the LDS. One of Gabriela's (LA) friends had asked her if her children wanted to attend LDS English lessons, and some YMs had taken an interest in them at their chapel. She had then invited the YMs to teach her children at home which led to her and her children becoming LDS. All this suggests that like religious sales people, the LDS use their English lessons to push the students towards investigating LDS religiosity, offering a free product to entice their clients

into buying a long-term one afterwards. Szymon (LA) acknowledged that YMs were looking for quick baptisms at LDS English lessons. However, rather than recalling an exciting time with YMs, Adam (LTI) had encountered outsiders, “drop-outs”, and fellow divorcees at his first LDS English lessons in Warsaw many years ago. Still, the convert cases above point towards LDS English lessons drawing in recruits for the LDS to start proselytising (Mauss 2008: 55).

Throughout central Warsaw, YMs can sometimes be seen seeking recruits on the streets. One Tuesday evening on 28-04-09, near the LDS Nowy Świat site, I saw two YFMs trying to chat with young passers-by. Outside a University of Warsaw Sociology department building on Krakowskie Przedmieście, a busy street between Nowy Świat and the Old Town, a YFM was speaking to three young adult males and they all walked to the main university gates where more YMs were trying to talk with students. Two YMMs were walking from the Old Town towards the university gates trying to chat with young people on the way. On 2-07-09, I met two YMMs inside their Nowy Świat site. The upper-floor, where Sunday meetings had taken place in the past, contained religious pictures on the walls. Here, a male recruit was chatting with a YMM and Radek (CTG), possibly the recruit’s friend. Downstairs, we passed a kitchen and toilets, and I was shown official leaflets about Jesus, Joseph Smith, LDS baptism etc. from 1987 when the Fusseks, the older missionary couple from 1.2.3, had stayed at Nowy Świat. After this, the YMMs started discussing the apostasy doctrine. All this shows how YMs may collectively seek and engage with mainly young recruits in busy parts of Warsaw.

In my interview data, quite a few converts discussed how their LDS contact had started through encountering YMs on the street. From the CTGs, Wojciech had met YMMs this way during the early days of the Poland Mission when there had been no YFMs. When Bruno had first met YMMs on the street, he had sensed God speaking through them, in front of their faces. In contrast, Dawid had rejected their first advances, as it was difficult for YMs to make contact with people on the street, because religion was a “very private thing” in Poland. Lech revealed that YMs sometimes asked Polish LDS members to help them seek recruits on the street or to approach them at branch meetings. When Celina (TTG) had first encountered YMMs in Szczecin, they had just asked to play basketball without revealing their identity to Celina and her friends, from whom only Celina had become LDS. Despite Celina and her friends viewing the young Americans as “good” people, she had felt “a bit scared” when her teacher had revealed that they were “Mormons”, as she had had stereotypical views of them having many wives and living strict lives. She had grown more comfortable through checking

out positive and negative accounts about the LDS on the internet, especially the Wikipedia “facts”. From the LAs, Józef had felt the impact of the YMs’ words on the street, while Paweł, who had studied the LDS for many years before meeting any, had given some YMs his telephone number when encountering them outside. Two YMMs had swapped addresses and telephone numbers with Patrycja when she had encountered them while off work sick, walking her dog on a different route than usual. She had been amused by both YMMs being called Matthew, and had recalled an LDS dinner party she had attended many years ago. Szymon had received copies of the BOM and D&C from YMMs on a Warsaw street 10 years ago. Recently, he had approached two YMMs to talk about the BOM, but they had been “too busy”. Despite this, he had met some more in Pole Mokotowskie Park, just when he had felt a need to see them, recognising them as LDS and not Jehovah’s Witnesses through seeing them playing American football. At Wolska the following day, one YMM had thought that Szymon was LDS through him knowing more about the LDS religion than the missionaries themselves.

In the accounts above, YMs got contact details off Patrycja and Paweł (LAs) immediately, which may suggest that they could sense quick baptisms. Celina’s (CTG) YMMs withheld their religious identity from her and her friends at first, possibly sensing that they needed a gradual proselytising approach. Bruno (CTG) and Józef (LA) describe their first contact with LDS missionaries in dramatic terms, and may have become interested in the LDS through having exciting/mysterious early episodes with them. All the converts’ experiences here may mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 3925) Hungarian LDS converts who were drawn to their general “first impression” of LDS missionaries, viewing them as “young, energetic, happy, optimistic, relaxed, and self-confident people” who offered a joyous image of religion. However, as Dawid and Lech (CTGs) suggest, such episodes may be rare because many Poles may refrain from discussing religion openly.

Four LTIs discussed how their LDS contact had started through encountering YMs on the street. About 12 years ago, after 17 years with the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Witek had started becoming more aware of “religion, history, and other people”, and the LDS had suddenly “appeared in Warsaw”. Six years ago, “some very nice Mormon missionaries” had approached Maczek on the street, inviting him to learn English and read the BOM. About a year ago, Tomasz had met two YMMs on Woronicza Street, Wierzbno while visiting Warsaw “to do a TV show” about looking after animals, “otherwise” he would not have met them”. Outside Wierzbno metro station, he had seen “two handsome guys with white shirts, short sleeves, and ties” about 150 metres away. After seeing they were not Jehovah’s Witnesses, he

had been intrigued by a spontaneous “harmony between” the taller and shorter missionaries. While looking “at their eyes”, they had smiled back and he had seen their “good spirits”, and when he had started talking, he had felt some “inner peace within them”. He had been impressed with the YMMs speaking “Polish very well” even though they had only been in Poland for six months and a year respectively. In Polish, they had introduced themselves as representatives of the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints”. After Tomasz had been reassured they were Christians, the YMMs had invited him to visit their Wierzbno site the following week. In response, Tomasz had told them that while still in “his mother’s womb”, he had been destined to meet them, which they had accepted and gained strength from. Like Bruno (CTG) and Józef (LA), Tomasz describes his first meeting with YMMs in dramatic terms, with it having prompted him to find out more about them. In contrast, Bogusław had been “accosted in the street” by YMMs seven years ago; had met them several times before they returned to America; and had then had a “five-year break” from the LDS. During the first meeting, the YMMs had tried convincing him that the LDS religion was a restoration of early Christianity and that the BOM was authentic scripture. Despite being “interested in their religion”, Bogusław had “his own views” through being a Catholic Theology graduate, which may have blocked him from viewing his first meeting with YMMs in dramatic terms.

The convert and LTI accounts above seem to show LDS missionaries often having the time/inclination to help people explore their religious ideas/feelings, and interaction between people and representatives of a religion providing opportunities for the latter to convert the former (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Kong and Nair 2014: 72). They also suggest that missionary street contacting is a common form of initiating LDS recruitment in Warsaw, which may imply that LDS member referral of recruits to missionaries may not be too common there (Oaks 2003).

While studying and working in Basingstoke, the UK, Damian (TTG) had encountered YFMs through them knocking on his door. He stressed that he would have never responded if it had been two YMMs, and believed that the YFMs had been cold calling because the LDS struggled to attract converts in Britain. The YFMs had impressed Damian through being concerned about him being “alone”, and asking where his parents were and what he was doing in the UK at only 15-16 years old. Inside Damian’s flat, one YFM had “scribbled away” while the other had been speaking, but he had not agreed to attend their chapel at first because he had had to work on Sundays. Eventually, he had attended some LDS Sunday meetings in Basingstoke but had been unimpressed with his first Sunday Sacrament meeting, while his first Sunday School meeting had just been “Christ, blah-blah-blah”. In particular,

Damian's preference for YFMs over YMMs is interesting. In both Warsaw branches, I saw male recruits of all ages being drawn towards and meeting YFMs rather than YMMs. Similar to Damian, Stefan's (CTG) experience of first encountering the LDS abroad (in the USA) may highlight that people who are detached from their usual geographical/social worlds may be prone to NRM recruitment, and that religious congregations may function as surrogate families offering comfort to people who lack surrounding group attachments (Bainbridge 1992; Yang and Abel 2014: 150).

6.3 Being drawn towards young missionaries

Between April and June 2010, I had four meetings with YFMs at Wolska. At the first, a sister with English, German, and American citizenship, dressed in black with dyed black hair in her mid/late-20s, did the talking, while a fair-haired, younger American sister took notes. We read an Elder Holland (Quorum of the Twelve) October/November 2009 General Conference speech about converts needing to give up everything to follow the LDS religion fully. I was asked for my opinion about Joseph Smith and answered that I viewed him as a Gothic-writing genius. During the second meeting, the sisters encouraged me to stop drinking beer to start living the WOW fully; gave me LDS scripture to read for homework; told stories about God answering their prayers; and emphasised the difference between their self-created prayers and formulaic ones used by Catholics. At the third one, we discussed the scripture reading homework, and both sisters said that they believed I would become LDS. I was invited to say the closing prayer to Heavenly Father which I did in Polish to create some distance from the action. After this, the Anglo/German/American sister was transferred to another Polish city and replaced by an American sister. At the fourth meeting, we looked at a BOM text on paying tithing with the sisters recalling how they had received blessings for doing it, and revealing that I could start paying voluntary tithing as a non-LDS. However, with my favourite sister gone, I felt little rapport, recognising how important the recruit-missionary bond was for LDS recruitment.

At our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 31-05-11, Damian (TTG) showed me some official investigator report forms, as he was an investigator coordination officer. He had seen my name listed at an investigator discussion meeting, and revealed that I had been monitored with an official form while meeting YFMs a year ago. After a Raławicka Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts on 3-07-11, at the underground station nearby, Damian, who had just returned from a two-week mini-mission in Gdańsk, asked me what Catholic missionaries did. I emphasised that they sometimes served dangerous missions in Muslim countries; told

him about a Protestant friend who had had rocks thrown at him as a missionary in Pakistan; and stressed that while Catholic/Protestant missionaries often tried converting non-Christians, the LDS targeted mainstream Christians and non-believers in Christian countries. For Damian, it was a wise strategy for a small Church like the LDS to proselytise in safe environments before encountering more challenging ones.

After the Sunday Sacrament meeting at Raławicka on 22-04-12 and 29-04-12, there was no Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts. Instead, two YFMs did individual investigator meetings, one with a Polish-American LDS married couple attending, the other with a British female ex-missionary (in Poland) present. After a Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 3-06-12, a YMM lamented that there were not enough recruits to hold a Sunday School meeting, and after one on 22-07-12, another YMM revealed that meetings for individual recruits were now done regularly after Sunday Sacrament meetings.

In my interview data, quite a few Polish LDS converts talked about developing feelings of trust/friendship with special missionaries. From the LAs, Barbara had received a sense of love and power during her first contact with YFMs at an American guest speaker event at Wolska, and Alina had been impressed by the smart appearance and politeness of the American YMMs she had encountered during recruitment. Patrycja had been attending LDS Sunday meetings at Raławicka, and when her ex-husband had stopped living at her house, her two YMMs, the two Matthews, had started visiting her. She had jokingly refused to become LDS unless her favourite, son-like Matthew became an LDS President somewhere, but when he had moved to another Polish city, his colleague had refused to reveal his contact details. One day, after finishing a Hans Christian Andersen text about God creating human life and returning home from the shop, Patrycja had found a letter from her favourite Matthew stating that he had become President of the Białystok branch in north-east Poland. In response, she had decided to become LDS through the maternal-type bond she felt towards this missionary. During her recruitment, Patrycja had also formed special bonds with Marysia (CTG) and an older American male missionary at Wierzbno/Raławicka. From the CTGs, Alicja's YMs had been "cool" friends offering "fun". During her baptism lessons, she had sensed that the LDS religion was true and had felt a need to act upon this. Stefan had been in Los Angeles speaking "some English" without understanding everything his YFMs said, but he had received something to hook onto in his religious search. Celina (TTG) viewed her early friendship with YMs as a key social factor in her recruitment/conversion process. Her missionaries had not pushed her towards baptism, as she had been the one asking all the questions, as the first main step in her recruitment/conversion.

While viewing their friendship with YMs as a key phase in their recruitment, the Polish converts above may value LDS missionaries for having the time/inclination to engage with people who want to explore their religious identity (Obirek in Harrison 2009). They may mirror Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3925) Hungarian LDS converts who view LDS missionaries as "young, energetic, happy, optimistic, relaxed, and self-confident people" with a joyous image of religion. However, Dawid talked about some YMs from American (especially Utah) backgrounds not knowing much about non-LDS problems. Despite this, he had asked one YMM, an LDS convert himself, many questions to which he had received answers to some problems he had had before becoming LDS.

From the LTIs, Maczek's "present" YFMs were "not that helpful" or "open". His previous YFMs had been concerned about people, and two YMMs had been "braver, more open", one "very charismatic", the other "intelligent, young, romantic, and very confident", determined to study Business and Law after his mission. However, when new missionaries arrived, Maczek had "to make the first move" getting to know them. For him, it was a big problem that missionaries moved to different cities, with recruits often disappearing through feeling neglected. Despite this, he believed that when missionaries stayed in one place too long, they found it difficult to get new people interested in their religion, because "Mormons in Poland" were viewed as a "sect". Tomasz had got on "very well" with his first two YMMs, because they had enjoyed praying like him and had sensed that he "wouldn't question or argue with them". Everything had been "friendly" and Tomasz had thought about learning English for the first time in 15 years, with his missionaries promising to teach him, but the LDS had not been offering English lessons at Wierzbno at the time. Moreover, Tomasz' YMMs had not discussed any LDS doctrines at first, and had only started mentioning LDS baptism after a "long time". After Bogusław had had a five-year break from the LDS, some YMMs had just phoned him "one day", as his phone number had not changed. He had agreed to meet them as he liked encountering different people and respected LDS morality for being like Catholic morality. Over the years, Adam had seen many YMs, including two YFMs who he had met "once a week" for a few months until recently. Through the YFMs pressuring Adam to become LDS, he had started ignoring their phone calls, and when he had seen one at Wolska recently, with the other having gone to "another place", he had excused himself by saying he was very busy. Thus, YM-LTI relations may start becoming strained when missionaries mention baptism.

At my flat on 8-10-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) stressed that no YMs would have sex while serving in Poland, but believed that pretty, sociable YFMs prompted baptisms in

Warsaw, and recalled a YFM from some years ago drawing in converts through her natural beauty and feminine charm. He also pointed towards the American/British/German YFM, who I had had baptism lessons with, drawing in converts recently. Through having a similar-aged daughter, Roman “felt like a father” to the YFMs. However, he had cut contact with the LDS for three years after a YMM had been rude to him at his home, although he now viewed this as a mistake after a YFM had coaxed him back to Wolska.

In my interview data, a few temple-goers spoke about differences between being recruited by YMMs and YFMs. Wojciech (CTG) had become LDS in the Poland Mission early days without any YFMs being around. Stefan (CTG) suggested that YFMs may interest recruits because they mature quicker than their male colleagues through being determined to complete a cycle of being raised LDS, serving a mission, and becoming full temple-going wives. Damian (TTG) believed that while YFMs attracted more converts, YMMs drew in “quality” converts, as some male recruits only became LDS to make their YFMs “feel good”, and disappeared when the sisters left the branch. He also revealed that some YMs requested to move branch through feeling attracted to members of the opposite sex. At our favourite Vietnamese restaurant on 31-05-11, Damian told me about a beautiful American YFM recently charming a Polish man in his mid-20s into becoming LDS, and him soon returning to Catholicism. Damian believed that the man would return to the LDS when he had grown tired of searching for a Polish woman and wanted to be mesmerised by YFMs again, but he could not see any American YFM taking a Polish male seriously. From the LTIs, Maczek preferred speaking to YFMs, while for Bogusław, the YMM-YFM issue did not matter.

6.4 Recruited by older missionaries

At Patrycja’s (LA) baptism at Wolska on 10-01-09, Elder Bulkely, an older American missionary, spoke about the kindness he had received while visiting her flat. On 18-05-09 at Wolska, Elder Bulkely met me to discuss his experience of following the historical Mormon Trek from Nauvoo, Illinois to Salt Lake City, Utah. At the end of a combined established convert-recruit/recent convert Sunday School meeting at Wierzbno on 29-07-09, Elder Bulkely’s last Sunday before returning to the USA, Józef (LA) thanked him for helping and understanding the Polish LDS. These observations may suggest that Elder Bulkely had a special empathy for and rapport with LAs and LTIs. At the Bierhalle bar (Arkadia shopping centre) on 4-06-11, Franciszek (LA) praised Walter Whipple, the first Poland LDS Mission President, for speaking Polish well, understanding Polish culture and psychology, and leading smaller meetings at Nowy Świat, and believed that a Whipple return would solve all the

Poland LDS Mission's problems. During a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 17-03-13, many speeches celebrated the Poland Mission early days, with Zofia (CTG) discussing Walter Whipple's role as the first Mission President. Moreover, at our favourite Vietnamese restaurant on 20-04-12, Damian (TTG) stated that after the Bulkelys and Hardings had returned to the USA, some Wierzbno/Raławicka branch leaders had been "less than perfect". After a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 22-07-12, Igor (LTI non-interviewee) told me that he had enjoyed the atmosphere at Wierzbno/Raławicka with President Harding who had made him feel comfortable through telling him that he could dress informally at Sunday meetings. While talking about Rock music (Black Sabbath, Deep Purple etc.), Igor joked that he liked me, because I never wore a suit/tie. However, he felt uncomfortable with Elder Harding gone, and rarely attended LDS Sunday meetings now.

In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts spoke about being impressed by older missionaries just before or after the Poland Mission had been established in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Franciszek (LA) joined the LDS shortly after the Poland Mission had started in 1990, when all Warsaw LDS meetings had been at the Nowy Świat site. He remembered the Fusseks, the older American missionary couple from 1.2.3, attracting early Polish converts, and stressed that Walter Whipple was viewed as a legend by the few LDS converts in Warsaw who could remember him. Zofia (CTG) had been prepared for baptism by the Fusseks in 1988 before the Polish Mission was established, when there had only been 2-4 YMs in Poland. She emphasised that she had not been pushed into anything, as she had felt that everything the Fusseks had taught her was true, as they had shown her how to live properly and everything she needed to know and do to become LDS. Moreover, she had been baptised by Elder Fussek. Many years ago, Romuald (CTG) had been taught by an older missionary couple whose ideas had mirrored his own understanding of the Bible. This had prompted him to investigate LDS religiosity thoroughly, with him having warmed to a special feeling he experienced with the LDS, which he now viewed as the Holy Ghost. Recently, Patrycja's (LA) friendship with Elder Bulkely had influenced her recruitment to baptism but without her being "brainwashed". Thus, the convert views here suggest that older missionaries with their greater life experience may perform parental-type/grandparent-type teaching roles to draw in recruits/converts inside the Warsaw LDS field (Glad 2009: 159-162).

In their comments above, Franciszek and Zofia (and possibly Romuald) directly/indirectly refer to the Fusseks prompting early Polish LDS growth between 1985 and 1990; a revised Polish law on religious liberty allowing the Poland Mission to be established in 1990; and Walter Whipple becoming the first Poland Mission President in 1990 (Mehr 2002: 165, 172).

The converts recall how older missionary figures helped to get the Poland Mission running in the late 1980s/early 1990s, with the latter being viewed as a magical time that has possibly been lost. In contrast, Tomasz (LTI) criticised President Nielson at the start of his Poland Mission Presidency, as he saw “no reforms” being “possible” through a conservative-looking man over 50 leading the Polish LDS. For Tomasz, the LDS had an inflexible religious spirit which sometimes made them “very strong” and other times “completely helpless”. This may suggest that older missionaries impress some Polish recruits/converts, but not all.

6.5 LDS dynamics

Between 10-1-11 and 14-02-11, I attended five Monday Chapel Home Evenings for people aged 30 and over in a side-room at Wolska where mainly Polish recruits, LTIs, and LAs from both Warsaw branches received talks about LDS religiosity. The Hardings, a popular older American missionary couple from Wierzbno/Raławicka, lead the meetings. At the first four, a young Polish LDS couple, Radek (Wolska CTG) and his future wife from Wolska, assisted the Hardings. For the first and third meetings, two YMMs from Wolska were in the audience, and at the third and fifth, the Hardings were joined by older American female missionaries from the Wolska Family History Centre. From the CTGs, Stefan (Wolska) did Polish-English/English-Polish translation work, while Lech (Wolska) and Marysia and Romuald (Wierzbno/Raławicka) were mixed in with the sometimes recently baptised LAs and recruits/LTIs present. Hence, the evenings involved teamwork between older American missionaries and Polish CTGs who were possibly performing callings. For the five meetings I attended, the number of recruits/LTIs and LAs present was relatively even. Amongst the recruits present, most of whom were males from Wolska, were Adam (LTI); the sister of a recent middle-aged, female convert from Wolska; an old man who had met the LDS in New York; and the male partner of a recent middle-aged, female convert from Raławicka. The LAs present were an even mix of males and females from both Warsaw branches. During each meeting, after an opening prayer and hymn, a video was shown or presentation given about general Christian and/or unique LDS teachings with group discussion afterwards (see Appendix 11). At the end of each meeting, the Hardings encouraged their visitors to attend upcoming LDS religious/social events, and then the recruits/LTIs and LAs enjoyed playing table tennis, eating food, and socialising with older American missionaries and Polish CTGs. All this seemed to be aimed at integrating recruits/LTIs, recent converts, and LAs into the Warsaw LDS world, with the older LDS leaders entertaining their guests like youth club workers or parents/grandparents.

During a teleconference from Salt Lake City at Wolska on 4-06-10, Elder Hales quoted fellow Quorum of the Twelve member L. Tom Perry's belief that the LDS could reach the "younger generation" in Europe, but possibly not older people. Perry had visited Warsaw in late August 2008. During a Wolska Christmas meal on 16-12-11, a female convert in her early 30s told me that she had had baptism lessons with YFMs for a few months, and had become LDS two weeks ago, because she felt a really good atmosphere with the LDS.

In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts spoke about how positive social dynamics had drawn them towards the LDS. Quite a few recalled being drawn to a welcoming atmosphere when they were young. At nine years old, Jola (TTG) had been impressed by the LDS being friendly, shaking her hands, and talking to her at church on Sundays. As teenagers during the early 1990s, Lech and Martyna (CTGs) had enjoyed doing social activities with missionaries and other recruits. Lech had been amused by LDS men wearing suits and talking in a "funny way", but after attending LDS social/sports activities for a few months, he had started noticing that he was using his free time differently. Despite not having been interested in religion at 12-13 years old, Lech had started respecting YMs for doing many positive things for him. Martyna had been impressed by all the social/sports activities and baptisms she had attended and places she had visited when 15 years old, which had prompted her to become LDS at sixteen. When in her late teens, Alicja (CTG) had felt good sensing that the LDS were "speaking the truth". Recent teenage convert Dagmara (TTG) felt a warmer atmosphere at Wierzbno/Raclawicka than at home, finding relief from stress there. After meeting YMMs in Szczecin in her late teens, Celina (TTG) had been invited to the LDS meeting place there, where she had started checking the LDS out as the first main step of her recruitment/conversion. After first struggling to focus on things, she had started feeling something "very strong" through meeting "cool" new friends, which had made her view the LDS Church positively. Celina stressed that she would have never been drawn to the LDS if they had been "sad and boring" because, like most people, she had been looking for something warm and positive. Hence, the Polish converts here seem to mirror Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3943) Hungarian LDS converts who viewed their "pre-baptism visits" to "local congregation events" as encounters with a "welcoming and inclusive" community that "like a family", provided "love" and a "sense of safety, warmth and acceptance", with many LDS members being "kind, happy, and content" people who maintained high "values and norms". Many years ago, Franciszek (LA) had been a "very young" convert entering a "good community". In hindsight, he was happy about having come across the LDS rather than any "other cults", although he believed that "all cults" created a

friendly atmosphere to draw people in. Thus, in time, some Polish recruits/converts may come to view LDS hospitality as little more than a proselytising strategy.

The Polish converts above first encountered the LDS as teenagers which again suggests that younger recruits may move towards LDS baptism and temple-goer status more easily through being less committed to other outlooks/worldviews than older recruits. While many of my CTG/TTG interviewees became LDS in their 20s or younger, most LA and LTI interviewees were older when they became or first encountered the LDS. This points towards young adulthood being a pivotal age for religious recruitment, as youths/young adults have more free time, with them sometimes being geographically/socially mobile and free to change their social networks (Chryssides 2016: 29; Stark 2005: 64).

Damian (TTG) discussed how YSA networking had dominated his recent LDS recruitment as a late teenager. Initially, he had been unimpressed with the lack of youth activity at Wolska after a similar situation in Basingstoke (UK), but while checking the YSA out at Wierzbno/Raławicka, he had been “pulled in” by Jola (TTG). The latter and another female YSA member had pushed Damian towards attending YSA Institute meetings at Wierzbno/Raławicka on Thursday evenings and birthday and first name day parties at Jola’s house. At first, Damian had attended these events for food, but things changed. At the YSA Institute meetings, where people had to be officially under 30 but older people were accommodated, he had met quite a few new LDS. While being pulled to youth events, he had felt himself becoming part of the Warsaw LDS scene. The “magical” turning-point had occurred during an international YSA conference in the Czech Republic, which he had endured a long coach journey and paid 100 Euro for. During the first three days, he received what he had expected, an unexciting time with good food. Then, over the next few days, he had started seeing the spiritual features that lay behind the geek-like appearance of YSA members, recognising the latter as datable girls and successful young peers. In response, he had started dropping his non-LDS habits through seeing the possibility of creating a good future with the LDS, e.g. serving a mission and finding an LDS wife. Here, Damian seems to have started recognising that big rewards could accompany long-term LDS service. He stressed that the LDS were more successful at baptising young people, as they had fewer beliefs and habits that needed overturning. Moreover, he revealed that through young students not working, they could perform multiple callings instead of paying tithing. Thus, such a system may get young converts immersed in LDS habits/routines, possibly controlling their time/behaviour, which may support the social control theory from section 2.1.

The YSA had not influenced Celina's (TTG) LDS recruitment, as most of the social side had taken place in Szczecin where it had not existed. However, she stressed that Warsaw YSA activities helped young people to feel welcome within the LDS fold. As a recent convert, she attended many YSA activities and had visited YSA conferences in Moldova, Romania, and the Ukraine. All this had helped her to develop her LDS faith, as she had bonded with other young LDS through sharing mutual norms and goals. Celina explained that the YSA looked out for recruits with LDS-type outlooks, with the recruits becoming curious about the YSA/LDS through recognising their own values at YSA meetings. She found it uplifting to be with similar-aged people at international YSA conferences, where nobody drank alcohol, and everybody dressed appropriately and accepted each other's sober behaviour. However, Celina criticised a female YSA colleague who was often late for Sunday meetings at Wierzbno/Raławicka despite being engaged to marry a young American man who had served a mission in Warsaw/Poland recently. Moreover, Celina's two best friends were an atheist and a believer without belonging, as she maintained contact with non-LDS. The last point may mirror some of Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3969-3978) Hungarian LDS converts who valued "mainstream" friends who never challenged them for becoming LDS.

Both Damian and Celina point towards the Warsaw YSA being a recruitment production line where young recruits may be proselytised and young converts start feeling comfortable (Mauss 2008: 55). Again, this may mirror some of Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3943) Hungarian converts who viewed the LDS community "like a family" that offered "love" and a "sense of safety, warmth and acceptance" etc. However, at our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 20-04-12, Damian revealed that some strong-minded young people disliked the YSA through having personality clashes with Jola (TTG) who sometimes dominated the Warsaw YSA, as she had the experience to hold things together, which she was doing for the current Warsaw YSA President, a young adult female from Wolska. On a Wolska-Warsaw city centre tram on 4-10-14, Damian told me that he was annoyed by a Polish LDS leader from Wolska who had forced the small Warsaw YSA group to move from Raławicka to Nowy Świat as a cost-saving operation. This may suggest that friction sometimes occurs between the YSA and older Poles inside the Warsaw LDS branches.

On 28-06-12, Małgorzata, a female non-LDS (non-interviewee) in her mid-20s, and I had an informal, two-hour meeting with the Jensens, an older American missionary couple, in the YSA room at Raławicka before a YSA Institute meeting began there. I arranged the meeting because Małgorzata, a student from one of my in-company English classes, was interested in

comparative religion. The Jensens spoke about being called to serve the Warsaw YSA, and the Raławicka YSA room contained posters with uplifting messages, e.g. “Never allow yourself to get too down, pick yourself up!”. Elder Jensen explained that they looked after the moral/psychological well-being of YSA members through emphasising the value of the WOW and law of chastity. After Małgorzata had pointed towards a table football game and large bowl of salad, Elder Jensen confirmed that they encouraged YSA members to eat healthy food and value each other’s company. Małgorzata was introduced to two YMMs, one American, the other German, in the Raławicka hallway, while Elder Jensen asked me about her religious inclinations, to which I revealed that she had been brought up Catholic, but was interested in Islam. In the YSA room, the chairs were set for Małgorzata and I to interact with the two YMMs, but the Jensens ended up dominating the proceedings. This may again show older LDS missionaries enacting a parent/grandparent-type role with Polish recruits/converts.

Despite the Warsaw LDS gaining some young converts, I saw many young recruits not joining them. Bogusław (LTI) explained that unlike the Jehovah’s Witnesses who had gained “many converts” in Poland during communist times, the LDS struggled to attract converts because Poles had lost “their interest in religion” in post-communist times. This may point towards many especially younger Poles now viewing religion as being irrelevant to their everyday lives, as they focus on imminent cultural, economic, environmental, and socio-political concerns (Obirek in Harrison 2009). In turn, this may highlight that a process of Catholic religious practice being handed down through the generations, as a feature of traditional Polish society, has given way to the looser bonds of a society embracing “modernity and post-modernity” (Borowik 2017: 200-202). However, Bogusław emphasised that despite the benefits of the LDS targeting “young people”, the latter were aware of “problematic issues” such as the LDS not being “really that Christian”. This suggests that for some young Poles, the religious differences between the LDS and mainstream Christians (from section 1.2.1) may be a serious issue.

A few convert interviewees had been impressed with the LDS Church’s welcoming atmosphere as adult recruits. In his mid-20s, Dawid (CTG) had immediately preferred the friendly LDS behaviour to the continual standing, kneeling, and getting crushed near the entrance/exit inside Catholic churches. Moreover, in his late 20s in California, Stefan (CTG) had valued the LDS offering him a family-type atmosphere, accepting him at a time when he had felt alone. While attending religious/social activities as a foreigner with little English, he had been amazed at how the LDS had offered him a warm welcome and Christ-like “true love” before he had accepted any LDS teachings. During this time, Stefan’s YFM’s and local

LDS had invited him to ward dances for single people, and he had done sporting activities at the weekend and played basketball indoors and volleyball on Redondo Beach during the week with LDS members. Meanwhile, Monday Chapel Home evenings had alternated between prayer and two hours of volleyball one week, and watching movies and eating popcorn at a chapel or male missionary's home the next week. Stefan had also enjoyed visiting the Los Angeles Temple visitors centre. He explained that this first phase of LDS recruitment had involved receiving love and acceptance, while a later religious phase had involved accepting the BOM as scripture. Recent convert Weronika (TTG), who was in her early 30s, felt that she needed the LDS Church's warm social atmosphere, as she had few friends through her painful shyness. She enjoyed attending Monday Chapel Home Evenings with young adults, where learning religious things was followed by "fun stuff" like playing games together. For Paweł (LA), who became LDS in his mid-50s, the LDS Church's positive social atmosphere was one of his main reasons for joining it. Szymon (LA), who joined the LDS in his late 40s recently, explained that like many Churches nowadays, the LDS attempted to attract recruits/converts through offering a positive social life, and more uniquely, by giving all male members the opportunity to become committed priests. All this suggests that the LDS may draw in recruits/converts through welcoming strangers in a respectful, engaging way, and offering a sense of community with meaningful interaction and commitment (Keifert 2004: 256-264). Again, the Polish converts here mirror Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3943) Hungarian LDS converts who viewed the LDS community as being "like a family" that offers "love" and a "sense of safety, warmth and acceptance" etc.

Some LTIs discussed how social interaction had drawn them into the Warsaw LDS community. Maczek (LTI), had now had "about a year" of LDS contact after a period of non-contact. He valued a "family-like atmosphere" above LDS teachings, as the Warsaw LDS seemed to be genuinely concerned about each other. Maczek was currently attending YSA Monday Chapel Home Evenings and Thursday Institute meetings for people under 30 at Wierzbno/Raławicka, while people over 30 attended (non-YSA) versions of these meetings at Wolska. At the YSA Chapel Home Evenings, young, mainly single people did "nice things" together but "nothing special", although there was the possibility of finding a "future husband or wife". Maczek revealed that YSA Institute lessons covered the BOM, LDS "teachings", and LDS history from the D&C/POGP, and were attended by about 10 young people, President Nielson and his wife, and an older Australian missionary couple. He also attended LDS English lessons, plus German lessons "programmed in the Mormon way" on Wednesday evenings with a German missionary who spoke Polish well. At the English

lessons, the members/missionaries were “enthusiastic” but never pressured anybody to become LDS. During Witek’s early encounters with the LDS, he had valued a “good” social atmosphere, sensing that he would find out if LDS religiosity was “100% true” later on when deciding to become LDS or not. About “six or eight years ago”, he had helped some missionaries to preach in Warsaw city centre, sometimes at the “Marszałkowska and Świętokrzyska” crossroads, with the missionaries having thought he was LDS. Witek viewed Stefan (CTG), who called him “brother”, as “fantastic”. Adam had been “in and out” of contact with the LDS since first encountering them in the mid-1990s. He had regained contact with them in 2000 after about four years of non-contact, and had enjoyed returning to English lessons and attending a New Year’s Eve party at Wolska where he had “met a girl”. Last year, Tomasz had appreciated his missionaries phoning to invite him to LDS Sunday meetings at Wierzbno/Raławicka, and had attended them to see if he could “fit into their environment, feel the way they feel, and understand them”. At the meetings, Tomasz’s missionaries had not tried to integrate him quickly, as, “in a way”, they wanted “to look after” their recruits.

Maczek (LTI) acknowledged that the LDS “wouldn’t be so happy” if anybody disagreed with their views, because they directed people to listen to them as a one-way process, and avoided arguments about religious doctrines. He explained that to remain friendly with the LDS and receive the social benefits they offered, recruits had to raise questions in a “skilful” way. Adam described the LDS offering recruits one or two months of friendship, where everything was “nice and pleasant”, but if LDS baptism failed to materialise, they found other recruits to focus on. He criticised the LDS for bringing “quite simple” and “casually dressed” people to their Sunday meetings, but he had never witnessed any cruel behaviour from them, as they were “very polite and nice”. Stefan (CTG) had encouraged Adam “to join the Church” to become a “priest”, and he had been “tempted” but was now interested in my “fresh look” at the LDS, especially the idea about recruits joining them to gain friends. Adam felt that the LDS were paying him little attention now, as they did not really care “much about” recruits, with their friendliness just being the “American way”. He spoke about a Polish LDS “girl” who was about 30 and “very nice” with “those American boys” (YMMs) while giving him an “artificial smile” and trying to avoid him. All this may suggest that missionaries/members remain friends with recruits if they move towards LDS baptism, but may become cold towards LTIs who occupy space without committing themselves to LDS teachings/values. This may support the idea that NRMs reward recruits who start accepting their beliefs/practices, and punish those who doubt or argue against them (ICSA website http://www.icsahome.com/infoserv_articles/singer_margaret_comingoutofcults.htm accessed 31-07-09).

Maczek (LTI) had visited some Friday “film nights” at Wolska, and revealed that the Warsaw LDS had a social event list “for the whole year”, with their Saturday sports activities being popular with young LDS and recruits. He explained that such social events could attract “poor people” who sometimes became both LDS members and missionaries, and received a “special grant for their studies” after their missions. I saw that after serving his mission in the USA and then working in the UK for a year, Damian (TTG) went studying Business in Salt Lake City, and without serving a mission, Stefan’s sister’s (CTG non-interviewee) eldest daughter went to an LDS educational site in the USA. Maczek suggested that through the LDS Church and some “rich” American members being willing and able to help poor people, some young Poles became LDS to “get a visa” to live and work in the USA. Thus, the Poland Mission seems to be part of an international LDS corporation which rewards dynamic, compliant young converts with career opportunities, including attaining LDS life adventures in the USA, if they follow LDS religious/social standards conscientiously. This points towards the LDS offering socio-economic benefits to non-wealthy converts to activate their self-development, and conversion being pursued if it offers upward social mobility (Davies, D.J. 2000: 252-253; Kong and Nair 2014: 73-75). Similar to what half of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3694) French respondents suggest about LDS conversion, some young Polish LDS converts may pursue an American dream attraction, which offers “material success, comfort” and the potential for “anybody” to get rich, as a “major factor of conversion”.

Finally, a few Polish converts believed that LDS interaction had little influenced their recruitment. Bruno (CTG), who became LDS in his early 30s, had never encountered the LDS much outside their Sunday meetings as he lived in a village outside Warsaw. Marek (CTG), who joined the LDS in his late 20s, had not seen much positive social networking during his recruitment, but acknowledged that the small size of the Warsaw LDS offered some empathy/support for recruits. Szymon (LA) believed that the Warsaw LDS community had not influenced his LDS recruitment at all, as it was his own “revelation of the heart” that had pushed him towards approaching YMs on the street and becoming LDS. All this may support the rational agency theory from section 2.1, as the converts’ own motivation may have been mainly responsible for their recruitment, and the idea that LDS religious teachings and spiritual change may play a big part in LDS recruitment from section 2.3.

6.6 LDS behaviour

After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Raclawicka on 15-01-12, an adult female LDS convert who had been both baptised and confirmed at Wolska on 31-09-09

told me that she had recently met Szymon (LA) and some YMs on the street. She had disappeared from Wolska for over two years through hating it there, and much preferred Racławicka through Szymon being there. Martyna (CTG), who was visiting from Wolska, took the woman's contact details. All this may suggest that successful post-baptismal adaptation depends on whether recent converts become friends with LDS members or not.

Following a Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 17-10-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) told me that somebody had been attacked at Wolska for shouting out against the LDS during a meeting. The most unsavoury episode I witnessed was at the baptism ceremony of an old Polish woman on 31-01-09. After a YFM musical presentation, a well-built, dark-haired Polish man who seemed to be in his 30s, wearing a black leather waistcoat, moved onto the stage and addressed the congregation. In Polish, the visitor stated that Jesus had informed him that all religions were bad, and the congregation started looking bewildered. After this, about six YMMs blocked the visitor from walking towards the baptism room where most people were heading, and Mrs Engbjerg and Stefan (CTG) guided the visitor into the opening hallway. An African convert from Wolska told me that the visitor was a recent convert who had had a bad experience. As I tried to follow the action, a Polish leader at Wolska, who had been on stage, blocked me from going into the opening hallway. When I tried to walk round another way, I was ordered into the baptism room by my gatekeeper Stefan. I complied as I had the rest of my research to think about. After the baptism ceremony had been completed in a downbeat atmosphere, a YMM told me that the dissenter should have been ignored, so the episode could have just blown over. For me, this episode shows that some YMMs and male LDS may become unpleasant if they feel the situation merits it. Thus, like two of Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3951) Hungarian converts point out about the Hungarian LDS, I saw that behind diplomatic/formal appearances, the Warsaw LDS are a "real community" with inevitable shortcomings.

In my interview data, a few Polish converts spoke about LDS members setting a good example of how to behave. Recent convert Celina (TTG) admired LDS members for behaving and speaking well as representatives of their Church. Alicja (CTG) had been drawn towards the LDS being happy without "faking it", as they lived their gospel as a top priority without drinking or using bad language. Before encountering the LDS, she had doubted that such people could exist. When Stefan (CTG) had become LDS in California in his late 20s, he had admired how similar-aged American LDS men went to church; did sport together; blessed sick people; and applied what they learnt from Sunday meetings to their everyday lives. Through this, he had wanted to know more about the LDS priesthood. Paweł (LA) had been

attracted to LDS Church leaders and members having a similar outlook to life as himself. Recent convert Patrycja (LA) was drawn towards the good manners of the LDS, especially their non-drinking/non-smoking ethos, but questioned if American missionaries behaved so well back in the USA. Despite this, a Polish neighbour, whose sister was LDS in the USA, had reassured her that the LDS were viewed as hard-working, middle-class people there. Thus, the Polish converts here seem to be drawn towards the LDS through viewing their moral behaviour as being authentic. This may point towards the LDS having “street cred” through being a “community-based” Church where members serve and help each other (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014). It also mirrors Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 3943) Hungarian LDS converts who view LDS “believers” and missionaries as “kind, happy, and content” people with high “values and norms”.

From the LTI interviewees, Maczek believed that “in every stake” worldwide, both “simple” and intelligent LDS members had their “weaknesses”. He was impressed by Marek (CTG) who was “intelligent, very well-spoken, and well read”, and could always “dispel” other people’s arguments. Witek stressed that despite the LDS being “fantastic people in families”, he had been “shocked” through many of them not being serious about their religion and creating a “bad spirit”. He recalled an episode when a Polish LDS woman had invited a Warsaw LDS choir to her “National Theatre” workplace, where she had made him coffee and a young LDS couple had been heavily kissing, embarrassing the woman. Tomasz had been put off the LDS through an episode when he had expected to see a “temple somewhere in Warsaw”. When “taken to Wolska” for the first time, he had discovered that “the nearest temple was 600 kilometres away” in Germany, and that another “was being built in Kiev”. He felt that he had been misled into believing there was a temple in Warsaw as some YMs had given him a photo of a temple saying ““this is our church””, possibly meaning ““this is our Church””. However, he had expected to see a temple at Wolska, with the missionaries having “somehow upheld his belief”. For Tomasz, a chapel like the one at Wolska was “something small, in a village, public building, or hospital”, so at a “District Conference in autumn”, he had protested about not finding a temple at Wolska. In response, his YMs and President Engbjerg had just listened without answering him, as it was the LDS way to not argue and “keep silent” in team-like “harmony” which made them “good people”. Tomasz also discussed an American YMM who he had met two months before the latter left Poland. This missionary, unlike any others Tomasz had met, had offered his help, friendship, and “everything for a lifetime” if Tomasz became LDS. Amongst many other things, the YMM had offered to help Tomasz set up a “beauty parlour for dogs” in Poland. Tomasz had refused

to become LDS because he had not been “ready to make such an important decision”, and could not understand how the YMM’s mother had done so at only nineteen. After this refusal, the YMM had become elusive and Tomasz had felt a “cold atmosphere” while being snubbed. Tomasz recalled a train journey when the YMM’s mother had corrected his English pronunciation mistakes, and upon reaching Warsaw, the YMM had just said “goodbye on the street”, and that was the last Tomasz had ever heard of him. Again, all this suggests that behind diplomatic role-playing, the Warsaw LDS are everyday people with inevitable shortcomings. Inside both Warsaw LDS branches, I saw that like all/most other Churches, the LDS contain good, bad, and indifferent people, and through chance/luck, recruits may encounter altruistic missionaries/members or mask-wearers, social actors, and role-performers. Bogusław regretted that LDS religiosity was accompanied by the LDS Church exercising “tight control” over its members, who were expected to “meet for three hours” every Sunday morning, to attend a “couple of meetings during the week”, and to visit LDS families to see if they were living a “Mormon moral life”. For Bogusław, the whole LDS communal set-up was designed to control people, and he could see that the LDS were “trying to draw him in more often” through inviting him to many events, so he was trying to limit his contact with them. This suggests that not all recruits can be charmed towards LDS baptism, especially if they have off-putting episodes or start sensing that the LDS are trying to control their time and outlooks on life. Thus, the LTI views above may support some anti-cult psychologist views from section 2.1 which point towards NRMs controlling and pushing recruits to adopt their ideas and practices.

6.7 Self-development

In my interview data, a few Polish converts talked about gaining self-development with the LDS. Wojciech (CTG) believed that his thoughts and feelings about his role in the world had changed during his recruitment and many years as an LDS convert. Alicja (CTG) explained that through the LDS encouraging people to do things all the time, LDS members went beyond doing a “Sunday Christian kind of thing”. She had felt herself becoming a better person through gaining higher purpose and learning exciting things with the LDS. This may point towards LDS members being role models, using their testimonies/faith to lead recruits towards developing LDS faith (Hinckley 1999; Ballard 2000). At first, Alicja had struggled to follow some LDS requirements, with the directive to not work on Sunday having been difficult when she had been an assistant manager at a Warsaw store. However, through following LDS commandments/directives, she had been protected from bad places and

influences, and had progressed from being a “rebellious kid” to doing things cleanly and safely. Alicja was getting married soon, and while not accepting that LDS women should just get married to “cook and clean and have kids”, she believed that LDS spouses had different but supportive roles. Jola (TTG) had become LDS as a child and Sunday Primary lessons had helped her to behave better at school, to respect people more, and to become friendlier towards others through recognising that everybody was related to God. Despite this, she criticised Utah LDS culture for reducing women to being mothers tied to the home. Recent convert Dagmara (TTG) felt that she could now appreciate what people were on the inside rather than what they looked like. Edyta (LA) had become LDS with her husband, as a woman entering her 40s, pledging to become a better person, more obedient to God. Józef (LA) had been prompted to become LDS through a search for goodness, beauty, and truth. Having previously mixed with “bad people”, he had become LDS to improve his moral discipline rather than to gain any higher theological understanding. Józef felt that he was becoming a better person with the LDS through reducing his sinfulness, but recognised that he was well short of being “perfect”. He believed that his sins were an issue between him and God, and was certain that the goodness, beauty, and truth offered by the LDS was higher than any “average level”.

The Polish converts above seem to mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4115) Hungarian LDS converts who felt themselves positively changing and increasing their “self-esteem”. This may point towards recruits/converts attaining greater moral purpose, psychological stability, and social responsibility, and the LDS gaining converts through offering moral guidelines, religious commitment, and an alternative worldview to growing moral relativism in society (Robbins and Antony 1982; Givens 2007: 208-212, 215-217; Millet 2007: 171-172). The Polish converts above may also highlight that recruits/converts can create their own levels of commitment and identity change inside NRM settings, as they separate their life stories into previous Catholic/other and ongoing NRM episodes through which they develop satisfying relationships and new convictions (Straus 1979 in Gooren 2007: 339; Richardson 1985 in Gooren 2007: 346; Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 198-199). This may suggest that the converts have found a religious community that fits their spiritual/social needs, away from the Catholic and secular worlds in Poland. Thus, this may mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4130) Hungarian LDS converts who gained a “sense of ontological security” and had their personalities/attitudes “transformed” which influenced their behaviour, way of thinking, “level of confidence” etc. (Ibid).

In contrast, some LTIs spoke about feeling unwelcome inside the Warsaw LDS branches. Adam felt so as the LDS realised that he did not want to join them. After almost a year with the LDS, Tomasz could see that he was being viewed a “bit like a nuisance”, with missionaries/members asking him why he was attending LDS events without becoming LDS and correcting his English language mistakes, especially when he referred to Jesus as “the Jesus” which was “important” for them. Rather than offering the LDS a baptism, Tomasz had been assessing the meanings behind the gestures, movements, and speech of the missionaries/members he encountered. This may suggest that not all recruits will see the potential for self-development with the LDS, and some LTIs may start questioning why many missionaries/members have stopped being friendly towards them. Mistrust may develop between missionaries/members and LTIs, as both sides may sense themselves being assessed and misjudged by the other. For missionaries/members, LTIs may provide an awkward, free-riding, sceptical presence inside their community. Again, all this suggests that behind diplomatic/formal acting, Polish LDS members and American/foreign LDS missionaries are everyday people with inevitable shortcomings.

Bogusław (LTI) explained that during recruitment, the LDS emphasised their views on moral behaviour rather than religious beliefs, as Polish and LDS forms of moral “thinking” were similar, with Polish members valuing the LDS for giving them a “sense of community”. He believed that when people belonged to a “smaller group” like the Polish LDS, it made them feel part of an “elite with some kind of special knowledge”, and felt that some Poles may be attracted to LDS claims about being the only true Church on Earth. However, Bogusław (LTI) appreciated that nowadays, the LDS did not condemn a person’s Catholic background, but viewed it as useful experience that could help Poles to enter the LDS world. This supports the idea that some modern-day LDS may value what other religious faiths have to offer (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014). Despite this, Bogusław pointed towards a Polish LDS elite which existed above Polish rank-and-file members but below an American LDS elite in Warsaw. He noticed this during Testimony Sunday Sacrament meetings at Wierzbno/Raławicka where a few Polish LDS seemed “to take over the responsibility” of being “leaders”, giving their stories of faith at the front of the hall. Bogusław also discussed a “group” of Polish men at Wierzbno/Raławicka who took it upon themselves to “talk to others” about missing LDS Sunday meetings (Baer 2014: 33). For him, such Polish LDS viewed themselves as “some kind of unofficial hierarchy among the permanent members”. Thus, Bogusław highlights how Polish CTGs hold higher positions than LAs in the Warsaw LDS hierarchy.

6.8 Conflicts inside Warsaw branches

In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts discussed the American cultural features of the LDS. Martyna (CTG) viewed the latter as superficial, but only as a minor “cultural thing”. She recalled how many Poles had started being drawn to the American features of the LDS in the 1990s, a period of massive social change when many started seeing Americans in Warsaw for the first time. Alina (LA) had been impressed by the American YMMs’ elegant speech/clothing. Damian (TTG) revealed that some younger Polish converts tried to network as many wealthy American LDS friends as possible to gain future employment and travelling opportunities. For Damian, younger converts got away with much wrongdoing at Wierzbno/Raławicka because the American LDS leadership there did not understand Polish language. He pointed towards the more American-flavoured Wierzbno/Raławicka branch being more welcoming to foreigners than the more Polish-flavoured Wolska. Celina (TTG) felt that Wierzbno/Raławicka was more attractive, as Americans were friendly, open, and honest, while Poles were suspicious and non-trusting of others. She believed that through the Poland LDS Mission having only started about 20 years ago, Polish members did not know how the LDS Church operated successfully in the USA. Celina explained that American members ran the Wierzbno/Raławicka meetings smoothly, while Polish members did things “weirdly”, felt insecure at not having an American LDS background, and struggled to adapt to a religion which originated from the “very different” USA. Some convert views above point towards the American cultural features of the LDS drawing in young Poles (Stark 2005: 118; Decoo 2015: 554-555). This mirrors the views of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: location 3676) LDS missionary questionnaire-fillers who believe that being American is a big “asset” for proselytisation work because recruits may view interacting with Americans as a special event.

From the LTIs, Tomasz was interested in “American culture, lifestyle, family life, history, and religion”, which made him curious about his YMMs’ family backgrounds. For Maczek, the Poland Mission was made up of “many nationalities”, but not many Poles. He believed that the LDS Church had developed through the USA and its democratic ethos needing its “own religion”, which was now “expanding all over the world”, like how the Catholic Church had spread throughout the Roman Empire. However, Maczek explained that Catholic churches were “more independent” from central authority and adapted well to international contexts, while the LDS, as a religious “minority”, were tied to an American “way of thinking” which was not “effective in every culture”. Bogusław believed that inside the Warsaw LDS branches, an established Polish male elite sought top leadership positions, but

felt undervalued by the local American authorities, so they tried to compensate for this by “looking after” younger and recent Polish converts. He pointed towards the LDS not gaining many converts in Poland, because their “American mentality” was completely different from a “European and Catholic Christian way of thinking”. For Bogusław, almost all Poles shared “some kind of mental religious background”, “completely different” from that of the LDS. Thus, he seems to suggest that most Poles share a religious psychology/sensitivity which makes it difficult to become LDS, as Catholic religiosity is so rooted to Polish national identity that Poles may struggle to orientate towards religions from different cultural contexts. This may support Borowik’s (2017: 190-191) point about religious “self-control” being learnt from an early age in Polish families which leads to Catholic religiosity being viewed as a routine in Poland, and may help to explain why many Polish recruits never make it to or soon disappear after LDS baptism.

The LTI comments above point towards the LDS struggling to adapt their religious identity and American-type behaviour to international demands, and American behavioural features that dominate international LDS churches being off-putting for some recruits/converts (Mauss1994: 204-210; Decoo 2015: 552). They may also support van Beek’s (2005: 19-20, 15) points about the national identity of European LDS possibly outweighing their identification as LDS, and international LDS being expected to accept the American LDS colonizer’s “culture”, development of the “colony”, and economic and “knowledge” superiority.

Over time, I became aware of specific conflicts inside the Warsaw LDS world. At the baptisms of a middle-aged Polish pop star and his daughter on 8-05-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) told me that no kind of intimidation from Polish LDS would make him join them or stop him from attending LDS events. Recently, Roman had had a big argument with a Polish male CTG at a Wolska picnic, and stressed that if he became LDS, it would be his own decision, not through being forced into it by Polish members. At my flat on 8-10-10, Roman explained that he enjoyed interacting with LDS missionaries because they were only temporarily in Warsaw, while Polish members could cause long-term problems if he fell out with them. He believed that conflicts between Polish members were destroying the LDS Church in Poland, and recalled an incident from the previous year when a Polish man, whose daughter was said to have had a child outside wedlock, had been stripped of the Wolska Branch Presidency. In response, a Polish male CTG had criticised American/foreign control of the Poland LDS Mission during a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska. Thus,

Roman's views here may suggest that for some recruits/converts, Polish rather than American LDS create problems inside the Warsaw LDS field.

After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Raławicka on 15-01-12, Martyna (Wolska CTG) gave a thumbs down sign while telling me that some Polish LDS at Wolska behaved like a "clan". During a private meeting at the Nowy Świat site on 19-01-12, a YMM told me that the Wolska members needed to forgive each other for the branch to grow, because a 35-40 person Sunday attendance was worrying. After the baptism of a middle-aged Polish man at Wolska on 28-04-12, Martyna acknowledged that LDS baptisms in Warsaw were now rare, whereas some years ago, there had been baptisms every week. Furthermore, after the baptism of a young Ukrainian man at Wolska on 19-05-12, Dawid (CTG) stressed that while poor member behaviour was a big reason for few converts, recruits/converts had an active part to play in their conversions too. At a Wolska Sunday Sacrament meeting on 29-07-12, I saw only 35 people, and after a fireside meeting with Elder Richards, a visiting American speaker from the First Seventy, at Wolska on 14-10-12, Martyna told me that the LDS were hitting an all-time low in Poland. However, at a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 21-04-13, an American male leader stated that the attendance was a bit low due to the Warsaw Marathon and traffic problems. In contrast, another American man prayed for the missing people to be sustained in the LDS faith and to return as soon as possible. At this meeting, Patrycja (LA) told me that she now only attended Sunday meetings once a month to sing hymns.

At our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 20-04-12, Damian (TTG) told me that in-fighting in Warsaw and other Polish LDS branches was off-putting for investigators and was making members disappear. He discussed how individuals could be ostracised, as Polish LDS members teamed up against Stefan (CTG), and President Nielson allowed a 50-year-old man from Katowice to attend Wolska Sunday meetings, because some Katowice branch members had "ganged up" on him. Moreover, Damian revealed that President Engbjerg had excommunicated some Katowice members for following a returned missionary's father's claim to be a prophet. Such stories may support Girard's (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 10-11) scapegoating concept which points towards conflicts being resolved through group members uniting against others, who are accused of committing transgressions against group rules, to restore peace and unity to the community. However, Damian stressed that President Nielson avoided antagonising or excommunicating any dissenting/rebellious Polish members. During a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 17-03-13, Martyna (CTG) told me that the Engbjerg Presidency had reached out to recruits, while the Nielson

Presidency focused on strengthening relationships between Polish members through encouraging cooperation between the Wolska and Raławicka branches. She revealed that at the time of her baptism 20 years ago, baptisms had occurred every week, while under President Engbjerg, they had occurred every few weeks, but now they took place every few months. She believed that Polish LDS member conflicts were more responsible for negating Polish LDS growth than the wider Catholic social world, as some Polish core members kept the Polish LDS operation running, but also put people off becoming LDS through their poor behaviour.

During his interview, Damian (TTG) discussed a big, long-term American-Polish conflict that existed inside the Warsaw LDS community. He pointed towards some Polish members at Wolska condemning the American LDS, because some years ago, there had been enough Polish members to build a stake in Warsaw, but an American leader had dismantled all the Polish-run infrastructure and local leadership, so many Polish members had disappeared. Damian explained that many Polish LDS at Wolska knew that if a stake had been established in Warsaw with Poles having significant callings and leadership positions, an exodus would have never occurred. At my flat on 4-06-10, Damian revealed that the big conflict had occurred about five years ago, and had upset Marek (CTG) who disliked American YMMs loitering around when they could be doing humanitarian/relief work. The latter issue had resulted in Marek having a big argument with President Engbjerg who did not want to upset YMMs. Damian told me that Polish LDS like himself and Marek viewed President Engbjerg as a diplomat, and a particular Polish leader at Wolska as a “cuddly teddy-bear”. Outside the Wolska building during the Engbjerg leaving party on 13-07-10, Damian informed me that Marek was organising an unofficial trip to the Kiev Temple dedication in the Ukraine, and that while Marek and about 10 others wanted to do a post-dedication trip, Damian and about five others preferred a pre-dedication trip. At a Wolska film night on 27-08-10, Radek (CTG) told me that Damian was in Kiev with Marek’s group for the Temple dedication on 29-08-10 (<https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/kyiv-ukraine-temple/> accessed 7-10-19). During a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wierzbno on 4-09-10, Damian and Marek gave testimonies about their Kiev trip. After a Wolska Priesthood meeting on 18-09-10, an older male missionary told me that Marek had written a six-page letter of complaint about a well-received LDS children’s party in Warsaw, and described him as a troublesome member who floated between both Warsaw branches and focused on visiting temples. All this suggests that Marek is a prominent member of an unofficial Polish hierarchy inside the Warsaw LDS field, and that some Polish LDS such as Damian may respect this hierarchy more than the official

American/foreign one. It may also show that some international LDS churches have capable “local leaders”, while “top leadership” positions and decisions about “building and missionary policies” and “stake formation” are governed by the American metropolis, as it retains “financial and political control over the satellites” (van Beek 2005: 17). Thus, internal conflict in the Warsaw LDS field may be caused through the American metropolis viewing the LDS Church as an “undivided whole” with “one dominant blueprint” for controlling any “branch, ward, or stake”, no matter where it is (van Beek 2016: 72).

An unofficial Polish LDS hierarchy seemed to exist at Wolska too. After a Sunday Sacrament meeting there on 14-06-09, Stefan (CTG) told me that at a recent Testimony Sunday meeting, a Polish male CTG had complained on stage about foreign people running the Poland LDS Mission, calling for greater Polish control of it. The following Sunday (21-06-09) at Wolska, Stefan added that the dissenting Polish CTG had been angry about President Engbjerg releasing a Polish President from his Wolska leadership position. Stefan disapproved of a testimony slot being used to make such a protest. At the 21-06-09 Sunday Sacrament meeting, an older American male missionary introduced the new Polish Presidency at Wolska which consisted of three male CTGs, with the ousted Polish President and his supporter being absent. All this suggests that Polish LDS may be divided over the issue of American/foreign LDS running the Poland Mission, and that both Warsaw branches contained CTGs in conflict with American/foreign missionaries.

After a Wolska Priesthood meeting on 18-09-10, where the merits of using interactive pedagogy at LDS Sunday meetings had been debated, an older male missionary told me that President Nielson knew the man who had baptised the Polish CTG who had complained on stage at a Wolska Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting in Texas many years ago, and that he had been a “trouble causer” back then. The older male missionary believed that the dissenter’s goal was for the Polish LDS to run the Poland Mission themselves, and that such a move would lead to it being closed down quickly if it ever happened. At our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 31-05-11, Damian (TTG) told me that the Raławicka branch viewed Wolska as “poison”, and that the Polish CTG dissenter and ex-Polish President from Wolska who had been released recently were disliked by some Wolska members. He revealed that Radek had confronted the Polish CTG dissenter several times about him having Radek’s pregnant wife in tears, and Stefan sometimes accused the dissenter of “un-Christian” behaviour. Damian also pointed towards a Polish female member at Wolska being viewed as “poison” for having encouraged a Polish female convert “to net” a shy American YMM in marriage. He explained that the matchmaker had been encouraging young Polish LDS women

to chase after YMMs as future husbands, and that some Raławicka members viewed her as a bad influence in her Sunday School teaching position at Wolska. At the Bierhalle bar, Arkadia shopping centre on 4-06-11, Franciszek (LA) defended the Polish CTG dissenter from Wolska for having got on stage at a Sunday Sacrament meeting to criticise a lack of Poland LDS Mission response to the Polish Presidential air disaster at Smolensk on 10-04-10. For Franciszek, the dissenter was an intelligent, level-headed man who people admired because he had been a managing director at a big American hotel in Warsaw where an American LDS visitor had led him to conversion. In contrast, Franciszek accused another Polish male CTG at Wolska of interfering with his personal life through disapproving of him drinking beer and treating him like a child by asking him to read the BOM and to pray to God for the moral probity needed for his Sunday Priesthood teaching role. For me, many comments above seem to point towards human purpose not being an autonomous project of desiring something, but a mimetic process of desiring what others desire, with this increasing the potential for conflict between rivals who compete for the same goals (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-10).

Despite the conflicts above, I saw attempts being made to harmonise the two Warsaw LDS branches together. At a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 26-06-11, a middle-aged woman from Wolska spoke about her calling as the Polish LDS website designer (<https://www.mormoni.pl> accessed 11-07-19). She talked about serving a mission in Seattle (USA) many years ago; emphasised how the Polish LDS website project could help unify the two Warsaw branches; and called for volunteers from Raławicka to help run the project at the Wolska Family History Centre. Over time, I saw other members from Wolska visiting Raławicka Sunday meetings. Wojciech and Zofia (CTGs) attended a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 19-02-12, where, after Sunday School, Bruno (CTG) arrived to participate in the Priesthood meeting alongside Wojciech. At a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 22-04-12, Martyna (CTG) encouraged the Raławicka members to help run the Wolska Family History Centre, as Polish LDS were taking over this role from older American missionary sisters.

6.9 Conflicts with family/friends

Following a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 3-01-10, the President of the Relief Society there told me that when a male psychologist friend had discovered she was LDS, he had found anti-Mormon literature on the internet and warned her not to try to influence his wife. At a combined Wierzbno Priesthood/Relief Society meeting on 31-01-10,

President Harding's request for Polish LDS to phone inactive members and non-members to invite them to Sunday meetings was countered by Alina (LA) stressing that many Poles viewed the LDS as a "sect", so any such action could make them more hostile towards the LDS. Moreover, at a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 29-04-12, Józef (LA) spoke about encountering a person outside the chapel who was looking after a sick person at home and disliked the chapel being in the area. However, Józef viewed this as an opportunity to convert the person. During a meeting with two YMMs at Nowy Świat on 19-11-12, one revealed that a female convert in her early 30s no longer attended LDS Sunday meetings due to a conflict with her family about her joining the LDS. The comments above seem to mirror the situation described by Annus and Csepregi (2018: location 3845) in Hungary, where despite LDS missionaries being visible, people know "precious little about them" which may make the LDS appear "suspicious".

In my interview data, several Polish LDS converts spoke about having problems with non-LDS family/friends. First, a few talked about negative stereotypes of the LDS prompting opposition to LDS baptism in Poland. Bruno's (CTG) typical Polish family had opposed his baptism through fearing that the LDS were a dangerous "sect", and that he would get lost somewhere in the USA. For Dawid (CTG), many Poles had stereotypical views of the LDS through watching television programmes that portrayed them negatively. Paweł (LA) explained that many Poles believed that LDS men had many wives, despite the 19th century, socio-economic practice of polygamous marriage being outlawed by LDS Church leaders in 1890. Moreover, he found it difficult to explain to "simple people" how the past practice of polygamy had corresponded to the POS. Tomasz (LTI) acknowledged that before encountering the LDS, the only thing he had thought about them was that LDS families "had five, ten children". When I talk with everyday Poles, many do associate the LDS with polygamy through having seen television programmes about LDS splinter groups which still practise it, not knowing that polygamy was banned by the main Salt Lake City group in 1890. Thus, many Poles have inaccurate, outdated views which do not represent what the modern-day, mainstream LDS stand for. This highlights that the "outside world" may still view the LDS as a "religion of polygamy" (van Beek 2016: 91). Overall, the convert comments above suggest that the LDS are almost routinely viewed as a strange American sect which threatens Catholic cultural identity in Poland.

Second, a few Polish LDS converts discussed how converts may fear telling their families about becoming LDS. Dawid explained that some Polish converts only told their families about their LDS baptism after the event, which caused problems, as some Poles were shocked

that “close” relatives would want to join a non-Catholic Church. For Celina (TTG), the prospect of family conflict was the main reason why many Polish recruits did not become LDS, and she had only told her Catholic parents about her LDS baptism after the event when they had started getting suspicious. Martyna (CTG) criticised her sister for upsetting their mother through telling her about her LDS baptism after the event. Stefan (CTG) recognised that his LDS baptism in California would have been more difficult in Poland where his Catholic mother would have opposed it. The converts here may imply that some Polish recruits fear telling their families about their decision to become LDS, because they may be viewed as betraying Polish national identity. All this may mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 3951-3960) Hungarian LDS converts who, through having “pre-conceived notions” about how “former social network” members would respond, chose “not to discuss their meetings” with LDS missionaries with “other people”, as most became more “open” about their LDS faith some time after baptism, “as part of their conversion process”.

Third, a few Polish converts talked about problems they had experienced with family members after LDS baptism. Celina (TTG) could not understand why her non-practising Catholic family had accused her of throwing away her Polish cultural inheritance. During a Christmas dinner, close and distant relatives had accused her of being “brainwashed” when she had not been preaching about not drinking alcohol or anything else. However, despite a “few stupid questions”, her family had been “okay”. After his LDS baptism, Stefan (CTG) had felt like he was being disowned by his mother. This had been intensified through him returning to Poland as a missionary, and refusing to visit his mother alone to not break any rules concerning him having to stay with his missionary colleague all the time. One time, his mother had tried to see what his missionary apartment looked like, and had accused him of betraying Poland through giving up the religion of his forefathers and leading his sister to become LDS too. Stefan felt that his mother had been unwilling to empathise with his clean spiritual lifestyle practising the WOW, as she had been embarrassed about him no longer being Catholic. Despite Martyna’s (CTG) mother not having allowed her to become LDS at 15, Martyna accepted that she had been worried about the LDS drawing in both her daughters, because her older sister had become LDS shortly before in August 1991. Her mother and some aunts/uncles had tried talking Martyna out of becoming LDS, and her uncles had given her some Catholic articles which offered a different perspective on the LDS. Nonetheless, Martyna had maintained her resolve, and six months after her sister had gone working in the UK, her mother had allowed her to become LDS in March 1992. Martyna’s mother had attended her baptism and some Sunday meetings afterwards, and became reassured that the

LDS were not a dangerous “sect”. Despite her mother recognising some positive change in Martyna, she had viewed herself as a failure through both her daughters becoming non-Catholic which was taboo in Poland. In response, Martyna had been determined to show her mother, grandmother, and other family members that she had not joined anything “crazy”, and that her change of religion was a responsible decision in a meaningful life process. Despite this, she still received some subtle pressure from an aunt to return to Catholicism, which she declined tactfully. Martyna understood some of her mother’s pain, especially at her sister’s wedding in Utah, where, after a three-hour drive, her mother had only seen a ring ceremony after not being allowed to attend the LDS temple wedding. Stefan and Martyna’s stories here seem to mirror those of Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: 3960-3969) Hungarian LDS converts that had family members who were “practising Catholics” and found their conversion “extremely problematic and distressing”, and tried to convince them that the LDS were a cult. Maczek (LTI) explained that it was “difficult” to become LDS in Poland, and that if he ever did, he would never be an “active member” because his family would view him as “crazy” and Polish society might misunderstand and reject him. Many accounts in this section point towards the LDS being portrayed as an ““American cult”” in Poland, and non-LDS relatives viewing “family member” conversion as cultural betrayal (Decoo 2015: 554). They sometimes show Polish converts being divided between a sense of betraying non-LDS family/friends and feeling fulfilled with the LDS, and family/friends trying to get them back to Catholicism but (half-) accepting the converts’ religious change over time (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 197, 200). However, many Polish converts may disappear shortly after baptism through not having the will to remain LDS while receiving subtle or overt opposition from non-LDS family members.

In summary, social networking may influence Polish LDS recruitment/conversion in several big ways. Becoming friends with LDS missionaries/members may push people into the Warsaw LDS field, where they may feel accepted and gain a sense of belonging. If so, LDS socialisation/institutionalisation may draw recruits away from the wider Polish social world, and YMs may push them towards LDS baptism through proselytising them in small group situations. Recruits may get baptised if strong friendships are formed and maintained, or disappear if otherwise. Some young recruits/converts may emulate American forms of behaviour through being impressed by American friendliness and openness. However, a sense of being controlled/restrained and the hegemonic American-Polish structure of the Warsaw LDS world may prompt some recruits/converts to disappear. Despite this, some recruits/converts may accept or even value their behaviour being controlled through seeking cultural

capital (rewards/benefits/fulfilment) with the LDS. Outgoing people from professional backgrounds with social skills and smart appearance may be well-suited for LDS career development. However, some recruits/converts may find conflicts between American and Polish LDS; Americanised and non-Americanised Polish LDS; and between themselves and non-LDS family members off-putting. Regarding mimetic theory, becoming LDS over time may involve desiring what others desire and have inside the Warsaw LDS community, which may lead to a strengthening of belief for some converts (CTGs), but conflicts between rivals who compete for higher rewards may result in many Polish LDS feeling defeated, scapegoated, and consigned to LA status (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-14).

7. LDS Religious Training

This chapter assesses my PO and interview data for information regarding the religious training that Polish converts received before and after LDS baptism and LTIs have received during their LDS contact. Several themes/topics emerged from the data which I discuss below. After this, I assess how both LDS religious training and social interaction pushed my Polish convert interviewees towards LDS baptism and LTI interviewees towards refraining from it.

7.1 Recruitment time frames

After a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 3-01-10, the Relief Society President there told me that she had first met LDS missionaries on the street in Warsaw many years ago, when she had been a late teenager and practicing Catholic, and had become LDS two weeks afterwards. In my interview data, quite a few Polish converts spoke about how long it had taken them to join the LDS after first meeting missionaries/members or becoming interested in the LDS. A few talked about becoming LDS within a month of first meeting YMs. Michał (CTG) had taken 12 days to do this during his late 30s, and Alina (LA) four weeks during her early 20s. Ten years after first meeting some YMs, Szymon (LA) had met some others during his late 40s, becoming LDS in “two weeks rather than the suggested three” without any rigorous preparation. His YMs had just given him a blank official form to fill in his baptism/confirmation details himself. These accounts compare to just over a quarter of Nabozny’s (2009: 86) 18 Polish converts who joined the LDS within three months of LDS contact.

Despite only becoming LDS recently, Szymon (LA) was already a Missionary Director, trying to stop YMs from pushing people who had never read the BOM towards fast baptisms. He explained that YMs believed that it was easier to baptise recruits who had not read the BOM or had just started reading it after discovering their baptism date. Szymon pointed towards YMs searching for fast baptisms at LDS English lessons, and recalled an episode when a young practising Catholic woman, who had attended 2-3 lessons, had asked for some information about LDS festivals for an educational project she was doing, and some YFMs had asked her for a baptism date. In response, Szymon had told the YFMs that new recruits needed to be befriended before being proselytised, as not everybody could become LDS quickly. He explained that rather than teaching many doctrines, the LDS chased fast baptisms through directing the recruits’ emotions towards an attractive communal sociology. Szymon

believed that many recruits who became LDS within a month were affected by emotion rather than religious understanding, with YMs sometimes prompting this process. Thus, Szymon's insights may point towards some recruits reading little of the BOM and attending few Sunday meetings before becoming LDS (Stewart Jr. 2008: 355-356).

Quite a few Polish converts discussed the importance of not becoming LDS too quickly. Lech (CTG) had first met YMs when he was 12-13 years old and had taken 7-12 months to become LDS. Many years ago, in his early 20s, Wojciech (CTG) had spent a year learning LDS teachings with YMs, and had become LDS through feeling "the Spirit". For Dawid (CTG), an appropriate recruitment time frame depended on the individual, with it being possible to have six discussions in one month and a quick LDS baptism. He believed that it was wiser to take three months, because recruits had a better chance of making an informed decision based on a "proper process of repentance". On principle, he had shared his decision to become LDS with his Catholic parents and siblings, spending 1-2 weeks trying to get them to accept his upcoming baptism. Before getting baptised, Celina (TTG) had had a year of LDS contact in her late teens. She felt that she had not been pushed into baptism, as she had asked all the questions, nurturing her own interest in the LDS. In the UK, Damian's (TTG) YFMs had spent 6-9 months trying to make him LDS when he had been in his teens, but his heavy work and study schedule had blocked this from happening. Through noticing that YMs were "obsessed with" getting baptisms, he had resented them only "loving" him as a potential convert, and had remained non-LDS for some time to get more attention from them. Damian had felt the need to ask questions because he believed that a two-week recruitment period may have been appropriate for the 19th century, but not for serious-minded, modern people. He revealed that President Nielson was "gunning" for fast baptisms through offering YMs rewards for high baptism rates, such as being able to choose their next mission post. Damian believed that recruits needed at least six months, possibly years, to decide whether to become LDS or not. Józef (LA) had been in his early 50s when he became LDS five months after first meeting YMs, through the nurturing of a "faith" already inside himself rather than any dramatic transformation. Thus, some converts here may point towards recruits needing to investigate LDS religiosity in their own free time and order of interest and, if necessary, over a long time (Decoo 1996: 110-113). Like Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3978) Hungarian LDS converts, the Polish converts above seem to view their conversion as a "gradually evolving experience". For me, longer recruitment periods may offer recruits more religious training, which may prepare them better for becoming CTGs, as post-baptismal religious training may not appear so dramatic.

Some recruits may receive religious training for many years without becoming LDS. From the LTIs, Witek, who first met the LDS in his mid-30s during the 1990s, had promised to become LDS many years ago but had not turned up for baptism because he had attended an Art exhibition in Białystok, a city in north-east Poland, instead. He had reneged on LDS baptism “many times” as he had never completely believed in LDS teachings, so the LDS had “stopped feeling” that he “really wanted” it. During Tomasz’s year with the LDS in his early 40s, the LDS had never invited him to become LDS nor “mentioned anything about baptism for a long time”. Eventually, his YMMs had invited him to an LDS baptism “to see what it looked like”, but he had not attended it through feeling uncomfortable about a probably Catholic person being baptised a second time, as he believed that baptism was a once-in-a-lifetime event. Despite this, a YMM who had offered to help Tomasz set up business ventures in Poland had believed that Tomasz would become LDS. In August last year, this missionary had “in a way” suggested that Tomasz had to become LDS because the missionary was leaving Poland in October. After Tomasz had refused, the missionary had cold-shouldered him. Maczek had first encountered the LDS in his early 20s six years ago. Recently, Józef (LA) had advised Maczek “to think” about baptism for a year and not become LDS “without proper consideration”. Maczek felt that some missionaries served their missions through a “kind of tradition” inherited from their parents, and that despite their wonderful behaviour, recruits had to be wary of their unorthodox teachings. For him, YMs often “pressurised” recruits because through their “culture and mentality”, they believed that if somebody expressed “positive emotions” towards the BOM, it was a “signal” of readiness for LDS baptism. Maczek described a process through which YMs directed their recruits to read the BOM in the “morning and evening”; invited them to become LDS and set a baptism date; and got the recruits to prepare for baptism through completing an official form over about a “month and a half”. He had been given baptism dates “a few times”, but had reneged on them all, so the missionaries had been “very disappointed and sad” stressing that he could only become a “fully worthy member of their society” through his life acquiring “some new meaning” after LDS baptism. Maczek said that he had only agreed to become LDS several times to see “how patient” the missionaries were, and through getting to know new missionaries after old ones had left, he was able to continue having baptism lessons and reneging on decisions to become LDS. He was determined “to remain friends” with all his missionaries and not become their “enemy”, and would “either get baptised” LDS some time or “just shake their hands” and wish them well. Maczek explained that if he lived somewhere “like the States”, where Catholicism was “not so strong”, he would have few problems

becoming LDS. Bogusław had had a “five year break” from the LDS after first meeting YMs “several times” in his early 40s. During his first encounters, he had been “curious” about the missionaries and their religion, but this had been quickly “quenched” as he too had sensed that they were on a “kind of tour” uneasily trying to justify their unorthodox beliefs. Adam had met the LDS while in his mid-40s and had been reactivated as a recruit numerous times from the mid-1990s onwards. He was now in his early 60s and had been meeting two YFMs until recently who after “about a year”, had started asking him to become LDS so he could “understand all the stuff”. In response, he had asked why he should do something that he did not “feel like doing”, which had “quite disappointed” the YFMs. Adam was no longer answering their phone calls and saw that they were looking for fresh recruits to push towards baptism, bringing “casually-dressed” and “quite simple people” to their Sunday meetings.

The information above suggests that when recruits become LTIs, the likelihood of them becoming LDS may recede through them becoming more sceptical about LDS religiosity. Recruits may try to stay friends with missionaries/members without becoming LDS, while YMs may get upset and try to make their recruits feel guilty, especially when they renege on baptism decisions. If the missionaries fail to get their recruits baptised, they may stop socialising with them.

7.2 Religious training during recruitment

During a Family History Centre Evening for non-LDS visitors at Wolska on 15-05-10, Damian (TTG) told me that he enjoyed being able to talk openly about religious issues with the LDS. In my interview data, Bogusław (LTI) explained that YMs always tried “to convince people to get baptised”, and that after several baptisms at Wolska on 23-10-10, some YMMs and Józef (LA) had gathered a few male LTIs, including Bogusław and Maczek, together in a side-room, but had been disappointed when the men had seen no reason for becoming LDS. After the last baptism, Elder Harding from Raclawicka had encouraged all the investigators present to attend a meeting afterwards, where Józef had tried convincing Bogusław that the LDS knew God as a fact while the Catholic Church only knew him as a rational argument. On 7-11-10, I saw Bogusław attend the Wierzbno Sunday Sacrament meeting, but not the following Sunday School lesson. As I was leaving Wierzbno, through a window, I saw Bogusław surrounded by four YMMs in a side-room. All this points towards interaction between people and representatives of a religion giving the latter opportunities to convert the former (Kong and Nair 2014: 72).

At Monday Chapel Home Evenings (for people over 30) in January/February 2011 at Wolska, Sister Harding from Raławicka encouraged me to attend Institute meetings (for people over 30) at Wolska on Thursday evenings. The three Institute meetings that I attended, all in February 2011, were like a stronger religious-flavoured version of Chapel Home Evenings. They were hosted twice by Marysia and once by Romuald (Raławicka CTGs), while Stefan (Wolska CTG) did the translation work, with all these roles possibly being branch callings. In the audience, the Hardings (Raławicka), Michał (Raławicka CTG), and Lech (Wolska CTG) were mixed in with 3-5 LAs, 2-4 recruits/LTIs, and a long-term African convert. Two YFMs attended the first meeting and an older missionary sister from the Wolska Family History Centre the third meeting. The LAs outnumbering recruits/LTIs may suggest that the Institute meetings were geared towards (recent) convert retention rather than recruitment. In the first lesson, after an Elder Holland (Quorum of the Twelve) video presentation, Marysia elicited testimony stories from Polish CTGs. Two YFMs were sat with a Polish male LTI and new-looking Polish male recruit, who they possibly had baptism lessons with, but not with another Polish male recruit, the partner of a recent female convert from Raławicka. During the second and third meetings, section-by-section analysis of the D&C was followed by all types of participants talking about such issues as young children being free of sin; wider Catholic society condemning the LDS in Poland; the ideal of living the law of consecration (offering all one has to the LDS Church) etc. At the Chapel Home Evening and Institute meetings, I saw that older, single people with free time enjoyed socialising together.

In my interview data, quite a lot of Polish LDS converts talked about the LDS directing them towards baptism. As mentioned in 6.4, a few became interested in LDS religiosity through meeting older missionaries. Moreover, a few recalled becoming interested in LDS religiosity through having baptism lessons with YMs. At Jola's (TTG) baptism lessons during childhood, her YMs had made LDS scripture enjoyable and easy to understand through explaining who "Heavenly Father" was and answering her questions. Paweł (LA) had first started visiting an LDS church while middle-aged, where YMs had answered his questions, and he had decided they were "his Church". During baptism lessons, something deep within himself had started accepting LDS religiosity, as everything the YMs had said echoed his own thoughts about God having helped him to survive tough situations as a TV reporter, stuntman, and racing car driver. Paweł had always sensed God guiding him towards deciding what was possible in dangerous situations, which offered him proof that God existed. Michał (CTG) had been in his late 30s when he had felt something profoundly spiritual during his baptism

lessons, prompting him to become LDS not long after first meeting his YMs. As a teenager, Martyna (CTG) had been invited to have discussions with two YFMs after she had attended her first LDS Sunday meeting with her older sister. The YFMs had visited her house with her Catholic mother's permission, where she had enjoyed six official baptism lessons, but her mother had not allowed her to get baptised straightaway. While her older sister had not had any baptism lessons, studying *Gospel Principles* (1978/2009) and asking lots of questions privately, Martyna had reflected on what her missionaries had said and had read the Bible on her own. Martyna's baptism lessons had felt just right, like she had experienced the same thing before, which had prompted her desire to become LDS. In his late 20s in California, Stefan (CTG) had only shown interest in his early meetings with YFMs to appear polite. However, the meetings had turned into something spiritual, as the YFMs had got him interested in religion like never before through bringing him activities to do, answering his questions, and confronting his doubts. Thus, no matter what age, the Polish converts here seem to have had their religious interest ignited and strengthened through LDS religiosity being explained/justified by YMs during baptism lessons. The convert reflections/stories point towards recruits having their worldviews changed through having regular meetings with YMs, as the latter offer opportunities for people to discuss their religious experience and the meaning of life which mainstream religious clergymen may not provide (Gooren 2007: 350-351; Chryssides 2016: 32-33). They also mirror Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3934-3943) Hungarian converts who were lead to LDS baptism through missionaries introducing them to LDS teachings, "rituals and social practices"; answering "their questions"; showing the "rational nature" of LDS teachings; and addressing "issues" sensibly. All this suggests that LDS missionaries may often have the time/inclination to explore people's religious identities, and to teach a universal religious lesson programme to recruits (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Trigeaud 2009: 279-280).

Two Polish LDS converts revealed that they had only started meeting YMs regularly after first reading LDS scripture. Marek (CTG) had started meeting them and attending LDS Sunday meetings after he had begun reading the Bible and BOM. Ten years after receiving the BOM and D&C from some YMMs, Szymon (LA) had had 3-4 meetings with different YMMs, knowing more about LDS religiosity than them. Both these converts seem to have been religious-minded recruits who studied LDS scripture privately/freely, away from the influence of YMs. They may mirror Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 4115) Hungarian LDS converts who valued "studying the scriptures" as a "foundation of their faith" and "relationship with God". Moreover, they may point towards some recruits preferring to

investigate LDS religiosity in their own time and order of interest, as many conversion theories/models overlook religious factors in recruitment/conversion, assuming that recruits build bonds with members before developing religious interest later on (Decoo 1996: 110-113; Gooren 2007: 348).

When two YMMs and two YFM's visited my flat on 5-06-10 to look at my books about LDS religiosity/culture, a YMM became annoyed when he saw a critical account of LDS religiosity and missionary work by an ex-LDS missionary, Worthy (2008). This book was on my bookshelf amongst many positive accounts by official LDS, academic LDS, and academic non-LDS writers. The angry YMM referred to Worthy (2008) as a "jerk", told a YFM that he was not interested in my books, and insisted on having a prayer session around extracts from the BOM. In my interview data, all my LTIs recalled experiencing some kind of religious tension with YMs. Witek had become interested in LDS religiosity through meeting YMs but had been unable to accept it 100%, which, for him, could only be possibly done after LDS baptism. Moreover, he had "felt a bit uncomfortable" when some YMs had shown him "many films" about their religion "from America" at his flat. When Witek had said that he did not believe in "this or that" about American features of their religion, the YMs had got "nervous" which he had found unpleasant. Maczek explained that to remain friends with YMs, recruits had to avoid arguing with them, while being "careful" about accepting LDS teachings or not, as they sometimes differed from mainstream Christian doctrines. However, through the YMs being "great" people, Maczek wanted to remain friends with them, and did not rule out becoming LDS in the future. Despite having felt some uplifting emotions while meeting YMs, Bogusław had broken off contact with them some years ago, and was currently doing the same, as he sensed that they felt "uneasy" trying to justify their non-mainstream beliefs. Moreover, Bogusław felt that the LDS viewed him as a nuisance as his Catholic background prompted him to raise awkward questions. However, he also thought that they may view this as a "positive experience", because it made them do "more research" to answer questions effectively, as they seemed less familiar with the Bible than the BOM. When Tomasz had first met his YMMs near Wierzbno metro station the year before, he had been impressed by their sense of "harmony". Like Maczek, he had got on well with his missionaries, because they knew that he would not argue with them, and through sharing a liking for prayer, they "suited each other". However, Tomasz claimed that some missionaries had mislead him into believing there was a temple in Warsaw. While expecting to see a temple at Wolska, Tomasz had been shocked to see a "small building with only one tower", with his YMMs "not saying anything". He had then started questioning why there was "no cross or crucifix", and why the

LDS prayed in a “different way” while still mentioning Jesus. Adam tried to avoid a “trap” where LDS missionaries prompted their recruits to read and pray about something, and “then talk about it in the next meeting”. He did not like being asked to pray, something he had never done as a Catholic, and had felt himself being manipulated through his YFMs telling him that he had to become LDS to understand all LDS “thought”. Most of the LTIs above seem to feel uncomfortable about YMs pushing them towards a brand of Christianity which contains unorthodox teachings/practices. This may suggest that arguments/debates between YMs and Polish recruits, especially those from Catholic backgrounds, are inevitable as Catholicism may be accepted as historically-grounded Christianity, and LDS religiosity less so.

At a Raclawicka Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts on 3-07-11, a young adult, recruit couple declined to read LDS scripture, possibly wanting to attend the meeting on their own free terms. In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts spoke about how they had started taking LDS religiosity seriously at LDS Sunday meetings. Paweł (LA) became certain that the LDS were the religion for him when he started attending LDS Sunday meetings. Celina (TTG) had decided to check out LDS religiosity properly at the Szczecin LDS meeting place after first meeting YMs playing basketball, and had started valuing the LDS for being a warm, interactive community. Moreover, Marek (CTG) had learned more about God and the origins and meaning of the world from LDS Sunday meetings than the Catholic Masses he had still attended during recruitment. Marek’s case here may mirror those of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: 3694) French LDS respondents who highlight religious reasons for becoming LDS. This may suggest that when some recruits start attending LDS Sunday meetings, they may start feeling that LDS religiosity fits their needs. Through encountering LDS religious/social activities, they may start valuing a sense of “being different from other people” (Gooren 2008: 379-380). However, Damian (TTG) had disliked attending “static” LDS meetings in Basingstoke, where he had been pushed to discuss the meaning of Sunday meetings with young LDS men, and the free food after Testimony Sunday meetings had not been enough for him to become LDS.

Some LTIs talked about having unfulfilling experiences at LDS Sunday meetings. Bogusław thought that they took up too much time, usually “three hours in the morning” and longer once a month when the LDS had a meal after the other meetings had ended. He viewed all these Sunday meetings and weekday activities, such as LDS members visiting each other’s families, as being “designed” to control LDS member lives. Adam disliked the LDS encouraging “quite simple people” to attend their Sunday meetings, as the latter did not wear “Sunday clothes”. Tomasz was attending both LDS Sunday Sacrament meetings and Catholic

Masses on Sundays to compare the different prayer formats. After first meeting his missionaries, Tomasz had been afraid of not being accepted at LDS Sunday Sacrament meetings, and his YMMs had “prolonged the moment” to start teaching him English. He had also started asking himself what LDS missionaries were doing in Poland speaking Polish, and, “as a Catholic”, had felt a “bit uneasy” knowing little about the LDS. Still, he had been impressed with how his YMMs had carefully arranged to take him to his first Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wierzbno, where he had wanted to see if he could “fit into their environment, feel the way they feel, and understand them”. At first, he had found the “alien environment, language, and people completely strange”, and had started wondering if the LDS were a “sect”. Despite this, he had accepted that they had “something to do with Jesus” and had tried to feel “God’s spirit” while assessing whether it was right for him to attend LDS meetings or not. While reflecting on “how God worked in his life”, Tomasz had asked himself if the smartly dressed LDS men were talking honestly from their “inner selves”, and had recognised that they were speaking about something meaningful. In response, he had started looking at a “traditional Bible”, and, at Sunday Sacrament meetings, he had kept asking his YMMs what their bread-and-water communion was about, and whether he was allowed to take it or not. After receiving permission, he had been taking the LDS sacrament for some time now, although he still wanted to learn “new things” about it because he was not from the LDS “community”. He took LDS communion respectfully as he wanted his missionaries to respect his Catholic background, which they seemed to do. Tomasz’s YMMs had not tried to integrate him with Polish LDS quickly because they had, “in a way”, been looking after him. Despite this, he had started to feel some kind of pressure when an LDS member had asked him why he was attending Sunday Sacrament meetings without becoming LDS and some “wise guys” had tried to “make fun of things”. Also, when he had talked about his Catholic beliefs in the Trinity being “three persons but only one God” and Mary being the Mother of God, his YMMs had just thought “their own thing”. Moreover, he sensed that the profound harmony between his YMMs gave them some kind of spiritual “authority”, and he had tried to learn more about the LDS through assessing what their gestures, movements, and speech meant. Thus, the LTIs above do not value LDS religiosity and Sunday meetings enough to become LDS. In particular, Tomasz appears to be frustrated at not finding the religious meaning/fulfillment he seeks from the LDS, and to be worried that LDS religiosity differs from the Catholic religiosity he has been brought up on and understands.

7.3 LDS scripture, hymns, and music

After a Wolska Priesthood meeting on 2-05-10, Wojciech (CTG) told me that the Polish LDS used Protestant Bibles in Polish that were close to the King James Version, with the most similar one being called the Gdansk Bible (see <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/9788385260165/> accessed 12-02-21) . At the baptisms of a middle-aged Polish pop star and his teenage daughter at Wolska on 8-05-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) revealed that he valued the LDS for having modern scripture and revelations appropriate for the complexities of contemporary life, as the Bible was outdated as a 2,000-year-old product. After a Nigerian man's baptism on 3-07-10, the new Mission President Nielson told me that while mainstream Christians focused on the Jesus of 2,000 years ago, the LDS had up-to-date revelation from modern-day prophets. At a Wolska Sunday Sacrament meeting on 18-09-10, Radek's (CTG) future wife emphasised that her LDS testimony was based on the four books of LDS scripture.

In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts talked about valuing LDS scripture, hymns, and music during or after recruitment. First, a few recalled having initial negative impressions of the BOM. Jola (TTG) viewed the Polish translation of the BOM as “messy”; Dawid (CTG) had understood little of the book before LDS baptism; and Alicja (CTG) had thought it was written by a “kid” as its simple language was nothing like the archaic language of old Polish Bibles. Alicja now viewed this as natural because Joseph Smith had been an uneducated young man when producing the BOM. Marek (CTG) had only accepted the BOM to not appear impolite but had then felt moved to read the book, and, for the first time in his life, had read the New Testament too. He had felt “inspired” reading the BOM and Bible together with them showing him “many things” that he had not seen before. Hence, these converts point towards recruits/converts sometimes being sceptical about the BOM, but then starting to accept it as scripture before or after LDS baptism. In contrast, two LTIs had serious reservations about the BOM. Witek had been wary about reading it, because the Bible was “the most important book”. When reading the BOM, he had “found many strange details” thinking that the book was a “little crazy”, influenced by a “devil or something”. Maczek had thought that unlike the historical authenticity of the Bible, the BOM “was some kind of forgery”, and when he had spoken to some Catholic priests and Protestant clergy, they had “claimed it was falsified” scripture with “strange teachings”. Maczek's comments here may mirror Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3845) point about many Hungarians having their views of the LDS “shaped” by “mainstream historical churches”, especially the Catholic Church.

Second, quite a few Polish LDS converts spoke about being directed towards understanding and gaining a testimony of the truthfulness of the BOM. Edyta (LA) believed that through reading the BOM, she had learnt more about history and Jesus. Despite not liking reading “that much”, Dagmara (TTG) had wanted to read the BOM more and more. She especially valued the 3rd Book of Nephi’s account of an ancient people’s lives changing “when Jesus came” to the Americas, because this mirrored her own life story. Celina (TTG) had started treating LDS religiosity seriously through digging into the BOM. While doing Moroni’s challenge, praying directly to God about the BOM, she had felt something special and taken the “big step” of becoming LDS after finishing the book. Celina now believed that literal and metaphorical truth could be found in both the Bible and BOM. Regarding the BOM, she believed that it was possible that ancient Jews had migrated to the Americas, and accepted the book’s story about Jesus descending from heaven to give people his gospel there. From the CTGs, Dawid had been encouraged to read all the BOM as a recruit, but through struggling to understand it, he had just tried to find questions for his YMs to answer, and had only started accepting it as scripture some time after LDS baptism. Martyna had followed her YFMs’ directives to read the book, and had prayed and got answers about it. In California, Stefan’s YFMs had encouraged him to read the BOM, asked him how he felt about it, and led him towards praying for a testimony about it being authentic scripture or not. At first, he had told the YFMs that the book was “good”, but that he was unsure if it was real scripture like the Bible which he had read a few times. After being asked to pray about the book, on 15th August 1990, Stefan had knelt down and prayed, becoming convinced that it was holy scripture like the Bible. Having offered his full desire to know if the BOM was true or not, he had received a sense of certainty from God that it was, as, without any delusion, he had felt “the Spirit”. However, Stefan acknowledged that he had never approached the book from a critical perspective because he had only encountered it with the LDS. Before becoming LDS, Bruno had read a meaningless testimony about the BOM but had then taken only a week to read the book, quickly coming to believe that it was the key to understanding everything about life. Over seven days, he had felt every part of his body testifying to the truth of the BOM and had been unable to contradict this sense of truth. Moreover, Bruno could not understand why some people became LDS without reading the BOM fully. Thus, both Bruno and Stefan recall receiving intense perceptions which they interpret as dramatic forms of revelation, gaining direct contact with God (Stark 2005: 38-39).

Some converts above seem to be drawn towards the BOM message that anybody can communicate with God directly, and Joseph Smith’s First Vision approach of asking God

questions and sensing them being answered (Givens 2007: 213-215). However, while some converts may start believing that the BOM is true through gaining a testimony about it before LDS baptism, others like Dawid (CTG) may struggle to understand it, hoping to comprehend it better after baptism. Again, all this highlights that many conversion theories/models overemphasise psychological, social, and economic issues at the expense of religious/scriptural ones (Gooren 2007: 348).

Szymon (LA), who had received the BOM 10 years ago, had only started empathising with it recently. He stressed that unlike many Polish LDS who viewed the BOM as literal history, he only believed in the “evangelical” aspect of the book and its events, and struggled to find the “historical Jesus” in it. This may highlight that people who do not have a “burning testimony” of the BOM, and view it as allegorical and uplifting, but not historical, may be accommodated inside the LDS Church (Givens, T.L., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014). From the LTIs, during Tomasz’s year as a recruit, the LDS had “talked him into reading” parts of the book. Over the years, Adam had read some parts but had never understood “much”, as the BOM contained “simple truths” without any “deep revelation”. Witek had started reading the BOM when the LDS had told him to start practising the WOW. He had found the story about ancient Jewish tribes discovering the Americas a long time before Columbus “very interesting”, and had questioned whether this was true or not “many times”. For Witek, it was “interesting” that the BOM contained “many names similar” to ones found in the Bible, which made it easy to “make many mistakes”, as people with names like Noah in the BOM were not the same as their namesakes in the Old Testament. Like Szymon (LA), Witek felt that “many details” in the BOM were historically inauthentic. For Maczek, the name of the book was a “problem” as he felt that “holy scripture” should have a special title and not just be named after one of its writers. He also pointed towards there being no real evidence to support the BOM’s historical claims, with only the LDS believing that the text had been hidden on golden plates for hundreds of years until Joseph Smith discovered them in the early 19th century. Nonetheless, Maczek had felt “some internal spiritual” emotions while reading the book, possibly through the influence of the Holy Ghost which the LDS often focused on rather than their teachings. During Bogusław’s first contact with YMs some years ago, they had tried convincing him that the BOM was true and that their religion was the revival of an ancient Christian gospel, but he had discarded these claims through having his “own views” formed from having done an MA at a Catholic Theology department in Warsaw. Bogusław rejected the LDS claim that the BOM “was some kind of complement to the Bible”, as it was “written in a kind of weak way” with “repetition, inconsistencies, and

anachronisms”. He also could not accept the BOM account about Jews emigrating to the Americas many years before the coming of Christ and them having “some kind of premonition” about the latter there. However, his earlier opinion about the BOM being “plain forgery” had given way to him now viewing it more positively through following a Vatican II directive to view all religions as “the works of God, in some way”. Despite not viewing the BOM as the “work of the Holy Spirit”, he sensed that it made people “get closer to the Spirit” and prompted them to live according to serious moral principles. Still, he regretted that this positive spirituality was “accompanied” by the LDS having “strange convictions” and exerting “tight control” over their members. Through knowing the Bible well, Bogusław noticed that the LDS spoke about it much less than the BOM despite claiming that the two books were “in a way, equal”. Thus, the LTIs here do not view the BOM as authentic scripture, especially when compared with the Bible, which may have blocked them from becoming LDS.

Third, a few LAs spoke about not reading all or much of the BOM. Over the years, Franciszek had never enjoyed reading the book. During Gabriela’s five-year LDS career, she had not read the BOM fully so she felt unable to judge its merit, but loved the encouraging messages that some YMs had left in her copy of the book. Moreover, Józef recalled his YMs saying that to become LDS, he only needed to desire to know the BOM. This had alleviated his worries about not knowing much about LDS theology which had previously blocked him from becoming LDS. Thus, the LAs here point towards some converts reading little of the BOM before and after becoming LDS which may impede LDS career development (Stewart Jr. 2008: 355).

Fourth, quite a lot of Polish LDS converts discussed other LDS scripture. From the LAs, Gabriela had not read all the D&C or POGP which were combined together as one book in Polish, *Nauki i Przymierza. Perła Wielkiej Wartości* (1981/1989). Szymon, who was currently reading the D&C again, believed that alongside the BOM, the two books represented a profound synthesis of all the world’s religions. For him, the BOM was a compilation of Buddhist and Hindu ideas rather than Christian ones, which was amazing given that Joseph Smith had no prior knowledge of these two religions. Franciszek viewed the D&C as a well-rounded piece of work, but could not accept the POGP as scripture because an LDS story about “some guy” finding part of the text in Egypt was “crazy”. Here, Franciszek may be referring to how the LDS believe that the Book of Abraham from the POGP originates from an ancient Egyptian text that Joseph Smith received from a travelling salesman in the USA (<https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng>

accessed 28-02-18). Recent convert Dagmara (TTG) valued the Bible and BOM more than the other two books, but was aware that the WOW came from the D&C. In contrast, Celina (TTG) found the D&C more interesting than the BOM, especially its details about LDS Church organisation. From the CTGs, Romuald had read the Bible and BOM extensively, but had only “dipped into” the other two books. Having only glanced at the D&C before LDS baptism, Martyna had studied it after baptism to learn about LDS Church history. Through reading the BOM, Dawid had started accepting Joseph Smith as a modern-day prophet, and had this confirmed as a testimony through reading the D&C later on. Stefan’s testimony about the BOM being true scripture had prompted him to join the LDS. Shortly after, he had received a second testimony through recognising that no other Church had a book like the D&C which had strengthened his convictions that the BOM was authentic scripture, Joseph Smith a latter-day prophet, and the LDS God’s Church on Earth. During recruitment, Marek had connected the D&C more with the Acts of the Apostles than the BOM, as it had shown him how God had given direct revelations to a young Church. Thus, some converts above speak about starting to seriously encounter the D&C after LDS baptism, with two viewing it as a testimony that confirmed the truth of the BOM and LDS Church. This may suggest that while the BOM, sometimes alongside the Bible, may push recruits towards LDS baptism, the D&C may push converts to enter the temple. Again, this seems to mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4115) Hungarian LDS converts who valued “studying the scriptures” as a “foundation of their faith” and “relationship with God” (Ibid 4115).

During a teleconference with Elder Hales (Quorum of the Twelve) from Salt Lake City at Wolska on 4-06-10, his wife talked about LDS music putting the gospel into peoples’ hearts. After a Raławicka Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts on 26-06-11, Jacek, a male recruit in his early 30s and sound engineer by trade, told me that religious music such as Gregorian and Slavonic chant could draw people to attend Catholic and Orthodox churches, because the human body feels in rhythm with pleasant sounds/vibrations. Especially during the Engbjerg Poland Mission Presidency between 2007 and 2010, I saw some entertaining musical events at Wolska. Some occurred in 2008 while an old American male missionary, a retired music teacher, was leading musical proceedings at Wolska. On 9-08-08, the first Poland Mission President and Music Professor, Walter Whipple, played some piano pieces by Chopin, a national hero in Poland, and discussed some BOM passages in English and Polish. I also saw a touring LDS youth choir from Idaho sing at a Sunday Sacrament meeting on 20-07-08; concerts by a touring LDS young adult choir from Germany, Vocalis, on 20-10-08, and Jenny Phillips, an American recording artist, on 13-02-09; and a fireside by Tomas

Kofod, a Danish opera singer on 6-03-10. Kofod, who had starred in a professional *Les Miserables* production, sang the mainstream Christian hymn *Abide with Me* in English and Polish with two YMMs. He also spoke about having to paint floors to support his family and opera-singing career, while his wife Ane Marie discussed their love for their adopted children, with Martyna and Stefan (CTGs) doing the English-Polish translation. During this event, two Polish friends of mine, visiting a Warsaw LDS event for the first time, noticed excessive smiling and bodily contact amongst the large LDS turnout. The Kofod fireside showed how music and moving stories of LDS faith were sometimes juxtaposed together by the Warsaw LDS, especially during the Engbjerg Mission Presidency.

Sometimes, especially at baptisms, I saw YMs doing musical presentations at Wolska. A spectacular one occurred at a Warsaw District Conference on 22-03-09 when about 40-50 YMs entered the main hall singing the LDS missionary hymn, *Called To Serve*. At Warsaw District Conferences with visiting foreign speakers from the First Seventy, and Quorum of the Twelve member visits from Salt Lake City, big choirs made up of YMs and mainly CTG members from both Warsaw branches sang for the audience. At a Warsaw District Conference on 21-03-10, I saw a big choir sing three LDS hymns, with a Polish woman who had served a mission in Russia leading the proceedings. The latter role was mainly done by Polish female teenagers/young women inside both Warsaw branches. After the second hymn, a British middle-aged man, an LDS theology advisor under President Engbjerg, thanked the choir for bringing “the Spirit” (Holy Ghost) into the meeting. This was a recurring phrase inside the Warsaw LDS world.

At both Warsaw branches, I saw recruits/converts singing LDS hymns at Sunday Sacrament meetings. In my interview data, a few Polish converts discussed how LDS hymns and music had influenced their recruitment/conversion. Weronika (TTG) valued singing LDS hymns because the words spoke about Jesus in a simple, direct way. From the CTGs, Marysia (CTG) had always found LDS hymns beautiful, inspiring, and uplifting. Stefan had enjoyed singing them in California, feeling warmth and truth coming from them. He had studied their words every Sunday morning in preparation for Sacrament meetings, and had attended choir practice after the latter had finished. He had enjoyed singing LDS hymns in their original language to understand English language and LDS teachings better. Stefan still preferred singing them in English, his “first language in the gospel”, as he believed some Polish translations were not done well. He lamented that most Polish members did not understand English well enough to sing LDS hymns in English, but accepted that it was more important for them to understand LDS religiosity in Polish. When Radek had started listening to LDS

hymns/ music, he had got rid of all his secular music as it had reflected his pre-LDS views on life. Alicja had never been a “choir type of person”, so LDS hymns had never affected her recruitment/conversion. Marek had never empathised with LDS hymns because he was not moved by music. He joked that if music had been a “prime factor”, he would have joined the Orthodox Church, as the latter sang much better than the LDS. Marek believed that while some Christian denominations created a “special kind of atmosphere” between faith and music, this was not the case with the LDS. All this suggests that some Polish recruits/converts value LDS hymns/music, while others do not.

Two LTIs spoke about valuing LDS hymns. After meeting his YMs, Tomasz had “really wanted to learn American hymns” to understand English language and American culture better. Witek liked LDS hymns “very much”, and “six, eight years ago”, he had sung alongside “many missionaries who played the piano”, learning many hymns “by heart” as a missionary had given him a big “songbook” with a green cover which had belonged to an LDS “brother” who had been “very ill” and died. He had recorded LDS hymns with missionaries “many times” and could still hum some of the tunes. At Wolska, Witek had sung in an LDS choir at concerts, sometimes in the early afternoon after Sunday meetings had ended and other times during “fantastic evenings”. He had done this for 2-3 years and had gone to choir practice at 9am before LDS Sunday meetings had started. Witek recalled performing with the LDS choir at big Conferences at Wolska, when the choir members had been “sitting and standing and singing”. He had also enjoyed watching the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on film “many times”.

The convert and LTI comments above suggest that the singing of LDS hymns can help to draw and keep some Polish recruits/converts inside the Warsaw LDS fold. Recruits/converts may become comfortable with LDS religiosity through reading and singing LDS hymns in Polish at Sunday meetings, as communal singing creates “emotional energy” and “social solidarity” in an environment where people may be persuaded to convert (Yang and Abel 2014: 144).

7.4 Unique LDS religiosity

During a baptism lesson with two YFM's on 13-05-10, I talked about mainstream Christians being offended by the LDS teaching about God the Father and a Goddess Wife producing Jesus as a spirit child in pre-mortality. A German/British/American YFM replied that this was because they associated the physical body with sin, while the LDS viewed it as sacred. After a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Racławicka on 3-07-11,

Damian (TTG), who had just returned from serving a mini-mission in Gdańsk, confided that the LDS expected people to believe in things that were unreal. He asked why I was unsure about the LDS Church being a Christian religion or not, and I replied that LDS beliefs about Jesus being below God the Father in the Godhead and people being able to develop into gods themselves were not mainstream Christian teachings. Shortly afterwards at Raławicka metro station, Damian acknowledged that Joseph Smith had had legal problems with his gold-seeking business, but was surprised to discover that he may have married polyandrous women (https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Polyandry accessed 27-12-19). At the Bierhalle bar, Arkadia shopping centre on 4-06-11, Franciszek (LA) told me that he did not know whether to believe stories about Joseph Smith being involved in criminal activities or not, and that he loved looking at anti-LDS websites and had been anti-LDS himself for about two years. Thus, Damian and Franciszek highlight that some Polish LDS converts may be unconvinced by LDS beliefs and the prophet figure of Joseph Smith.

In my interview data, a few Polish converts spoke about receiving limited religious training before LDS baptism. Patrycja (LA) had collected some LDS materials without really reading them, and Celina (TTG) had only started believing in LDS religiosity months after baptism. Dawid (CTG) had been attracted to the LDS Church's basic "faith in Jesus Christ". Martyna (CTG) had only glanced at LDS teachings before baptism, and during her first "couple of years" after baptism, many had gone "over her head". Years afterwards, Martyna was still coming to understand LDS teachings through searching the internet, borrowing books in English, and asking people questions about them. This suggests that many Polish LDS converts receive most religious training after baptism, especially if/when they start working towards becoming CTGs. Such insights may point towards many unique LDS beliefs being downplayed during early LDS recruitment, with greater stress being placed on sharing mainstream Christian beliefs, and many recruits being involved in religious experimentalism rather than transformation (Bainbridge 1992; Lofland and Skonovd 1981).

Despite the above, many Polish converts spoke about encountering unique LDS religiosity during recruitment/conversion, and valuing LDS teachings which differed from mainstream Christianity. Damian (TTG) did not care about unique LDS teachings, but Martyna (CTG) valued the LDS for offering something different from mainstream Christianity. During Martyna's baptism meetings, her YFMs had told her about God and Jesus, the restoration doctrine, and the baptism commitments/promises she was expected to make. Through accepting the teaching about Joseph Smith restoring an ancient Church with additional doctrines, Stefan believed that the LDS had far greater religious understanding than any

mainstream Christian group. Quite a few Polish LDS converts spoke about encountering POS teachings as new doctrines before or after baptism. While attending LDS Sunday meetings before baptism, Martyna had empathised with the children of God doctrine which teaches that people are the pre-mortal offspring of God the Father. Weronika (TTG) had been surprised by the pre-existence of souls teaching, but had grown to like the idea of pre-mortal souls being allowed to choose whether to live on Earth or not. From the CTGs, Stefan had not learnt about pre-existence as a Catholic, so the POS and eternal family doctrines had only started making sense after LDS baptism when he had learnt more about them. Romuald had only started understanding the pre-existence teaching when encountering LDS scripture, especially a story about a pre-existent Jesus creating the world, and an account from the Book of Job (Old Testament). Regarding the latter, Romuald seems to be referring to Job 38: 7, which the LDS interpret in terms of literal “‘sons of God’” witnessing the “‘creation of the world’” (Wayne 2018). Romuald valued the pre-existence teaching for explaining why people are born unequal, with them having learnt things with different degrees of diligence during pre-mortality. Despite the Catholic Church not mentioning pre-existence, Dawid had always believed that human life had to begin before conception on Earth, so he had quickly accepted the POS teachings as being logical. Alicja explained that through the pre-existence teaching locating the origin of humans somewhere, and her having never believed that people come “‘out of nowhere’” on Earth, the LDS religion had started making sense to her. Alina (LA) had heard about pre-existence at a religious presentation after her first LDS English lesson. It had surprised her because despite having worried about going to hell after death, she had never thought about what might precede human life on Earth. Hence, the pre-existence teaching may surprise many recruits/converts, but in time, some may start valuing it as a doctrine not taught by the Catholic or other Christian Churches. Alicja had also been unfamiliar with the baptism of the dead teaching, and had only started understanding it over time. It had been a new concept for Romuald too because the Catholic Church had not taught it. Alina recalled the LDS explaining that baptism of the dead was necessary, because many people had died without the opportunity to receive LDS baptism on Earth. Edyta (LA) and her husband had decided to become LDS through empathising with the eternal family doctrine, especially the idea that temple-married couples can stay together procreating for eternity. Dagmara (TTG) recalled that the agency/free will doctrine had pushed her towards becoming LDS, as she had chosen to move “‘towards perfection’” through applying LDS religiosity to her life, rather than following her family towards an “‘imperfect life’”.

Many Polish LDS convert views above seem to mirror those of Rigal-Cellard's (2018: 3694) French LDS respondents who give religious reasons for becoming LDS. The Polish converts point towards the LDS directing them to become and remain LDS through them encountering and coming to value core, unique LDS teachings. Moreover, they highlight that Polish recruits/converts may start valuing LDS teachings that mainstream Christians do not have, being attracted to the LDS Church's extensive account of eternal purpose and core unique teachings (Givens 2007: 215-216; Mauss 2008: 43-45; Decoo 1996: 105, 114). This suggests that some recruits/converts may sense themselves becoming different from the non-LDS world through being immersed in many LDS religious/social activities and codes of conduct (Gooren 2008: 379-380). It may also point towards active-passive recruits assessing and being influenced by LDS teachings/practices; having their worldviews changed as they assess an LDS outlook against their previous views on life; and converting when not strongly developed pre-LDS beliefs are challenged through encountering LDS ones and being encouraged to convert (Rambo 1998; Gooren 2007: 350-351; Paloutzian 2014: 221).

Despite the above, Szymon (LA) believed that the LDS had "dodgy" doctrines. He was intrigued by the LDS notion of God the Father originally being a man, "half a God", and people being able to develop into this kind of God which he compared to a Hindu concept of individuals seeking access to a path of self-realisation. Moreover, he valued the LDS for being the only religion he had encountered that offered the reward of godhood status to everybody through teachings found in the BOM and D&C. Thus, Polish converts may start encountering unique LDS teachings before or after baptism, but rather than accepting them as true doctrines, some, like Szymon, may enjoy comparing/contrasting them with non-LDS teachings, which may block them from becoming CTGs.

When encountering unique LDS teachings, some recruits may feel uncomfortable about moving away from mainstream Christian or other worldviews. From the LTIs, Witek had been blocked from becoming LDS through rejecting the pre-existence teaching. For him, some LDS teachings were "very logical", but the pre-existence doctrine was "very strange" because it contradicted a common belief that people receive their souls (rational intelligence) during conception on Earth, a view grounded in Judeo-Christian and ancient Pagan history. This suggests that recruits who accept the latter belief may reject the pre-existence teaching. Despite respecting LDS morality for mirroring Catholic morality, Bogusław was uncomfortable with LDS religiosity differing from Catholic religiosity. Tomasz had tried to comprehend the LDS bread-and-water communion rite, but had attained no clear understanding of it. He was also suspicious of crosses, crucifixes, and other mainstream

Christian symbols being absent from both Warsaw LDS chapels. The last point seems to highlight the institutionalised taboo position of the cross in modern-day LDS religiosity, with the LDS being uncomfortable at using it as a religious symbol (Reed 2011, 2012; Gaskill 2013: 185). All this suggests that recruits from Catholic backgrounds may feel uncomfortable with the different visual and ritualistic aspects of LDS religiosity, and that people with strong beliefs are more able to resist the “pressure to change” from other belief systems (Paloutzian 2014: 221). Again, this supports the rational agency theory from 2.1 which highlights that recruits/converts freely assess NRM teachings/practices.

A few Polish LDS converts spoke about having problems accepting the LDS modern-day prophet doctrine. Stefan (CTG) had known about Brigham Young having many wives, but nothing about Joseph Smith, and had only started viewing Smith as a prophet when he came to accept the BOM as scripture. Dawid (CTG) had found it difficult to believe in the modern-day prophet doctrine, as the Catholic Church had said nothing about it. When the LDS had mentioned prophets, some Old Testament, Moses-type figures had entered his mind, and it had been difficult to become LDS without a “personal witness” of the modern-day prophet doctrine. He had gained the latter after baptism through reading talks by modern-day LDS leaders, and seeing the LDS President (prophet leader) speaking at General Conferences screened from Salt Lake City at Wolska. Alicja (CTG) had found it difficult to believe in modern-day prophets, as, like many people, she had thought that the line of prophets had ended when Jesus came to Earth. For two years, she had viewed the LDS claim to have scripture written by a modern prophet as “weird”, and had only read “bits and pieces” of the D&C. However, through coming to believe in the LDS Church, she had accepted Smith as a scripture-writing prophet. Thus, Stefan and Alicja may point towards recruits/converts gradually accepting Joseph Smith as the “once and forever Mormon prophet” through coming to value his extensive religious revelations and books of scripture which underpin the LDS religion (Givens 2007: xii). In contrast, Patrycja (LA) had read non-LDS accounts about Smith, so, despite viewing the LDS as fine people, she had never believed that Smith was a prophet which had made some Polish LDS friends cry. This may suggest that with or without post-baptismal religious training, some Polish LDS converts may never accept the modern-day prophet and Joseph Smith being a scripture writer teachings, especially if they have encountered non-LDS accounts about LDS history and religiosity.

From the LTIs, Witek talked about the LDS prophet leader doctrine mirroring the Catholic idea of having a Pope, both of which he found unbiblical. Maczek discussed how some time after Joseph Smith’s death, one of his sons had “started a new Church” to rival the one that

Brigham Young had inherited from Smith, which was a kind of “apostasy”. Here, Maczek seems to be referring to Smith’s oldest son, Joseph Smith III, becoming the leader of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1860 (Shipps 1987: 84; Russell 2015: 82). This Church, now known as the Community of Christ and centred in Independence, Missouri, was formed from LDS congregations that remained behind in the American mid-West after Brigham Young had lead many LDS westward in 1847 (Shipps 1987: 84; Russell 2015: 82). In contrast to the LDS Church led by Young, the RLDS Church has rejected the practice of polygamy from its early years onwards (Shipps 1987: 84-85; Russell 2015: 82-83). Maczek also stressed that many Polish recruits became LDS “hastily without knowing the teachings”, being unaware that the “beginnings of Mormonism were strange” through Smith having been “convicted” as a criminal for something concerning “land conveyance”. For Maczek, this may have been due to the early LDS being forced to move “from one place to another”, buying and selling land with Smith having “to sign some kind of contracts”. He viewed Smith as a maverick who had, amongst other things, campaigned to become the President of the USA. The latter point refers to Joseph Smith starting to campaign to become US President, with fellow LDS Sidney Rigdon as vice-President, on May 17th 1844, and this ending when Smith was murdered in Carthage Jail, Illinois on June 27th 1844 (Garr, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2009/02/joseph-smith-campaign-for-president-of-the-united-states?lang=eng> accessed 17-06-20). All this suggests that some recruits will be aware of the controversial side of the Joseph Smith story, and may become fascinated with this and the LDS themselves with little intention of becoming LDS. Again, this supports the rational agency theory from 2.1.

At Sunday and weekday meetings for recruits/recent converts, I saw recruits saying prayers directly to Heavenly Father. I was encouraged to do so at the end of private baptism lessons with YFMs. During a baptism lesson on 13-05-10, both YFMs compared the LDS creating their own prayers with Catholics saying formulaic prayers, and looked surprised when I replied that Catholics meditated on the meaning of formulaic prayers and sometimes created their own prayers. After a General Conference session screening from Salt Lake City at Wolska on 31-03-12, Stefan (CTG) criticised Catholics for praying in groups and repeating words without thinking about their meaning, and never responded to my point about a hypnotic, collective quality of group prayer. Furthermore, after the LDS baptism of an old Polish man on 28-04-12, Stefan got annoyed when I told him that Catholics said the *Hail Mary* prayer because they believed that Mary was the mother of God.

In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts talked about being attracted to the LDS practice of praying directly to God the Father. Weronika (TTG) had always prayed straight to God. For Dagmara (TTG), doing this was a big reason for her becoming LDS. In contrast to her “imperfect father” on Earth, Dagmara valued having a “perfect Father” in heaven who she could be “completely open” with about anything during her prayers. Radek (CTG) had believed in praying directly to God the Father before meeting the LDS, but Dawid (CTG) had only become aware of it through discussions with YMs, as the Catholic Church had never encouraged it. The converts above seem to view direct prayers to God the Father as being more authentic than Catholics praying to Jesus, Mary, the saints etc. This may point towards some Catholic lay people suffering spiritual voids through not addressing God the Father directly and priests mediating with God on their behalf at Sunday Mass (Obirek in Harrison 2009).

The Polish LDS converts above suggest that some Catholics do not pray much beyond vocal rote formulas and do not engage in much mental prayer. Frankini and Coulombe (2020) explain Catholic mental prayer in terms of adoring and praising God; discussing concerns with and saying sorry to him for sins; and asking and thanking him for blessings. Ripperberger (2018) defines authentic Catholic prayer in terms of spiritual reading being followed by four main acts of mental prayer. First, religious objects (the Trinity; the Incarnation; God’s attributes; Christ-like virtues; the Mother of God; angels and saints etc.) may be reflected upon from many different points of view. Second, examining one’s conscience may prompt virtuous “affectations” towards God, such as repentance and humility. Third, petitioning God may involve seeking to understand how to develop faith and perseverance; how God’s grace can provide growth in virtue; and how God can be loved more perfectly. Finally, making “resolutions” may involve finding precise ways of improving oneself; consistently praying for uprooting vices; thanking God; and not allowing oneself to just focus on emotional consolations. Thus, some Catholics will have stronger prayer lives than just reciting rote prayers.

From the LTIs, Tomasz had been impressed with his YMMs praying a lot. However, through feeling that they had misled him into believing there was a temple at Wolska, he had started questioning why they prayed in a “different way” mentioning but not directly addressing Jesus. Adam had disliked his YFMs pressuring him to pray, as he had never prayed as a Catholic, and was too busy for it. This suggests that some recruits may feel uncomfortable with praying directly to God the Father and LDS pressure to engage in intense, private religiosity.

A few Polish LDS converts touched on the mainstream Christian Trinity versus LDS Godhead issue. Weronika (TTG) felt that Jesus and God the Father were at the “same level”, because when the LDS prayed to the Father, they prayed to Jesus too. In contrast, Alina (LA) believed in a 100% unity of agreement/purpose between the three Godhead members, but rejected that they shared the same essence/nature. Moreover, Martyna (CTG) felt that the LDS Godhead teaching might be off-putting for some people. However, like Weronika, many Polish LDS converts may not be aware of the difference between the mainstream Christian concept of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost sharing the same divine essence/nature and the LDS idea of the Father having higher status. Thus, many converts may only start understanding and accepting the LDS Godhead doctrine when they receive more teachings after LDS baptism.

Two LTIs pointed towards the different mainstream Christian and LDS notions of God being an uncomfortable issue for recruits, converts, and missionaries. Tomasz recalled “some wise guys” mocking him and his YMs remaining silent when he had talked about “God being in three persons”. During Bogusław’s early contact with the LDS, he had recognised a huge difference between the “image of God in Christianity” and that in “Mormonism”. He explained that in LDS theology, God is the “creator” of the Earth and “other worlds”, and that temple-married couples believe that they can become gods after death through populating their own worlds. Moreover, he felt that some YMs could see that the idea of perpetual god-making amounted to a “never-ending chain” of polytheistic gods populating an infinite number of other worlds, which was difficult to comprehend and defend. However, when the LDS had arranged for Bogusław to speak with Józef (LA), the latter’s “vision of God was more Catholic than Mormon”. Bogusław believed that many Polish LDS maintained a mainstream Christian psychology, and, while mainly admiring LDS morality, did not attain a “strict” understanding of LDS theology. At a Family History Open Evening at Wolska on 15-05-10, Damian (TTG) told me that it was logical that God must be the first cause of everything, and looked uneasy when I mentioned Joseph Smith’s King Follett teaching that God was originally a man. Moreover, Damian stated that he had learnt more about LDS teachings in half an hour with me than with the LDS in 18 months. All this suggests that many Polish LDS converts may retain a mainstream Christian image of a monotheistic God, and may only start accepting a polytheistic outlook if they become CTGs. Again, this may imply that doctrinally aware Catholics are less likely to join the LDS (Obirek in Harrison 2009).

7.5 The Word of Wisdom

After a Chapel Home Evening at Wolska on 17-01-11, a middle-aged male recruit (non-interviewee) told me that he had met LDS missionaries in Warsaw 10 years ago; had lost contact with them through moving to Slovenia; and was in contact with missionaries again after returning to Warsaw recently. He felt drawn to the WOW, especially a less-known rule about not eating much meat, because he was vegetarian. After the Raławicka Sunday meetings on 19-02-12, a middle-aged male LA (non-interviewee) told me that he had always lived healthily through being sporty and practising karate, so becoming LDS had involved no major life readjustment for him. Thus, both participants here were attracted to the WOW mirroring their healthy lifestyles.

In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts spoke about (not) needing to adapt to the WOW during recruitment. First, quite a few spoke about the WOW fitting their already healthy lifestyles. Wojciech (CTG) had never smoked or drunk alcohol, so he had not needed to change his lifestyle to become LDS. Jola (TTG) had become LDS as a child so she had been spared any addiction problems through having always practised the WOW. None of her family had ever smoked, she had hated tea/coffee from kindergarten onwards, and she had always felt protected from the disastrous effects of alcohol. In the UK, Damian (TTG) had never had the time or money to drink the expensive alcohol there. Damian's healthy approach to life had continued in Poland through him seeing the "potential suicide" of smoking and how alcohol could damage people's lives, so following the WOW had never been a problem. From the LAs, Szymon had practised the WOW before encountering the LDS. Before becoming LDS, Paweł had kept his body healthy through only drinking alcohol on social occasions and never trying drugs like marijuana because they were dangerous. He believed that alcohol was a drug scientifically and that the LDS rightfully prohibited it. Józef had never smoked or taken any drugs, and five years after becoming LDS, the WOW health regulations were still "very attractive" for him. Alina had practised most WOW rules before encountering the LDS, as she had hated cigarettes and her mother had stressed that tea/coffee and alcohol were unhealthy. However, she had not known that any Christian Church prohibited these substances, and had occasionally broken LDS-type health rules, but had started obeying them all after becoming LDS. The Polish LDS converts here mirror a few of Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 4019) Hungarian LDS converts who before LDS contact, had not drunk alcohol, smoked, or partied the way "their peers" did. Moreover, they may point towards some Polish recruits/converts sensing that the LDS offer a religious community that fits their needs away from the Catholic and secular worlds in Poland.

Second, many Polish LDS converts recalled having few or no problems dropping different kinds of non-LDS behaviour. Recent convert Barbara (LA) had no problem following all aspects of the WOW. Gabriela (LA) was grateful to the LDS for helping her to overcome a “bit of trouble” with beer and vodka. For five years as an LDS, she had never drunk any alcohol or mixed with heavy drinkers, and had not allowed her non-LDS husband to drink alcohol at home to set a good example to their children. She also criticised Catholics and other mainstream Christians for having no strict rules against alcohol. Recent convert Weronika (TTG) had never smoked or drunk tea, had no problem giving up alcohol, and advised me to ask God for the strength to give up beer. Celina (TTG), another recent convert, had drunk alcohol and coffee and had smoked 5-10 cigarettes a day, but now, she did not miss any of this “at all”, as she felt healthier practising the WOW. For her, the WOW protected people against unhealthy habits like smoking, drinking alcohol, and taking drugs. From the CTGs, Radek had started following the WOW rules after first meeting the LDS, feeling that they were “just right” for modern times. Marek had drunk tea and small amounts of alcohol, but had quickly followed the LDS example of having fun without stimulants, and had politely refused any offers of alcohol ever since. Michał’s “interest” in LDS religiosity had stopped him from drinking alcohol, and Alicja had had no difficulty avoiding alcohol after becoming LDS. In California, Stefan had drunk 7-20 beers a week, regularly having a few with his roommate especially while playing table tennis with other people. He had also visited some Latino friends to dance and drink beer and champagne with, but had never tried drugs or smoked cigarettes. Upon meeting the LDS, he had had no problems giving up alcohol but a little difficulty giving up lemon tea. By June 1990, two months before becoming LDS, Stefan had started practising the WOW. Martyna had tried alcohol and cigarettes as a teenager “to see what they tasted like”, but upon becoming LDS, the WOW had made sense, so she had committed herself to practising it long-term. She had tried the WOW out to see if it made her feel better and increased her spirituality, and, over the years, she had retained her resolve to practise it, living without wine despite knowing how good it tasted. Thus, the Polish LDS converts here have mainly made small adjustments to practise the WOW, and those who have made bigger ones seem to value their moral development. They also appear to mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4063-4071) Hungarian LDS converts who before conversion: some had drunk alcohol “occasionally”, none had taken drugs, but most had drunk tea or coffee. Like the Hungarian converts, the Polish ones seem to view the benefits of LDS conversion as outweighing the costs, with the WOW being valued as a positive “investment” through it providing moral “boundaries” which protect people from unhealthy and sinful

lifestyles (Ibid 4082-4097). Overall, the Polish converts above highlight that the LDS can gain converts in modern secular societies through offering moral guidelines, religious commitment, self-control, and a longer, healthier life (Farrin 2009: 27-40; Givens 2007: 208-220; Millet 2007: 171-172; Nabozny 2009: 65-66; Marks and Beal 2008: 261). Besides this, they may value the LDS Church for it requiring more moral commitment than most mainstream Christian churches.

At my flat on 8-10-10, Roman (LTI non-interviewee) told me that he knew many Polish LDS who smoked, drank alcohol, and never visited the temple, with the Warsaw LDS leadership not knowing how to make Polish members active. In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts talked about themselves or converts in general having difficulties following the WOW. Recent teenage convert Dagmara (TTG) had gone to parties, so it had been a “little difficult” dropping smoking and drinking alcohol, as everybody had done this “for show”. Many years ago, giving up tea as a teenager had been a “big thing” for Martyna (CTG), while in California, Stefan (CTG) had sensed himself breaking the WOW through doing erotic dances from the 1987 film *Dirty Dancing*. Franciszek (LA) was currently not practising LDS commandments, and as a Sunday Priesthood meeting teacher, found it difficult to teach what he had trouble comprehending. Moreover, he drank beer and Bacardi rum, especially at nightclubs and an American hotel bar in Warsaw. Szymon (LA) believed that many Polish LDS never followed the WOW, and joked that he had never met one who disliked coffee, tea, or alcohol. For Szymon, Polish recruits were almost hypnotised by LDS “charm”, but quickly became disgruntled and often disappeared after baptism due to the WOW demands. He believed that Joseph Smith had only banned alcohol, tobacco, and gambling because they were expensive habits in the 19th century, when Smith had wanted people to donate their money to his Church. Some comments above suggest that high levels of discipline and motivation are necessary to practise the WOW long-term. However, many LAs appear to value the WOW which may imply that practising it may be more important for them than becoming temple-goers.

From the LTIs, Witek found it difficult to understand and follow the WOW. Being instructed not to smoke was no problem because Witek had never done this, but he had never understood the prohibition against coffee, as it was “not very dangerous” for his health. Still, at some point, through LDS pressure, he had fluctuated between drinking and not drinking coffee. Despite this, he sometimes drank beer, and at “opening exhibition celebrations” at art galleries/museums, he drank wine to suit the occasion. Moreover, after I had interviewed

Adam, Bogusław, and Maczek, they all drank some beer. All this may suggest that the LTIs here drink alcohol in a controlled manner, so they do not feel a need to give it up.

Finally, a few Polish LDS converts talked about being ridiculed for practising the WOW. When Dagmara (TTG) refused to drink tea at school, her schoolmates sometimes accused her of belonging to a “sect”. Marysia (CTG) had always been the only LDS at home and work, so she had felt “strange” practising the WOW rules in places where people did not accept them and told “bad jokes” about religion. However, this kind of “mockery” had stopped in time. Stefan (CTG) had been ridiculed by his Latino friends in California for refusing to drink alcohol, but through being impressed by films and the atmosphere at the Los Angeles Temple Visitors Centre, he had developed a strong resolve against drinking it. The converts here may have felt uncomfortable at being ridiculed for practising the WOW, especially before or not long after baptism. However, this may become less of an issue in time, especially if the converts become temple-goers. This may suggest that the WOW and other LDS forms of self-sacrifice offer recruits/converts a more meaningful life than modern-day moral relativism and secularism, with them valuing a sense of becoming different from the non-LDS world through being immersed in many LDS religious/social activities and strict codes of conduct (Millet 2007: 171-172; Gooren 2008: 379-380). Despite this, Maczek (LTI) feared becoming especially an “active” LDS, because he felt that his family and Polish society would think he was “crazy”. He believed that this was a big reason why the LDS “only had about six million active members” practising the WOW from about “14 million members” worldwide. Such comments highlight that WOW practice may make LDS members stand out from the surrounding Polish social world. They may also support van Beek’s (2005: 29) idea that being a member of a “small and unusual” religious group can be more difficult than belonging to a mainstream religion, especially in Poland where the Catholic Church still has a strong influence on wider society.

7.6 Testimonies

At Warsaw LDS meetings/events, I saw older American/foreign missionaries giving magical-type stories to support LDS religiosity. On 23-10-10, during the baptism service of five converts for Wierzbno, Sister Harding spoke about an episode when she had driven with young children through a blizzard in the USA, and had sensed Heavenly Father sending angels to protect them all. At a Sunday Scripture meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 2-01-11, a Family History Centre sister talked about feeling togetherness in the temple with her late husband and a daughter they had lost at only two weeks old. On 17-03-

13, at a Warsaw District Conference, Sister Nielson spoke about coming close to death recently and having to wear a heart monitor which reminded her that God still had a plan for her on Earth. At the same event, President Nielson discussed how his family had been irregular chapel-goers when he was about 10, and how a home teacher, a policeman, had motivated them all to become full-time LDS through recognising that something was missing in their lives. Such testimonies supported the LDS faith through the speakers reflecting on real-life situations and concerns which prompted everybody to feel “uplifted and edified” (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014).

During the Elder Christofferson Conference in Warsaw on 3-03-12, in front of 500-600 LDS from all over Poland, a Polish female YSA member (future missionary) stressed that her testimony was about the LDS fulfilling a need to build on the work of Jesus Christ, with Joseph Smith being a “true hero” for sacrificing himself for God. She also talked about receiving spiritual strength from the BOM and the atonement of Christ, and LDS religiosity blessing families. For her, the LDS Church was a big family which offered inspiration from President Monson right down to local leaders. She tearfully emphasised how she had learnt to do missionary work through the missionaries’ example, and called for others to become missionaries. For me, such a testimony, with successive rhetorical references to LDS religiosity, may represent a procession of “platitudes” (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014).

In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts discussed LDS testimonies. First, several talked about receiving them before LDS baptism. Recent convert Celina (TTG) had gained a pre-baptismal testimony about the BOM being true scripture through doing Moroni’s challenge. From the CTGs, Dawid believed that recruits should wait and pray for their decision to join the LDS to be confirmed by the Holy Ghost, with Lech having received this kind of testimony. As mentioned in section 7.3, Bruno and Stefan had received epiphany-type, pre-baptismal testimonies about the BOM being true scripture. While visiting a Warsaw LDS office, Michał had felt like on “another planet”, which had prompted him to become LDS soon after first meeting YMs. Alina (LA) had initially not believed what her YMs had said, but had then developed a “little faith”, sensing that it was good to pray about things. Moreover, she had interpreted an older male missionary’s talk about the purpose of LDS English classes as a sign that the LDS religion was true, and had told him that she wanted to get baptised. The older missionary had then given her a blessing saying that God wanted her to become LDS, and Alina had prayed for three weeks maintaining her decision to get

baptised. The convert comments above may point towards recruits starting to become internally converted through:

- Praying about the BOM/Joseph Smith and receiving a spiritual confirmation that LDS religiosity is true (Ballard 2000).
- Praying to God and committing themselves to the LDS faith (Rector Jr. 1975).
- Directly communicating with God, and receiving modern-day religious revelation and emotionally-driven religious experience (Givens 2007: 212-215, 218-219)
- Desiring to know if LDS religiosity is true or not, undertaking Moroni's challenge, and receiving an epiphany of LDS truth (Coleman 2003: 64-67)
- Sensing themselves finding a true religious path and connection with God (Eliason 1999: 142-143).

As modern-day religious-seekers, the converts above seem to have trusted their own spiritual intuitions, interpreting any uplifting feelings they had towards doing Moroni's challenge or other aspects of LDS religiosity as validating the truth of the BOM and LDS faith (Mauss 2008: 22-25).

After a Wolska Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts on 27-01-13, a young adult male LTI (non-interviewee) told me that he was satisfied with his visit and would be returning the following week. He liked the idea of the LDS having a priesthood related to the family like the Old Testament patriarchs (e.g. Abraham). When asked about whether he viewed Jesus as God or a prophet, he shrugged his shoulders saying that he liked the LDS idea of him being an older brother. He believed in an early Church with Jesus as the leader, and was interested in a Church as a group of people, but not the historical, philosophical outlook of the Catholic Church. However, he had never received any religious testimony, with the LDS testimonies that he had heard being emotional and open to interpretation. The last point may point towards some recruits being sceptical about LDS testimonies through seeing no objective criteria for measuring them. All my LTI interviewees except Adam spoke about having uplifting spiritual feelings with the LDS, but this had not prompted any of them to become LDS. Adam believed that his most recent YFMs had tried to lure him into a "trap" of discussing and then praying about the BOM and LDS teachings which suggests that some recruits may sense that YMs are pushing them towards receiving testimonies, which may make them defensive against any uplifting feelings they have towards LDS religiosity. Thus,

LTIIs may have higher levels of scepticism which block them from viewing uplifting experiences as confirmations of LDS truth.

Second, many Polish LDS converts spoke about receiving or building up testimonies after LDS baptism. From the LAs, Barbara believed that testimonies involved recruits/converts learning about different LDS teachings. As a convert, Józef gained insights from his Wierzbno/Raławicka community that built upon his pre-LDS search for goodness, beauty, and truth. He now viewed it as a duty to learn things from LDS colleagues, Institute lessons, and Sunday meetings, and to reflect on and pray about any new information on his own. For Paweł, giving testimonies at LDS meetings was a crunch test as individuals had to declare their faith in front of colleagues. Gabriela's post-baptismal testimony concerned seeing many miraculous-type things "come true". One episode involved a Polish LDS man who had only been expected to stay alive for three days survive to the amazement of the doctors and medical profession. Interestingly, only Gabriela from the LAs here talks about having an epiphany-type, post-baptismal testimony which may suggest that some LAs struggle to become CTGs through not having such testimonies after baptism.

From the TTGs, Dagmara described her testimony as a "confirmation" of the teachings/practices she had learnt from the LDS. Weronika viewed testimonies as expressions of gratefulness to God for being lead in a "good direction" that were shared with LDS colleagues. Jola believed that the Holy Ghost prompted people to have testimonies through testifying to them about religious truths concerning "Heavenly Father", Jesus, and LDS scripture/teachings. For her, this involved people starting to believe in LDS teachings, living according to LDS Church laws, and praying to get a "strong feeling" that the teachings were true. Jola stressed that everybody experienced testimonies differently, as the Holy Ghost could work through scripture or other people to answer somebody's questions. She revealed that LDS members receive testimonies about many "different topics" which cannot be scientifically proven, but can be strongly felt as "different knowledge" received from "Heavenly Father". Jola also discussed one of her own testimonies where rather than just going to church, she had "wanted to know" if God really existed, as she had been "searching the scriptures to learn more about him". Then, during a summer vacation, the weather and beach had been so beautiful that she had been forced to acknowledge that God exists, as the beauty of creation "couldn't happen by accident". During this episode, she had experienced the strongest, most profound, "soft" feeling imaginable, as the confirmation of God's existence had entered her brain. Despite her young age, Jola had been an LDS member much longer than any of the other TTG interviewees, which may suggest that long-term converts

are more likely to receive testimonies than recent ones. For temple-going converts, receiving testimonies may be an ongoing, episodic process which prompts them to feel more uplifted as their faith grows stronger.

Amongst the CTGs, Radek stressed that testimonies should not be kept secret because LDS colleagues can learn many “great things” from them. For Alicja, her testimony was no “one-day boom”, but a lifelong process that kept getting stronger. Her post-baptismal testimony about “the prophet, Joseph Smith” had occurred while teaching a lesson about the First Vision as a trainee missionary at the MTC in Preston (UK). Without being a “crying-type”, Alicja had just started weeping the more she had felt the Joseph Smith/latter-day prophet teaching to be true. Martyna had strengthened her faith while serving a mission in Britain, as she had tried to help people by becoming involved in their problems, and offering them a “better life” through introducing them to LDS religiosity to bring them “closer to God”. For Marek, having a testimony was a more complex process than “the Church is true, the Book is blue!” rhetoric of many new converts. He believed that genuine testimonies involved the Holy Ghost guiding converts to understand LDS religiosity at a higher level. Marek explained that through converts gaining a “confirmation” of having a relationship with God, just believing in something such as LDS scripture could turn into strongly sensing it was true. Romuald stressed that having a testimony was more than just deciding to become LDS, because it involved fulfilling obligations and developing spiritual knowledge after baptism. To highlight this, he pointed towards the LDS being blessed for paying tithing, as they gained greater understanding about the value of obedience and self-sacrifice. Stefan’s post-baptismal testimony revolved around having a “personal relationship” with the D&C which he had started studying a few months after baptism. This was a “second testimony” after his BOM epiphany, as, through the D&C not being “owned by any other Churches on Earth”, he had gained a “very strong conviction, confirmation” supporting his decision to become LDS. Dawid’s testimony was based on sensing that his ancestors had put him in “the right place” to make the “the right decisions” necessary for him to become LDS and do baptism of the dead for them. He explained that his ancestors had not had the “opportunity to know the Gospel of Jesus Christ” on Earth, and that in the post-mortal world, they had been waiting for him to “open the door” for this to happen. Thus, the CTGs here view their testimonies as long-term processes, which may involve receiving profound learning experiences that strengthen their faith in LDS teachings/practices and sharing their experiences with LDS colleagues. This seems to mirror many of Rigal-Cellard’s (2018: 3685-3693) French LDS respondents who

assessed their testimonies by giving “long explanations about their innermost motivations”, possibly influenced by an “American custom of testifying publicly on one’s faith”.

Many Polish LDS converts above discuss how they built up their testimonies, convictions about different aspects of LDS faith, over time (Gooren 2008: 367). Their comments highlight that while LDS testimonies sometimes only involve recruits/converts becoming certain about what God wills them to do on Earth, other times they may interpret intense, intuitive experiences as gaining contact with God (Stark 2005: 26-27, 38-39). This suggests that converts continue to construct/reconstruct their conversion stories long after joining the LDS, with some building up long-range testimonies through assessing how the LDS have benefitted their lives over the years (Stromberg 1993/2008, 2014: 130).

7.7 Baptism/confirmation

Inside the main hall at Wolska, on 5-09-09, I saw Damian (TTG) and President Engbjerg who were sat in central, front pew positions, all dressed in white. Nearby, Damian’s mother and sister were sat with a German YFM. After an opening hymn, a female YSA member (non-interviewee) from Wierzbno gave a speech smiling at Damian non-stop, and a recent English male convert did a violin version of the *I Am a Child of God* hymn. Also from Wierzbno, Patrycja (LA) and Marysia, Michał, and Jola’s mother (CTGs) were all sat together, and Józef (LA) was leading events on stage. In a small pool in a side room, Damian first resisted being baptised, but President Engbjerg then gently immersed him under the water. After this, two YMMs showed a video about Joseph Smith’s First Vision on a big screen in the main hall. Damian gave his testimony in a suit/tie, looking like a model convert. On 31-09-09 at Wolska, I saw a female in her 30s receive baptism and confirmation on the same day. LDS confirmation usually occurred 1-2 days after baptism in Warsaw. The laying on of hands (confirmation) ceremony was performed by Lech (CTG), Edyta’s reactivated husband (LA), and four YMMs including two who had met the baptised/confirmed woman when she had been in hospital. One of the YMMs took the lead, referring to the woman as “Córka Ojca” (Heavenly Father’s daughter).

A Wierzbno Sunday School lesson for recruits/recent converts on 13-06-10 was lead by a Polish female TTG (non-interviewee), with an American YFM translating the Polish into English. The lesson covered the LDS baptism chapter in *Zasady ewangelii/Gospel Principles* (2009). When the host asked what LDS baptism meant, a young Puerto Rican woman gave party-line answers about it involving repentance; remission of sin; returning to a childlike state; starting a new life; receiving the Holy Ghost; and becoming LDS. The host added that it

involved an exchange of agreements/promises between God and the baptised person. When the host contrasted the LDS belief in people having to freely choose baptism with the Catholic concept of baptism eradicating original sin, Bogusław (LTI) explained that Catholics baptised babies to not only eliminate original sin, but also impart grace on their souls. While the host looked confused, the YFM assistant thanked Bogusław for his point. Bogusław also pointed towards the apostle Paul saying that baptism was a symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ, which the LDS host agreed with. This episode showed that theologically-minded Catholics could be found inside the Warsaw LDS field.

At our usual Vietnamese restaurant on 31-05-11, Damian (TTG) revealed that Maczek (LTI) was considering LDS baptism, but his missionaries were frustrated at trying to make him give up smoking and him having cancelled numerous baptism dates. During a phone call on 17-06-11, Damian talked about Maczek having problems/struggles which blocked him from becoming LDS, but remained silent when I suggested that this may have been an inner defence mechanism. Before a Sunday School meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 30-12-12, two YMMs revealed that Roman (LTI non-interviewee) was due to be baptised in two weeks time, although the exact date had not been confirmed. During the meeting, Roman was flanked by two YMMs, the first time I had seen this with him. At a Wolska (Testimony) Sunday Sacrament meeting on 3-02-13, an older male missionary jokingly pushed Roman towards the stage, with Roman saying that there were too many people present for him to give his testimony. Despite looking embarrassed, Roman went on stage talking about how much he enjoyed attending meetings at Wolska. After the meeting, a YMM told me that Roman was being encouraged to get baptised when he felt comfortable, with it being entirely his decision, although Roman had started becoming committed to the idea through giving up smoking and reading the BOM daily. Despite this, Roman's baptism never materialised. Thus, the PO accounts here highlight that LDS baptisms do not always go ahead as planned.

On 13-04-13, I attended the baptism of a 70-year-old woman and attempted baptism of her 94-year-old mother. To make things safer, the LDS tried to immerse the women forwards rather than backwards. During one baptism attempt, the 70-year-old woman shouted "Nie" ("No"), and a Polish leader from Wolska halted the proceedings. The woman was eventually immersed after seven attempts by an African man. A Polish man then made six attempts to immerse the 94-year-old woman, but each time, she shouted "Nie", and the proceedings were halted. After about 20 minutes of hymn-singing, both baptisers tried to immerse the 94-year-old woman together three times before the local Polish leader waved things off. Afterwards,

Michał (CTG) acknowledged that the baptism procedure had been dangerous, and a YMM informed me that the older woman would be baptised in a swimming pool the following week. Michał added that he would rather see a very old, sick person receive a proxy baptism in the spirit world.

In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts discussed LDS baptism/confirmation issues. Two spoke about some recruits becoming LDS to “maintain friendships” with missionaries. Stefan (CTG) recalled an episode from about 10 years ago when three girls had got baptised and disappeared after some YMMs had “changed the city”. Patrycja (LA) had decided to become LDS upon discovering that her favourite YMM had become President of the Białystok branch in north-east Poland. This now ex-missionary maintained their “special bond” from the USA through speaking to her on Skype at 4pm every Sunday. However, Patrycja never became a CTG, which may suggest that without face-to-face contact with influential missionaries, some Polish converts may become LAs quickly.

Stefan and Patrycja also revealed that YMs had asked them to help plan their baptism ceremonies. In California, Stefan’s missionaries had asked him for a baptism ceremony plan, to find out who he wanted to organise things and what he wanted to do after baptism. Recent convert Patrycja had felt “special” when she had been asked to plan her baptism ceremony, but she had had to argue with her missionaries to get the colourful baptism invitations and LDS hymns she had wanted, as they had tried to save the coloured photocopying cartridges and had wanted to choose the hymns themselves. All this may suggest that LDS missionaries may encourage recruits to help organise their baptisms to increase the likelihood of them turning up for the baptism event.

On 6-02-10, I attended a musical event that should have been a baptism, as a Polish man had dropped out of being baptised a few days beforehand. At the event, a middle-aged couple who I had never seen before sang LDS hymns well, but this could not overturn a downbeat atmosphere. Again, this showed that there was no guarantee that recruits would turn up for their baptisms. In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts talked about fearing LDS baptism. Patrycja (LA) had been late for her baptism interview because she had sensed something holding her back from becoming LDS, which had made her favourite YMM angry. Stefan (CTG) had felt in shock when his YFMs in California had asked him to get baptised after he had told them about his BOM testimony. In response, he had wanted to get baptised later than the proposed August 26th date, as, through being afraid of “entering a new life” and being “a bit of a digger”, he had wanted another confirmation of LDS “truthfulness” before baptism. Moreover, something inside had been telling him that LDS baptism “wasn’t right”,

tempting him not to go through with it. Stefan also discussed a male LTI who was in his 30s and had attended Wolska meetings for many years, but had kept changing his mind about LDS baptism because “he just got scared” through searching for the truth in too many places and his parents being against it. For Dawid (CTG), anti-LDS websites prompted recruits to doubt what they had felt to be true, to wait too long to become LDS, and to lose their sense of having a relationship with the Holy Ghost. All this suggests that to become LDS, Polish recruits may have to overcome both inner fears and external opposition from non-LDS family/friends. They may fear being viewed as traitors by Catholic society, as while some Poles view NRMs with indifference, others condemn them as non-mainstream, psycho-manipulative groups (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 195; Zielińska 2006: 217-218). Like many other Europeans, many Poles may know little about the LDS, not condemning them but inaccurately ridiculing them as polygamists.

A few Polish LDS converts recalled having special feelings on their baptism days. From the CTGs, Bruno had felt elated entering something heavenly, sacred, and universal during his baptism, while Stefan had felt relieved and “anew” during and after baptism. Despite having been tempted to put off his baptism, Stefan had gone through with it, and during the immersion, he had felt happy at “doing something right”. During Lech’s baptism, he had felt himself gaining “something really amazing”, and had seen others taking in the experience more spiritually than him which was “nice”. In contrast, Alina and Patrycja (LAs) had been afraid of drowning, although, despite not having understood the meaning of her baptism at the time, Alina had felt excited before and after it. On her baptism day, Patrycja had felt a bit uncomfortable about YMs blocking her from seeing her favourite missionary. Nevertheless, she was proud about having been escorted to Wolska by four YMMs, as she believed that recruits were not usually given this kind of treatment and that it had been done to fulfil her wish for a well-organised baptism. During the journey, she realised that she had forgotten her mobile phone and a top that she was going to wear for baptism, which had intensified a feeling that things were conspiring against her. Still, despite feeling nervous/apprehensive, she had gone through with her baptism. While the CTGs above experienced uplifting feelings on their baptism days, the LAs had been more apprehensive which may suggest that having uplifting memories from baptism may energise Polish converts towards becoming CTGs. Moreover, Patrycja’s YMs may have been escorting her to Wolska to counter the possibility of her not turning up for baptism, as I sometimes saw recruits arrive at Wolska for their baptisms with LDS missionaries/members.

Finally, a few CTGs explained how confirmation had completed their LDS baptism process. Lech compared his confirmation to receiving the Melchizedek priesthood as he had felt “something” special entering himself. In California, Stefan had been baptised and confirmed on the same day, with confirmation being the “sealing” of LDS baptism. During the confirmation, the local bishop’s palms were placed on Stefan’s head and a standard word formula was given for him to receive the Holy Ghost. Stefan stressed that being baptised without receiving confirmation was invalid, and that some newly baptised people never got confirmed because they were “scared” of what their non-LDS family/friends might think. Dawid explained that confirmation completed LDS baptism because the convert received the “seal of the Holy Ghost” as a constant companion. During his baptism, Dawid had felt the Holy Ghost becoming his “companion” and had wanted to keep “him”. The laying on of hands ceremony had been a “great experience”, with Dawid promising God that he would keep LDS commandments through not wanting to lose the Holy Ghost by breaking them. Again, all this suggests that if Polish LDS converts have profound/uplifting memories from baptism/confirmation, this may energise them to become CTGs. This may point towards some converts feeling transformed through gaining uplifting outlooks on life (James 1902/1985; Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 199).

7.8 Post-baptismal adaptation and difficulties

During a Sunday Scripture meeting for recruits/recent converts at Wolska on 22-05-11, a recently baptised, male convert repeatedly commented on the BOM texts that were read out. In my interview data, quite a few Polish LDS converts spoke about adapting positively to LDS member life. As recent converts, Celina (TTG) enjoyed encountering different types of LDS who tried to help each other, and Szymon (LA) praised the LDS for fulfilling his need to practise a meaningful religion. From the CTGs, Lech recalled being a young teenage convert who had started to think more seriously about life. He now valued LDS callings and organised member support which attempted to stop fresh converts from disappearing shortly after baptism. Martyna had been “put to work straightaway” as a teenage convert, learning more about LDS religiosity and strengthening her faith through teaching Primary classes for young children on Sunday and doing other callings. During this time, Martyna had developed the desire to serve a mission to thank God for what her YMs had taught her, and had started believing that the LDS could “change people for the better”. Stefan recalled his time after baptism in California, when his YFMs had mentioned the usual LDS things but from a member’s perspective, and he had started to feel detached from the non-LDS world through

gaining some new spiritual “understanding”. Soon after Dawid’s baptism, the missionary who had baptised him returned to the USA and his other missionaries were changed regularly. Despite this, he had become curious about the temple being a “special place”, and had done a course to prepare for entering it which had been organised by his branch President. His goal of entering the temple had become clearer over a year of coming to understand LDS religiosity more fully, with “each part” of the D&C and POGP becoming easier to comprehend. Thus, some Polish converts above may mirror Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4115) Hungarian LDS converts who felt themselves changing through increasing their “self-esteem” and gaining “new skills” by doing church callings/duties.

The comments above suggest that to move towards CTG status, Polish converts need to integrate with LDS colleagues; do callings; read more scripture; develop a desire to enter the temple; and sense themselves becoming more religious. While religious transformation may be unnecessary for LDS baptism, it appears to become more so for entering the temple. All this points towards active-passive converts becoming committed to an LDS worldview through assessing and being influenced by LDS teachings/practices, and developing core LDS identity through becoming more active inside their group (Rambo 1998; Gooren 2007: 350-351). However, my research points towards only a small number of Polish LDS becoming CTGs which suggests that the LDS only select and train new members who strongly adhere to their beliefs/practices for higher LDS status (McBride 2007: 404-412).

In time, I saw a few young Polish LDS converts go on to serve missions. During a mobile phone chat on 17-06-11, Damian (TTG) informed me that he was going on a 1-2 week mini-mission outside Warsaw organised by President Nielson as preparation for an upcoming two-year mission. Damian stressed that he just wanted to get his two-year mission out of the way. At a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Raławicka on 3-07-11, Damian had returned from his Gdańsk mini-mission and gave a speech about what he had learnt from it. Inside Raławicka metro station afterwards, Damian confided that his mission had been “no bed of roses” due to the workload and lack of free time. After a Raławicka Sunday Sacrament meeting on 18-12-11, Damian told me that he had received his official mission paper to serve in Tacoma, Washington, and a female YSA colleague had received hers to serve in Moldova/Romania. At the Elder Christofferson Conference at the Radisson Hotel, Warsaw on 3-03-12, the future YFM talked about receiving her mission call, and being due to travel to the Provo MTC the following week.

In my interview data, quite a few Polish LDS converts talked about having difficulties after baptism. Patrycja (LA) believed that most Polish LDS were too poor to pay tithing. She

got angry when the LDS preached about it during Sunday meetings and tried to get members to give money at Testimony Sunday meetings. For Celina (TTG), it was difficult for anyone to give away 10% of their money, especially LDS from “poor countries” like Poland who did not earn much. From the CTGs, Stefan’s first few months as an LDS convert had been “semi-difficult”, as he had needed to become more scrupulous in behaviour than when Catholic, but despite some difficulties learning LDS rules, he had started following them. Lech believed that it was natural for new converts to question their decision to become LDS because they feared making big changes in life. For him, new converts sometimes disappeared quickly through not receiving enough missionary/member support, especially when a pre-baptismal period of feeling uplifted by “the Spirit” was replaced by everyday problems remaining after baptism. Dawid stressed that local members should attend missionary-recruit meetings to push future converts towards integrating inside a branch. He felt that some young converts disappeared quickly through viewing themselves as too weak to keep LDS commandments, and not knowing how to take the Sunday Sacrament properly to maintain their repentance/conversion process. For Martyna, new converts disappeared quickly through feeling close to and sometimes in love with missionaries who moved on, being expected to pay tithing, and receiving hostility from non-LDS families. Hence, new converts may disappear for many reasons, with the directive to pay tithing being a massive problem because Poland is not an affluent country. It may also be difficult to replace influential missionaries, as trust between recruits/converts and new missionaries often takes time to develop. Many Polish converts may dislike being pushed towards becoming committed LDS members shortly after baptism, as they need time to assess what they have got themselves involved in. All this suggests that recent converts may not be supported by foreign missionaries or local members, and that quickly recruited ones may become disillusioned through exciting recruitment journeys being replaced by arduous membership routines (Glad 2009: 157; Decoo 1996: 108-109). LDS member duties may be especially off-putting for Polish converts from nominal or inactive Catholic backgrounds, as investing significant time/effort in a religion may be alien to them. Thus, given the many difficulties that Polish LDS converts face, it is unsurprising that few become CTGs.

Recent convert, Szymon (LA) was confirmed a day after LDS baptism, and then became an Aaronic priest a week after, missionary leader two weeks after, and Melchizedek priest four weeks after. As a missionary leader, he coordinated the work of YMs, and had access to all Polish LDS member data at both Warsaw branches. Despite being a Melchizedek priest, he criticised the LDS and spent 5-6 hours a day studying mainly non-LDS and ex-LDS (e.g.

Jerald/Sandra Tanner; ex-BYU professors etc.) accounts about LDS teachings/history. He believed that official LDS accounts about the latter often contradicted each other, and that the BOM was “evangelically” rather than “literally” true, so parts of the Warsaw LDS hierarchy were encouraging him not to speak to other LDS about such things. While Szymon had not had any mystical experiences with Buddhism or Hinduism, he believed that he was having them with the LDS, with many LDS in Warsaw wanting to be blessed by him. He had recently blessed and reactivated a Polish LDS woman who had quickly disappeared from Wolska after her baptism through the “badness” there, and they had both felt something extraordinary during the blessing, but nothing “hysterical”. After witnessing the latter, a YFM from Wierzbno/Raławicka had said that for the first time in her life, she had seen and felt “the Spirit” breaking through a veil, which had annoyed President Nielson. Despite feeling “the Spirit” working through himself, Szymon did not want to bless people to get mystical effects. During a private meeting, President Nielson had told Szymon about seeing similar power from “LDS Apostles” (1st Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve members), and had advised him not to discuss such matters with other LDS members. Given that Szymon disappeared a few months after LDS baptism, his frenetic post-baptismal life may have prompted some kind of religious burn-out or other Polish LDS members (especially CTGs) and the American LDS leadership in Warsaw/Poland to be suspicious of his charismatic approach to LDS convert life.

In summary, the issue of LDS religious training influencing Polish LDS recruitment/conversion seems to involve several big factors. Religious transformation over various amounts of time will involve a person changing or adapting a system of ideas to give his/her life new meaning. Some recruits may resist LDS religious conditioning to maintain features of Polish cultural identity, while others may accept/embrace it as a countercultural move. Recruits may experience internal conflict/crisis while evaluating pre-LDS and LDS worldviews against each other, with some overcoming a sense of guilt about leaving past customs/lifestyles behind, and others not. During recruitment, investigators may have some mainstream Christian beliefs reinforced and may encounter some unique LDS beliefs. Stronger religious transformation may occur after LDS baptism if converts encounter more unique LDS religiosity and become CTGs. LAs and LTIs may experimentally taste and enjoy LDS religiosity without (strongly) committing to it. Overall, my CTG interviewees appear to have undergone religious transformation; TTGs semi-transformation; LAs limited transformation; with the LTIs remaining as sceptics. Thus, the CTGs and TTGs may be viewed as orthodox LDS; LAs as heterodox/hybrid LDS; and LTIs as sceptical curiosity-

seekers. Regarding Girard's mimetic theory, CTGs may compete with rivals for higher LDS career development, while LAs may not have or may lose the desire to do so, being possibly scapegoated as causes of disorder/disunity inside the Warsaw LDS community (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-14).

7.9 Social interaction and religious training influencing recruitment

I will now summarise which religious and social factors influenced the recruitment of members of my Polish LDS convert and LTI groups. From the CTGs, Wojciech had not needed to adapt to the WOW through never having been a drinker/smoker, and had received religious training from YMMs for a year before LDS baptism. When Radek first encountered the LDS in Kraków, he had been drawn towards the WOW, while an appreciation of LDS music had prompted him to stop listening to secular music. After meeting LDS missionaries, Bruno had read the BOM in a week, becoming convinced that it was authentic scripture and LDS shortly afterwards. Romuald had had his eyes opened to religious truth while sharing similar ideas about the Bible with an older missionary couple, and Marek had studied the New Testament, BOM, and D&C on his own before baptism. Hence, the male CTGs here may have had mainly religious journeys to LDS baptism. Zofia had spoken with a Polish LDS friend about LDS religiosity, after which she had been prepared for baptism by an older missionary couple. Stefan had studied the BOM and met his YFMs over a long time, and had enjoyed attending LDS social activities before receiving a dramatic testimony about the BOM being authentic scripture. Martyna had attended LDS social activities, had met her YFMs regularly, and had read the Bible and BOM as a teenager. Michał had become LDS within two weeks of first meeting missionaries in Warsaw, having felt like in heaven. These CTGs may have had (sometimes dramatic) balanced religious-social journeys to LDS baptism. During recruitment, Alicja had admired how the LDS put their faith into practice, valuing her missionary friends and the safe cheerful environment that the LDS provided. Lech had been impressed by the exciting interaction and friendly missionaries he had encountered as a young teenage recruit. Dawid had attended LDS free English lessons, formed a friendship with a missionary, and had only understood the BOM and unique LDS teachings after baptism. These CTGs may have had mainly social journeys to LDS baptism. Some CTGs (Alicja, Dawid, Martyna, Stefan etc.) point towards Polish LDS converts receiving limited religious training before baptism, and a fuller understanding of LDS religiosity after baptism. However, given that all the CTGs above became LDS some/many years ago, they may have framed/

reconstructed their recruitment stories in religious or social terms when the reality may have been different.

From the TTGs, Jola had been LDS since childhood, while the four others were in their first year of LDS membership when I interviewed them. In childhood, Jola had enjoyed meeting LDS missionaries who had taught her religion lessons in a friendly way. Weronika valued making LDS friends as an antidote to her painful shyness; enjoyed singing LDS hymns through their focus on Jesus; and liked the LDS pre-mortality teaching. Dagmara appreciated a warm/friendly LDS atmosphere, and enjoyed reading the BOM. Celina had valued meeting friendly/uplifting people when first attending LDS Sunday meetings, and had then received a testimony about the BOM which prompted her to become LDS. Thus, these TTGs may have had balanced religious-social recruitment journeys. In contrast, Damian had only attended LDS social events for free food, but during a YSA conference in the Czech Republic, he had become impressed with the moral outlooks of young LDS, so he may have had a mainly social recruitment journey.

Amongst the LAs, Edyta had become LDS with her husband which shows how the LDS may recruit family members together if the opportunity arises. She now read the Bible privately, and felt more religiously active with the LDS than the Catholic Church. Gabriela had valued the WOW and LDS interaction during her recruitment. Recent convert Barbara had become curious about a male LDS workmate who had talked about the BOM with her. While attending an American LDS guest speaker event at Wolska with her workmate, she had enjoyed meeting YFMs for the first time which had increased her interest in the LDS. Paweł had read about the LDS on the internet; had met some LDS missionaries in Warsaw years after; and had been impressed by LDS member behaviour. Despite encountering LDS religiosity long before LDS interaction, both factors seem important for Paweł. After meeting LDS missionaries, Józef had been impressed by the WOW, LDS behaviour, and basic LDS teachings about God and Jesus, without having read the BOM. Alina had attended LDS free English lessons where she had encountered smartly dressed, well-spoken YMs. At some point, she had started praying, receiving a testimony that it was God's will for her to become LDS. Recent convert Patrycja's recruitment seems to have been dominated by a bond she felt with an American YMM, with her not reading the religious materials that the LDS had given her. Despite viewing the LDS as good/moral people, she had read some anti-LDS literature so she could not accept Joseph Smith as a prophet. All this points towards the LAs here receiving balanced religious-social recruitment journeys. Franciszek had first encountered the Warsaw LDS through a non-LDS friend telling him about them giving away free copies of the

BOM, and had then enjoyed socialising with American and Polish LDS during the early days of the Poland Mission. Despite this, he had never enjoyed reading the BOM. Thus, Franciszek's recruitment journey may have been a mainly social one. Recent convert Szymon had encountered LDS scripture about 10 years ago through some missionaries giving him the BOM and D&C. A few months ago, he had met some more missionaries knowing more about LDS religiosity than them. This suggests that Szymon's recruitment was mainly religious, as he had privately studied LDS scripture for many years.

From the LTIs, Adam valued the LDS English lessons and social activities that he had attended over the years, but had little interest in LDS religiosity. Despite this, he had periodically attended Wolska Sunday meetings and read the BOM during baptism lessons with YFMs, which suggests that long-term LDS recruitment inevitably involves some religious training, although some recruits may be disinterested in it. The other four LTIs were all interested in LDS religiosity. Bogusław viewed the BOM as inauthentic scripture; critiqued the LDS polytheistic concept of God; and saw no need for anybody to get baptised LDS if they had already received baptism with another Christian Church. In contrast, he respected LDS morality for mirroring Catholic morality, and believed that there was some allegorical truth in the BOM, but criticised YMs for trying to control their recruits' time as part of a recruitment technique. Maczek enjoyed comparing and contrasting Catholic and LDS doctrines, especially rival claims about having an original Christian priesthood instituted by Jesus. He had encountered the four LDS books of scripture at Institute meetings, and enjoyed attending LDS social activities. Like Bogusław, Maczek was wary of the control aspect of LDS interaction, and saw that missionaries did not tolerate having their religious teachings challenged. During Witek's early contact with the LDS, he had got to know some members; had enjoyed being a Wolska choir member; and had helped missionaries to seek recruits in Warsaw city centre. He had never become LDS through not accepting the BOM as authentic scripture nor the pre-mortality teaching as true doctrine as it contradicted a common view that human life starts with conception on Earth. With the more recent recruit, Tomasz, his missionaries had spoken little about LDS religiosity while befriending him, but he had started feeling uncomfortable because, like Bogusław, he saw no reason for recruits to receive LDS baptism if they had been baptised before. He was also suspicious that LDS chapels contained no mainstream Christian symbols, and was uncomfortable with some LDS members mocking his Catholic beliefs. Thus, the LTIs here may have refrained from becoming LDS through having religious objections and disliking how some missionaries try to push recruits towards LDS baptism.

8. Wider Issues Influencing LDS Recruitment in Poland

This chapter assesses my PO and interview data for information concerning three main themes/topics related to the Polish social world. After this, I use my PO data to show how the Warsaw LDS deal with Polish social issues at their religious/social meetings.

8.1 Religious conversion in post-communist Poland

During a teleconference from Salt Lake City at Wolska on 4-06-10, Elder Hales (Quorum of the Twelve) recalled how many years ago, the LDS Church President Kimball (1973-1985) had instructed him to work with future Church President Monson (2008-2018) in the “old communist bloc” of Eastern Europe. He remembered visiting Poland with its few LDS members; meeting two Polish government ministers responsible for censoring religion; seeing early Polish LDS baptisms in a hotel swimming pool; and taking a Polish Minister of Religion to meet LDS religious leaders in the USA, and driving to Yellowstone Park where the Minister valued a “moment of freedom” during a morning walk.

In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts spoke about the general issue of choosing or changing religious identity in Poland. A few revealed that Poles had had few problems practising non-Catholic religions during communist times. Barbara (LA) pointed towards the LDS gaining permission to operate in Poland during communist times, although she had never seen any YMs “on the road” back then. From the CTGs, Stefan had not seen any major “obstacles” concerning non-Catholic religious practice during communist times, and Romuald recalled people having “absolute freedom to choose” any religion that suited them from those that had existed in Poland during “that period”. However, Romuald was “not familiar” with how many new Churches had been established in post-communist Poland. Marek explained that “minority Churches” had existed and gained new members in communist Poland, when religion had not been unduly affected despite the authorities censoring “printed materials” and Poland having few close relationships with other countries back then. Nonetheless, he stressed that members of the communist government’s “different services” had not been religious, and people from “devout” religious families had suffered “professional difficulties” during communist times. Thus, the converts here highlight that Poles had been free to choose their religious affiliation during communist times, but with less religious options available than nowadays. This may suggest that the Polish communist authorities had allowed different Christian Churches to exist because they provided

competing versions of belief which helped to discredit all Christian assertions of providing religious truth (Obirek in Harrison 2009).

Second, many Polish LDS converts believed that people had more freedom to practise non-Catholic religions in post-communist Poland. Gabriela (LA) and Dagmara (TTG) felt that this was so, and Weronika (TTG) had seen on Polish television that Poles had not been allowed “to speak about things”, even Catholicism, during communist times. From the CTGs, Michał felt that post-communist Poland was a “good country” because it offered “enough freedom” for people to become LDS. Radek believed that the fall of communism had occurred especially to let Poles choose their own religious orientation, as (LDS Church) President Kimball had asked all LDS “to fast for the fall of the Iron Curtain” and had visited Ogród Saski Park, Warsaw in 1977 to sanctify Poland for LDS missionary work (Mehr 2002: 102-103). Dawid explained that during communist times, Poland had been a “special place” with a strong Catholic Church, while now it was “more open” to other cultures and religions, and easier for people to join non-Catholic religions. For Marek, this greater openness was reflected by Poland now having about 20 times more foreign visitors a year than just before the fall of communism. He believed that many Poles had had their eyes opened to cultural diversity through taking recent opportunities to travel and see that the world was not like their ancestors’ “village or town”. Marek also described the fall of communism being marked by the 1989 Religious Freedom Act which “opened the door” for everybody to practise whatever religion they liked. Marek’s last comment supports Mehr’s (2002: 172) points about the 1989 law on religious liberty clearing the way for foreign people to direct religious congregations in Poland, the Poland LDS Mission to be established in 1990, and the LDS to become a visible, operational religion in Poland. Moreover, some comments above may support Annus and Csepregi’s (2018: location 4115-4124) view of people in “post-socialist” Central/Eastern European states assessing religions and “ideologies” to try to find a “new framework to guide” their lives/actions and create a “basis for their newly constructed world”.

Paweł (LA) pointed towards Poles now being able to freely choose their religious identity through Poland’s new economic situation in the EU and “modern information channels” like the Internet giving information about many Churches and religions. For Alina (LA), modern “freedom of information” offered access to “more knowledge about Churches, religions, and some ideologies”. These views highlight that the Internet has made many “spiritual options” visible to people in Poland (and many other countries) through allowing NRMs to portray themselves positively without any media or anti-cult movement criticism and to widely advertise their meeting times and venues for “enquirers” (Chryssides 2016: 31). Alina

believed that it was easier to practise religion now, as the communist system had tried to control all kinds of information, which had limited people's freedom to choose what they wanted in life. She explained that after communism ended, "many new Churches" entered Poland preaching different gospels in Warsaw city centre, which had been impossible during communist times. This point about religions now being able to enter public space to draw people towards their messages suggests that post-communist Poland has a growing religious marketplace. Alina emphasised that shortly after communism had ended, "some authorities" had allowed the LDS to build their chapel at Wolska, and through having access to more Churches, Poles now had "more opportunities to choose" their religious identity. Thus, Alina and Paweł equate religious freedom with having more religious options to choose from.

At the meeting that my friend, Małgorzata, and I attended at Raławicka on 28-06-12, the Jensens (older missionary couple) asserted that the wider Catholic environment was the main problem blocking LDS growth in Poland. In my interview data, a few Polish LDS converts talked about Poles still receiving some kind of pressure from the Catholic social world which held them back from exploring non-Catholic religions. Marysia (CTG) explained that despite people being legally free to choose non-Catholic religious practice in Poland, Poles tried to preserve Catholic culture "from one generation to another". However, her receiving of some kind of Catholic religious inheritance had been overcome through her sensing that "the truth" mattered "more than tradition". Dagmara (TTG) believed that Poles had religious freedom but sometimes did not realise that they had non-Catholic options to choose from, as they just viewed Poland as a "Catholic country". Still, she had used her religious freedom to become LDS. For Alicja, Catholic society pressured Poles to be Catholic while viewing it as acceptable for foreigners to be non-Catholic, which was "very closed-minded". She stressed that if Poles became non-Catholic, they risked being "banished forever" from their families for breaking "the philosophy". Alicja's views here suggest that some Polish LDS converts resent a social expectation to be Catholic, with this possibly providing motivation for some people to become LDS as a challenge to the Catholic Church's dominant position in Poland. Her opinions may point towards the Catholic Church being viewed by many younger Poles as a dominant ideological body that tries to control people's morality and sense of national identity (Obirek in Harrison 2009). They may also support Annus and Csepregi's (2018: location 3835) point that in the former communist countries of Central/ Eastern Europe, the governing powers' "political preference" for "traditional Christian churches" has made it difficult for "new religious communities" to be accepted.

Two Polish LDS converts spoke about many Poles being indifferent to religion. Dawid (CTG) explained that despite having numerous religions to choose from, many Poles did not care about religion “at all”, as they just lived comfortably without developing any “spiritual life”. Jola (TTG) believed that despite the fall of communism and people being freer to choose their religious practice, young Poles saw no purpose in looking for religion/spirituality, as they were more interested in making money, going to parties, and living for the moment. The views here may support Obirek’s (in Harrison 2009) point about many younger Poles viewing religion as irrelevant, as they are more drawn to everyday concerns. They may also point towards Church non-affiliation amongst young people being increasingly taken for granted (van Beek 2005: 29). For Jola, young Poles were “sick of” their grandmothers supporting a well-known Catholic radio station, *Radio Maryja*, and they did not attend Catholic churches because the priests mainly talked about politics and said “nothing about God”, and their families told lies and did bad things despite attending Mass every week. She emphasised that young Poles were not interested in Catholic religiosity, because they saw their families not putting Catholic principles into practice and not creating positive change in their lives. Jola also criticised the Polish government for encouraging people to follow Catholicism as the “main religion”, while many people resented Catholic priests for being “well-off” and spending money on cars rather than helping people. Thus, she believed that the Catholic Church looked after itself rather than Polish people. All this suggests that many younger Poles condemn the Catholic Church for not relating its teachings to their real-life experience; being preoccupied with material gain and political objectives; not offering answers to their questions about life; and not treating them as free-thinking individuals (Borowik 2006: 319-324).

8.2 Changing religion in post-John Paul II Poland

Many Polish LDS converts spoke about how the religious landscape in Poland was changing after John Paul II. Quite a few discussed how Poles celebrated him. From the CTGs, Stefan believed that “everyone on Earth”, especially Poles, loved John Paul II as a “great man”, and Alicja viewed him as “one of the best people that walked this Earth”, because, through his intelligence and humour, he had served humanity. Radek explained that after becoming Pope in 1978, John Paul II had helped to create many changes in Polish and international politics, with many people having followed his leadership for this reason. Dawid believed that Poles loved him for his connection to “Polish history” and helping Poland to “become a free country”. Despite respecting John Paul II as a “great person”, Dawid did not

believe that he had been “the leader” of God’s Church on Earth. For Paweł (LA), Poles mainly respected John Paul II for his “big historical role” of helping to separate Poland from “communist Moscow”. Barbara (LA) believed that Poles loved him for both his support of Polish interests and the friendly relationships he built with other cultures and religions. The comments above seem to point towards many Poles remembering John Paul II as a wonderful person rather than a Catholic religious leader; respecting him for helping to liberate Poland from communism during the late 1970s and 1980s; and valuing him as a distant authority whose ideas do not influence their personal lives (Scislowska 2014; Borowik 2006: 319). While the converts above respect John Paul II for helping Poles and people worldwide on the political stage, his role as a Catholic religious leader does not seem to mean much or anything for them.

A few CTGs discussed the effect that John Paul II’s death (had) had on many Poles. Stefan recalled the “Polish nation” being unified in shock, with even rival football fans respecting each other in the immediate aftermath of his death. Dawid believed that over time, John Paul II’s death had only strengthened the faith of a “certain group”, some “traditional Catholics” associated with the *Radio Maryja* “sect” founded by the Redemptorist priest, Tadeusz Rydzyk. Krzemiński (2017) discusses how Father Rydzyk built up *Radio Maryja* in the 1990s, and believes that the radio programme promotes a national Catholic ideology (especially an idea that to be Polish, people must be Catholic) and treats foreigners and foreign organisations (especially Germans, Jews, Russians, and the EU) suspiciously. Romuald felt that many Poles would remain Catholic as a tribute to John Paul II’s service as a “great Pole and leader”. However, Alicja believed that John Paul II would be “twisting in his coffin”, knowing that people were praying to and worshipping him rather than the “Catholic God”. Thus, Dawid and Romuald held opposing opinions about whether memories of John Paul II would help to maintain Polish people’s affiliation to the Catholic Church or not, and Scislowska’s (2014) point about Polish people’s adulation towards John-Paul II becoming weaker in time.

Quite a few Polish LDS converts discussed the possibility of non-Catholic religious growth in the post-John Paul II era. Paweł (LA) believed that through losing their Polish Pope, some Poles might develop a “mental opposition” to the Catholic Church. Weronika (TTG) felt that Poles “who really did follow” John Paul II rather than the Catholic Church might find it difficult to remain Catholic, and might choose a “different way, a different path”. Jola (TTG) believed that many Poles were against Pope Benedict XVI because they found it impossible to like a German Pope through having been taught “to hate” Germans and

Russians by preceding generations as a Polish tradition. She highlighted that some “well-educated, open-minded” Poles were checking out non-Catholic religions and other perspectives on life. From the CTGs, Michał thought that greater non-Catholic religious growth was possible, but was “not 100% sure” if it would take off. Stefan felt that through losing a “great leader”, Catholics may start exploring other religions, and Dawid believed that many lukewarm or non-practising Catholics could start investigating them. Dawid highlighted the irony of John Paul II having helped Poland to become a free country, and Catholics there now being able to change religion more easily through encountering less social pressure to remain Catholic. Dawid, himself, had had few problems becoming LDS during John Paul II’s papacy when Catholic sentiment had been stronger in Poland. Bruno believed that non-Catholic religious growth would occur in Poland, but was uncertain whether it would happen quickly or gradually. For him, everybody in Poland lived a “kind of Catholic life” despite not always realising it, but he stressed that “if something burns”, it was Polish nature to “build something completely new”, as there were “many different ways of experiencing and seeing God”. Radek believed that through John Paul II having influenced politics and religion so much, Poles would “start looking for this kind of leadership again” through exploring different religions, as there was no longer a Polish Pope. Some of Marysia’s Catholic friends had a “weakened” faith, realising that “something” was “wrong” with their religion, so they were looking “for a change”, something more meaningful. Marysia stressed that this had “nothing to do with” Benedict XVI being German, but concerned the “previous Pope being Polish” and “loved by the Poles so much”. Thus, some converts above expect non-Catholic growth to occur, but are unsure how and when it will take place.

Finally, a few Polish LDS converts were unconvinced that much non-Catholic growth would occur in post-John Paul II Poland. Alina (LA) believed that “only a few” Poles would stop being Catholic without their Polish Pope. Marek (CTG) felt that any issue concerning John Paul II being followed by non-Polish Popes would have little impact on Poles deciding to practise non-Catholic religions or not. Romuald explained that in Poland, an exodus away from Catholicism towards other religions was unlikely, because, despite few Poles understanding Catholic theology, many valued the Catholic Church for its role in history and being part of Polish “tradition”. These views suggest that many Poles may still support the Catholic Church itself, with their religious practice not being just based on nostalgia for John Paul II. However, while Romuald’s comments may ring true about older Poles, many younger Poles may have materialistic outlooks while possibly paying lip service to Catholicism and expressing little interest towards non-Catholic religions in Poland.

8.3 The EU and PC ideology challenging Catholic culture in Poland

At the Bierhalle bar, Arkadia shopping centre on 4-06-11, Franciszek (LA) criticised the Catholic Church in Poland for trying to control people's lives through airing its views against abortion and contraceptives. In my interview data, many Polish LDS converts discussed issues concerning how the EU and Western politically-correct (PC) ideology may be challenging or threatening Poland's Catholic culture. A few criticised Poland for adopting non-Christian outlooks and practices from the West, especially since it had joined the EU in 2004. In general, Gabriela (LA) was "utterly against" Western, non-Christian morality being imported into Poland. Paweł (LA) explained that the political agendas of homosexuals/lesbians, feminists, and other minority-interest groups were "not normal, not human", with such groups sometimes using EU laws "to take power". Stefan (CTG) stressed that "many things" which Poland had inherited from the West were a tragedy for everybody, and felt sorry for homosexuals/lesbians because they disrespected themselves. He highlighted that God was against same-sex relations in the Bible, and emphasised the LDS belief that people should refrain from sex outside God-sanctioned, male-female marriage. For Stefan, the sexual happiness that homosexuals/lesbians experienced for "one minute or five" violated God's commandments, so they would experience "misery and sorrow" as a result. He believed that despite not everyone being cut out to live a "strict Mormon, male or female" life, people needed to respect their bodies through avoiding homosexuality/lesbianism, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or anything else that lead to "total disaster". Hence, Stefan may be defending an LDS belief that God-sanctioned marriage is "inherently heterosexual", with "human souls" being "eternally sexed" so faithful LDS married couples can continue procreating in the afterlife to attain "godhood" status themselves (Hudson 350-351). He also seems to criticise an assertive/aggressive gay culture which promotes a "distorted lifestyle" as an alternative to heterosexuality (Oko in Cichobłazińska 2013). For Weronika (TTG), Polish society was becoming more materialistic through people following Western "trends". She talked about traditional Polish culture being threatened through "multiplex cinemas" replacing smaller ones, and people doing their shopping at hypermarkets on Sunday "instead of going for a walk" together. Thus, the converts above seem to refer to an emerging pluralist society offering different Western cultural trends as alternatives to mainstream Catholic culture in Poland (Mariański 2006: 84-85). When interviewed, both Paweł and Stefan were over 45, so it is unsurprising that they felt threatened by permissive sexual outlooks which have become more accepted in Polish towns/cities since Poland joined the EU, as they will not have been

conditioned to accept such views. Moreover, the convert views above may point towards the LDS offering a refuge to people who prefer religious order to a quickly changing postmodern/post-Christian world (Givens 2007: 215-217; Keifert 2004: 267-268; Millet 2007: 171-172).

Two Polish LDS converts believed that Western PC ideology was not strong enough to destroy Polish culture. For Dawid (CTG), it was difficult for Polish culture to be destroyed because Poles and Western Europeans spoke “different languages”. He explained that in pre-EU Poland, Poles had learnt about different cultures from the world without creating problems for Polish culture. Barbara (LA) highlighted that while big Polish cities were becoming “cosmopolitan”, few foreigners lived in the countryside or small towns, so any challenge to traditional Polish culture was “not necessary” in these places. A few converts seemed to believe that it was an inevitable process of modern history for Poland to start adopting Western PC ideology. Dagmara (TTG) felt that Polish culture would change if PC procedures continued to enter Poland. Alicja (CTG) explained that all cultures change “little by little” over time, and that Poland had always been influenced by different countries depending on “which union” it was in. For Michał (CTG), Poland needed a “close relationship” with the USA because of its help during the 2nd World War, and had to be in the EU, without forgetting the USA, to strengthen its national security. Paweł (LA) valued the idea of politicians building a “European state” along the same lines as the USA, and viewed the EU as a union of Greco-Roman, Christian civilisation “in opposition” to external threats such as China and Islam. However, he lamented that despite many EU politicians sharing this purpose, many minority-interest groups were blurring “this situation”. Paweł’s last point may support the idea that aggressive/assertive minority groups compete for power and influence in modern-day European societies (Oko in Cichobłazińska 2013).

A few Polish LDS converts, all in their 20s, seemed to support the prospect of Poland moving away from a Catholic mono-cultural identity towards a more multicultural outlook. For Jola (TTG), most Poles accepted a false view that the Catholic Church was a big “part of Polish tradition”. She described how her mother’s family had been non-Catholic, but had always participated in Polish traditions like painting Easter eggs, and believed that her mother had only become Catholic to get married. This suggests that Jola’s mother may have been Eastern Orthodox (or Eastern rite Catholic) before becoming (Western rite) Catholic, as both Catholics and Orthodox have Easter egg painting traditions in Central/Eastern Europe. Jola believed that Catholicism had been enforced onto Poles from outside Polish culture, and that the EU could help Poles realise that there were more options in life than “talking about only

one thing”. Moreover, she described Poland being caught in a conflict between being a “Catholic country” and the EU promoting laws supporting permissive abortion, homosexuality/lesbianism etc. She regretted that most Poles were “not interested” in moving away from a Catholic mono-cultural identity, and hoped that the Polish government would incorporate some EU laws/policies into “its own system”, but without adopting an extreme PC agenda. Jola’s views here seem to point towards modern-day Poland being caught between Catholic religious practice being handed down as a feature of traditional society, and increasing “modernity and post-modernity” bringing about a loosening of social bonds and growth of cultural/religious diversity (Borowik 2017: 200-202). Regarding this, Radek (CTG) believed that younger Poles were no longer holding onto “tradition in general” and were ready to change their lives. For Marek (CTG), it was healthy and natural for Polish culture to seek greater diversity to compensate for “being deprived” of a previous, “fairly multicultural” identity. He explained that in the early 1930s, Poland had contained sizeable ethnic minority populations: Armenians; Belarusians; Germans; Jews; Russians; Tatars; and Ukrainians, but this had dramatically ended when Poland was re-established as the most “mono-ethnic, mono-religious” country in Europe after the 2nd World War. Marek stressed that pre-2nd World War Poland had not been “multicultural” in a contemporary, Western PC fashion, where minority interests dominate political issues, but had involved Polish and non-Polish cultures co-existing rather than “influencing one another very strongly”. He pointed towards modern-day Western European countries having bigger and smaller multicultural societies, as the Western world was changing with its people having no control over this. For Marek, non-Western immigrants had first been used to help Western European countries strengthen their “domestic labour” and “economic needs”, but this had created problems through the immigrants sticking to their own cultures. He also believed that it was “just wrong” to expect immigrants to disappear after they had helped to make a country richer, and that mainstream citizens had a duty “to learn how to live with” the immigrants’ different cultures. The convert comments above seem to support Obirek’s (in Harrison 2009) points about it being healthy for Poland to regain a multicultural design, and many younger Poles being interested in imminent socio-political issues, and Mariański’s (2006: 83-85) view of an emerging pluralist, secularised society eroding institutionalised religion, which makes religious practice more privatised and gives Poles more ideological/religious options to choose from. Against such a changing socio-political background, the LDS may represent a “non-European orthodox” Church, with its traditional moral fundamentalism not sitting comfortably with increasing secularisation in Poland (van Beek 2005: 32).

Finally, a few Polish LDS converts doubted that Poles would accept PC ideology. Alina (LA) discussed a conflict between some Poles trying to import PC ideology into Poland and others fighting against this, as some minority groups fought “for their rights” while “some fascists” hated this. For Lech (CTG), Poland had a historical connection with the Catholic Church, because many Catholics had fought for Polish people’s freedom and dignity during the 2nd World War and following communist period, so many older Poles viewed the Catholic Church and Poland as being synonymous. Despite this, he believed that Poland’s Catholic identity would become much weaker over the next 20 years, as older people who attended Mass started dying out. Lech explained that many younger Poles were indifferent to Catholic religiosity because they had a “too critical” outlook on life, lacked good Catholic “role models”, and could see hypocrisy in the Catholic Church. Thus, Lech seems to support Zielińska’s (2006: 210) view of traditional religions in Eastern Europe still being valued as well-established institutions that strengthen a country’s communal life and national identity, and Borowik’s (2006: 320-321) point about younger Poles criticising the Catholic Church for containing hypocritical, materialistic, politically-minded priests. Stefan (CTG) pointed towards younger Poles deserting Catholicism, which was gradually disappearing from Poland, because their parents did not practise it well and Poles were getting better paid work and had access to more information about the world. He also believed that other Christian Churches like the Baptists were more committed to practising their faith (e.g. following the Ten Commandments), as smaller religious groups were generally more faithful to their teachings than bigger ones. Despite this, Lech pointed towards the LDS losing members too. Again, the views above suggest that modern-day Poland is caught between Catholic religious practice being passed down as a feature of traditional society, and increasing “modernity and post-modernity” loosening social bonds and encouraging the growth of cultural/religious diversity (Borowik 2017: 200-202).

8.4 LDS approaches to working in Poland

After a Wierzbno Priesthood meeting on 14-02-10, Sister Engbjerg told me that the Polish LDS were unique due to the directness of Polish culture, with the LDS Church not being the same anywhere else in the world. This comment may support van Beek’s (2005: 18-20) points about international LDS outposts being “different from” the American “core region”; “ideals of self-sufficiency and autonomy” being felt strongly in non-American LDS communities; and European LDS being drawn towards the “values and norms of their society before those of the LDS Church”. With all this in mind, my PO work allowed me to assess how the Poland

LDS Mission approached the task of working in Poland. First, I saw American/foreign LDS Mission leaders being complimentary/deferential about Polish history and culture. During an All-Poland LDS Conference at Wolska on 4-09-08, Sister Engbjerg revealed that she had started having Polish lessons and had travelled all round Poland. After this, President Engbjerg discussed his joy at being able to preach to and express his love for the Polish LDS again after having a medical operation in Frankfurt, done by a doctor who was the Heidelberg Stake President in Germany. He joked that he and his wife were proud to be in Poland as Poles who did not speak Polish. At a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 21-03-10, Sister Engbjerg praised the Polish LDS for coming from circumstances not easy to deal with, and called for them to support each other. She also spoke about a video where the Fusseks talked about their LDS service in Poland in the 1980s and Poles having loving hearts. After this, President Engbjerg joked that his love of Polish food was a sign of him loving Poland.

During the Elder Christofferson (Quorum of the Twelve) Conference at the Radisson Hotel on 4-03-12, Sister Nielson spoke about how her and her husband had felt the strength of Polish LDS testimonies while visiting LDS branches around Poland many times. Elder Christofferson then joked that the Nielsons' love for the Polish LDS meant that they no longer cared for Las Vegas. Moreover, he emphasised how he was looking forward to reporting back on his Poland trip to President Monson at a First Presidency/Quorum of the Twelve meeting which took place inside Salt Lake City Temple every Thursday morning. During a Warsaw District Conference on 27-03-13, Sister Nielson stressed that she knew almost everybody present by name, and promised that she would never forget the good example she had learnt from the Polish LDS. After this, President Nielson spoke about God having a plan for Poland, and referred to Mehr (2002) while describing how the LDS Church was set up there. In particular, he mentioned President Kimball's dedicatory prayer at Ogród Saski Park in 1977; the Fusseks being in Warsaw between 1985 and 1990 rather than their scheduled two years; President Monson being involved in commission trips to Poland in the 1980s which helped the LDS to become established there; the 1989 Freedom of Religion bill allowing the LDS to start proselytising and expanding; and the Wolska chapel being built in 1990. Moreover, he revealed that in 1985, LDS Church leaders had prophesied that Poland would get a temple like the newly-opened Freiberg Temple in East Germany back then. At the Nielsons' leaving fireside on 22-06-13 at Wolska, Sister Nielson emphasised how much she had enjoyed staying in Poland, and President Nielson talked about how much he had learned from Polish people and how many people he knew in the congregation. Throughout his speech, President Nielson

kept looking at Stefan's (CTG) brother-in-law who was a friend of the Nielsons and now a leader at Wolska.

I saw other older LDS missionaries being habitually deferential and respectful towards Polish culture and history. At a Wolska Sunday Sacrament meeting on 24-04-11, an older Australian missionary spoke about it being her last Sunday in Poland, with her being happy to go home but sad to leave Poland. She stressed how she had enjoyed working with a YSA Institute group, and how her mission had made her apply LDS scripture to real life. Her husband, also Australian, talked about knowing Poland well through having driven 60,000 miles around the country, and now being able to share the LDS gospel with a Polish understanding of it. At a Wolska Sunday Sacrament meeting on 27-01-13, Elder Jensen who was returning to the USA with his wife in mid-February, spoke about how much they had enjoyed working with the Warsaw YSA since January 2012, and how much they had learned from the "great leading example" of the Polish LDS. His wife then read a speech out in Polish emphasising how much she loved the Polish people, and a recent male convert (former LTI) started cheering. Thus, all the Mission leaders and older missionaries above may have been generating intercultural respect to deflate van Beek's (2005: 15) notion of international LDS being expected to uncritically adopt the American LDS colonizer's "culture, view of the colony as an area to be developed", and economic and "knowledge" superiority.

American/foreign LDS had to be especially culturally sensitive in the aftermath of the 10-04-10 Smolensk air disaster where many Polish politicians and dignitaries lost their lives. During a Wierzbno Sunday Sacrament meeting on 18-04-10, a Polish male CTG (non-interviewee) read out a condolence message sent by President Engbjerg to the acting Polish President Komorowski and Catholic, Lutheran, and Orthodox Church leaders in Poland who all lost representatives in the disaster, and an American male ex-missionary gave a similar message on behalf of all former and present LDS missionaries in Poland. During a Testimony Sunday Sacrament meeting at Wolska on 2-05-10, President Engbjerg talked about a recent trip to Kraków with non-LDS friends and seeing a poster about the Katyn 2nd World War massacre where thousands of innocent Poles were murdered by "evil men" when Poland had just wanted to be a peaceful country. For me, such speeches had positive diplomatic purpose because many Poles value hearing about how Polish people endured great suffering during the 2nd World War.

Inside the Warsaw LDS field, many American/foreign YMs spoke Polish, but older missionaries rarely did so. However, during a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 18-

07-10, Sister Nielson spoke in Polish about enjoying her first two weeks in Poland, and finished off with the short, rhetorical-type testimony below:

“Moje świadectwo, Prezydent Monson jest prorokiem ...” (My testimony, President Monson is a prophet ...”).

President Nielson then gave a similar testimony in Polish. However, over the next three years, I hardly heard the Nielsons speak Polish again so their Polish at the District Conference above may have been an early attempt to gain the acceptance of the Polish LDS. Through many older missionaries rarely or never speaking Polish, this language/communication barrier may have reinforced van Beek’s (2005: 15) notion of international LDS viewing American/foreign LDS as colonizers. In contrast, at a Warsaw District Conference on 10-10-10, I saw two YMMs introducing themselves in fluent Polish on stage. One spoke about being brought up speaking Polish by his parents in Chicago (USA) and his LDS conversion being prompted by reading the BOM. The other was Polish, from Gdansk, and he criticised the Catholic Church for offering tradition rather than religious truth. Both speeches drew sighs of appreciation from the Polish congregation who valued native Polish-speaking missionaries entering the Warsaw/Poland LDS field. Much of the PO observation work above points towards religious representatives attempting to convert others while expressing “sensitivity” towards “local cultural traditions” (Kong and Nair 2014: 73). Moreover, the native Polish-speaker missionaries above may have been employed to counteract van Beek’s (2005: 15) notion of American/foreign missionaries being viewed as colonisers by LDS in non-American settings.

Second, I attended some LDS events where the LDS were barely distinguishable from mainstream Christians. At a Wolska *Wigilia* (Christmas) meal on 16-12-11, I saw small groups of YMs singing traditional Christmas carols (e.g. *Silent Night*) in Polish with a Polish female convert who had served a mission in Russia leading the proceedings. Most members/missionaries were sat eating food at long tables, and during the singing, an old man in a grey suit and dark tie, started weeping to which Stefan (CTG) smiled approvingly. For me, this showed that Christmas celebrations inside LDS chapels may be valued by Polish LDS converts from Catholic or other mainstream Christian backgrounds, and that on appropriate occasion, the LDS can make themselves look like mainstream Christians for diplomatic purpose (Decoo 2015: 554; Bainbridge 1992; Rigal-Cellard 2018: location 3801).

Third, I occasionally heard American/foreign LDS criticising mainstream Christianity, especially the Catholic Church. During a *Mormons and Jews in the Latter-days* presentation

at Wolska on 9-10-09, the visiting American speaker, Mark Paredes, a convert from Judaism, spoke about mainstream Christianity having an anti-Jewish historical record, with the early 4th century Council of Nicaea being the “origins of Christian” and “state-sponsored anti-Semitism in Europe”, as the Nicene bishops had viewed Jews as being “odious, blind, and detestable”. Paredes emphasised that unlike mainstream Christian Churches, the LDS had never needed to apologise for committing “atrocities against Jews”. Of course, such strong views can be contested, with Whitehead (2000: 76-77) offering a contrasting picture of bishops with serious physical disablement caused by persecution/punishment from non-Christians attending the Council of Nicaea. During a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 21-03-10, a middle-aged Englishman, an LDS theological authority under President Engbjerg, stressed that in contrast to the LDS who had unpaid clergy, the Catholic Church passed a plate round for money. Then, at a Wolska Sunday Sacrament meeting on 17-10-10, he acknowledged that the Catholic and Methodist Churches had beautiful buildings, but unlike the LDS, never had “the Spirit”. Some foreign, visiting LDS speakers were more complimentary towards Catholicism/mainstream Christianity. At a Wolska fireside meeting on 6-03-10, the Danish LDS opera singer, Tomas Kofod, spoke about the Catholic bishop in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* showing mercy rather than seeking justice, with this episode prompting Hugo’s hero to change his life for the better. This seems to show a modern-day LDS acknowledging how another faith may offer something positive (Givens, F., Givens/Givens on FairMormon 2014). Besides this, Kofod emphasised that Hugo’s parable could be viewed as a metaphor for the LDS testimony experience.

Fourth, I saw some foreign, visiting LDS speakers discussing how higher LDS growth could be attained in Catholic countries. At a Wierzbno Sunday Sacrament meeting on 6-07-08, a Korean LDS man spoke about living in Brazil and Chile where he had seen the LDS competing with Catholicism for members, which he hoped would happen in Poland. During a Warsaw District Conference on 21-03-10, Elder López, a Spanish LDS convert, talked about his Catholic past when he had learned about the Ten Commandments, but had lacked the method to put them into practice. Through choosing to leave the Catholic Church behind in Spain, he had lost a sense of culture and family/friends, and had been viewed as “somebody strange in a strange Church”. However, by joining the LDS, Elder López had found a new world of friends and a loving God, with his obedience to the Ten Commandments now being born from love, not from a fear of himself and deceased family members going to and “burning in hell”. In response, some Polish LDS converts started laughing. After this, Elder López emphasised that the LDS try to refrain from sin through loving rather than fearing God,

despite it still being difficult for him to stop fearing God. For me, the last point suggests that it may be almost impossible for converts to fully leave a previous religious identity behind.

After his speech, a hum of excitement went round the congregation. Elder López returned to Wolska for another Warsaw District Conference on 17-03-13 where he stressed that as a First Seventy member in Europe, he had only visited one city, Warsaw, twice. This time, he recalled how despite being atheists, his father and grandfather had sent him to a Catholic school because it was cheaper, where he had learnt about a “mysterious God” who was “incomprehensible” but feared. Besides this, he described Francisco Franco’s (1892-1975) Spain as a place where the environment had restricted the individual’s choices, but at the age of 20, he had found the “God of mercy” that he had been looking for with the LDS. Moreover, Elder López emphasised that he could see a “fine youth” providing the LDS with something to build upon in Poland. During an All-Poland Conference at the Marriott Hotel, Warsaw on 15-06-14, Dieter Uchtdorf (First Presidency counselor) revealed that before arriving in Warsaw, he had visited the Vatican and Rome. He acknowledged that it was difficult to become LDS in Catholic countries like Poland, but highlighted that an LDS temple was being built in Rome, the centre of Catholicism. After this, Elder Teixeira, a prominent European LDS figure accompanying President Uchtdorf, stressed that like Poland today, his native Portugal had once only had branches, but now it had stakes with a strong membership which he believed was possible in Poland too.

Finally, I saw some action inside the Warsaw LDS field which may have embarrassed Polish people. At a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 21-03-10, recent converts were given white carnations to wear, with President Engbjerg explaining that this was so established members could recognise and befriend the converts to help them keep their testimonies. While wearing such a badge of identity, some converts looked embarrassed, possibly feeling patronised or stigmatised. During a Warsaw District Conference at Wolska on 17-03-13, President Nielson instructed recent converts from the past year, who were wearing white carnations, to stand up so established members could notice them. Another cultural blunder occurred at a Wierzbno Sunday Sacrament meeting on 18-04-10, shortly after the Smolensk air disaster. While the Sunday School and Priesthood/Relief Society meetings had been cancelled as a sign of respect, the British man who was a theological authority under President Engbjerg spoke about all the Smolensk deceased having failed to join the LDS while “on probation” on Earth. He explained that while good practising LDS are taken to paradise, less deserving people are taken to spirit prison for another opportunity to learn the LDS gospel. Of course, such comments reflect LDS doctrine, but at this highly sensitive time,

they seemed imprudent. Inside the Warsaw LDS field, I never saw the British man above speak Polish. At a Wolska Priesthood meeting on 24-01-10, he said a short, concluding prayer in English which drew a “Po polsku!” (“Polish language!”) retort from Bruno (CTG). The PO accounts above may show that American/Western LDS may sometimes fail to respect Polish culture through possibly having a “sense of superiority” (Decoo 2015: 552). They may also support van Beek’s (2005: 15) point about international LDS being expected to uncritically adopt the American LDS colonizer’s “culture, view of the colony as an area to be developed”, and economic and “knowledge” superiority.

In summary, an individual’s dissatisfaction with or alienation from the wider Polish social world may prompt a search for alternative identity and openness to LDS involvement. Globalisation in big Polish towns/cities may provide many ideological and religious alternatives to mainstream Catholic outlooks. Some (especially younger) Poles may try out such options through sensing that they can enhance their personal development. Resistance to the Catholic and secular worlds in Poland may prompt or arise from LDS involvement, with recruits/converts feeling more accepted by the LDS than the wider social world. The LDS may limit or optimise criticism of Catholicism to not offend recruits or converts who do not view ongoing or past Catholic religious experience negatively. Polish converts may submit to LDS authority and control as their rewards/benefits accrue and faith develops, becoming immune to the wider Polish social world if they gain and maintain CTG status. Regarding Girard’s mimetic theory, a lack of empathy for or rejection of the surrounding Catholic and secular worlds in Poland may push rivals to compete for higher LDS career development and the rewards/benefits that this offers (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-9).

9. The Heart of Polish LDS Conversion

In this chapter, I re-examine my interview data to compare and contrast different Polish LDS convert and LTI group views on the most discussed topics/themes concerning my main research issues. This allows me to see the heart of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion after the general analysis of chapters 4-8.

9.1 First contact pathways

LDS recruitment often starts through individuals encountering LDS missionaries/members. Some CTG interviewees were introduced to missionaries by LDS siblings and friends or non-LDS friends, another met them at LDS English lessons, and others encountered them on the street. Another insisted on looking at LDS scripture/teachings away from missionary/member influence which shows that some recruits may push themselves towards becoming LDS through evaluating LDS religiosity on their own. One TTG encountered LDS missionaries through playing volleyball with them in Szczecin, while others did so through answering a knock on the door in the UK, attending LDS English lessons in Warsaw, and being led to them as a child by a parent. From the LAs, one was introduced to the LDS by an LDS friend and another through a non-LDS friend, while two met them at their English lessons, and a few were recruited by missionaries on the street. Regarding the latter, one had been privately interested in the LDS for many years beforehand, and another had briefly met missionaries years ago before looking at LDS scripture on his own for many years, which highlights that not all LDS recruitment is developed through social interaction. Most LTI interviewees first encountered LDS missionaries on the street, while another was directed towards the LDS by his non-LDS father. None were pushed towards missionaries by LDS friends/ relatives, which may have decreased the likelihood of them becoming LDS through less pressure/expectation being placed on them. Moreover, recruits who first encounter the LDS through attending their English lessons may become LDS through seeing the benefits the LDS can offer.

9.2 Interaction and religious training

Some CTG interviewees talked about overcoming disinterest in the LDS, enjoying LDS social/sporting activities, and having conflicts with non-LDS family members. Two others discussed how they had avoided conflict with non-LDS family, and two downplayed the interactive side of their LDS recruitment. Despite the latter, most of the CTGs seem to have

had special relationships with (mainly young) LDS missionaries. From the TTGs, two spoke about having special relationships with YMs, all were impressed with LDS warmth/friendliness, and most believed they had become better people with the LDS. Two had initially been suspicious of the LDS, although one of these highlighted how the YSA had influenced his recruitment and the other how it had helped her LDS integration after baptism. These two also valued the American cultural features of the LDS at Wierzbno/Raławicka, with one revealing that while not caring much about LDS religiosity during recruitment, he had seen the possibility to gain huge benefits through building friendships with American LDS. From the LAs, most recalled having special relationships and baptism lessons with (mainly young) missionaries; a few spoke about being drawn to LDS warmth/friendliness; two talked about becoming better people with the LDS; and two had lead their children towards becoming LDS. Thus, for all three Polish LDS convert types, encountering LDS warmth/friendliness and having special relationships with (mainly young) missionaries were significant recruitment issues.

Over half the LTI interviewees spoke about having special relationships with LDS missionaries, one discussed having English lessons with them, and two valued LDS warmth/friendship. One had a calendar of Warsaw LDS social events which listed regular activities (e.g. YSA meetings), and attended German and English lessons at Wierzbno/Raławicka and Saturday sports events with the LDS. He explained that young recruits/converts could seek friends and educational, employment, and marital opportunities at LDS social events. Another LTI was attracted to LDS American cultural features, but two others pointed towards the LDS struggling to adapt to Polish culture. Moreover, the LTIs criticised LDS missionaries for trying to control their behaviour, time, and beliefs; seeking simple-minded recruits; serving missions as a tradition/holiday; not tolerating opposing views; only becoming friends to prompt baptisms; giving misleading information; and cold-shouldering LTIs. Two spoke about avoiding missionaries to stop being controlled by them, and one discussed an elite group of Polish LDS who gave testimonies at Sunday Sacrament meetings and encouraged lukewarm members to become active in their faith. Thus, the LTIs provided more negative views of LDS interaction than the three convert groups, which helps to explain why they have not joined the LDS.

Regarding LDS religious training, many CTGs recalled being attracted to the WOW. Some had had to adapt their lifestyles to follow WOW rules/regulations, while others had already been leading healthy lives. Similarly, all the TTGs and over half the LAs had been drawn to the WOW. However, one LA regularly broke the WOW through drinking alcohol,

and one LTI spoke about not accepting all WOW rules, especially one that prohibited drinking tea/coffee as it never threatened his health, and over half the LTIs drank beer with me after their interviews. Thus, while the CTGs/TTGs and some LAs practise and value the WOW, most LTIs may view it as unnecessary control of human behaviour.

Over half the CTGs discussed how LDS scripture had influenced their recruitment/conversion. A few recalled having sometimes dramatic, pre-baptismal testimonies about the BOM, with two pointing towards how the BOM and Bible had lead them towards LDS baptism. This suggests that reading the BOM and sometimes the Bible may prompt LDS recruitment/conversion, with some recruits valuing the BOM as new scripture. In contrast, a few CTGs spoke about having post-baptismal testimonies about the D&C which strengthened their belief in the BOM and LDS faith. This highlights that some Polish LDS converts may not fully accept the BOM as scripture until after LDS baptism. Two TTGs talked about valuing LDS scripture, especially the BOM. Another had had a testimony about the BOM before baptism, but had been more impressed by the D&C after baptism when she had started understanding LDS religiosity more clearly. From the LAs, two had positive impressions of the BOM, while one had not read enough of it to offer any real opinion. Moreover, one only accepted LDS scripture as allegorical truth, while another treated the D&C as serious scripture but disliked the BOM and ridiculed the POGP as being contrived. Hence, while CTGs/TTGs value the roles that the BOM and D&C have played in their recruitment/conversion, the LAs value, criticise, or offer little opinion about the BOM and other LDS scripture. In contrast, the LTIs only viewed the BOM as allegorical truth at best. One talked about encountering all four books of LDS scripture at Institute meetings, while another was only aware of the BOM which suggests that some LTIs may encounter and recognise much LDS scripture, while others may only encounter or recognise the BOM. Thus, while the LAs may not become familiar with much LDS scripture and may sometimes view it as allegorical truth, and the LTIs view it as the latter, CTGs/TTGs tend to accept the BOM as authentic scripture before or after baptism and the D&C after baptism.

For some CTGs, having a testimony mainly meant valuing their ongoing LDS faith development, with quite a few discussing how they had started accepting unique LDS teachings after LDS baptism. Two had epiphany-type experiences about the BOM being authentic scripture before LDS baptism, and another about Joseph Smith being a modern-day prophet/scripture writer after baptism. For over half the TTGs, testimonies were related to ongoing LDS faith development, and two of these had epiphany-type experiences before baptism (one about the BOM being authentic scripture, the other about the beauty of God's

creation). From the LAs, one spoke about having ongoing LDS faith development testimonies after baptism, and another about receiving a non-dramatic pre-baptismal testimony. Moreover, over half the LTIs talked about having uplifting experiences with the LDS, which may suggest that they are more careful/sceptical about viewing uplifting experiences as LDS testimonies.

Finally, a few CTGs spoke about having been surprised by unique LDS religious teachings at first. One TTG had been surprised by such teachings during recruitment, while another saw no difference between the LDS Godhead and mainstream Christian Trinity teachings. A few LAs critiqued unique LDS teachings, especially the idea of Joseph Smith being a latter-day prophet, as they had read non-LDS and anti-LDS literature. The LTIs rejected some unique LDS teachings. One was confused by the LDS Sunday Sacrament rite and the LDS Church's lack of Christian symbolism, and two disliked the LDS forcing recruits from mainstream Christian backgrounds to be baptised LDS. Two pointed towards many recruits/converts valuing LDS morality and communal integration over LDS religiosity. Thus, while CTGs/TTGs may overcome some initial surprise about unique LDS teachings, LAs may doubt and critique them, and LTIs reject them.

9.3 Pre-LDS background

Most of my CTG interviewees became LDS in their 20s, a few in their teens, and a few in their 30s, while most of the TTG interviewees were recruited in their teens, another in childhood, and another in her early 30s. This suggests that younger converts may become CTGs/TTGs through having little life experience to block them from gaining fuller LDS outlooks. Only two of my LA interviewees were recruited in their early 20s, while two others became LDS in their late 30s/early 40s, and over half in their late 40s/mid-50s. This may imply that the longer life experience of older recruits may block them from becoming committed LDS. Only one of my LTIs encountered the LDS young, in his early 20s, and all my LTIs were male which may suggest that some older male recruits are inclined to become captivated by the LDS without joining them.

Regarding geographical mobility, most of my CTGs were recruited in Warsaw, a few in Łódź, one in Kraków, and another in Los Angeles, and most TTGs were recruited in Warsaw, one in Szczecin, and another in Basingstoke (UK) before Warsaw. This highlights that a few CTGs/TTGs were recruited away from Warsaw and even abroad, and then lived in Warsaw amongst the highest number of LDS in Poland. In contrast, all my LAs and LTIs were recruited in Warsaw which may suggest that they are less geographically mobile people more

tied to wider Polish society, which may make it difficult for them to become LDS or CTGs. Besides this, one female CTG interviewee met her American LDS husband in Poland and went living with him and their children in the USA, and three TTG interviewees got married to and lived with LDS spouses in the USA. This suggests that young TTGs may look to migrate to the USA as a reward for their LDS commitment, and may help explain why young Polish CTG numbers are low in Warsaw/Poland.

Concerning previous religious background, most of my Polish CTGs had been practising Catholics, with some having sought a better way of worshipping God, and a few having felt the need to study the Bible privately. This suggests that having previous Catholic religious experience and desiring to find more fulfilling religiosity may help motivate Polish LDS converts to become CTGs. In contrast, most of my TTGs had been mild or non-practising Catholics without much or any religious experience before encountering the LDS. This may highlight that Polish temple-goers are now starting to come from secular or mild/non-practising Catholic backgrounds. Moreover, while the TTGs may be developing temple-going careers to gain LDS life adventures in the USA, the CTGs may have exchanged one form of religious practice for another in Poland. An LDS life adventure in the USA reward may not have been available to the CTGs, as they became LDS in Warsaw/Poland some or many years ago when an American-Polish LDS communication/travel network was less established. In contrast, over half my LAs had been religious-seekers in their pre-LDS days which may have blocked them from becoming CTGs. Finally, over half my LTIs were practising Catholics, another a religious experimentalist, and another a benefit-seeker, with all these orientations possibly blocking them from becoming LDS.

Most of my Polish LDS converts discussed different aspects of undertaking pre-LDS religious searches. While a few CTGs talked about being interested in religion from an early age, for a few LAs, this had started during adulthood. This may imply that those who have been interested in religion from an early age are more likely to become CTGs, as religious practice may be more engrained in them. A few ex-Catholic CTGs, two ex-Catholic LAs, and two (one Catholic) LTIs talked about how they had needed to attain greater knowledge of the Bible. This may point towards some Catholics in Poland feeling spiritually impoverished through not studying the Bible privately. A few CTGs spoke about having sought religious truth inside the Catholic Church or more religious commitment than what the Catholic Church could offer. In contrast, two LTIs appeared to be satisfied with their Catholic religious experience. Thus, receiving insufficient fulfilment from being Catholic may prompt some

recruits to search for religious meaning elsewhere (e.g. with the LDS), while for other recruits, LDS religiosity may be less satisfying than Catholic religiosity.

Just over half my LAs, a few CTGs, one TTG, and one LTI talked about exploring non-Catholic churches, Christian-derived NRMs, or non-Christian religions before encountering the LDS. A few LAs, one CTG, and one LTI discussed how they had encountered non-Catholic churches or Christian-derived NRMs. Most of these had been involved with the Jehovah's Witnesses (świadkowie Jehowy), the third biggest Church denomination in Poland with approaching 120,000 members (<http://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/worldwide/PL/> accessed 11-09-19). In contrast, a few LAs and one CTG had encountered Buddhism, one CTG and one LA had explored Islam, and one CTG and one TTG had looked at Judaism. I found all this unsurprising as the Buddhist and LDS religions share a strong onus on self-development, while some religious-seekers may investigate Islam and Judaism through being interested in monotheistic religions. However, I was surprised that one LA had been involved with Anton LaVey's Church of Satan and another with the Rosicrucian religion, as I had not expected such marginal religions to feature in a Polish religious marketplace. This may suggest that some Polish LAs seek exotic-type religions, possibly viewing the LDS as such.

My Polish LDS converts who talked about investigating other religions before the LDS may have a religious-seeking instinct which may influence Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. During the latter, many of the converts have been affected by LDS religious training and social interaction, with background/personality issues concerning deprivation, benefit seeking, and religious seeking lurking beneath the surface. The LAs seem to have been involved in more pre-LDS religious seeking than the CTGs which may suggest that they have not become CTGs through retaining an appetite for religious experimentation. Only one TTG spoke about pre-LDS religious seeking which may imply that less religious experimentation may help recruits to become LDS and CTGs.

Regarding deprivation, two of my CTGs and two TTGs had been brought up by (female) single parents, and another CTG by his grandmother and sisters, which may have prompted these converts to value a family-type atmosphere offered by the Warsaw LDS and to strive towards becoming CTGs. From my LAs, one had separated parents, another was divorced, and another enjoyed drinking alcohol. In marital status, the LAs seemed to be more deprived than CTGs/TTGs, as, at the time of their interviews, only one LA was temple married to an LDS husband with two children, and this couple became inactive when they had a third child. From the male LAs, one was single; another a single parent with two teenage daughters; one was married to and had a daughter with a Catholic wife; and another had a non-LDS

girlfriend. From the female LAs, one was married to and had children with a previously heavy drinking, non-LDS husband; another was divorced from and had adult children with a periodically heavy drinking husband who became LDS; one had a heavy drinking, non-LDS boyfriend; and another was about to get married to a CTG. However, the latter marriage ended in divorce a few years afterwards. Thus, most of the LAs were not married to LDS spouses, and the female ones sometimes (had) had non-LDS husbands or boyfriends with alcohol problems. This suggests that some LAs have problematic ties to the wider Polish world which may block them from becoming CTGs.

For the LDS, having a temple marriage and successful family life is imperative because eternal marriage is associated with godhood development. At the time of the interviews, from my 13 CTGs, only two couples were temple married with children. However, I saw six other CTGs (four males and two females) go on to marry LDS spouses, with most having children and creating eternal families, although one male ended up getting divorced from his recent convert wife. Besides this, a male CTG had been divorced from an inactive LDS woman, with whom he had two children, for a long time; another had a child from an unmarried relationship with a non-LDS woman; and another was almost middle-aged and still single despite being LDS for many years. Thus, while many of my CTGs came to live temple-married lives, others did not, which suggests that there are two Polish CTG types: temple-goers with eternal marriage and others without. Despite all my TTGs being single at the time of their interviews, I saw three go on to receive temple marriage with LDS spouses in the USA. Furthermore, one female TTG got married to a possibly non-LDS Dutch man in Holland, and another one got engaged in Britain. Again, all this points towards young TTGs looking to move away from Poland, especially through targeting temple marriage in the USA.

All my LTIs were single males and mainly middle-aged, with one being divorced, which may imply that they were exploring the Warsaw LDS field for female partners. However, it would be difficult for them to court female CTGs/TTGs who usually seek CTG husbands, or single female LAs who only periodically enter the Warsaw LDS branches. For me, the Warsaw LDS field is a pyramidal, hierarchical system where people are valued according to their compliance with LDS religious/social values: CTGs being at the top, followed by TTGs, LAs, short-term recruits, and LTIs at the bottom. In this system, recruits/converts need to become CTGs to attain higher rewards, e.g. increase the likelihood of being considered for eternal marriage.

Finally, occupational status may help push recruits towards becoming different Polish LDS convert types or LTIs. At the time of their interviews, most of my CTGs had (semi-)

professional jobs which may suggest that some developed their occupational and CTG careers simultaneously. Hence, having an instinct for career-building and seeking social success may help Polish LDS converts to become CTGs. By comparison, two TTGs were striving towards professional careers; two were students; and one had a non-professional job. In time, I saw the two who were striving towards professional careers and one student attain temple marriage with LDS spouses in the USA, which may suggest that a simultaneous seeking of educational/professional development and higher LDS religious career may increase the likelihood of young Polish TTGs gaining temple marriage in the USA. From my LAs, well over half had (semi-) professional occupations, while two were unemployed. This may suggest that older Polish converts from (semi-) professional backgrounds may not become CTGs through sensing that the rewards that accompany such status are not worth the sacrifice involved, and that while LDS chapel religiosity is believable, LDS temple religiosity is less so. Besides this, being unemployed may result in stunted self-confidence which may block LDS career development. All my LTIs were from (semi-) professional backgrounds, with two being unemployed at the time of their interviews. This may suggest that having (semi-) professional backgrounds may prompt some recruits to assess LDS religiosity/interaction long-term without becoming LDS. When unemployed, some recruits may guard against becoming LDS through sensing that it may be a compensatory move for being without work.

9.4 The Polish socio-political world

A few CTGs talked about some non-Catholic Christian Churches having been already around in communist Poland, while a few CTGs and LAs and two TTGs spoke about post-communist Poland having greater religious freedom, as Poles had greater access to information and more religions to choose from. However, most CTGs/TTGs and a few LAs believed that in post-communist Poland, some kind of psychological and social pressure pushed people towards remaining or becoming Catholic, which made it difficult to explore non-Catholic religions. Moreover, two CTGs, two TTGs, and one LTI spoke about religious freedom in Poland becoming meaningless through many younger Poles becoming materialistic and irreligious. All this highlights that while Poles now have more religious options to choose from and greater access to religious information, they may be blocked from non-Catholic religious exploration through adopting materialistic lifestyles or feeling pressured to be Catholic by a surrounding Catholic society. In contrast, one LTI talked about feeling pressured to remain Catholic, while another had always resisted any pressure to be a Catholic, LDS, or any other kind of religious adherent. Moreover, two were comfortable

being Catholic, while the one non-Catholic LTI never mentioned anything about feeling pressured to become Catholic. Thus, some LTIs seem to be less critical about Polish national identity being associated with Catholicism, and less intimidated by the wider Catholic world in Poland. Some Polish LDS possibly feared such issues through being LDS for many years, with LDS members periodically criticising the Catholic Church.

Regarding the post-John Paul II era, almost half the CTGs/TTGs believed that more Catholics would explore alternative religious options, while two CTGs believed that most Poles would remain Catholic as a tribute to John Paul II. This may suggest that through the CTGs having invested so much time/effort into joining and internalising a non-Catholic religion, and the TTGs moving towards doing so, they may believe that others can do the same. However, through most Polish converts being LAs, many may not have the desire and commitment to go through the sacrifice/stress that non-Catholic religious change may involve in Poland.

Finally, a few CTGs talked about Poland becoming more open to cultural change, while two pointed towards there still being a big cultural connection between Poland and the Catholic Church, and another was convinced that traditional Polish culture was strong enough to defend itself against PC and other external ideological challenges/threats. However, another believed that Western PC trends, especially homosexuality/lesbianism, were destroying Poland's traditional morality/culture. Over half the TTGs pointed towards there being a conflict between Catholic and PC forces in Poland. One rejected the idea that Catholicism was a backbone of Polish culture and hoped that the EU would liberate Poles from Catholic mono-cultural identity; another believed that Polish culture would change if PC continued entering Poland; and another felt that Western business/economic interests were threatening Polish culture/morality. From the LAs, two were opposed to PC threatening Polish culture/morality, while another believed that there was a conflict between nationalist and PC forces over the latter issue. Another believed that PC only challenged traditional Polish culture in big towns/cities, with Polish mono-cultural identity remaining untouched in smaller towns and villages. Thus, in each LDS convert category, the converts support, oppose, neutrally comment on, or have mixed feelings about Western PC ideology challenging Catholic culture and morality in Poland. In contrast, two LTIs believed that LDS religiosity, with its American cultural features, did not suit Polish people's psychology as their mainly Catholic religious experience made it difficult for them to comprehend and accept. This suggests that the LDS may struggle to gain converts in Poland, because many Poles have a Catholic background which is difficult to eliminate from their consciousness.

10. Conclusions and Implications

In this final chapter, I increasingly spell out my own views about how wider social issues, the recruit's pre-LDS background, and LDS interaction and religious training may prompt or hinder LDS recruitment and the construction of different Polish convert types in Warsaw. This leads me to create a final overview of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion.

10.1 The wider Polish social world

During my 2008-early 2020 (before the coronavirus outbreak reached Europe) research time frame, how did the wider Polish social world help or hinder Polish LDS recruitment/conversion? Well, in 2004, Poland joined the EU to receive economic benefits, making itself more open to adopting Western secular outlooks on life. In 2005, John Paul II's death may have prompted some Poles to question their allegiance to the Catholic Church and to look at non-Catholic religions for greater spiritual fulfilment. Between 2008 and 2015, a more secular atmosphere seemed to develop in Poland under the centrist/liberal PO government, and parts of the Polish media and political world appeared to become more influenced by Western PC ideology. This seemed to result in some especially younger Poles in big Polish towns/cities becoming more materialistic and permissive in attitude towards abortion, homosexuality/lesbianism, multiculturalism etc., while many older Poles retained their support for the PiS party's vision of a Catholic Poland. Many especially older Poles may view PC ideology as a growing threat to mainstream Catholic society, believing that Poland is being pushed/coerced towards adopting PC laws/procedures in exchange for receiving economic benefits from the EU.

A conservative Catholic outlook may have been re-energised through the PiS party general election victories in 2015 and 2019, and some Poles believing that Western PC ideology has helped to facilitate mass Muslim migration into Western Europe. Nowadays, the Western macro-ideology of political correctness seems to be increasingly associated with attempts to destroy national identity and freedom of speech. Many Europeans critique PC for espousing ideas that devalue the histories and (religious, literary, and cultural) traditions of Western nations. In Western academia, PC is discussed in such terms by Gottfried (1999, 2002); Scruton (1998, 2000/2006); Mac Donald (2018); Eberstadt (2019); Furedi (2020) etc. A famous case of PC censorship in modern-day Poland concerns Ewa Budzyńska, a Polish, now former Professor of Sociology at the University of Silesia in Katowice who, in early 2020, was accused by 12 students of imposing "radical Catholic views" on her class (<https://notes>

frompoland.com/2020/01/19/minister-promises-bill-to-defend-free-speech-at-universities-after-lecturer-accused-of-homophobia/ - Notes from Poland JAN 19, 2020 accessed 15-05-

20). Professor Budzyńska was accused of “imposing” anti-abortion, “homophobic”, and anti-semitic views through describing the family in heterosexual and reproductive terms, referring to the foetus as a child in the womb, and “presenting research which described the effects of same-sex couples raising children” in her classes (Ibid). After an “investigation”, the University of Silesia’s “disciplinary official”, Wojciech Popiołek, dismissed the “allegation of antisemitism”, but determined that Budzyńska had expressed a “lack of tolerance towards social groups and people with a different worldview” through “homophobic statements, religious discrimination, and criticism towards the life choices of women who terminate pregnancies” (Ibid). In response, Budzyńska, whose “disciplinary hearing was due to take place on 31 January” 2020, resigned after nearly 30 years of teaching at the University of Silesia in protest at classes being ideologically censored there. On January 18th 2020, the government minister of higher education and science, Jarosław Gowin, promised to present a bill to protect freedom of speech and research at Polish universities, and to not allow “extremely ideologised groups to censor” information. Thus, this may highlight that nowadays, Catholic academics and conservative politicians are fighting against PC censorship and ideology being imposed inside Poland.

In contemporary Poland, many everyday people seem to view PC and extreme Islamist (and possibly everyday Islamic) forces as threats to their cultural identity and self-preservation. Before this, Polish migration into Western Europe after 2004 may have encouraged the import of some PC outlooks into Poland. However, many Poles may now see that despite Western European countries offering high-paid employment and social benefits, they may also contain extreme Islamist groups and PC nihilism. The latter process may make individuals feel disenchanted through PC conditioning reducing their national culture, with its religious, historical, and literary components, to being almost meaningless. In contrast to Obirek (in Harrison 2009) and Mariański (2006) believing that Poland is becoming more secularised and open to accepting non-Catholic cultures, the present Polish political scene seems to revolve around a tense tug-of-war between conservative and centrist/liberal parties. While the PiS government’s child benefit allowance policy may encourage more young couples to have children and possibly become more Catholic-minded, this government sometimes struggles to implement its policies. In 2016, it failed to make Poland’s restrictive legal position on abortion more restrictive through opposition from PC interest groups and PO supporters (this conflict reignited in late 2020). Moreover, some Poles believe that current PiS

policies may lead to higher inflation, tax payments, and food prices. If people do start worrying about imminent economic concerns rather than Muslims and Western PC ideology entering Poland, this may result in PiS and the Catholic Church losing power, and secular movements gaining strength.

Between 2008 and 2015, stronger secular conditions may have encouraged a bigger religious marketplace and non-Catholic religious growth to develop in larger Polish towns/cities. My research highlights that Polish LDS recruitment/conversion may involve conflicts with Catholic family/friends, or may be less stressful, especially when recruits/converts come from lukewarm Catholic or mixed/open religious backgrounds. LDS recruitment/conversion may be discouraged through the Catholic Church's social influence in Poland encouraging Poles to associate their national identity with Catholicism (Pasek 2006: 181-182; Zielińska 2006: 213; Obirek 2017: 48). Polish LDS/NRM converts may feel embarrassed or even stigmatised through having to overcome a strong Catholic background to change their religion (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 195). However, the link between Catholicism and Polish identity may be weakening through especially younger Poles supporting Western secular ideology and resenting the moral authority that the Catholic Church tries to exert over them (Mariański 2006: 88; Obirek in Harrison 2009). Nonetheless, despite Western secular ideology challenging the high status of the Catholic Church in Poland, a still Catholic environment may sometimes make conversion away from Catholicism a stressful process (Mariański 2006: 81-85; Obirek in Harrison 2009; Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 195).

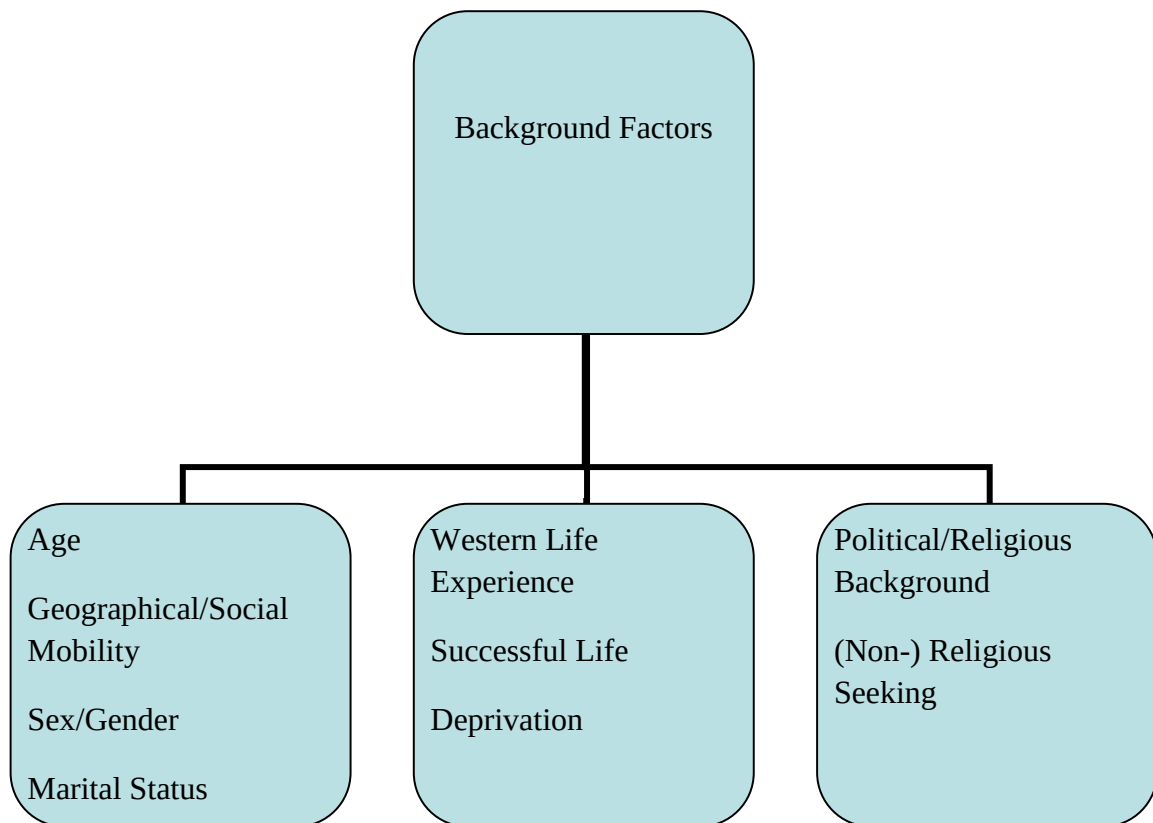
In summary, less harmony between the Polish government and Catholic Church may encourage non-Catholic religious growth in Poland, while greater harmony may restrict it. Hence, Poland may need to become more secularised and pluralistic, with the Catholic Church losing socio-political power and influence, for individuals to be able to more freely choose their religious practice from many different options, and for the stigma that may accompany joining a non-Catholic religion to disappear. Such change may make the Catholic Church struggle to remain meaningful to many people, giving non-Catholic groups like the LDS more opportunities to attract converts. Thus, greater non-alignment of church and state may prompt a big decline in formal religious practice in Poland, allowing LDS/NRM religious practice to grow (Stark 2005: 95-99). However, given that the Catholic Church is commonly valued for having played a positive role in Polish social life for a few hundred years, it may be questioned why its socio-political influence should be negated to make way for greater secularisation and non-Catholic religious growth. Many Poles value the Catholic

Church for supporting Polish people during the 2nd World War and helping them to undermine the communist system afterwards. Moreover, many Poles may believe that it now has a role to play in blocking the spread of Islam and Western PC ideology in Poland. Some Poles may sense that when the Catholic Church is blocked from exerting influence in Catholic countries (Ireland, Italy, Spain etc.), it may be reduced to being a museum piece with no right to shape the socio-political life nor power to protect the traditional cultural identity of a country. Such views were expressed by few, if any, of my Polish LDS converts, but become visible with two of my three LTIs who are still practising Catholics and many everyday Catholics who I encounter in Poland.

My research suggests that in present-day Poland, some Poles do have religious options to choose from, with many non-Catholic Churches and religions operating in bigger Polish towns/cities. However, this has not prompted a big increase in non-Catholic religious practice, as many younger Poles pursue better living conditions and become indifferent to religion or maintain loose attachments to Catholicism. While ignoring the Catholic Church's once-a-week, Sunday Mass obligation, some young adults may attend Mass once or twice a month, only on special occasions (baptisms, first holy communions, weddings, funerals etc.), or may have stopped attending Mass altogether while still identifying as Catholics. All this points towards Poland having an underused religious marketplace with many Poles seeking to improve their material lives, diluting their Catholic religious practice, and not seeking religious/spiritual fulfilment elsewhere. Nonetheless, some kind of exodus away from Catholicism may occur in the long-run through older, committed Catholics dying out and Poland becoming more secular and indifferent to religion like Western European countries. Thus, believing-without-belonging outlooks and non-Catholic religious practice may end up filling part of a religious void that would accompany Poland becoming a more secularised country.

10.2 Personal background/experience

The diagram below shows some significant background issues that may push Poles towards becoming different types of LDS converts or LTIs in Warsaw:



First, my research highlights that young adult Poles may respond positively towards LDS contact, and if they are geographically/socially mobile, this may raise the possibility of them being recruited (Bainbridge 1992; Stark 2005: 64). Many young Poles may not be heavily influenced by Western PC ideology, and may not have the nihilistic aversion to religion that many young Westerners seem to have. This may make some Polish teenagers and young adults open to religious exploration (e.g. LDS recruitment/conversion), with the main obstacle to this being the enduring cultural influence of the Catholic Church in Poland.

Second, from what I saw inside the Warsaw LDS field, the number of male and female converts in both the CTG and LA groups seemed to be relatively even. This may imply that despite NRMs being “more likely to attract more women than men”, there are some exceptions such as the LDS (Chryssides 2016: 26). In contrast, the Polish LTIs who I saw were almost entirely male, and most of my LTI interviewees were interested in comparative religion, which may suggest that while males often become interested in a religion for religious reasons, women often convert through family/social relationship influences (Yang and Abel 2014: 151). This points towards a need for “gender differences” to be studied in the “phenomenology of religion” to assess whether “men and women experience conversion differently” (Kent 2014: 319).

Third, my research suggests that some young adult recruits may enter the Warsaw LDS field looking for partners. Inside an LDS community, recruits/converts may value the massive respect that the LDS have for heterosexual marriage. Some may be drawn towards LDS views about heterosexual marriage being an “everlasting covenant” and “template” for humans to realise their “divine potential” (Hudson 2015: 351). Such views may be strengthened over time, with Polish CTGs coming to learn that “only marriage between a man and a woman can create” a godhood “state of being” (Ibid). Thus, in a PC age where alternative options to heterosexual marriage are promoted, supporters/defenders of the latter may value the LDS belief that “marriage has been defined by God as inherently heterosexual” (Ibid).

Fourth, my research implies that if Poles have lived in or visited the West extensively, especially while young, they may have become open to non-Catholic religious exploration through encountering religious pluralism. My research shows that some Poles may become LDS or may start getting recruited by the LDS in Western countries. Through the LDS being more established in many Western countries, especially the USA, they may be more respected there than in Poland where they are often dismissed as an American sect. In Western countries, where the government/state is detached from religion, the level of stigma attached to LDS involvement may be lower than in Poland where a harmonious relationship between the Catholic Church and state may make non-Catholic religious exploration and conversion taboo.

Fifth, my research suggests that young benefit-seekers may develop successful LDS careers through sensing that the LDS offer big rewards over time. This seems to refute a deprivation theory assumption that NRMs mainly appeal to impressionable/vulnerable people, as rational-minded recruits may be attracted to their offers of a strong commitment ethic, new friendships, clear moral/spiritual purpose etc. (Givens 2007*). Developing some kind of LDS commitment may lead to recruits/converts acquiring life/social skills that are useful for pursuing occupational careers. However, my research highlights that the Warsaw LDS do recruit some people who struggle to overcome problems/addictions, have unrealistic expectations about LDS life, and quickly become inactive, which may annoy established LDS members (Decoo 1996: 100-101; Mauss 1994: 213, 2008: 17; Stewart Jr. 2008: 352-353). Thus, the Warsaw LDS draw in not only rational benefit-seekers and socially successful people, but also people with problems who may seek some kind of compensation for being unsuccessful in employment, marriage, financial security etc. (Bainbridge 1992).

Interestingly, my research highlights that some problems, such as being shy or suffering parental divorce, may help some recruits/converts to value the Warsaw LDS community's

family-type belonging ethos. Converts may climb the LDS career ladder as a rational approach to overcoming such forms of adversity. Similar to Miller's (2017: 219-242) Catholic storytellers who find solace to the pain of parental divorce in their faith, Polish LDS converts from broken families may find some kind of healing through their LDS involvement. This may include overcoming "self-pity" and a "lack of forgiveness" towards others; moving beyond the embarrassment of "having divorced parents"; feeling newly created in faith but still a "mess in some ways"; and finding a "release valve" from "incredible tension" (Ibid 222-226). Hence, such a religious healing process may involve learning "how to turn and forgive over time" and letting go of anger to move on in life (Ibid 226-230). However, the victims of parental divorce may realise that a sense of working through "woundedness" can never be complete, as they "can't change anything that has happened" from the past (Ibid 235-237). Nonetheless, an "ongoing", religious healing "process" may involve pain being gradually transformed into faith, with some degree of comfort countering a sense of "self-loathing" and "intense emotional pain and loneliness" (Ibid 239-241). Such a healing process may be mobilised through the LDS offering a profound commitment to and enhancement of family life, and encouraging friendship-building which starts when YMs lead newcomers into LDS communities (Davies, D.J. 2000: 253, 257).

Despite the above, my research suggests that recruits with economic and psychological problems and not strong will power may not follow the WOW or pay tithing, perform callings etc. which will result in LA status. In contrast, young students may bypass tithing through doing multiple callings, and may go on to serve missions. Such intense LDS involvement may revolve around pursuing rewards/benefits that accompany CTG status. Not having money and work may be unproblematic if a recruit/convert is young and earnest enough to offer the LDS long-term commitment and service. Hence, any talk about deprivation stunting LDS careers needs to be accompanied by an emphasis on long-term benefit seeking encouraging CTG status. Deprivation theory helps to explain why some Polish LDS never or only temporarily become temple-goers, while rational benefit-seeker and religious marketplace theories help to show why other Polish LDS become CTGs. However, my research highlights that some older Polish converts from (semi-) professional backgrounds may become LAs through not wanting their lives to be too controlled by the LDS, with them being reticent about entering the temple and feeling that LDS chapel attendance fulfils their religious/social needs. This again suggests that younger recruits/converts are more likely to undertake fuller LDS conversion journeys, and refutes the brainwashing theory from section 2.1 as the converts themselves determine their levels of religious involvement.

Sixth, my research implies that socio-political outlook may influence whether Polish people become and remain LDS. For example, I encountered Polish LDS from all three convert types who were against the Catholic Church being a de facto state religion supported by the PiS political party, and it being commonly viewed as a backbone of Polish national identity. Such attitudes may push recruits to become involved with the LDS or may take shape with them. Initially, some Polish LDS converts may be just indifferent to mainstream Catholic culture, with their criticism towards it growing through encountering LDS members who loathe it. The antipathy of Polish LDS converts towards mainstream Catholic culture may be prompted through them having had Catholic religiosity enforced upon them in the past, when they can now freely choose and express their religious beliefs (Obirek in Harrison 2009). This antipathy may be constructed through the converts sensing that the Catholic Church does not relate its teachings to people's real-life experience; delivers political sermons; has materialistic/hypocritical priests; makes people feel obliged to attend Mass to avoid feeling stigmatised; and does not treat people as free-thinking individuals (Borowik 2006: 319-324).

Seventh, my research shows that previous religious experience may influence Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. It points towards staunch Catholics being more immune to LDS recruitment/conversion; lukewarm Catholics, believers without belonging, agnostics etc. being prone to becoming LAs; and average practising Catholics being open to becoming CTGs. This suggests that rank-and-file Catholics are more likely to join the LDS than doctrinally aware ones, as the less a person digests a religion's teachings/practices, the easier it will be to detach himself/herself from it to join another religion (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Stark 2005: 65-66). Some recruits from Catholic backgrounds may be predisposed to LDS religious exploration through having doubts about Catholic teachings/practices (Coleman 2003: 13-17). Moreover, my research points towards some people using an acquired, average religious discipline to help them become religious with another Church. A few CTGs spoke about smoothly switching from Catholic to LDS religious practice, with them rationalising that their former Catholic practice had provided a foundation which helped them to find higher religious truth with the LDS (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 196, 199; Coleman 2003: xiii, 9). In contrast, over half my LTIs still identify with Catholic religiosity, which helps to explain why they have never become LDS.

My research also suggests that agnostics and believers without belonging may be open to Polish LDS recruitment/conversion, especially if they encounter LDS missionaries/members. Believers without belonging may accept invitations to investigate LDS religiosity through

sensing that God exists while not having yet trusted any religious organisation enough to practise one officially. Besides this, my research highlights that recruits may engage in pre-LDS religious searches out of curiosity; to look for authentic religiosity; through sensing a lack of religious knowledge; and to combat adversity (Lofland and Skonovd 1981; Rambo 1998; Clarke 2006: viii; Taylor 2007: 506-508; Anderson 1977; Eliason 1999: 142-143). Hence, they may initiate religious searches in response to personal problems or through religious/theological interest. Religious experimentation may give people an eclectic outlook which, when encountering the LDS, may incline them to become LTIs or LAs, as they may struggle to commit themselves to one religion alone. Thus, if religious seekers become LDS, their previous religious experience may block them from attaining the tunnel-vision necessary to become CTGs.

Eighth, my research highlights that despite the Catholic Church still dominating proceedings, in big Polish towns/cities, people may encounter many different religions (Pasek 2017: 163-165, 2006: 181-182). Both religious seekers and Catholics who are looking for stronger expressions of faith may explore Catholicism in different traditionalist (pre-Vatican II), conservative, middle-of-the-road, and liberal/ecumenical formats. They may also look at mainstream non-Catholic Churches which offer religiosity not far removed from Catholicism, and smaller, charismatic Christian groups with less ritualistic, more Bible-centred forms of worship. Moreover, they may investigate Christian-derived NRMs which resemble charismatic Christian groups, and may start valuing their unique religious teachings/practices. They may also explore non-Christian religions, being drawn to something radically different from the mainstream Catholic culture that surrounds them. All this highlights that the religious diversity which existed in communist Poland (Obirek in Harrison 2009) has increased considerably during post-communist times, with a widely-varied religious marketplace now existing alongside mainstream Catholic culture.

In summary, the following background factors may incline individuals towards LDS recruitment/conversion:

- Being a teenager/young adult
- Trusting in personal intuitions
- Engaging in lukewarm or average forms of pre-LDS religiosity
- Disliking the Catholic Church
- Being a religious seeker
- Having liberal or middle-of-the-road political views

- Having lived or travelled extensively in the West
- Having deprivations/problems
- Being a benefit seeker
- Strongly respecting heterosexual marriage.

For me, the most important factor is that young Poles with limited life experience are more likely to become LDS and CTGs than older ones whose greater life experience may block such change.

10.3 LDS networking influencing recruitment

First, my research suggests that during recruitment, LDS networking often precedes religious training (Eberhard 1974; Anderson 1977; Hinckley 1999; Coleman 2003: 41-43; Ostling/Ostling 2007: 221-222; Stark 2005: 79-82). This involves recruits socialising with missionaries before LDS baptism, which may be initiated through LDS members putting friends and relatives in touch with missionaries or taking them to Warsaw LDS events where they meet missionaries. Such forms of recruitment eliminate the need for missionaries to search for recruits, giving them easy opportunities to befriend new ones and strengthen ties with existing ones. Of course, they may have to encourage LDS members (and LTIs) to set up such recruitment pathways. All this highlights that recruits may be (or may become) friends with LDS members who first discuss common interests, then invite the recruits to LDS social events before they encounter any religiosity (Bainbridge 1992; Eberhard 1974). Thus, friendship-building often underpins LDS recruitment (Stark 2005: 79-80).

Inside both Warsaw LDS branches, I saw some Polish family networks, but not many, which may suggest that LDS member referrals of recruits to missionaries are not that common despite them being the most effective form of LDS recruitment (Oaks 2003). My research highlights that the Warsaw LDS draw in recruits through other pathways such as offering free English and German lessons, which people may see advertised on LDS chapel (or other) notice-boards or may be invited to by people who attend or know about them. Young Poles who want to improve their English to pursue employment and geographical/social mobility may enter the Warsaw LDS world through the LDS taking care of their language-learning needs. They may also be encouraged to attend YSA (Home Evening and Institute) meetings and LDS sporting events, where they may become friends with young LDS and older/younger missionaries. Such pathways target young recruits, because their limited life experience may not block them from becoming LDS.

In Warsaw city centre, I saw YM pairs/teams seeking recruits through giving whiteboard displays and handing out leaflets about their faith (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 213). Those who may check out LDS religiosity include religious seekers, believers without belonging, unfulfilled religious people, and people with enough free time on their hands. Through sheer weight of numbers, a few passers-by will take the religious salesman bait and start becoming interested in the LDS. In contrast, knocking on people's doors seems to be less fruitful, with many people feeling uncomfortable encountering religious door-to-door salesmen, and this technique often being associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses in Warsaw/Poland.

Second, my research shows that after first contact, recruits often start meeting LDS missionaries regularly. Such meetings may start as casual chats, with missionaries viewing them as baptism lessons and recruits not always being aware of this. YMs may befriend their recruits before introducing any religious teachings, while later on, recruits may feel pressured to become LDS to maintain the friendship. When several YMs surrounded a recruit at LDS meetings, I sensed that a push towards baptism was gaining momentum. Recruits may feel excited about becoming friends with American/foreign missionaries, sometimes accepting what they say and emulating how they behave. During early contact, some recruits may feel curiosity and excitement mixed with fear and suspicion, viewing LDS missionaries as representatives of a consumer-friendly but unusual, American form of Christianity. Other recruits may simply view early LDS interaction as an opportunity to get to know some Americans, with the American cultural features of the LDS being a plus point for drawing in recruits/converts (Stark 2005: 118; Decoo 2015: 554-555; Rigal-Cellard 2018: location 3676-3694). However, missionary friendliness towards recruits may only be maintained if they head towards baptism, with some recruits viewing this as a manipulative technique. Despite this, some recruits may view LDS networking as a minor issue through mainly investigating LDS religiosity privately. Yet, for most recruits, it will be LDS interaction, which may involve LDS friends starting to outnumber non-LDS ones, that paves the way to baptism. Meanwhile, recruits may become submissive through being monitored, nurtured, and even sanctioned while learning roles from LDS members (Long and Hadden 1983 in Gooren 2007: 340-341). However, many recruits/converts disappear before or shortly after LDS baptism and LTIs remain within the Warsaw branches without becoming LDS, as recruits/converts may retreat or distance themselves from LDS involvement if they cannot commit themselves to an LDS worldview or receive opposition/conflict from the wider Polish social world (Bromley and Shupe 1979 in Gooren 2007: 342; Cowan 2014: 695). Recruits who develop

into LTIs may start feeling uncomfortable if they get cold-shouldered, as their non-LDS presence may annoy the LDS through questioning the validity of their faith.

Third, my research suggests that some recruits/converts may start feeling that they belong to a Warsaw branch as they move towards and beyond LDS baptism (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 221-222; Farrin 2009: 33-40). LDS interaction may tie recruits to an LDS community, while religious training prepares them for baptism (Stark 2005: 79-82). Through feeling comfortable, recruits/converts may start thinking about adopting LDS norms/values above those of wider society, while the LDS push them towards accepting LDS rituals, rhetoric, and values, and becoming committed to an LDS worldview.

Fourth, while evaluating LDS teachings/practices and social dynamics, recruits may start questioning their own outlooks on life, and through sensing the opportunity/potential for self-development, they may embark on long, possibly lifetime journeys with the LDS (Anderson 1977). My research points towards rational-minded individuals engaging with the LDS through sensing a need for positive change, and recognising that the Warsaw LDS offer opportunities to stop bad habits through the gaining of moral purpose, psychological stability, and social responsibility (Robbins and Antony 1982; Nabozny 2009: 65-66; Annus and Csepregi 2018: location 4115). These individuals may compare the potential rewards/benefits of adopting LDS beliefs/practices and gaining LDS friends against the sacrifice of time/money involved (McBride 2007: 399). This cost-benefit assessment may prompt recruits to adopt LDS norms above those of wider Polish society (Stark 2005: 62). As the LDS try to push recruits towards baptism, a recruit's cost-benefit assessment may be ignited through practising the WOW (Annus and Csepregi 2018: location 4082-4097; Keifert 2004: 261-262; Nabozny 2009: 65-66). Recruits who do not smoke and drink little/no alcohol may value the WOW for (almost) matching their healthy lifestyle, while others may try practising it to overcome unhealthy habits and reform themselves. However, if a recruit is attached/addicted to serious indiscretions, the WOW may present an insurmountable barrier to becoming or remaining LDS.

Fifth, the Warsaw LDS offer a transnational/multicultural quality, as American/foreign missionaries, members, and guest speakers constantly pass through and a few foreign members remain ever-present inside the Warsaw branches. This may suggest that conversion in a "multi-ethnic context" can involve ethnic identity being transcended, as a "new and shared religious identity emerges among congregants" (Yang and Abel 2014: 145). However, before the two Warsaw LDS branches joined together in 2017, they offered different kinds of interaction, with more American/foreign members attending Wierzbno/Raławicka. Some

young adult Polish recruits/converts seemed to be drawn towards a friendly atmosphere created by American missionary/non-missionary leaders at Wierzbno/Raławicka. This suggests that especially young Poles may be predisposed to admire the “Americanism” of the LDS (Stark 2005: 118; Decoo 2015: 554-555; Rigal-Cellard 2018: location 3676-3694). Many Poles seem to believe that the USA is a staunch ally of Poland as both countries view Russia as a big enemy. Through many Poles being predisposed to admire the USA, many especially younger recruits may value the American cultural aspects of the Warsaw LDS, which may push them towards becoming and remaining LDS. Between 2009 and 2012, I saw that the YSA at Wierzbno/Raławicka offered young recruits the opportunity to befriend and emulate the behaviour of young Polish LDS converts and young and old American/foreign missionaries. This again points towards young adulthood being a pivotal age for LDS recruitment (Stark 2005: 64). At the less multicultural Wolska, I could see that a few Polish converts had joined the LDS in the late 1980s/early 1990s, not long before or after the Poland Mission was established. Most were CTGs who seemed to hold high status inside the Warsaw LDS field, which may have intimidated some recruits/recent converts through sensitising them to their lower status.

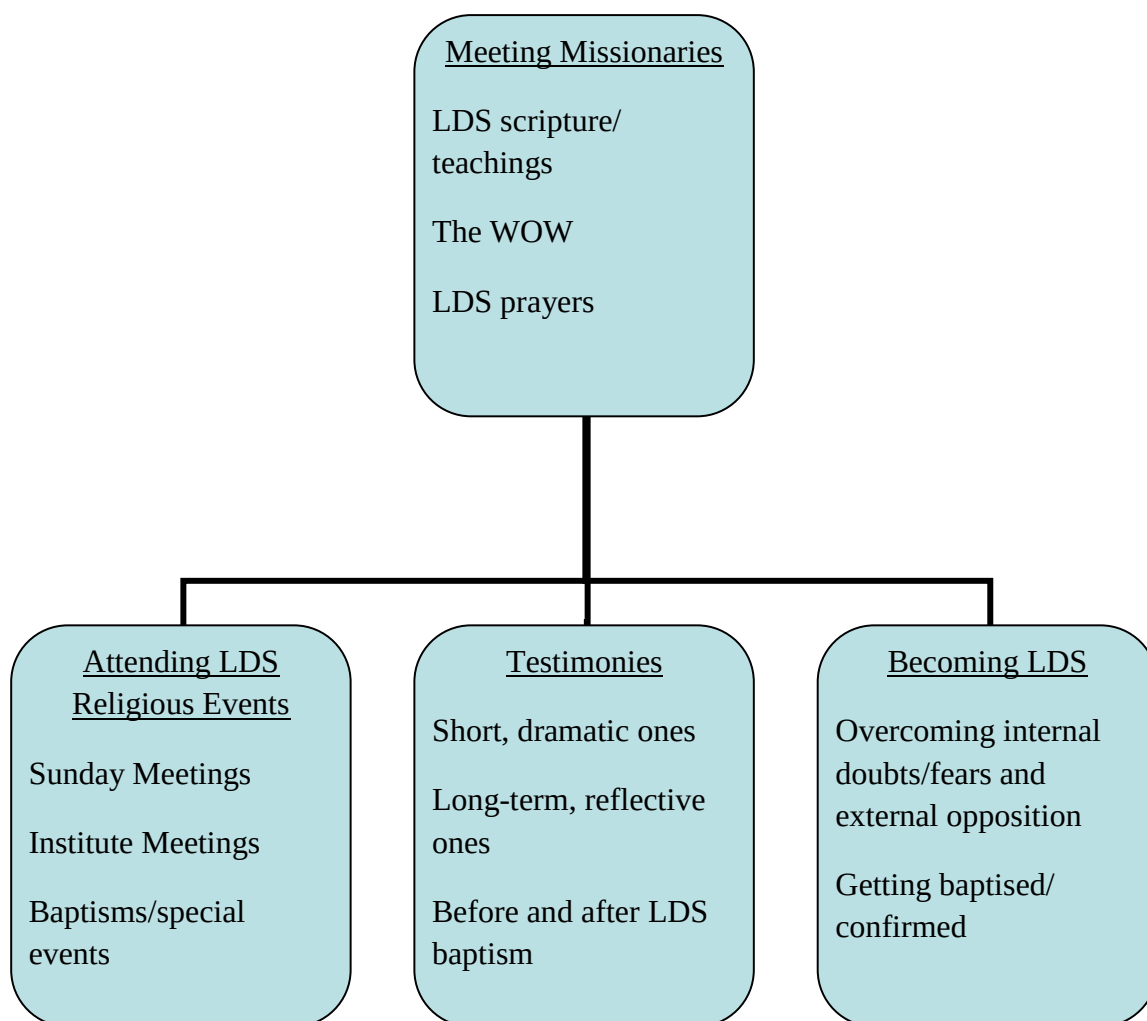
Sixth, some recruits/recent converts who disappear quickly may feel uncomfortable with American friendliness/openness and a kind of disharmony that exists between Polish CTGs and American/foreign missionaries, especially at Wolska. Such recruits/converts may refuse to accept the American LDS colonizer’s “culture, view of the colony as an area to be developed”, and economic and religious “knowledge” superiority, with the American colonizer role blocking the LDS from creating a strong organisation in Poland (van Beek 2005: 15). Alongside this, the limited life experience of YMs may not prepare them well for complex, intercultural proselytisation work (Glad 2009: 161-162). Some older Polish recruits may feel uncomfortable at being lead into new religious territory by young, American/foreign LDS missionaries, but if the latter speak reasonable Polish, which some can do after 9-12 months in Poland, this may increase the recruits’ trust/respect and push them towards LDS baptism. During the Walter Whipple fireside at Wolska on 9-08-08, I saw the ex-Mission President speaking Polish fluently and the Polish LDS audience admiring this. Thus, the cultural/linguistic adaptability of old/young missionaries is a significant factor in Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. However, some young recruits may enjoy speaking English with YMs, being drawn to their similar age and different backgrounds, so YMs without much life experience may guide some young recruits to LDS baptism. Thus, various kinds of LDS missionaries may draw in different kinds of recruits/converts.

Finally, my research highlights that while moving towards LDS baptism and beyond, Polish recruits/converts may have conflicts with non-LDS family/friends. Through wider Polish society associating the LDS with American culture, recruits/converts may have problems discussing them with non-LDS family/friends (Mauss 1994: 205; Stewart Jr. 2008: 348). Catholic families may be embarrassed about family members becoming involved with and joining what they view as an imported sect that tries to push its American values onto European nations with much older religious traditions/identities, so if a Catholic becomes LDS in Poland, it may be viewed as serious disloyalty (Decoo 2015: 554). In Poland/Europe, the LDS are often stigmatised through still being associated with polygamy when it was officially abolished by the Salt Lake City leadership in 1890 (van Beek 2016: 91; Millet 1998: 11-12; Givens 2007: xvi). This may be due to documentaries about small LDS splinter groups which still practise polygamy being shown on Polish television.

The comments above suggest that secularisation and religious freedom may be stunted in Poland through the state's multi-tiered concordat/registration system where Catholicism functions as a de facto state religion (Pasek 2006: 181-182; Zielińska 2006: 212-213). In Poland, NRMs may be viewed suspiciously due to their small numbers; Catholicism being associated with national identity; and NRMs being stereotyped as small self-contained groups which control recruit/convert behaviour and decisions (Pasek 2006: 190; Zielińska 2006: 210, 217-218). Hence, while having to change religion surrounded by a strong Catholic environment, Polish LDS converts may (be made to) feel embarrassed/stigmatised (Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2006: 195). All this suggests that the root cause of Polish recruits/converts having conflicts with non-LDS families/friends is the harmony between the Catholic Church and Polish state, with the latter prompting many Poles to view non-Catholic religions as less authentic than Catholicism. However, my research does not highlight any incidences of Polish state institutions harassing non-Catholic religions of the type from the 1990s/early 2000s described by Pasek (2006: 183-191) and Zielińska (2006: 213-216, 218-219). Still, it suggests that a Polish recruit's fear of telling non-LDS family/friends about his/her upcoming LDS baptism may result in him/her dropping out of baptism to end or prevent conflicts, or getting baptised without informing family/ friends to avoid stress. However, if Polish recruits come from open backgrounds without strong allegiance to the Catholic Church, they may be supported or not interfered with during LDS recruitment.

10.4 Religious training during recruitment

The diagram below shows how recruits may encounter LDS religiosity:



First, my research suggests that during private meetings with YMs, recruits will receive some kind of LDS religious training. This may include reading, praying about, and accepting the BOM as scripture; learning about the POS; accepting Joseph Smith as a latter-day prophet and the LDS as God's Church on Earth; developing a relationship with Jesus; praying to God the Father; practising the WOW; and committing oneself to becoming less sinful (Rector Jr. 1975; Anderson 1977; Burton 1985; Gooren 2008: 364-365). Such training will rarely lead to big-scale religious transformation, as many recruits and recent converts may not accept basic LDS beliefs or may only possess an embryonic faith without much LDS religious knowledge. Still, some Polish recruits/converts may feel themselves becoming healthier and morally cleaner through following the WOW and law of chastity, and may value a sense of becoming different from the non-LDS world while attending LDS religious/social events (Gooren 2008: 379-380).

Second, my research points towards Polish recruits encountering some unique LDS teachings before baptism. They may encounter and prefer the LDS idea of God being a flesh-laden Father who can be spoken to through direct prayer to a common, mainstream Christian view of him being a distant spirit. However, some recruits/converts may retain mainstream Christian sensibilities, viewing the LDS idea that God the Father produces spirit children with a Goddess Mother in pre-mortality as blasphemous. Hence, the LDS may not offer many details about their children of God doctrine before recruits are baptised unless prompted to do so. Despite this, many recruits/converts may view the LDS pre-mortality doctrine as a profound answer to a question many people ask about where humans come from before conception on Earth. Throughout history, philosophers, poets, and theologians have reflected on the idea of human pre-mortality (Givens 2010: 3). Belief in human pre-existence has remained “as a philosophical idea” in Western culture “from Plato into modernity” (Ibid 4). Such a belief may be justified through it accounting for “individual differences” between people; explaining the “existence of innate ideas”; and providing a “solution to the problem of God’s apparent injustice” (Ibid 3). In particular, it may help to explain the origins of virtuous behaviour, and how humans innately long for “transcendence and the sublime”; commonly experience “alienation” and inevitable sadness; innately recognise universal moral behaviour; receive an uneven distribution of “pain and suffering”; and sometimes make friends and find lovers almost magically (Ibid 5). Besides this, Polish recruits/converts may prefer the LDS baptism of the dead doctrine to a mainstream Christian belief that salvation can only be sought on Earth, valuing the idea that humans never lose the possibility of salvation, even after death. However, recruits may start rejecting LDS religiosity if they encounter too many unique teachings, mainly from the D&C/POGP, on top of more basic Christian teachings from the Bible and BOM. If this happens, they may notice how far LDS religiosity departs from mainstream Christianity, and may start viewing the LDS as a post-Christian or non-Christian religion. Still, the LDS may push recruits towards believing that their unique teachings are meaningful complements to mainstream Christian teachings. When LDS religiosity is viewed and accepted as extending previous religious experience, this may push recruits towards LDS baptism.

Despite the last two points above, Polish recruits may not accept LDS teachings about Joseph Smith being a latter-day prophet and scripture writer through holding a mainstream Christian view that prophets only existed before Jesus because he showed the way to salvation, making them unnecessary afterwards. They may resist teachings about Smith and his LDS President successors being latter-day prophets if they have seen internet accounts

about Smith being a polygamist, gold-seeker, outlaw leader etc., and his successor, Brigham Young, being a maverick too. However, if recruits have a strong distaste for the Catholic Church, they may be inclined to accept LDS teachings about God's Church on Earth having fallen into error following the deaths of the first apostles and Smith restoring it in the early 19th century, which may prompt them to view Smith as a latter-day prophet/scripture writer. Still, some recruits may reject such teachings through asking why Jesus was sent to redeem the world in ancient times only for it to fall into darkness again shortly afterwards. They may also view the LDS apostasy/restoration teachings as less believable than Catholic and Orthodox claims to be the descendants of Jesus' original apostles, as the latter Churches can be seen to have existed throughout all or most Christian history. Again, all this may point towards recruits from strong religious backgrounds being less likely to become LDS, as their pre-LDS experience may block them from accepting LDS teachings/practices (Obirek in Harrison 2009; Stark 2005: 65-66).

Third, my research shows that recruits may become LDS through receiving dramatic/profound intuitions which prompt them to believe that LDS religiosity/scripture is true (Coleman 2003: 64-67; Eliason 1999: 142-143; Nabozny 2009:64). This may happen if they do Moroni's challenge, praying directly to God to see if the BOM is true or not. Modern-day religious seekers may be inclined to accept any profound or uplifting intuitions/responses they have while doing Moroni's challenge as validating the BOM and LDS religiosity (Mauß 2008: 22-25). If the recruits sense that Moroni's challenge could be a life-changing episode, this may create the desire to gain a profound experience, so any intense feelings that occur during the challenge may be interpreted as a testimony. Sceptics may argue that intense friendship, discussion, and prayer between LDS missionaries and recruits may produce heightened emotions which may be arbitrarily interpreted as God-given confirmations of LDS truth. However, receiving religious revelation may not only involve people having intense, mystical experiences which may be interpreted as gaining direct contact with God, as they may simply become (more) certain about what God wills them to do on Earth (Stark 2005: 26-27, 38-39). Both kinds of testimony may push recruits/converts towards becoming and remaining LDS, as without them, they may find it difficult to accept LDS religious teachings. For me, it is impossible to show if religious revelations/testimonies occur or not, which makes it impossible to believe in or dismiss them (Stark 2005: 27). Whether real or unreal, they can push recruits towards and beyond LDS baptism. However, when Polish recruits consider becoming LDS, some may fear moving away from their previous lives towards a mysterious religious unknown. Some may back out of LDS baptism or fail to turn up for confirmation to

invalidate it, while others may become sufficiently intrigued by their early taste of LDS religiosity to pass through baptism/confirmation.

Fourth, my research highlights that before LDS baptism, Polish recruits are unlikely to learn much about the full LDS agenda, may have their pre-LDS worldviews criticised, and may be rewarded for starting to accept LDS religiosity or ignored/ostracised for questioning and doubting it (the International Cultic Studies Association website http://www.icsahome.com/infoserv_articles/singer_margaret_6conditions.htm). However, this does not support the brainwashing theory from section 2.1, as Polish LDS recruitment/conversion also involves recruits assessing the costs of offering their time/money against the benefits of becoming LDS, while the LDS push them towards baptism through offering attractive religious/social goods (McBride 2007: 399). Besides this, some good-natured LDS missionaries/members may remain friends with LTIs despite the latter not becoming LDS.

Finally, my research points towards many religious conversion theories/models emphasising socio-economic and psychological issues at the expense of religious factors (Gooren 2007: 348). LDS interaction and religious training may occur simultaneously or missionary/member-recruit friendship may lead to recruits encountering LDS religiosity (Givens 2007*: 207-220; Keifert 2004: 256-268; Davies, D.J. 2000: 252-265). My research suggests that Farrin's (2009: 24-40) distinction between some of her British LDS converts looking for communal belonging and others religious truth becomes more visible after baptism, as LAs do not attain long-term temple-goer status, but CTGs do. Before LDS baptism, encountering LDS interaction and religiosity may be both enjoyable and stressful, as recruits receive missionary pressure to become LDS and possible family/friend pressure to do otherwise. Overall, Polish LDS recruitment/conversion is a complex/nuanced experience that cannot be explained fully by any theorists/writers on their own. Instead, many ideas from chapters 1-2 need to be joined together to help explain significant features and phases of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion.

In summary, after first meeting LDS representatives, recruits will start receiving religious training at some point, with this often becoming more serious as they draw near to LDS baptism. The table below shows the kinds of religious and social factors that may push recruits towards becoming LDS:

<u>LDS Interaction</u>	<u>LDS Religious Training</u>
Befriending missionaries	Reading the BOM/the Bible

Gaining a sense of belonging at LDS events/ meetings	Praying to God the Father
Desiring to emulate missionary/member behaviour	Receiving general Christian and unique LDS teachings
Seeking self-development	Practising the WOW
Being attracted to American cultural features	Gaining a sense of relationship with Jesus
Sense of gaining LDS identity increasing or receding during later recruitment	Listening to LDS hymns, prayers, and testimonies at Sunday meetings
Agreeing to become LDS	Having testimonies which support LDS beliefs/ practices
Having an LDS baptism interview	Getting baptised/confirmed LDS.

All this suggests that rather than undergoing any strong religious transformation, recruits may experience a moral/social adaptation process while encountering some general Christian and unique LDS teachings. Thus, recruitment often introduces LDS religiosity, while conversion involves journeying towards CTG status.

10.5 Integrating new converts

In Warsaw, new LDS converts will be encouraged to continue attending LDS events to get to know missionaries/members better. If they start feeling that they belong to their LDS branch, they may sense themselves gaining personal development, which may lead to them becoming CTGs. My research suggests that many social factors may help or hinder a Polish convert's LDS career development. First, new converts may not receive adequate support through poor teamwork between American/foreign missionaries and Polish members (Glad 2009: 157). Many new converts may disappear through missionary friends becoming distant and the LDS trying to push them towards becoming temple-goers while they are still assessing what LDS baptism/membership means. Meanwhile, missionaries/members may start losing interest in converts if they start becoming less enthusiastic towards LDS religiosity.

Second, amiable/sociable converts may quickly develop LDS friendships and attachments to their Warsaw branch, while quieter/shyer ones may disappear or settle for chapel-goer status through not bonding strongly with missionaries/members. Self-conscious converts may be afraid of speaking at public events and doing callings which may inhibit them from

becoming temple-goers. However, at Wierzbno/Raławicka, I saw the painfully shy Weronika (TTG) become a temple-goer without doing much public speaking. Moreover, converts may become well-integrated inside the Warsaw branches when they have more LDS than non-LDS friends and spend more time with the LDS than other people (Lofland and Stark 1965 in Gooren 2007: 338; Yang and Abel 2014: 142). However, new converts may not be allowed into the tight-knit world of established Polish LDS members, and maverick/overzealous members may irritate them (Decoo 1996: 106). Thus, recent converts and established members may only become friends through trust being built up over time. Nonetheless, new converts who are short of friends may start viewing LDS members positively if they are open and friendly.

Third, the recruitment of low-income, modestly-educated people who may not fulfil LDS member duties and may have unrealistic expectations about LDS life can irritate established temple-goers (Decoo 1996: 100-101; Mauss 1994: 213, 2008: 17; Stewart Jr. 2008: 352-353). Some LDS converts may carry personal problems beyond baptism, as bad habits/traits and difficult situations may not disappear. Such converts may start feeling inferior if they fail to become temple-goers. In reality, the LDS have problems transforming quickly recruited, ill-prepared converts into CTGs, because many are not predisposed to follow the WOW or to carry out other LDS duties. New LDS converts may become disillusioned as pre-baptismal excitement turns into arduous membership routines, when they need support and undemanding callings to not feel overwhelmed (Decoo 1996: 108-109, 113). Convert problems may include losing contact with influential missionaries; having to deal with local leaders; and being expected to offer prayers/testimonies, perform time-consuming callings, and pay tithing (Gooren 2008: 366-367). When directed towards such duties, new LDS converts may feel servile and overwhelmed, and may end up disappearing. In contrast, some young converts may follow LDS rules, endure early sacrifice, and allow themselves to be pushed towards becoming committed members if they can see interesting benefits and life adventures ahead.

Fourth, if a recent convert practises the WOW, does his/her callings well, and pays tithing regularly, he/she may be viewed as a potential temple-goer and pushed towards attending temple preparation meetings and doing family history research. Some LDS converts will not be cut out to become temple-goers, as they may only be used to attending a one-hour, once-a-week religious event. Many converts may find it stressful being expected to fulfil LDS member duties, to belong to the priesthood/relief society, to pay fellow LDS home visits etc. (McBride 2007: 404-409). This stress may be amplified through the LDS assessing convert

compliance with group standards during home visits, calling/tithing interviews, and routine branch interaction, and trying to convince converts that greater commitment yields greater rewards (Ibid 410-412). Recent converts may become further stressed through seeing the contrast between CTGs, who often hold local leadership positions and have successful family lives and extensive friendship ties, and their own fears/uncertainties about being new LDS members. Thus, rather than becoming temple-goers, some LDS converts may settle for having active chapel lives (Keifert 2004: 265-267).

Fifth, young LDS converts may become TTGs through meeting and admiring young LDS members with similar outlooks and aspirations at YSA meetings (Mauss 2008: 55). Young LDS who are students may perform multiple callings and become TTGs without paying tithing. Through their YSA involvement, young LDS converts may start recognising that if they work towards becoming temple-goers, they may receive big rewards like studying and gaining temple marriage in the USA. From the YSA at Wierzbno/Raławicka, three of my five TTG interviewees got married to LDS spouses in the USA, and two young, Polish female converts (non-interviewees) migrated to the USA, one marrying an American YMM who she had met in Warsaw, the other receiving higher education there after serving a mission in Moldova/Romania. For most of the duration of my research, Poles needed a visa to enter the USA, and still need one for visits longer than 90 days (<https://pl.usembassy.gov/vwp-faq/> accessed 14-08-20). Hence, some young Polish LDS converts may view the YSA as a transmigration agency where young recruits/converts receive support for moving towards LDS baptism and adventurous LDS lives. Moreover, YSA activity may mirror the early 20th century, learning theory of the Soviet educational psychologist, Vygotsky (see McLeod 2019). TTG status may be constructed through Vygotsky's idea of people learning social roles while receiving scaffolding/support from more experienced people (e.g. LDS missionaries/members) in a small, intimate zone of development (e.g. the YSA). Such status may be attained through young LDS converts imitating and competing against each other to create opportunities for gaining LDS life adventures in the USA, with this competitiveness strengthening their conversion process (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-9).

Sixth, during the 2010-2013 Nielson Mission Presidency, I saw three of my male CTG interviewees marry LDS women, with whom they had children and created LDS families inside their Warsaw branches. Most of these family-builders were in their late 20s which may point towards this being a ripe age for CTGs to get married and have children in Poland. Throughout the Nielson Presidency, I saw the number of recruits/converts dwindle, possibly showing that the LDS hoped that young Polish LDS families would provide future members

in Poland. However, I also saw a teenage female member from a Polish CTG family at Wolska go on to study at an LDS educational site in the USA, with the family possibly being rewarded for years of faithful LDS service. Like the young, mainly female converts from the YSA at Wierzbno/Raławicka, the teenage female member from Wolska seemed to be attaining an LDS life adventure in the USA, possibly through attending YSA meetings at Wierzbno/Raławicka. This may suggest that young, mainly female, Polish members from both branches, and the parents of the one from Wolska, are benefit seekers who pursue long-term rewards from the LDS.

Seventh, some kind of cultural enchantment may prompt especially young Polish LDS converts to imitate the friendliness and openness of the American missionaries/members they encounter in Warsaw. American LDS families and younger/older missionaries may encourage Polish converts to adopt American-like appearance and behaviour. This may prompt some young converts to become temple-goers and to serve LDS missions in pursuit of attaining further education, professional employment, and LDS marriage in the USA. Inside both Warsaw branches, young Polish converts may get financial assistance from the LDS Church (or rich American families) to study in the USA. For ambitious-minded, young Polish converts, LDS conversion may involve pursuing American-type LDS member status in the USA. I saw such identity transformation being sought on Facebook sites where young Polish LDS converts sometimes made their names more American/English-sounding while living in Poland or the USA. Thus, such converts may mimic the American cultural features of the LDS as the latter help to draw in young international converts (Stark 2005: 118; Decoo 2015: 554-555; Rigal-Cellard: location 3676-3694). However, some older Polish converts, especially LAs, and LTIs may start associating the LDS with negative stereotypes of American culture, possibly viewing them as business-suited, religious salesmen with a “capitalistic ethos” (Ostling/Ostling 2007: 220).

Finally, many new Polish converts may disappear if they get ostracised/disowned for joining the LDS by family/friends. However, if they remain LDS in such adverse circumstances, this may show that they have the strength of conviction to become CTGs. A convert’s non-LDS family may become less opposed to him/her being LDS if they see him/her developing into a better person over time. If this happens, missionaries may try directing the convert’s family members towards LDS baptism too. Inside the Warsaw LDS branches, I saw a few Polish family networks (e.g. Stefan and his sister’s family), and a few interviewees revealed that they had followed family members into becoming LDS. However,

most Polish LDS that I encountered seemed to be the only LDS in their families, although more Polish family networks may have existed beneath the surface.

10.6 LDS religious paths

After baptism, new Polish LDS members develop different levels of commitment. My research suggests that the Warsaw LDS try to make new converts more committed through encouraging them to continue having lessons with missionaries, to regularly attend Sunday meetings, and to read more LDS scripture. If new converts respond well, they may be directed towards doing a temple preparation course and family history research. However, few Polish converts become CTGs with many developing into LAs or alternating between periods of temple-going and non-temple going. When converts receive more LDS religious teachings, some may doubt them, because, as the rational agency theory from section 2.1 suggests, active-minded recruits/converts assess religious teachings/practices and their and other people's actions inside religious communities, which may stunt commitment. Nonetheless, LDS converts who survive an early post-baptismal stage may co-create their religious identities with fellow LDS members inside the Warsaw branches. They may adapt/reconstruct their conversion stories long after becoming LDS, with their pre-LDS indiscretions being reviewed negatively to strengthen the value of their new religious views (Heirich 1977 in Gooren 2007: 340; Snow and Machalek 1983 in Gooren 2007: 343; Stromberg 2014: 130-131; Steigenga 2014: 413 etc.). Thus, LDS religiosity may become more valued as converts more strongly devalue their pre-LDS lives.

Second, my research points towards Polish recruits mainly encountering the BOM and sometimes the Bible, plus some general Christian and unique LDS teachings, before LDS baptism, and more of the D&C/POGP and unique LDS teachings after baptism. Some converts may prefer to continue reading the BOM and Bible rather than the D&C/POGP, which may incline them towards becoming LAs rather than temple-goers. Despite this, reading the D&C may strengthen some converts' belief in the BOM being God-given scripture and Joseph Smith being a latter-day prophet. Such converts may value the D&C's focus on Joseph Smith, early LDS Church history, and temple rituals as an appropriate introduction to post-baptismal LDS religiosity. Converts may also encounter unique LDS teachings while reading the POGP, although some may view the latter as contrived/inauthentic scripture, which may prompt them to doubt LDS religiosity altogether. However, when converts become CTGs, they may value the D&C/POGP for taking LDS religiosity

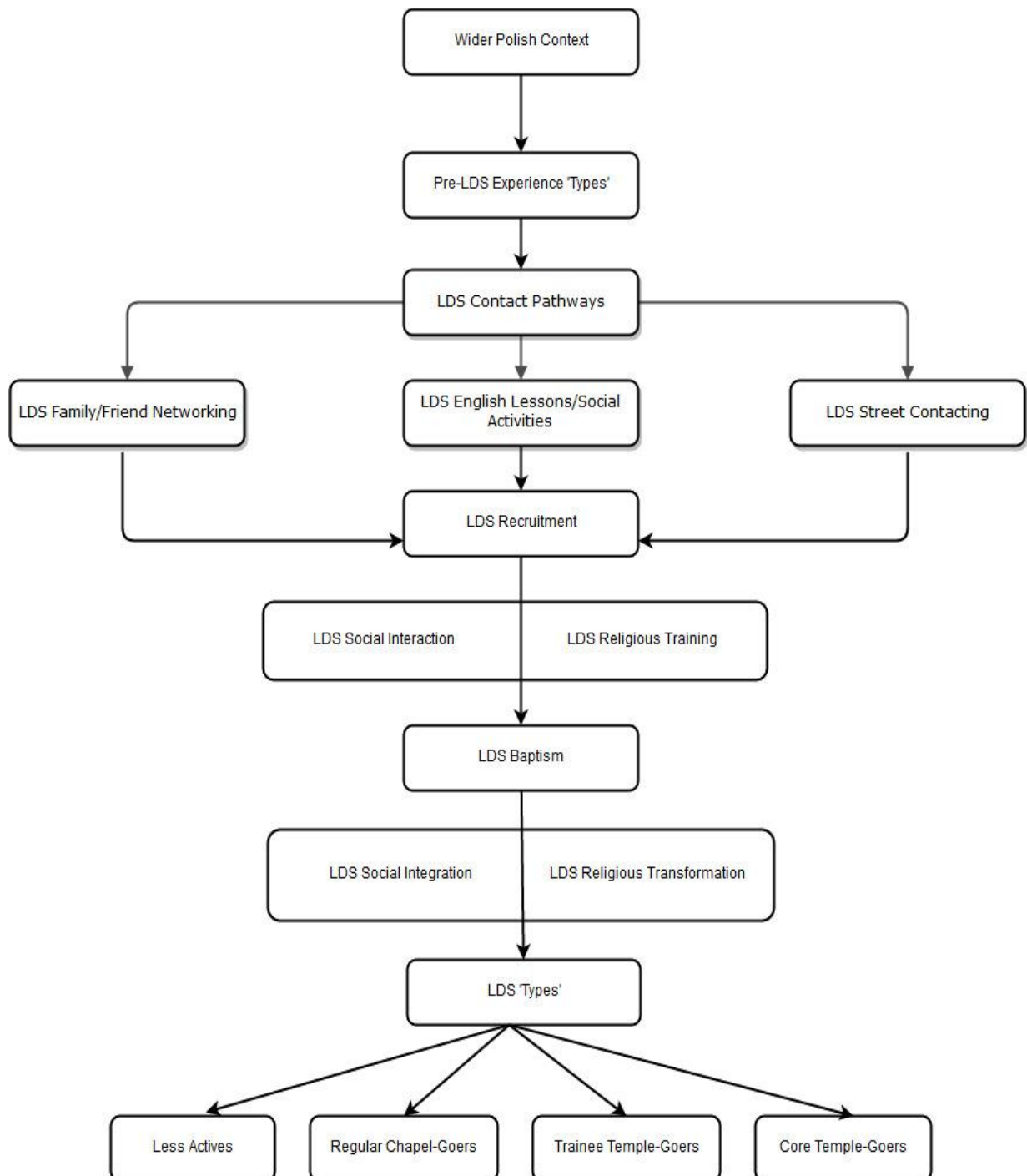
away from a BOM and mainstream Christian message of gaining salvation to another level where “covenant-making temple ritual” is performed by divinity-seeking people (Davies, D.J. 2003: 34-35). Thus, LAs may prefer salvation-seeking, chapel religiosity which resembles mainstream Christianity, while CTGs more value godhood-seeking, temple religiosity.

Polish converts will almost certainly accept more unique LDS teachings if they become CTGs. Temple preparation lessons and family history research, with the latter being fascinating in-itself, prepare new LDS converts for doing baptism of the dead for deceased relatives. If the converts do temple preparation classes and build their family trees well, they will be interviewed by Warsaw LDS branch leaders to see if they are worthy enough to enter the temple. At such temple recommend interviews, they may be questioned about their WOW practice, tithing payment, branch callings, acceptance of LDS beliefs etc. This questioning process may highlight that converts become submissive while being monitored, nurtured, and immersed into LDS roles by established members (Long and Hadden 1983 in Gooren 2007: 340-341). If their interviews are successful, LDS converts will be rewarded with temple entrance, when LDS control may tighten as converts devote more time to digesting LDS beliefs/practices, and possibly become more detached from non-LDS contacts. Thus, at the temple entrance stage, serious-minded Polish LDS converts may strongly commit themselves to LDS religiosity and modify their behaviour/thinking to become accepted as authentic converts by CTGs.

During Freiberg Temple trips, new Polish temple-goers will start doing baptism/confirmation of the dead, and may gain higher temple status through receiving eternal marriage and the endowment for themselves and deceased relatives. My research shows that some LAs went beyond doing baptism/confirmation of the dead during sole trips to the temple which may suggest that this fast-tracking approach is not always successful for producing long-term temple-goers. LDS converts may view higher temple rites as strange or as a mystical progression towards religious fulfilment. Temple-goers may value receiving eternal marriage, developing eternal families, and receiving the endowment in pursuit of becoming gods themselves. However, my research highlights that temple marriage can end in divorce, possibly through spouses coming together too hastily. In contrast, young single people who are preparing for LDS missions may feel strengthened through engaging in temple activity. Despite this, (especially younger) LDS converts may be anxious about receiving the endowment, as they may sense that their actions will be more strictly monitored, judged, and punished, although some may just view this as a spiritual challenge to gain higher religious identity.

10.7 Polish LDS recruitment/conversion

The diagram below shows my general overview of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion:



Within this overview, the wider Polish social world, pre-LDS background, and LDS interaction and religious training can all be seen to influence LDS recruitment/conversion. Significant underlying factors related to these issues include:

<u>Wider Social World</u> - Secularisation may encourage non-Catholic religious growth, while the Catholic Church opposes it - Alienation may prompt identity crisis and openness to religious recruitment - Big urban areas offer many non-Catholic religious options - Resistance to Catholic and secular worlds prompts or arises from LDS involvement - Personal development/new identity may be pursued with a new religion - The LDS may not overtly criticise the Catholic world to avoid offending some recruits/converts	<u>Pre-LDS Background</u> - Young age (limited life experience) and one-parent upbringing may encourage LDS baptism and CTG status - Lower socio-economic status and older age may block CTG status - Professional experience/social skills may encourage benefit seeking with the LDS - Deprivation and heterodox views may encourage LA status - Staunch Catholic experience and free-riding may encourage LTI status - Average Catholic experience may encourage LDS baptism and CTG status
<u>LDS Networking</u> - Gaining a sense of acceptance/belonging through making LDS friends - Fear of losing YM friendship may help prompt LDS baptism - Investing time/energy in an LDS counter-cultural move - Being impressed with and emulating American LDS friendliness/openness - Accepting an LDS control factor through seeing long-term rewards ahead - Outgoing personality and smart appearance helping LDS career development - Negotiating conflicts inside the Warsaw LDS world and with non-LDS - Creating distance from the non-LDS world through becoming CTGs	<u>LDS Religious Training</u> - Gaining new religious convictions/life meaning - Resisting or accepting LDS religious teachings/practices - Experiencing inner conflict over valuing pre-LDS or LDS outlooks - Overcoming a sense of guilt at leaving a non-LDS life behind - Receiving a sense of religious development - Recruitment extending mainstream Christian experience - Conversion involving temple preparation/activity - CTGs becoming orthodox converts; TTGs trainee orthodox converts; LAs heterodox/hybrid converts; and LTIs curiosity-seekers,

- Disillusionment/disappearance through LDS friendships breaking down	sceptics, and free-riders

Furthermore, Girard's scapegoating concept may come into play, as conflicts between individuals and groups arise through people desiring what others desire and have inside the Warsaw LDS world, with, for example, CTGs uniting to blame LAs and/or LTIs for creating disunity (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-14).

Of course, the pre-LDS background issue is related to the wider Polish social world, as pre-LDS outlooks are formed there. The table below highlights how different recruit types from the wider Polish social world may get involved with the LDS and become different types of LDS converts or LTIs:

<u>Recruit Types</u>	<u>Prompt for LDS Involvement</u>	<u>Prompt for Becoming Convert Types/LTIs</u>
1. Religious seekers/ Believers without belonging	Curiosity/Trying to fill a religious void	May become LAs through having eclectic religious experience
2. Young, geographically/ socially mobile people	LDS interaction	May become TTGs/CTGs through seeking long-term rewards
3. Lukewarm religious people	LDS interaction	May become LAs through lacking strong religious experience and not seeking long-term benefits
4. Healthy lifestyle people	Valuing the WOW	May become CTGs through not requiring big lifestyle changes
5. Unhealthy lifestyle people	Seeking better health	May become LAs through not developing big lifestyle changes
6. Unsuccessful people	Seeking compensation for unfulfilled lives	May become LAs through lacking long-term discipline
7. People with divorced parents	Valuing a sense of family belonging	May become CTGs through sensing long-term acceptance
8. Average religious people	Seeking more fulfilling religiosity	May become CTGs through believing the LDS extend their previous religious experience

9. Staunch religious people	Religious curiosity	May become LTIs through pre-LDS religious experience not being devalued
10. Free-riders	Seeking rewards/benefits	May become LTIs through avoiding LDS member sacrifice
11. Older professional people	LDS interaction/WOW	May become LAs through not seeking temple-goer status
12. Psychologically ill people	Seeking help/sympathy	May become LAs through their situations

Thus, such background factors as age, geographical/social mobility, deprivation, benefit seeking, and religious seeking may incline people towards different levels of LDS involvement. For me, age is a prime factor, as young people with limited life experience may not be strongly attached to the Catholic and secular worlds in Poland, so they may join the LDS Church and rise through its ranks by seeking and acquiring benefits as a lifetime adventure. While doing this, young converts may imitate and compete against each other to attain interesting LDS life adventures, intensifying a sense that what they are doing is right (Girard 1979/in Williams, ed., 1996/2000: 7-9).

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Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Main Issue Focus)

Social Issue Questions

	Pre-LDS Background/ Experience	LDS Interaction/ Networking	LDS Religious Training	Wider Polish Social World
A1) Have you always been interested in religion and theology? Why/Why not? Czy zawsze był/a Pan/Pani zainteresowana religią i teologią? Dlaczego?/Dlaczego nie?	X			
A2) When you started to convert to the LDS faith, were there any unfamiliar/unusual things that attracted you towards the LDS religion? Kiedy rozpoczął Pan proces nawracania się na wiarę Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich, czy były tam jakieś nieznanne/niezwykłe rzeczy które przyciągały Pana/ Panią do tej religii?		X	X	
A3) What do you experience in terms of Christian social participation with the LDS? Jak wygląda Pana/Pani doświadczenie z chrześcijańskim życiem towarzyskim w Kościele Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?		X		
A4) Do you feel different about other people and how do you think they feel about you since you joined the LDS?	X	X		X

Czy teraz widzi Pan/Pani ludzi w inny sposób i jakie ma Pan/Pani odczucia na temat tego co inni ludzie myślą o Panu/Pani od kiedy Pan/Pani stała się członkiem Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?				
A5) How do you feel about being obedient to God's laws through the LDS religion? Co Pan/Pani myśli o postępowaniu zgodnie z Bożymi prawami poprzez religię Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?	X		X	
A6) Have you ever felt a need to find a way of defeating alcohol? Why/Why not? Czy kiedykolwiek czuł/a Pan/Pani potrzebę, żeby znaleźć sposób na walkę z alkoholem? Dlaczego/Dlaczego nie?	X			
A7) Do you feel that your faith in the LDS religion has helped you with any big problems in life? Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że wiara w religię Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich pomógł Panu/pomogła Pani kiedyś w rozwiązywaniu jakichś poważnych problemów życiowych?	X	X		
A8) What is your impression of male and female roles in LDS culture? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o roli mężczyzny i kobiety w kulturze Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?		X		
A9) What is your impression of the role of the family in LDS culture? Jaka jest Pana/Pani opinia na temat roli rodziny w kulturze Kościoła Jezusa		X		

Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?					
A10) What is your impression of LDS church music (e.g. the Mormon Tabernacle Choir)?		X			
Co Pan/Pani sądzi na temat muzyki Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich (np. Mormoński Chór Tabernakulum)?					
What is your impression of contemporary LDS music?		X			
Co Pan/Pani sądzi na temat współczesnej muzyki, którą tworzą członkowie Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?					
A11) Do you believe that the LDS religion is absolutely (100%) true?					
Czy wierzy Pan/Pani, że religia Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich jest absolutnie (w 100%) prawdziwa?					
A12) What were your impressions of the baptism lessons and meetings with the LDS missionaries?		X			
Jakie były Pana/Pani wrażenie z lekcji przed chrztem, oraz spotkań z misjonarzami Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?					
A13) Do you feel that nowadays, since the fall of communism, people have more freedom to choose their own religion in Poland? Why/Why not?					X
Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że dzisiaj, po upadku komunizmu, ludzie mają więcej swobody w wyborze religii w Polsce? Dlaczego?/Dlaczego nie?					
A14) Do you feel that more Polish people will become interested in different					X

religions with there no longer being a Polish Pope? Why/Why not? Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że teraz, kiedy nie ma już Papieża Polaka, więcej ludzi w Polsce zainteresuje się innymi religiami? Dlaczego?/Dlaczego nie?					
A15) Do you feel that the politically correct (multicultural-type) ideology of the European Union may be having an effect on Poland's traditional culture? Why/Why not? Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że ideologia politycznej poprawności/wielokulturowości w Unii Europejskiej może mieć jakiś wpływ na tradycyjną, Polską kulturę? Dlaczego?/Dlaczego nie?					X

Religion-Centred Questions

	Pre-LDS Background	LDS Religious Training
R1) At first, what did you find fascinating about the LDS faith? Co fascynującego znalazła Pan/Pani w religii Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?		X
R2) How do you feel about the LDS belief in the pre-existence of souls? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o wierze Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich w istnienie duszy przed narodzeniem człowieka? How do you feel about the LDS practice of baptism of the dead? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o praktyce udzielania chrztu zmarłym przez Kościół Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich? How do you feel about the LDS belief in having a direct/personal relationship with God the Father? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o wierze Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich w bezpośredni/personalny związek z Bogiem Ojcem?		X
R3) How do you feel about the LDS agency doctrine? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o doktrynie Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich o wolnej woli? How do you feel about the LDS Godhead doctrine? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o doktrynie Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich o Boskiej		X

Trójcy?			
R4) How do you feel about the LDS concept of baptism? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o koncepcji chrztu w Kościele Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?			X
R5) Before joining the LDS, were you looking for something more from (your previous) religion? Zanim wstąpił/a Pan/Pani do Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich, czy szukał/a Pan/Pani czegoś więcej w (swojej poprzedniej) religii?	X		
R6) Did you previously believe in transubstantiation? Czy przedtem wierzył/a Pan/Pani w transsubstancjację?	X		
R7) How much did you believe in your previous religion? Jak bardzo wierzył/a Pan/Pani w poprzednią religię?	X		
R8) How do you feel about the themes and literary quality of the Book of Mormon? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o tematyce i wartościach literackich Księgi Mormona? How you feel about the themes and literary quality of the Doctrine and Covenants? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o tematyce i wartościach literackich Nauk i Przymierzy? How do you feel about the themes and literary quality of the Pearl of Great Price? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o tematyce i wartościach literackich Perły Wielkiej Wartości?			X X X
R9) How do you feel about the LDS concept of the testimony? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o koncepcji świadectwo w Kościele Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich? Have you ever received a testimony?			X X

Czy kiedykolwiek otrzymał/a Pan/Pani świadectwo?		
R10) What are your impressions of LDS temples? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o świątyniach Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich? How do you feel about the ordinances that take place inside LDS temples? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o obrzędach w świątyniach Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?		X X
R11) How do you feel about the LDS apostasy doctrine? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o doktrynie odstępstwa w Kościele Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich? How do you feel about the LDS restoration doctrine? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o doktrynie przywrócenia w Kościele Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?		X X
R12) How do you feel about Joseph Smith? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o Józefie Smith? How do you feel about Brigham Young and other LDS leaders? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o Brighamie Young i innych liderach Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich?		X X
R13) What do you think about the congregation's participation at Sunday Sacrament meetings? Co Pan/Pani sądzi o uczestnictwie kongregacji w cotygodniowych spotkaniach Sakramentalnych? How do you feel about receiving speeches from members of the congregation?		X X

Co Pan/Pani sądzi o uczestnictwie kongregacji w cotygodniowych spotkaniach Sakramentalnych?		
R14) What does the Sunday Sacrament mean to you? Why? Co znaczy dla Pana/Pani niedzielny Sakramencie? Dlaczego?		X
R15) Which have been your most memorable Sunday Sacrament meetings? Why? Które z niedzielnych spotkań Sakramentalnych były dla Pana/Pani najbardziej pozostające w pamięci? Dlaczego?		X
R16) Do you feel that there are any deep similarities between the LDS faith and your previous religion? Why/Why not? Czy uważa Pan/Pani, że są jakieś głębokie podobieństwa pomiędzy wiarą Kościoła Jezusa Chrystusa Świętych w Dniach Ostatnich i Pana/Pani poprzednią religią? Dlaczego?/Dlaczego nie?	X	

Appendix 2: Examples of Religion-Centred and Social Issue Questions Used

e.g.

R1 = Religion-Centred Question 1

S2-3 = Social Issue Questions 2-3

R11 (x 2) = 2 features/parts of Religion-Centred Question 11

<u>Polish Converts</u>	<u>Pre-LDS Background/Experience</u>	<u>LDS Interaction/Networking</u>	<u>LDS Religious Training</u>	<u>Wider Polish Social World</u>
Stefan (Wolska)	S5-6, R5 (x2), R6, R16, S1	S2-3, 5-6, 8, 10, 12	R2 (x3), R8 (x2), R3 (x2), R4, R11 (x2), R13-14, S11	S13-15
Gabriela (Wolska)	S1, R5-6, R16	S3, 9-10	S11, R2 (x2), R3 (x2), R4, R8 (x3), R9 (x2), R10, R11 (x2), R12 (x2)	S13, S15
Alicja (Wierzbno/Racławicka)	S1, S4-6, R5-6, R16	S 2-3, 7-10, 12	S11, R1, R2 (x2), R3 (x2), R4, R8 (x3), R9, R10 (x2), R12-14	S13-15
Paweł (Wierzbno/Racławicka)	S1, S5-6, R6, R16	S3, S8, S10 (x2)	R2 (x3), R3 (x2), R4, R8 (x3), R9,10 (x2), R11 (x2), R12	S14-15

Appendix 3: Interview Coding System Excerpt (Religious Search Theme from the Pre-LDS Background Main Issue)

Theme/Topic	Sub-Themes	Dimensions/Features
2 nd Theme: Religious Searches	(ii) Seeking the Bible	<u>Stefan</u>: In his mid-20s, he had sensed something missing, had only read parts of New Testament from Bible/bought Polish Bible, read it one Easter/Christmas searching for religious purpose/different relationship with God <u>Romuald</u>: Had attended Mass and learnt about Ten Commandments/started viewing things differently reading Bible, especially New Testament/found spirit of scripture, early Church organisation and duties in Bible/hadn't found these in Catholic Church, Mass hadn't affected him beyond Sunday <u>Martyna</u>: Had been reading/believed in Bible when Catholic <u>Patrycja</u>: Got famous version of Bible from daughter or work with sentence containing idea that God/Jesus/Holy Ghost were separate entities <u>Szymon</u>: His mother bought him Bible when Catholic priest had said he would go to hell for not attending Catholic Religion lessons at school/first tried showing Bible was false, but became fascinated writing articles about Christianity, especially St. Francis of Assisi/had still read Bible when Buddhist
	(v) Looking at Non-Catholic Churches	<u>Celina</u>: Stressed that if people believe in God, they should follow what they believe is the one true religion <u>Stefan</u>: Has an 'only one Church can be true' view/rejects relativist views as alternatives to absolute assertions about religious truth/believes that one, universal way of learning religious truth is praying directly to God/looked at other Churches while attending Catholic Mass/invited by friends, he'd gone to non-Catholic churches, not looking for new religion <u>Szymon</u>: Had encountered Jehovah's Witnesses/Seventh-Day Adventists/Pentecostals during long religious search <u>Patrycja</u>: Knew about Jehovah's Witnesses/Seventh-Day Adventists/Catholics through mixed religious background/had always sensed all religions were similar/her ex-husband knew Baptist religion from childhood through Baptist grandmother/they'd gone to Baptist chapel, had two daughters there during early marriage/Baptist minister had done her shopping as she'd been unemployed and her husband had

		drunk heavily/had found prayers in different languages funny at Baptist Church <u>Józef</u>: Hadn't been impressed by members and missionaries of Churches he'd met/but if he'd met Amish before LDS, he might be Amish now
	(vi) Looking at Buddhism	<u>Barbara</u>: Had been interested in Buddhism, reading books, not going anywhere <u>Alicja</u>: While she was young, her parents had practised Buddhism/had been curious about some family friends having different religions <u>Józef</u>: Had always respected Buddhists for their strong morality <u>Szymon</u>: Believed his brother was first unofficial Buddhist in Poland/his mother bought him a paper with picture of Buddha on front/had contacted a mountain village community of Polish Buddhists where he'd found out about Buddhists in Warsaw/had contacted a famous Polish Buddhist psychoanalyst/claimed to have started teaching about Buddhism at 17 despite no official initiation into Hinduism or Buddhism/had written about Buddhism/Hinduism/Christianity/Islam as an intellectual, non-spiritual process
	(vii) Looking at Islam/Judaism	<u>Michał</u>: Previous interest in monotheistic religions: Catholicism/Islam/Judaism <u>Weronika</u>: Once read about Jewish religion <u>Szymon</u>: Had visited a mosque in Warsaw many times/really liked the Koran, valuing Islam as a monotheistic religion
	(viii) Looking at Esoteric Religions	<u>Alina</u>: Previously member of a Church opposite to any Christian Church, Anton LaVey's Church of Satan <u>Barbara</u>: Had attended Rosicrucian meetings and lessons for a few months/similar to LDS religion, it had many lay people/had decided to become Rosicrucian, was turned down for membership at interview/decided to stop attending Rosicrucian meetings

Appendix 4: Recruitment Path Theme from the LDS Social Interaction Main Issue

CTGs

<u>Name/Sub-Theme</u>	<u>1. Family/Friends</u>	<u>2. Free English Lessons</u>	<u>3. Meeting Missionaries on the Street</u>
Stefan	(i) <u>Non-LDS Friend</u> Polish friend led him to YFMs in Los Angeles		
Dawid		Met missionaries at English lessons in Łódź or Warsaw	
Martyna	(ii) <u>LDS Family</u> Her sister led her to Sunday meetings and missionaries in Łódź		
Bruno			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries there
Radek			(ii) <u>Other Polish City</u> Met missionaries in Kraków
Lech	(ii) <u>LDS Family</u> His sisters led him to missionaries in Łódź		
Wojciech			
Zofia	(iii) <u>LDS Friend</u>		

	Her friend discussed LDS religiosity and led her to older missionaries in Warsaw		
Michał		(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries there	
Alicja			
Romuald			
Marek		(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries there	
Marysia			

TTGs

<u>Name/Sub-Theme</u>	<u>1: Family/Friends</u>	<u>2: Free English Lessons</u>	<u>3: Meeting Missionaries on the Street</u>
Jola	(ii) <u>LDS Family</u> Her mother led her as a child to missionaries at Sunday meetings in Warsaw		
Weronika		Met missionaries after English lesson in Warsaw	
Dagmara			
Damian			(iii) <u>Abroad</u> Met missionaries through them knocking on his door in Basingstoke, UK
Celina			(ii) <u>Other Polish City</u> Met missionaries through playing volleyball in Szczecin

Las

<u>Name/Sub-Theme</u>	<u>1: Family/Friends</u>	<u>2: Free English Lessons</u>	<u>3: Meeting Missionaries on the Street</u>
Edyta			
Barbara	(iii) <u>LDS Friend</u> Her LDS workmate led her to missionaries at Wolska American guest speaker event		
Gabriela		Met missionaries after her children's English lessons in Warsaw	
Franciszek	(i) <u>Non-LDS Friend</u> Friend told him about LDS giving away BOM in Warsaw		
Alina		Met missionaries after English lessons in Warsaw	
Paweł			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Read about LDS religiosity for many years before meeting missionaries in Warsaw
Józef			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries there

Patrycja				(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met an English LDS woman at a nursery where she had worked, attended one LDS meeting/Many years later, met missionaries near her home
Szymon				(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries, received LDS scripture/met other missionaries many years later

LTIs

<u>Name/Sub-Theme</u>	<u>1: Family/Friends</u>	<u>2: Free English Lessons</u>	<u>3: Meeting Missionaries on the Street</u>
Witek			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries many years ago
Adam	(iv) <u>Non-LDS Family</u> His father led him to LDS at Wolska many years ago		
Maczek			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries some years ago
Bogusław			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met missionaries some years ago
Tomasz			(i) <u>Warsaw</u> Met two YMs near Wierzbno metro station a year ago

Appendix 5: Sunday School Lessons for Recruits/Recent Converts, April-June 2011

Wolska 23-04-11

Theme	2 YMM hosts at front of chapel hall. <u>Pokuta (Repentance/Atonement)</u>
Main Participants	Polish male recruit (returned from Slovenia) with YMM YFM wearing white dress/long fair hair/designer eyelashes with recently baptised Polish woman/8-year-old daughter Roman (Polish LTI) Polish, middle-aged/male recruit
Religious Resources	“Ewangelia Jezusa Chrystusa”/“The Gospel of Jesus Christ” official LDS leaflet (https://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/polish/pdf/language-materials/01134_pol.pdf?lang=pol accessed 25-02-18) BOM/Bible
Reading Tasks	Roman read first part of leaflet Group read/analysed part of BOM Leaflet read by Polish male recruit (Slovenia)/2 YFMs/Roman/Polish middle-aged, male recruit
Whiteboard	Hosts put features of Atonement/Repentance in Polish on whiteboard: Uznajesz (You acknowledge) Przestajesz (You stop) Wyznajesz (You confess) Dokonujesz rekompensaty (You amend/compensate)

	Przestrzeganie Przykazań (You follow the commandments) Uznajesz moc Zbawiciela (You acknowledge the Saviour's power)
Bible Reading	Polish male recruit (Slovenia) read Luke 14: 15-17 Roman tried to dominate analysis, but recently baptised, Polish female convert kept challenging him
Final Prayer	Polish male recruit (Slovenia)

Theme	<u>Wolność Wyboru (Free Agency) from <i>Zasady ewangelii</i> (2009)/<i>Gospel Principles</i> (1978/2009), Chapter 4</u> Hosted by a young Polish female LDS host in a side-room
Participants	3 YMMs/2 YFMs Polish/male LTI interviewee (Maczek) 2 recruits: Ukrainian young man; middle-aged wife of Polish male convert 4 YSA members (Jola/Celina/Damian/female who later served a mission in Romania/Moldova) Recent convert (teenage daughter of Polish male convert) Reactivated female interviewee (Patrycja) Long-term/male LDS from Democratic Republic of Congo
Positions	YMs and YSA members mixed in with recruits/recent converts
Opening Prayer	Damian
Main Activity	Jola/Damian gave model-type answers to questions about agency.

Raławicka 26-06-11

Lesson Themes	<u>Duch Święty (The Holy Ghost)/Jesus Putting God's Operations into Practice</u> Recently baptised, Polish female YSA host (served mission in Romania/Moldova later)
Participants	2 YFMs 8 Recruits: Paweł's daughter/elderly Polish man/middle-aged Polish woman/young Polish man/2 adult Polish men/adult Polish woman/Ukrainian young man LTI (Maczek) 2 recent converts (Mongolian woman and middle-aged Polish man) 2 YSA converts (Celina/Damian) Long-term, male LDS from Democratic Republic of Congo
Scripture Focus	2nd Book of Nephi 2: 14-25, BOM Book of Moses 5: 1-9, POGP D&C 20: 38; 130: 22; 11: 12-14
Scripture Reading	Polish, middle-aged, female recruit read scripture three times, Damian once, with YFM speaking after each reading Recently baptised, Polish, middle-aged, male convert and Polish, adult, male recruit did scripture readings
Central Message	Host stressed the importance of gaining testimony of Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost
6. Final Reading	Maczek read from a text by Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. (LDS Church President 1970-1972)

Theme	<u>The Spirit World</u>	
Participants	2 YMM hosts at front of chapel hall 2 YFMs Recently baptised, Polish female convert (with young daughter) Young and middle-aged Polish male recruits with YFM Old Polish, male reactivated convert	
Whiteboard	YMMs did drawings representing LDS concepts: Zasłona (curtain/veil between Earth and spirit world) Duch Święty (the Holy Ghost) Adam i Ewa (Adam/Eve) Rodziny (Families) Przykazań (the Commandments) Zadośćuczynienie (the Atonement)	
Scripture Reading	Recently baptised, Polish female convert read from the BOM and answered many questions	
Interaction	2 YMMs, recently baptised Polish female convert, and YFM discussed the ideas on the whiteboard	
Final Prayer	Middle-aged, Polish male recruit	

Appendix 6: Male LDS Baptising Polish Recruits

<u>Polish Recruits Baptised/Branch</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Baptiser</u>
1. Weronika (W/R)	Sunday 10-2-08, 6.00-7.15pm	American YMM (Weronika's favourite from non-Warsaw branch)
2. Middle-aged female (W)	Saturday 3-01-09, 6.00-7.00pm	YMM
3. Patrycja (W/R)	Saturday 10-01-09, 4.00-5.00pm	American YMM (Patrycja's favourite from non-Warsaw branch)
4. Elderly female (W)	Saturday 31-01-09, 6.00-7.00pm	American YMM
5. Damian (W/R)	Saturday 5-09-09, 5.00-6.00pm	President Engbjerg
6. Middle-aged male (W)	Thursday 1-10-09, 6.00-7.00pm	American YMM
7. Radek's future wife (W)	Saturday 13-02-10, 6.00-7.15pm	American YMM
8. Famous male musician/his teenage daughter (W/R)	Saturday 8-05-10, 6.00-8.00pm	2 American YMMs
9. Middle-aged couple (W/R)	Saturday 23-10-10, 4.00-5.15pm	President Harding (W/R)
10. Mother/daughter (W); husband/wife LTIs (W/R)	Saturday 19-02-11, 6.00-8.00pm	Stefan (W) baptised mother/daughter; Romuald (W/R) husband/wife
11. Elderly male (W)	Saturday 28-04-12, 5.00-6.15pm	Stefan
12. Middle-aged male (W)	Saturday 26-01-13, 12.00-12.45pm	Recently baptised Polish male convert (W) baptised his friend
13. Elderly female (W)	Saturday 13-04-13, 2.00-3.15pm	African, long-term member (W)

Appendix 7: LDS Baptisms of Three Convert Interviewees

a) Weronika (Wierzbno): 6.00-7.15 pm/Sunday 10-02-08

Baptised Person's Clothing	White trousers/top
YFM Attention	2 YFMs stood with Weronika in Wolska hallway
Baptism	Performed by Weronika's favourite YMM from non-Warsaw branch
Baptism Aftermath	4-5 hymns sung before Weronika/2 YFMs returned to hall
Weronika's Testimony	A few tearful/incoherent words in Polish
Video	General Christian video about Jesus being saviour with Romuald (W/R) translating into Polish
YFM Attention	Sister Engbjerg/4 YFMs gave Weronika flowers in the hallway
Non-LDS Family	Weronika's mother was crying/her father smiling during the baptism event

b) Patrycja (Wierzbno): 4.00-5.00pm/Saturday 10-01-09

Wierzbno Female LDS Support	Patrycja arrived with Marysia (W/R) Marysia and Jola's mother (W/R) offered Patrycja support during the service
Non-LDS Family	Family members/ex-husband absent
Older American Missionary	Sister Bulkely (W/R) talked about Patrycja getting baptised to engage with POS
Opening Hymn	"Duch Boży Jak Płomień Najświętszy" ("The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning")
Older American Missionary	Elder Bulkely (W/R) spoke about receiving kindness visiting Patrycja's home
YMM	Elder Mehner talked about Hans Christian Andersen fairytales helping Patrycja go through with baptism Had observed her growing in LDS religion, believed that Heavenly Father was smiling on her through her baptism decision Stressed the importance of her receiving the Holy Ghost through confirmation at Wierzbno the next day, and taking the Sunday Sacrament to remember her baptism Viewed Patrycja as one of the nicest, most visual people he had met Stressed that Patrycja, a former smoker, should keep her body beautiful like a temple
YMM Music	One YMM played the piano, three sang
Baptism	Matt Jones (YMM, Białystok branch) baptised Patrycja Before the immersion, Patrycja looked towards Elder Bulkely
Video	2 YFMs showed a video about Jesus' life with mainstream Christian themes, some BOM events
Patrycja's Return to Hall	After 20 minutes away with Marysia, Patrycja sat with Józef (W/R)
Patrycja's Testimony	She joked about deciding to get baptised because Elder Jones became the Białystok Branch President.
Final Prayer	In Polish, by tall/fair-haired/American YMM who had been Catholic until 18.

c) Damian (Wierzbno): 5.00-6.00pm/Saturday 5-09-09

Welcoming Party	Radek (Wolska) and American YMM greeted arrivals in the Wolska hallway
Main Participant Clothing	Damian and President Engbjerg wore white shirts/ties, sat in the central front pew
Non-LDS Family	Damian's mother (became LDS later on) and sister sat with German YFM
Speech: Polish Female from YSA (W/R)	Smiled at Damian speaking about joining a big LDS family.
Violin Version of "I Am a Child of God" Hymn	By recent English male convert recruited at Wierzbno by YFM (known for drawing young males to baptism)
Wierzbno/Racławicka Female Support	Patrycja/Marysia/Jola's Mother (W/R)
Host Józef (W/R)	Introduced speakers/gave quick speech
Baptism	Damian was gently immersed by President Engbjerg at the second attempt
Video	YMs showed video about Joseph Smith's First Vision
Damian's Testimony	Spoke quietly in Polish in a suit/tie
Hymn	"Bóg Moim Ojcem Jest" ("I Am a Child of God")

Appendix 8: Background Information about Long-Term Investigator Interviewees

<u>Name/Branch</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>	<u>Age at Interview</u>	<u>Age at Initial LDS Contact</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>
1. Witek (W)	20-12-08	49	Mid-30s	Professional singer/unemployed	Single
2. Maczek (W/R)	15-08-10	28	22	MA in Theology/bank cashier/ financial advisor	Single
3. Tomasz (W/R)	2-09-10	42	41	Animal sanctuary worker	Single
4. Bogusław (W/R)	30-10-10	47	40	MA in Theology/Religion teacher in state schools/unemployed	Single
5. Adam (W)	5-11-10	60	45	English teacher in state school	Divorced/Single

Appendix 9: LDS Convert Interviewee Types

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Core Temple-Goers</u>	<u>Trainee Temple-Goers</u>	<u>Less Actives</u>
Wolska	<u>Male</u> Bruno/Dawid/Lech/Radek/ Stefan/Wojciech <u>Female</u> Martyna/Zofia		<u>Temple-Experienced</u> Franciszek (Male) Barbara/Edyta/Gabriela (Female)
Wierzbno/Racławicka	<u>Male</u> Marek/Michał/Romuald <u>Female</u> Alicja/Marysia	<u>Male</u> Damian <u>Female</u> Celina/Dagmara/Jola/Weronika	<u>Temple-Experienced</u> Paweł (Male)/Alina (Female) <u>Non-Temple Experienced</u> Józef/Szymon (Male)/Patrycja (Female)

Appendix 10: Convert Interviewee Background Information

Wolska

<u>Name/Sex/Convert Type</u>	<u>Baptism Age</u>	<u>Interview Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Marital Status When Interviewed</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
1. Stefan (Male CTG)	Late 20s	48	Construction equipment salesman	Divorced from inactive LDS wife with 2 sons	6-03-08/27-03-09
2. Dawid (Male CTG)	25	35	Electronics engineer	Married to CTG wife with two children	16-03-08/24-05-09
3. Edyta (Female LA)	40	43	Bank worker	Married to LA husband with two children	16-03-08
4. Barbara (Female LA)	39	40	Care assistant	Engaged to CTG from Wierzbno/Raclawicka	20-07-08
5. Gabriela (Female LA)	49	54	Plastic factory worker for 30 years/on sick leave	Married to non-LDS husband with two pre-teenage children	3-08-08
6. Bruno (Male CTG)	32	42	Handyman/driver/farmer/ electro-technician	Single	10-08-08
7. Radek (Male CTG)	22	27	Student	Single	14-09-08
8. Lech (Male CTG)	13	30	Consultancy worker (care worker in Britain for a year later)	Single (with young son from past, unmarried relationship)	21-06-09
9. Martyna (Female CTG)	16	35	LDS Church translator	Married to CTG husband with two children	18-10-09
10. Franciszek (Male LA)	About 17	About 37	Works for Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw University	Single with non-LDS girlfriend	1-08-10
11./12. Wojciech/Zofia (Male and Female CTGs)	Early 20s	Mid-40s	Wojciech = businessman/Zofia = manicurist	Married CTG couple with 2 young adult daughters	15-08-10

Wierzbno/Raławicka

<u>Name/Sex/Convert Type</u>	<u>LDS Baptism Age</u>	<u>Interview Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Marital Status When Interviewed</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
1. Alicja (Female CTG)	20	25	Assistant store manager	Engaged to American, former YMM in Poland	10-02-08
2. Michał (Male CTG)	38	42	Care assistant for disabled person	Single (became engaged to recent LDS female convert soon after)	17-02-08
3. Jola (Female TTG)	9	23	Lawyer's assistant	Single	23-02-08
4. Romuald (Male CTG)	25	Mid-40s	Manager at Warsaw hotel	Single	2-03-08
5. Marek (Male CTG)	27	32	Immigration Office Director	Single	20-04-08
6. Alina (Female LA)	20	25	Unemployed	Single	3-05-08
7. Marysia (Female CTG)	21	35	Public administration worker	Single	21-09-08
8. Weronika (Female TTG)	30	31	Shop assistant	Single	28-09-08
9. Dagmara (Female TTG)	16	17	Secondary school student	Single	13-10-08
10. Paweł (Male LA)	54	61	Engineer/previously racing car driver and film stuntman	Single parent with two teenage daughters	23-11-08
11. Damian (Male TTG)	18	19	Student	Single	30-05-10

12. Józef (Male LA)	50	55	Econometrist	Married with Catholic wife and daughter	5-11-10
13. Patrycja (Female LA)	51	52	Nursery worker	Divorced with two adult children	26-11-10
14. Szymon (Male LA)	47	47	Novel and film script writer/ film producer/commercial advisor	Single	8-01-12
15. Celina (Female TTG)	19	20	English teacher in private language school	Single	30-01-12

Appendix 11: Wolska Chapel Home Evening (for People Aged 30+) Activities

<u>Activities</u>	<u>10-1-11</u>	<u>17-1-11</u>	<u>24-1-11</u>	<u>31-1-11</u>	<u>14-2-11</u>
Presentations	Video: Christ's crucifixion/resurrection	Video: Christ's life story	Two YMMs gave LDS temple whiteboard presentation	Polish Female LA (Wolska) discussed agency doctrine, referred to Liahona magazine article	Video: authentic love/marriage
Question-Answer Sessions			Answers from mainly older American missionaries	Discussion mainly by Polish CTGs	Sister Harding prompted discussion from everybody
Bonding Games	Standing in circle game with Radek (CTG)/his future wife from Wolska		Scissors circle game with Sisters Harding (Racławicka)/Austin (Wolska)		
Upcoming Events Mentioned	Elder Harding (Racławicka) mentioned Ryan Millar Fireside at Wolska on 14 th January			Sister Harding invited me to Thursday Evening Institute Meeting	Elder Harding invited people to two Racławicka baptisms at Wolska on 19 th February/Wolska Film Night on 25 th February/Warsaw District Conference on 26 th -27 th February

Thesis Summary in English

In contemporary times, more and more writers are studying LDS history, religiosity, and social life. Some accounts are published under the official LDS Church name (e.g. Ballard 1993/2006), and semi-official ones are published by companies connected to the LDS Church without the official LDS name (e.g. Coleman 2003; Kidd/Kidd 1998). Also, independent accounts are published by LDS academics (e.g. Decoo 1996, 2015; Givens 2007, 2007*, 2009, 2010, 2015; Mauss 1994, 2003, 2008) and non-LDS academics (e.g. Bloom 1992/2006; Davies, D.J. 2000, 2003, 2013; Shipps 1987, 2000, 1994/2001, 2015; Stark 2005). Moreover, a body of empirical and ethnographic-type research, which explores the multi-level complexity of LDS recruitment/conversion in different (mainly European) locations, has been built up by LDS/non-LDS academics (e.g. Gooren 2008; Farrin 2009; Nabozny 2009; Trigeaud 2009; Annus and Csepregi 2018; Rigal-Cellard 2018). Set in Warsaw, Poland, my research explores how the pre-LDS religious/social experience of the recruit (the person investigating the LDS); LDS social interaction/networking; LDS religious training; and the wider Polish social world may help or hinder a Polish recruit's journey to LDS baptism and beyond. These areas of study represent my four main research categories. My research also explores how different types of Polish LDS convert identity are created inside the Warsaw LDS world, and how long-term investigator identity is constructed through recruits staying inside the Warsaw LDS field for long periods of time without joining the LDS Church.

Within an interpretive framework, data was collected using two main research methods. Between 2008 and early 2017, I built up a diary-type narrative account of the religious and social events that I attended at the two LDS branches at Wolska and Wierzbno/Raławicka in Warsaw, and continued this process up to late 2019 after the two branches had merged into one at Wolska in February 2017. This helped me to develop a picture of the main participants who operate inside the Warsaw LDS field: different types of (mainly American/foreign) LDS missionaries; three main types of Polish LDS converts (less actives, trainee temple-goers, and core temple-goers); and Polish short-term recruits and long-term investigators. Between 2008 and 2012, I did (semi-structured and/or unstructured) in-depth interviews with a number of Polish LDS converts and unstructured interviews with a small group of long-term investigators from both Warsaw LDS branches to probe for information concerning my four main research categories. The data from these interviews was then thematically analysed so that I could build up a big picture (interpretation) of how Polish LDS recruitment/conversion may occur according to my four main research categories.

Many issues relating to my four main categories emerged from my research, including some key findings. For example, it appeared easier for Polish LDS converts from average/ quite strong Catholic backgrounds to become core temple-goers, while those from weaker or non-practising Catholic backgrounds seemed more inclined to become less actives, and those from stronger Catholic backgrounds tended to become long-term investigators. Besides this, the study revealed that both LDS social interaction/networking and religious training are important processes of Polish LDS recruitment/conversion. Social interaction was often seen to dominate the early stages of LDS recruitment, with LDS religious training coming into play not long before LDS baptism and becoming far more significant afterwards, especially if converts moved towards becoming temple-goers. The findings also highlight how the wider Polish social world may influence Polish LDS recruitment/conversion, as, despite the fact that post-communist (post-1989)/post-John Paul II (post-2005) Poland offers the freedom to change religious identity, a common cultural association of Catholicism with Polish national identity can make this a troublesome process. Moreover, age was shown to be a significant issue, as young adult converts seemed to find it less troublesome to become LDS converts and established temple-goers than older converts through them not having to overturn/devalue as much previous life experience.

Samenvatting

Het aantal publicaties over LDS geschiedenis, religiositeit en sociaal leven is in recente tijden steeds omvangrijker geworden. Sommige publicaties verschijnen onder de officiële naam van de LDS kerk (Ballard 1993/2006), andere semi-officiële publicaties verschijnen bij uitgeverijen die weliswaar de officiële LDS naam niet voeren, maar wel verbonden zijn met de LDS kerk (Coleman 2003; Kidd/Kidd 1998). Hiernaast zijn onafhankelijke publicaties verzorgd zowel door LDS onderzoekers (Decoo 1996, 2015; Givens 2007, 2007*, 2009, 2010, 2015; Mauss 1994, 2003, 2008) en door onderzoekers die niet aan de LDS verbonden zijn (Bloom 1992/2006; Davies 2000, 2003, 2013; Shipps 1987, 2000, 1994/2001, 2015; Stark 2005). Bovendien is er een groeiende hoeveelheid empirisch en etnografisch onderzoek (door LDS en niet-LDS onderzoekers) dat de gelaagde complexiteit van LDS werving/bekering in verschillende (meest Europese) contexten onderzoekt (Gooren 2008; Farrin 2009; Nabozny 2009; Trigeaud 2009; Annus & Csepregi 2018; Rigal-Cellard 2018).

Deze dissertatie betreft Warschau, Polen, en onderzoekt hoe de tocht van een Poolse rekrut (iemand die belangstelling heeft voor de LDS en de mogelijkheden verkent) wordt gesteund of geremd door een aantal omgevingsfactoren: de religieus-sociale ervaringen voor het contact met de LDS; LDS sociale interactie en netwerk; LDS religieuze instructie; en de bredere Poolse maatschappelijke context. Deze onderzoeksgebieden vormen de vier hoofdcategorieën van het onderzoek. Deze dissertatie verheldert daarnaast hoe verschillende identiteitstypen van Poolse LDS bekeerlingen in de LDS context van Warschau ontstaan en hoe een lange termijn ‘onderzoeker’ identiteit in de Warschau LDS context tot stand komt. In dit proces blijven rekruten langdurig in de Warschau LDS context maar treden ze niet toe tot de LDS kerk.

Binnen dit raamwerk zijn gegevens verzameld met behulp van twee onderzoeksmethodes. Tussen 2008 en 2017 heb ik een dagboekachtig narratief verslag bijgehouden van de religieuze en sociale bijeenkomsten die ik in de twee LDS centra in Wolska en Wierzbno/Raclawicka in Warschau heb bijgewoond. Ik ben hier mee doorgegaan tot eind 2019, na de fusie van de twee centra tot een centrum in Wolska in februari 2017. Dit heeft me in staat gesteld een beeld te krijgen van de hoofdrolspelers die in het Warschau LDS-veld actief zijn: verschillende types (voor Amerikaanse/buitenlandse) LDS zendelingen; drie hoofdtypen Poolse LDS bekeerlingen (minder actieven, aspirant tempelbezoeker, en vaste tempelbezoekers); en Poolse korte termijn rekruten en lange termijn ‘onderzoekers’. Tussen 2008 en 2012 heb ik uitvoerige interviews gehouden met een aantal Poolse LDS bekeerlingen

en een kleine groep lange termijn ‘onderzoekers’ uit beide Warschau centra om informatie te verwerven over de vier belangrijkste onderzoeksvelden. Op de gegevens uit deze interviews is een thematische analyse toegepast om een beter beeld (interpretatie) te krijgen van hoe Poolse LDS werving en bekering plaatsvinden binnen die vier onderzoeksvelden.

Deze analyses hebben veel inzichten opgeleverd. De belangrijkste hiervan worden hier kort geschetst. Voor Poolse bekeerlingen uit een gemiddelde of vrij strikte katholieke achtergrond is het makkelijker om vaste tempelbezoeker te worden. Poolse rekruten uit een niet-praktiserende katholieke achtergrond zijn eerder geneigd minder actief te worden. Rekruten met een sterke katholieke achtergrond worden eerder lange termijn ‘onderzoekers’. Het onderzoek toonde eveneens aan dat LDS sociale interactie en netwerken en religieuze instructie een cruciale rol spelen in het proces van LDS werving en bekering. Sociale interactie speelt een hoofdrol in de eerste stappen van het LDS wervingsproces. LDS religieuze instructie wordt steeds belangrijker kort voor de doop in de LDS kerk en nog krachtiger daarna, vooral wanneer bekeerlingen zich verder ontwikkelen tot vaste tempelbezoekers. Bovendien laat het onderzoek zien hoe de bredere Poolse sociale context het proces van LDS werving en bekering beïnvloedt. Ondanks het feit dat het post-communistische (na 1989) en post-Johannes Paulus II (na 2005) Polen grotere vrijheden biedt om van religieuze identiteit te veranderen zorgt de algemene culturele band tussen katholicisme en Poolse nationale identiteit ervoor dat dit proces ingewikkeld is. Leeftijd bleek bovendien een cruciale factor te zijn: jongvolwassen bekeerlingen hadden minder moeite met de bekering tot de LDS kerk en met het verder uitgroeien tot vaste tempelbezoeker dan oudere bekeerlingen, omdat dit proces het voor hen minder noodzakelijk maakte eerdere levenservaringen te wijzigen of af te zwakken.

Curriculum Vitae

Patrick Harrison was born in Bury, Lancashire, Great Britain, in 1966. He was educated in Bury, and then took a BA (Hons) in Literature with Philosophy at the Bolton Institute of Higher Education (currently the University of Bolton). He continued his education in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), obtaining the Trinity College Certificate in TESOL (with merit), the first stage of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education in Teaching in Further Education, and an additional GSCE in Spanish, all from the Bury College of Further Education. He then went on to obtain an MA in TESOL, with postgraduate diploma and a certificate in TESOL, all from Christchurch University College in Canterbury, Kent, UK.

He currently lives in Poland, where he works in publishing with Macmillan English Language Coursebook Publishers, in Warsaw. At the moment, he is active in the teaching of English at all levels for the EIP IT Service Company in Warsaw, Poland. His residence in Poland allowed him to combine his professional career with the long-term fieldwork and interviews that led to this dissertation.



The baptism pool at Wolska LDS chapel



Wolska LDS chapel grounds

