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

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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 Raclawicka on 1-05-11, Stefan retold his story above, and the visiting mother of a mother from a young American LDS family at Raclawicka 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 Raclawicka 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 Raclawicka, 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/Raclawicka. 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/Raławicka 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 YFMs 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 Raławicka 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 Raławicka 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 (Mauss 1994: 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 Raclawicka 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).