NAVIGATING IDEALS: LATTER-DAY SAINT WOMEN AND

LATTER-DAY SAINT CULTURAL MASTER NARRATIVES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My doctoral journey has been exhilarating and challenging. I may have been the solo researcher and lone writer, but I was not alone. Many people nurtured, guided, counseled, and mentored me through this process. I have felt like the woman in Brian Kershisnik's painting, *She Will Find What Was Lost* (see Figure 1), being ministered to by legions of people on both sides of the veil. I cannot name them all here, but there are a few I would like to acknowledge.

Figure 1

She Will Find What Was Lost.

Note: Brian Kershisnik. (b. 1962). *She will find what was lost.* [painting on canvas]. LDS Conference Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

First, thank you to the dissertation committee. To my advisor, Dr. Lori Wolff, thank you for the countless hours guiding me through this process. Your kindness and compassion were a welcomed balm to the inevitable bumps and bruises of being a doctoral student. To Dr. Jane Bolgatz, thank you for continually reminding me to do less and to honor the path I was on by not getting distracted by the shiny new idea. Your instruction and feedback strengthened my writing

and critical thinking skills. To Dr. Henri François Dengah, thank you for helping to pioneer this research design. Your generosity and mentorship have been life changing.

To Dr. Justin Coles, my first advisor, thank you for creating a brave space where I could examine my biases and privileges while simultaneously feeling a sense of belonging. You empowered me to lean into interdisciplinary approaches and to establish an ethical foundation.

To Dr. Jenny Reeder, thank you for your expertise and editing skills. This dissertation benefited from your insights and support.

To the Contemporary Learning and Interdisciplinary Research professors, thank you for mentoring me in interdisciplinary research – in particular, Dr. Fran Blumberg, Dr. John Craven, Dr. Veronica Szczygiel, and Dr. Akane Zusho. Your wisdom and instruction are weaved throughout this dissertation.

Thank you to all of the Latter-day Saint women who participated in this study. I am honored that you entrusted me with your perspectives, experiences, and stories. In particular, I am deeply grateful to thirty interview participants. I enjoyed getting to know you and the time we spent together. I learned something from each of you. Thank you to the three key participants who let me practice on them and gave candid and useful feedback.

For the past decade, The LDS Women Project has given me a platform to advocate for LDS women. To Neylan McBaine, the Founder, thank you for this life affirming project, your mentorship, and faithful agitation. Thank you to the editorial board, Allie Brown, Trina Caudle, and Rosemary Demos, for being my sisters in Zion and pushing this handcart with me.

I have incredible friends who loved me and cared for me through this process. My heart is full of gratitude to them and for them. Special thanks to Jeff Butler, Ally Callaghan, Candice Cook, Claire Easley, and Xiaohan Zhu.

To my cousins Angela Russell and Allison Shields and to my chosen family, Ryan Dooley, Laura Gonzalez, Zeynep Ozkan, Emily Porter, Katie Proulx, Steve Smith, Pete Swerdzewski, and Kellie Terry, I could not have made it through this without you. Your friendship healed my broken heart and helped me stay grounded as the waves of grief threatened this whole project.

To my parents, Calvin Ostler and Kim Ostler, for as long as I can remember you have valued my intellect and curiosity. Dad, thank you for modeling the importance of education. I fondly remember the briefcase you gave me to hold my "whale research." Mom, thank you for teaching me how to think critically while maintaining curiosity. Your love of books is contagious. Thank you for giving me *Tales of the Fourth Grade Nothing* all those years ago. I love you both.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my siblings, Lisa, Laura, and Robert. Lisa and Robert, I miss you every day. I honor your legacy by living a courageous, loving life. Laura, may you live to the fullest measure of your creation. Your counter-narrative has the power to heal many wounds.

To my nieces and nephews: Alice, Ben, Calvin, Elizabeth, Isabell, June, Kirsten, Lilly, Makayla, Zack, and Zephyr. You are my heart. Your personal narratives are sacred, and no matter the journey your life takes, know you are deeply loved and belong.

The future belongs to the curious and the learners, not the knowers.

– Dr. Brené Brown, *Atlas of the Heart Television Special*

Well, what else can one do today but tell the story and hope that the story itself will become a prayer.

– Elie Wiesel, *The Tragedy of the Believer*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents   Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Abstract

LATTER-DAY SAINT WOMEN AND
LATTER-DAY SAINT CULTURAL MASTER NARRATIVES

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Cultural master narratives are a primary way that cultures proscribe how and who cultural members are supposed to be. This study coupled cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis with the master narrative framework to identify Latter-day Saint (LDS) cultural master narratives that emerge from the perspectives and lived experiences of Latter-day Saint women. Building upon the findings from a previous study that identified descriptions of an ideal LDS woman, a pile sorting analysis was conducted with LDS women (N = 30) living in the United States. The findings from pile sorting analysis were used to create a cultural master narrative survey. The responses from the survey by LDS women in the United States (N = 2,436) were analyzed using cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis. This study successfully identified nine Latter-day Saint cultural master narratives. The research design demonstrated that cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis combined with the master narrative framework effectively identify cultural master narratives. The consensus analysis successfully attended to the master narrative principles of ubiquity, invisibility, utility, and rigidity. The remaining principle, compulsory, as well as utility, were addressed through cultural consonance analysis.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

So, I have a funny tango between feeling like the church is both a blessing and a place
that doesn't live up to its ideals.

– Research Participant

The storying of experiences is a primary way that individuals make meaning of their lives

(Hammack & Toolis, 2015; McLean & Syed, 2015), build interpersonal relationships, and

establish communities and cultures (Hammack & Toolis, 2015). Communal storied experiences

can become cultural narratives that direct cultural and personal identity (Meretoja, 2020; Syed &

McLean, 2023; Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Cultural narratives when reified into cultural master

narratives are operationalized to determine belonging and to dictate how one is supposed to be

and act within the community (McLean & Syed, 2015). The growing body of research examining

cultural master narratives primarily focuses on the symbiotic relationship between culture and

identity development (Hammack & Toolis, 2015; McLean et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2017;

McLean & Syed, 2015). Dr. Kate McLean and Dr. Moin Syed have made (and continue to make)

significant contributions to the field by conducting master narrative studies, which have shown

the power the master narratives have in people's lives (McLean, Boggs, et al., 2020; McLean,

Delker, et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2017; Syed & McLean, 2022). In 2015,

McLean and Syed published a master narrative framework articulating the markers of master

narratives.

This study uses the master narrative framework coupled with the cultural consensus

analysis and cultural consonance analysis to identify cultural master narratives within the Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). More specifically, this study focuses Latter-

day Saint (LDS) women living in the United States to see what cultural master narratives emerge from their perspectives and experiences.

In this chapter, I introduce the purpose of the study and research questions. I share my positionality as a Latter-day Saint woman researcher and the steps I am taking to mitigate bias. I provide an overview of a prior study I conducted identifying the traits and characteristics of an ideal LDS women, the findings from which are foundational to the present study. Finally, the theoretical frameworks guiding this study are discussed.

Purpose of Present Study

> A wild wish has just flown from my heart to my head, and I will not stifle it though it may excite a horse laugh. I do earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society, unless where love animates the behaviour. (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 70).

The present study resides at the intersection of religion and gender to discover what LDS cultural master narratives emerge from the perspectives and experiences of women who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Members of the LDS church are commonly known as Mormon. In 2018, church leadership asked that the term Mormon no longer be used in referring to the church or its members (Weaver, 2018). In keeping with this request, I will refer to the church by its full name or as the LDS church. Members will be referred to as members, Latter-day Saints, or LDS.

The LDS church and culture are patriarchal (Beaman, 2001; Brekus, 2011; Campbell, 2016). The challenges and potential harms for women living within patriarchal societies are well documented in the literature. Latter-day Saint women are navigating LDS doctrine and cultural expectations that prescribe how they are supposed to behave and who they are supposed to be. This study builds upon an earlier study I conducted wherein 45 descriptors of an ideal LDS woman were found using free listing analysis (Dengah et al., 2020), which is discussed in detail

later in this chapter. The present study further examines those descriptors using cultural consensus analysis (CCA) and cultural consonance analysis (Dengah et al., 2020; Romney et al., 1986), the master narrative framework McLean (McLean, 2017), and counter-narrative theory (Halverson et al., 2011; Hammack, 2011; Hyvärinen, 2020) to reveal LDS cultural master narratives.

This study aims to contribute to the field of cultural master narratives by exploring if the coupling of the human development master narrative framework with the anthropological cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analyses methods results in the identification of cultural master narratives. McLean and Syed's work primarily looks at master narratives through a developmental lens and the instruments and methods utilized to garner and analyze data are from the human development discipline. Unfortunately, these instruments and methods were not adequate for answering this study's research questions, because they presupposed that cultural narratives have been identified and do not provide a method for identifying them. This exposes a limitation of the current master narrative literature, a limitation this study intends to address.

Lastly, this study has an explicit social justice purpose of fostering egalitarian LDS communities. I intend to do this by challenging stereotypes and monolithic assumptions about LDS women, within and outside of LDS communities, by centering their voices, perspectives, and experiences. Cultural master narratives often manifest as stereotypes and expectations. They are often "myths created and developed in the old order, which like specters haunt" (Freire, 2020, p. 55) the culture today. The validity of these inherited myths could be undermined by the realities, nuances, and complexities of LDS women. Invisibility is key to the power master narratives have in a community. That power is disrupted by making the master narratives visible

and accurately identifying them as narratives, as opposed to natural or divine. Identifying the gendered cultural master narratives within LDS communities could challenge the assumption that some guiding beliefs and cultural expectations are divinely mandated or naturally ordered by proffering that they are humanly constructed. This acknowledgement has the potential to shift power dynamics, whereby LDS women can claim more agency in their identities, worship, and communities. As feminist Mary Wollstonecraft wrote in her seminal book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women,* "Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience" (p. 32) . I hypothesize that bringing awareness of master narratives within communities could undermine the reification of the narrative thereby challenging its power and authority.

Research Questions

Sometimes, it is necessary to "summon the courage to challenge groups that are after all, in one sense, 'home' to us, in the name of the parts of us that are not made at home" (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1299). I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a woman. I have mostly felt at home in my community, but there are parts of me and members of my community that are not at home. In my first semester as a doctoral student, a professor taught that ethical research begins at home – through self-reflection and by examining your own backyard first. In that moment, I knew that first population I would study cultural master narratives had to be Latter-day Saint women. The following questions "press upon" me (Jones et al., 2013, p. 20) and ignite my research:

RQ1: How do LDS women think about and experience LDS cultural expectations?

RQ2: What cultural master narratives emerge from LDS women's experiences within LDS communities?

Reflection on Subjectivity and Positionality

Research is an act of interpretation, not reporting (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). And I am the instrument (Creswell & Poth, 2016). My epistemology and ontology positionality is interpretive/constructivism mixed with aspects of critical and poststructuralism/postmodernism as defined by Jones et al. (2013). Reality is an experiential and relational construct. Like reality, truth is subjective (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). I may believe something to be a universal truth, such as it is immoral to steal or that deity exists. But even though I am attributing this belief to all people, it is still a subjective perspective. Truth is an existential belief informed by lived experiences, socialization, and education. What is believed to be true can change when confronted by difference, new experiences, ideas, and relationships. This is how paradigms shift (Kuhn, 2012).

My interests in this research topic are informed by my positionality as a storyteller, Latter-day Saint woman, and feminist. These identities are foundational to who I am as a human and researcher. I am a professional storyteller. Stories have a dual power within communities and the lives of individuals. The sharing of stories is an effective way to foster connection and build trust. It can also be a tool of division and destruction (e.g., propaganda). I want to better understand this duality. This desire led me to the work of Kate McLean and Moin Syed. Their cultural master narrative framework (McLean & Syed, 2015) has captured my imagination as a possible tool to understand the duality of story and greatly influenced my decision to focus my research on cultural master narratives.

I acknowledge there may be concerns about the trustworthiness of a study of LDS women conducted by a member of the faith. The concern for objectivity by researchers studying their own community has long been debated in anthropology. However, it is impossible for any

researcher to be objective in a study (Morrow, 2007). To assume otherwise is irresponsible and potentially damaging to the participants and the communities that the study impacts. Abu-Lughod (2008) contends that objectivity can reinforce an othering of the community being studied. "One way to retain their identities as anthropologists is to make the communities they study seem 'other'" (Abu-Lughod, 2008, p. 467). Though this critique is for anthropologists, it is applicable to researchers of all disciplines. Abu-Lughod goes on to say that because identity and power are at play, the researcher is at risk of positioning themselves as the default, which is ripe with bias. Furthermore, objectivity lends itself to generalizations and decontextualization, which are not neutral (Abu-Lughod, 2008). Without nuance and context, a community can be represented as monolithic and further reify stereotypes. Ethical research does not lie or harm (Li, 2022). Decontextualization is a type of lying and harmful.

Lila Abu-Lughod (2008) refers to anthropologists conducting studies within their communities as "halfies" (p. 467). She argues there are benefits to being a halfie, namely contextualized representations, "multiple accountability," and disruption of power (p. 469). Contextualized representations contain the nuances and complexities so that the participants' truth and realities are centered. A benefit of conducting a study within my culture is I am fluent in the cultural language and norms. As participants share their stories, I'm able to recognize the nuances in their lived experiences and the ways they overtly or subversively negotiate cultural expectations. As a halfie, I have multiple audiences and multiple accountabilities. The academy holds me accountable for the process of conducting the study, while I'm accountable to the LDS community for the content. Since I belong to both I feel professionally and personally compelled to conduct a rigorous and trustworthy study. Throughout the study, I am frequently code switching and constantly aware of how my experiences and ideologies are affirmed or

challenged by the participants. I hope this awareness mitigates confirmation bias or dismissing data that does not align with my experiences or point of view.

Power dynamics can be disrupted when researchers use language that is familiar and accessible to the participants (Abu-Lughod, 2008). LDS women participated in this study by entrusting me with their perspectives and stories. Some of this dissertation is written for them, using language that may be unfamiliar to those not of the LDS faith; however, in those instances, I attempt to provide enough context that the general meaning can be inferred.

As a devout member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I actively participate in my ward (congregation) and within the community. In my ward, I serve as a Primary teacher, providing religious instruction to children ages 6 and 7. Through doing this study, I am even more aware of the distinction between being active in the church and a believer of the doctrine. It is possible to be one and not the other; I am both. Being active in the church impacts my time and relationships. Being a believer influences my ideologies and behaviors. All of it informs my identity.

I am a descendant of Latter-day Saint pioneers who travel across the American plains as religious refugees and labored in the Salt Lake Valley to establish an LDS community. I grew up celebrating their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, Pioneer Day, and hearing their stories of hardship, perseverance, and faith. I have recalled these stories during challenging times in my life, which has given me comfort and courage. In those moments, I remind myself that my ancestors made tremendous sacrifices while crossing the plains. Their blood is in my veins. I can do hard things.

Their pioneering spirit and determination are alive in me as I pursue novel ways to conduct master narrative research and contest LDS cultural expectations that are harming our

community. LDS doctrine teaches that humanity is inextricably linked and that the relationships forged in this life can be eternal. As believers, we enact sacred rituals that seal all of humanity together as one great family. We make covenants vowing to dedicate all that we are and have to the building up of Zion. In LDS scripture, Zion is referred to as "the pure of heart" (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835/2013, 97:21). It is a way of being and also a place, a "collective, utopian ideal" (Maffly-Kipp, 2020, p. 212) of the world that Latter-day Saints are striving to establish within themselves and in their sphere of influence (LDS, n.d.-e). For me, this work, this study is a one of the ways I live up to those covenants and lay bricks in Zion.

My feminist activism within the Latter-day Saint community is most visible in my role as the editor-in-chief at the LDS Women Project (LDSWP). The LDSWP is a non-profit organization, not affiliated with the LDS church, with a mission "to provide a platform that amplifies LDS women's voices, demonstrates how there is no 'right way' to be an LDS woman, provides resources and empowerment for the creation of more egalitarian governance and worship within our spheres of influence" (LDS Women Project, n.d., LDSWP (Her)story section). We do this primarily through the publishing of interviews of LDS women with diverse life experiences and perspectives. We also publish narrative-driven and doctrine-centric essays written by LDS women and host events that allow for discourse on pressing issues within the community.

I am aware of my bias for LDS women and that my commitment to working toward a more egalitarian LDS community could influence all aspects of this study. I have taken steps to mitigate this bias, namely in the design of the study, the chosen methods, procedures for analyzing the data, and the committee members. This study is multi-step mixed method study. In each step both qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed. Cultural consensus

analysis (CCA) privileges the perspective of the participants as the experts and relies on mix-method analysis to determine to what extent there is consensus in a culture about a specific domain (Dengah et al., 2020). As the researcher, I am not the expert; I am a curious explorer.

To increase the trustworthiness of the study, a code book was created with the help of a second coder who is not a Latter-day Saint. I also wrote memos throughout the process documenting my process, evolution of ideas, and the moments when I became aware of my biases. Additionally, the members of this committee are not Latter-day Saints. They have guided and challenged me to honor the data and be ethical throughout the execution of this study. Committee member Dr. Henri François Dengah has experience studying Latter-day Saint women using cultural consensus analysis (Dengah et al., 2019). He has provided invaluable moments of perspective taking. Furthermore, I enlisted historian Dr. Jennifer Reeder to be a reader. She brings an expertise in nineteenth-century women's history and an additional LDS female perspective. Lastly, a commitment to self-examination of philosophical assumptions helps to ensure an ethical study. The practice of overtly stating those philosophical assumptions within the findings allows for personal, professional, and relational accountability.

Capstone Project: Ideal LDS Woman

The Contemporary Learning and Interdisciplinary Research (CLAIR) doctoral program at Fordham University requires students to complete a capstone project in lieu of comprehensive exams. Students are asked to demonstrate their preparedness for dissertation by conducting a small-scale study that is defended, much like a dissertation. For the capstone project, I conducted a study to identify descriptions (traits and characteristics) of an ideal LDS woman from the perspective of LDS women living in the United States. This capstone study was defended on May 2, 2022, and laid the foundation for the present study.

To identify the descriptions of an ideal LDS woman, a free listing method was used, a common first step in conducting a cultural consensus analysis (CCA). Through a survey, participants are asked to list all the words they could think of to describe a specified domain, such as list all of the characteristics and traits of an ideal LDS woman. Asking participants to list descriptors, such as traits and characteristics, gives insight into how they think about and perceive specific domains of their culture (Dengah et al., 2020).

A total of 756 individuals participated in the survey with 544 completing it. Using a random number generator, 118 participants were selected for the free list analysis. I sought an equitable number of women per age group; 20 were in the following age ranges: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69; 18 of the participants were 70 years and older. The race/ethnicity makeup of the participants was 82% Caucasian; 2% Asian; 2% Pacific Islander; 5% Hispanic and Caucasian; 1% Hispanic; 1% Hispanic and American Indian; and 6% preferred not to answer. In terms of the level of activity in the LDS church, 69% very active, 24% active, 7% somewhat active, and 1% not active. The majority of the participants reported being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for more than 10 years (99%).

This study produced 45 descriptors of an ideal LDS woman (see Figure 1). A word frequency analysis was performed. In the raw data, *kind* was the word used most frequently (54 times). After the analysis, *faithful* is ranked the highest (69.5%), followed closely by *kind* (61%). *Straight*, meaning heteronormative sexual orientation, was only used once. Nonetheless, the literature on LDS women and the cultural emphasis on traditional family values and gender norms (Jacobsen, 2017) warranted its inclusion. One participant described the ideal LDS woman as *shallow*, which became an umbrella term to capture other superfluous characteristics. *Married*

was chosen over wife because LDS literature and doctrine speak more frequently about the state of being married, as opposed to the role of being a wife.

The last question in the survey asked participants, "What else would you like me to know?" Of the 118 analyzed responses, 50 participants responded with additional information relevant to the study. An in vivo method analysis of these responses resulted in four themes: too many expectations, belonging within wards, empowerment, and personal revelation. Many of the participants shared feelings of being overwhelmed and/or stressed by the number of expectations placed upon them. Wards are the primary social network within LDS communities, how participants experience the interpersonal and social dynamics of their ward had a profound impact on their sense of belonging, faith, and perceived value within the community. Many participants talked about being empowered as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Personal revelation was often referenced as a way women negotiated cultural expectations and make meaning out of their life experiences.

Personal revelation is foundational to Latter-day Saint doctrine. It is the spiritual vehicle that brought to pass the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Joseph Smith in the early nineteenth century. Joseph Smith claims that in a prayerful plea to know what church he should join he received personal revelation that put him on the restoration path (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835/2013). Within the LDS faith tradition and in the culture, the revelation that an individual receives is considered sacred, factual, and rarely challenged. This makes it a culturally sanctioned tool for negotiating LDS doctrine and culture.

Figure 2

Findings from Free List Analysis: Descriptions of an Ideal LDS Woman
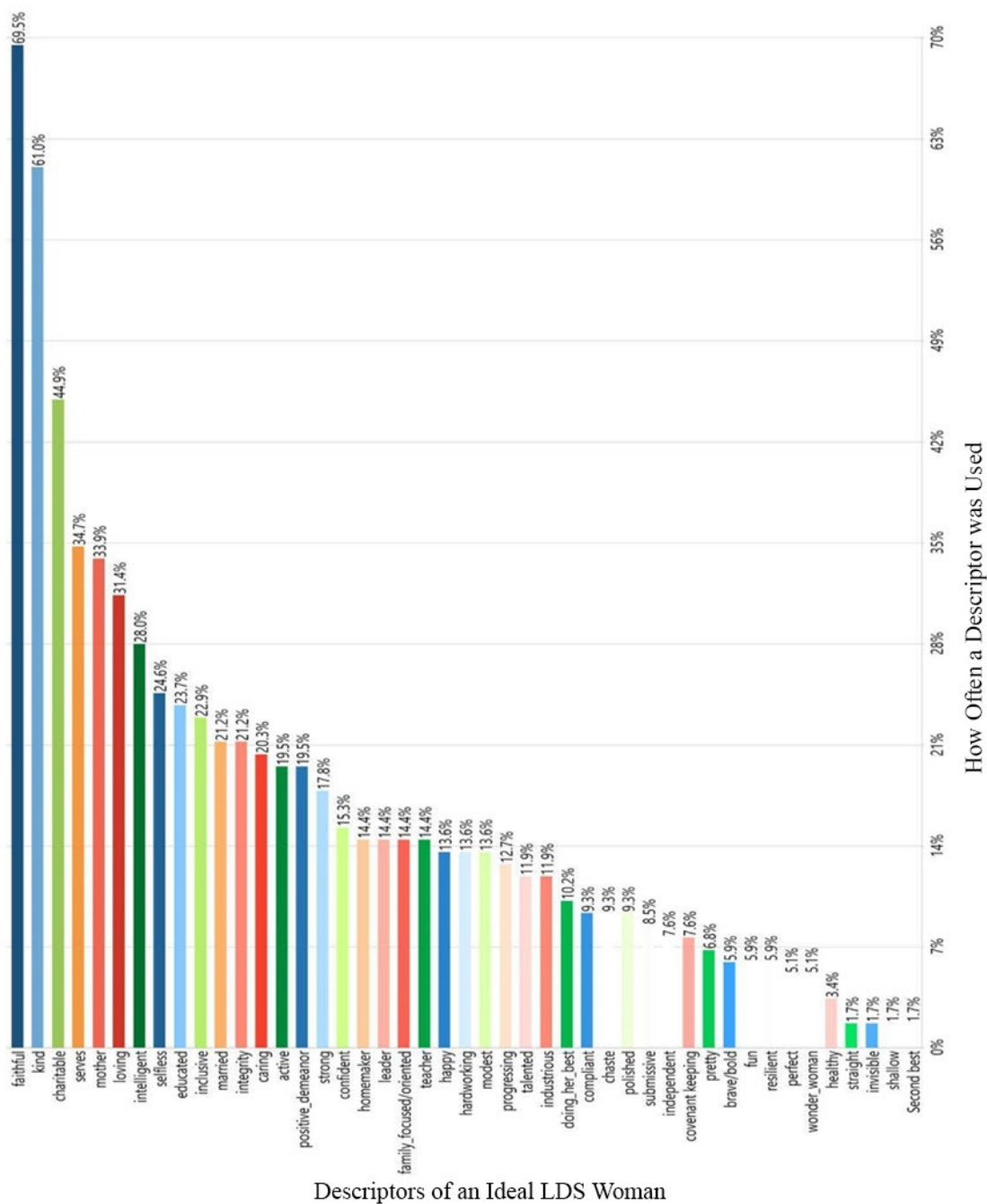
Note: The findings from the free listing analysis show that faithful was the most frequently used description of LDS woman, followed by kind. Straight refers to sexual orientation. Shallow was used to capture multiple superficial terms.

Theoretical Frameworks

In 2020, Syed and McLean called on psychologists to engage in "interdisciplinary collaborations" by incorporating methods and frameworks for different disciplines to strengthen their work (p. 3). With this spirit, I bring their master narrative framework into conversation with counter-narrative theory, critical sociocultural theory, and cultural consensus analysis (CCA) and cultural consonance analysis. The master narrative framework outlines the principles of a master narrative. Counter-narrative theory validates the inability to live up to the cultural master narratives. Master narratives are about power, influence identity, and limit agency, which can be examined using critical sociocultural theory. Cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis are methods for determining the saliences of cultural domains.

Master Narrative Framework

McLean (2017) developed a master narrative framework for studying the dynamic relationship between cultural narratives and how individuals identify and situate themselves within a community. When studying master narratives, researchers are scrutinizing "content" and "process" (Syed & McLean, 2023, p. 6). Content is the features and components of master narratives while process is how people interact, internalize, or reject the master narrative (Syed & McLean, 2023). This study is primarily focused on content – what are some of the LDS cultural master narratives? Does the coupling of CCA, cultural consonance analysis, and the master narrative framework result in cultural master narrative identification? The process is touched on but a more extensive look at how LDS women navigate their cultural master narratives will be a future study.

In their seminal paper, Kate McLean and Moin Syed (2015) outline the content of master narratives, "five interrelated principles that define master narratives are utility, ubiquity,

invisibility, their compulsory nature, and their rigidity" (p. 326). Master narratives are ubiquitous within a community. Due to this ubiquity, a community can utilize the master narrative to define what is acceptable, valuable, and who belongs (McLean et al., 2018). Master narratives are so interwoven within the community's fabric that they appear invisible, natural, and immutable (Hammack & Toolis, 2015). Though master narratives evolve with the culture, their power and authority come from their rigid permanence and privilege of the majority (McLean & Syed, 2015). The compulsory nature of master narratives prescribes how individuals are expected to be, behave, and feel within the community (Hammack & Toolis, 2015; McLean & Syed, 2015).

Counter-narrative Theory

Individuals who negotiate and/or deviate from master narratives often produce alternative (Syed & McLean, 2022) or counter-narratives (Hyvärinen, 2020; Meretoja, 2020). These are personal narratives that deviate from the prescriptive way that individuals are supposed to be and behave within a community (Hyvärinen, 2020; McLean et al., 2018; Meretoja, 2020; Syed & McLean, 2022). Master and counter narratives are interconnected. The formation of counter-narratives is in direct response to master narratives, thus making them an effective way to reveal cultural master narratives (McLean et al., 2017). Conflict between one's identity and/or experience with the master narrative can be experienced as dissonance. Bodine Al-Sharif and Curley (2021) define dissonance as a "feeling one has when holding two beliefs that may be seen as contradictory to one another (even if not internally) and/or when there is conflict between one's identities and/or the environmental systems that house them" (p. 308). Individuals suffering from dissonance may seek internal harmony through the construction of a counter-narrative (Bodine Al-Sharif & Curley, 2021). Once a master narrative has been exposed, individuals can more readily construct counter-narratives, because they now have a name and

way to describe what they have been experiencing (Meretoja, 2020). However, this puts the onus on individuals who are already vulnerable, for having deviated from the master narrative, to construct an alternative identity and narrative (McLean et al., 2018).

Counter-narratives problematize the master narratives by validating the nuances and complexities of lived experiences that do not align with the community's reified expectations. Hyvärinen (2020) seeks to lay the groundwork for a counter-narrative theory. He posits such a theory is necessary because counter-narratives (a) illuminate how individuals defy and undermine master narratives; (b) challenge the researcher to situate themselves in relation to the narratives being studied; and (c) require that individual stories be contextualized in relation to cultural narratives when analyzed.

Meretoja (2020) suggests that counter-narratives can be a critical response to master narratives. Master narratives maintain authority and power by being ubiquitous, invisible, and rigid (McLean & Syed, 2015). The telling of counter-narratives can challenge the invisibility of master narratives and can undermine reification. However, this process is not without its complications. McLean et al. (2018) found that when individuals share their counter-narratives, it is inevitable that at least a portion of the master narrative will be repeated or invoked in its telling, which can reinforce the master narrative's rigidity within the culture. For example, in LGBTQ+ coming-out narratives, individuals will frequently reference a heteronormative master narrative from which they have, at least to some degree, departed. Some narrators may emphasize the areas where they have not fully deviated from the heteronormative narrative, such as being monogamous, to mitigate ostracization.

Counter-narratives are not as prevalent within communities because they are not told as frequently, often dismissed and not documented, and when invoked by the majority are

negatively framed (Hyvärinen, 2020; McLean et al., 2018). Even though master narratives have the advantage of being well-known and accepted within a culture, they are often not as vibrant as counter-narratives in their sharing (Hyvärinen, 2020). Counter-narratives benefit from the richness, intimacy, and immediacy of an individual conveying their lived experience. Individuals who negotiate and/or deviate from cultural master narratives are more likely to have engaged in higher levels of personal identity development (McLean et al., 2018), which can contribute to the telling of fuller and richer narratives.

Counter-narratives can also be empowering for individuals whose life, experiences, and identities do not align with the master narratives (McLean et al., 2018). As an oppositional critique of the cultural master narratives (Hyvärinen, 2020), counter-narratives are an opportunity for "narrative agency" (Meretoja, 2020, p. 30). Individuals can craft narratives that honor their personal narrative thereby liberating themselves from the experienced oppression of their culture's master narratives. Finnigan and Ross (2015) conducted a study exploring how LDS feminists utilize social media. They found that in LDS feminist Facebook groups, especially closed groups, LDS feminists were able to find belonging and resources to navigate being a feminist in a patriarchal religion. Participants used narrative agency to negotiate their personal relationship with the church through the sharing of stories, giving advice, and organizing protests. Furthermore, by finding community and narratives that resonated with their own, they were able to self-assuredly chose who they wanted to be and how they wanted to behave.

Critical Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory is based on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978), who believed that development occurred in relation to others, principally from those more advanced in their

development. Critical Sociocultural Theory (CST) is often used in education, specifically in literacy, nonetheless, the principles apply to human development in general. Individuals learn who they are and how they are supposed to be from the people in their community. CST views relational development and learning through the lens of identity, agency, and power (Lewis & Moje, 2003). Communities retain power by controlling resources, including cultural knowledge. Lewis and Moje (2003) argue that "systems of power actually get built, reproduced, and contested in subtle and usually invisible ways during everyday processes of learning, producing knowledge, and making meaning" (p. 1992). The association between power and invisibility cannot be over emphasized. It is harder for individuals to enact agency if they are unaware of why they believe and behave the way they do. Awareness disrupts power dynamics. All aspects of this study are conducted through the framework of identity, agency, and power and warrants a more detailed discussion.

Identity

Identity is self-reflective positionality in relation to others and experiences (Abu-Lughod, 2008; Meretoja, 2020; Rogers et al., 2021). Abu-Lughod (2008) adds that "self is always a construction, never a natural or found entity, even if it has that appearance" (p. 468). Cultures supply materials for the construction of identity with pressure to produce a self that conforms to the societal expectations. Because belonging is at stake, there is pressure to perform self for the community – to demonstrate that one's personal narrative is in alignment with the cultural expectations or master narratives (Meretoja, 2020). Forced conformity can be experienced as an act of violence against personal narratives. Personal narratives are "ways of narrating our experiences and our sense of who we are" (Meretoja, 2020, p. 35) constructed in response to master narratives and counter-narratives (Syed & McLean, 2023). When personal narratives

deviate from the cultural scripts the consequences are often painful, confusing, and isolating, such when one does not conform to the cultural gender norms. Individuals have "narrative agency" as they navigate master and counter-narratives to create a personal narrative (Meretoja, 2020, p. 30). Awareness of their culture's master and counter-narratives increases their ability to enact agency.

Agency

How one responds to cultural socialization is a matter of agency. "Agency might be thought of as the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power" (Moje & Lewis, 2020, p. 6). Being aware of resources and how to utilize them enhances one's agentic power. Knowledge is a profound resource. Educating individuals about their cultural master narratives gives them greater agency to choose how they construct their personal narratives in response. It can be personally empowering for individuals to choose to create rich alternative narratives that oppose master narratives (McLean et al., 2018; Meretoja, 2020). It is also a disruption of power. In the context of master narratives, agency will be defined as the ability to negotiate who one is and how to behave in relation to power.

Power

Moje and Lewis (2020) argue that "power is produced and enacted in and through discourses, relationships, activities, spaces, and times *by people* as they compete for access to and control of resources, tools, identities" (p. 5, emphasis theirs). In this framing, power is not an outside focus acting upon humans or an external force that some humans have learned to harness and leverage. It is human made and relational. Therefore, individuals and communities are responsible for how they construct and utilize power. Gjerde (2004) posits that "[one] aspect of

power is the ability to determine what counts as knowledge and to make knowledge appear 'natural' rather than a human construction" (p. 145). This framing of power is particularly relevant to the reification of cultural master narratives, which masks the human authorship so that they appear to be natural. Reification will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter II.

Cultural Consensus Analysis

Cultural consensus analysis (CCA) is an anthropological framework used to identify the salience of shared cultural understanding of community members by studying participants' "pattern of agreement or consensus" (Romney et al., 1986, p. 316) about a domain. Furthermore, it permits the researcher to measure the extent and variations in shared knowledge within a community (Dressler et al., 2017). Examining shared cultural knowledge can be challenging because culture is a collective creation, yet members of a community will have different experiences that inform how they internalize the culture. This means that not everyone within a culture will think and speak about a domain in the same way (Gatewood & Cameron, 2010). CCA takes this complexity into account by using factor analysis and ethnographic methods (Dengah et al., 2020). Factor analysis allows for evaluating statistically significant commonalities within the community despite individual differences. Whereas the ethnographic methods ensure that the individual's experiences are not lost and deepens the understanding of how individuals think about their community and make meaning of their culture.

As an emic process, CCA seeks to understand cultural domains by recruiting members of the community as participants (Dengah et al., 2020; Romney et al., 1986). CCA positions members of a community as cultural experts. It is strongly advised that researchers contextualize the study and utilize words and phrases that are "linguistically and culturally meaningful to the population in question" (Dengah et al., 2020, p. 51). This practice was utilized in the

aforementioned capstone study. The majority of the descriptors were words used by at least one of the participants. The findings of this study will be presented using language that resonates with LDS women in conjunction with excerpts from interviews with LDS women.

In their seminal article, Romney et al. (1986) outlined three assumptions for cultural consensus analysis: "common truth," "local independence," and "homogeneity of items" (pp. 317-318). Common truth calls for participants to come from the same culture and have a shared understanding of domains. Local independence directs participants to be interviewed separately to mitigate groupthink. And homogeneity of items ensures that the level of cultural competence of participants can be determined. The number of participants needed is correlated to their level of competency in the domain. If participants have high cultural competence, fewer participants are needed for the study.

The current literature on master narratives does not specify how to identify cultural narratives. The master narrative framework presumes knowledge of cultural narratives. This is not an issue if the researcher is already an expert in the domain being studied. However, there is the risk of a researcher assuming that something they observe in a community is a cultural narrative. It was while reading the literature on Latter-day Saint women that I came across Dr. Henri François Dengah's work. Dengah et al. (2019) conducted a study using CCA to assess the cultural distress and consonance experienced by Latter-day Saint women. After a discussion with Dr. Dengah to better understand CCA, I hypothesized that cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis could be used to identify cultural narratives. Furthermore, the assumptions and purpose of CCA aligned with the master narrative framework principles.

Master narratives are rigid, meaning that they have been around long enough to be internalized by the culture. They are also so ubiquitous that they are invisible. Cultural

assumptions can be an indicator of invisibility (McLean, Boggs, et al., 2020; McLean, Delker, et al., 2020). A purpose of CCA is to test cultural understanding of a specific domain or in other words, how much as the culture internalized the understanding of that domain. CCA makes the invisible, visible. Communities also utilize master narratives to proscribe how one is supposed to be and behave to belong to the community. Cultural expectations are a type of group consensus on ideal behaviors and identities. CCA can determine what a community values including behaviors and identities. Master narrative utility as well as being compulsory are identifiable by using cultural consonance analysis, which is discussed next.

Cultural Consonance Analysis

Dressler et al. (2017) explains cultural consonance as "the degree to which individuals, in their own beliefs and behaviors, approximate the prototypes for belief and behavior encoded in cultural model" (p. 43). In terms of narratives, consonance analysis evaluates the extent to which an individual believes their personal narrative aligns with the cultural master narrative. The higher someone's consonance the more aligned they are with the master narrative, which can contribute to a sense of well-being (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler et al., 2017). Individuals who deviate from the cultural master narrative may experience social distress and poor mental health (Dressler, 2020; Dressler et al., 2017). Cultural consonance analysis lends itself to assessing the compulsory nature of master narratives. Consonance can help to identify if individuals feel they are at risk by not aligning or deviating from the master narrative.

Organization of This Dissertation

In this chapter, the purpose of the study to identifying LDS cultural master narratives that emerge from Latter-day Saint women's perspectives and experiences was stated. My assumptions and positionality as a storyteller, Latter-day Saint woman, and feminist were shared,

as were the steps that will be taken to mitigate biases. An overview of the preliminary capstone study was provided with a brief discussion of the findings. The chapter ended with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks: master narratives framework, counter-narrative theory, and cultural consensus analysis, with particular attention given to the dynamics of identity, power, and agency as articulated in critical sociocultural theory.

Chapter II is a thorough review of the existing literature that helped to ground this research, namely cultural narratives and master narratives. The master narrative framework, which guides this study and framed my findings is discussed at length. An introduction to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is provided for greater context and LDS women are situated within the faith and literature. Identity, power, and agency are highlighted throughout.

Chapter III is a thorough presentation of the mixed-method research design and methodologies used. It describes in detail how participants were secured, data collection procedures, and the steps taken to analyze the data. It concludes with a discussion of the ethics and reliability involved with this study.

Chapter IV presents the results. The nine master narratives that emerged from LDS women's perspective and experiences are detailed using excerpts from the data. The dissertation concludes with Chapter V, a discussion on the significance of this study to the Latter-day Saint community and the field of cultural master narratives, particularly regarding identity, agency, and power. Limitations are acknowledged and implications of future research are proffered.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

> Story is a container for meaning, is a vehicle of meaning. It's a way that people have shared meaning with one another for generations. It's what holds culture together. Culture has a story and every person within it participates in that story.
> – Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen, *How We Live With Loss*

In this chapter, I review the literature on cultural narratives and master narratives, which are foundational to this research. The master narrative framework, which guides this study and frames the findings is discussed at length. The evolution of a narrative from cultural to master and the consequences of such is included in that discussion. An introduction to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is provided for greater context and LDS women are situated within the faith and literature. Lastly, consideration is given to the implications of having cultural ideals that prescribe how women are supposed to be and behave. Identity, power, and agency are highlighted throughout the chapter.

Culture

Culture is a body of shared knowledge of traditions, language, mores, and religion (D'Andrade, 1981; Dengah et al., 2019; Inouye, 2016; Romney et al., 1986). Adams and Markus (2001) add that "culture resides, not in groups themselves, but in the implicit and explicit patterns that are (often) associated with groups…[framing] cultural involvement, not as membership in a more-or-less recognized group, but as engagement with patterns" (pp. 7-8). Culture is enacted, not approximated. The cultural knowledge and patterns are understood collectively by a community and individually by community members as the socially agreed upon ways of being and behaving (Dressler et al., 2017; Hochman & Spector-Mersel, 2020). Culture is used to educate posterity (Brookfield, 2004) and ensure survival of the society.

In anthropology, this body of knowledge is known as cultural models (Dressler et al., 2017; Strauss, 2004). "Cultural models are learned, shared mental representations or schemas: both factual and value-laden assumptions about the world" (Strauss, 2004, p. 163). Societies benefit from cultural models because they provide a rubric for interpersonal interactions and a template for how to model one's life. Individuals understand and make meaning out of their relationships and experiences based on cultural models (Quinn, 2005b). Societies permit some personal agency, but only within the bounds set by the cultural model (Dressler et al., 2017).

Cultural Narratives

Societies intergenerationally share their cultural models through narratives. Cultural narratives are consciously or unconsciously shared stories, expectations, ideals, or norms that dictate how one is to be and behave within a community (Fivush, 2010; Hochman & Spector-Mersel, 2020; McLean & Syed, 2015; Meretoja, 2020; Saldaña, 2021). Cultural narratives are often hegemonic origin stories such as Christopher Columbus discovering America or the first American Thanksgiving. These narratives distinguish in group and out group, while establishing and reaffirming cultural identity. Cultures dictate all aspects of cultural narratives, including content, structure, narrators, and timing. "[Cultural] narratives exist as models of sense-making, but these models are in a constant process of changing as they are interpreted and reinterpreted, reinforced and challenged" (Meretoja, 2020, p. 32). However, if they prove to have lasting power, they are reified into cultural master narratives.

Reification

Cultural narrative transition into a master narrative through reification. Reification is taking the abstract and making it concrete (Meretoja, 2020). Reification occurs over time as cultural narratives are repetitively told and passed through generations becoming interwoven into

the community fabric. Once reified as master narratives, these narratives manifest as cultural ideologies, expectations, and archetypes of a culture. Often in the transformation, the cultural narrative will no longer be a story shared (Hyvärinen, 2020), but a word or a phrase operationalized. For example, referencing the American dream is sufficient to invoke storied cultural expectations and ideologies about upward mobility in the United States; an actual narrative or explanation is unnecessary.

When reified, narratives are stripped of human authorship and responsibility and attributed to divinity or natural law (Meretoja, 2020), such as believing it is divine will or natural for men to have authority and power over women (Mikaelsson, 2016). The obfuscation of the human authorship and responsibility dehumanizes the master narratives (Berger & Luckmann, 2016; Meretoja, 2020). This obfuscation puts individuals and cultures at risk of believing they are subjects to the master narrative with limited to no power or agency to change it. Freire (2020) adds the oppressors position the structure of culture as permanent and natural and that people are "spectators" that must "adapt" to the given reality (p. 137). Recognizing that some long-standing cultural beliefs are inherited master narratives divests them of their power, empowering cultures and individuals to be agents of change.

Silva (2013) expands the definition of reification to be, "a form of action and a tool for transformation, positive or negative, revolutionary or reactionary, substantial or minuscule" (p. 94). Silva challenges the reified framing of reification, considering Marx, as a problematic objectification of humans. Silva, in turn, emphasizes reification as multifaceted transformational undertaking that is not inherently problematic. She draws from her ethnographic studies of fetishism in Zambia and how reification animates and enriches Zambian life. Silva points to context as a primary distinguisher of whether reification is positive or negative. Reification is

"always enacted contextually" (Silva, 2013, p. 90). Reification can be beneficial in the context of a Zambian imbuing an object with the spirit of a deceased loved one and valuing said object with significance (Silva, 2013). Reification can be dangerous when used to oppress or annihilate a group of people through dehumanization. "[Such] distortions are very serious and very real, that negative reification does things, from injuring the victims and empowering the perpetrators to reproducing the conditions under which such acts become possible" (Silva, 2013, p. 90). Human history has many examples of this from Tutsis being labeled as cockroaches in Rwanda to African Americans being property in the United States.

Viewed through a critical sociocultural lens reification has a profound impact on identity, agency, and power. When reified, constructs can appear natural or stereotypical (Gjerde, 2004). It is important to remember that identity is not natural; its continuously being developed (Abu-Lughod, 2008). When humans forget that reification is an actionable tool, they risk abdicating their responsibility and power. Reification can reduce complex intra-relational dynamics into homogenized communities disempowering and marginalizing people outside of the socially agreed upon norms (Adams & Markus, 2001). Master narratives are the manifestation of such reification that permeates all aspects of individual and cultural identity (Hammack, 2011).

Master Narratives

For the purposes of this study, master narratives will be defined as the dominant transgenerational cultural narratives that have been reified and internalized to such a degree that they are considered natural and are operationalized to prescribe how one is supposed to be and behave (Hammack, 2011; Hyvärinen, 2020; McLean & Syed, 2015; Meretoja, 2020; Syed & McLean, 2023). Master narratives are specific to cultures, an enduring part of that culture (Hyvärinen, 2020; McLean et al., 2018), and the canonization of a culture's expectations

(Hyvärinen, 2020). As a tool of the dominant actors within a community, master narratives become the community standard and may be used to uphold systems and frameworks (Hyvärinen, 2020). Master narratives are ripe for reification because they exist in all domains of life, and their indoctrination is so complete that they may be experienced as essential to the culture (Hammack, 2011) or characterized as a normative experience (Hyvärinen, 2020). For example, the American dream of socioeconomic accession through sheer determination and grit, regardless of one's origins, is a cultural master narrative. Continuing the example of the American dream, it has evolved from a narrative of possibility to an ideology. Challenging the volatility of the American dream could be viewed as un-American.

Master narratives are not amoral or apolitical due to the power they have in communities and in the lives of individuals (McLean & Syed, 2015). Communities benefit from the guidance and structure that master narratives provide (Hyvärinen, 2020). Through their ubiquity, invisibility, and compulsory nature, communities utilize master narratives to prescribe how individuals are to be and behave. The community's expectations are privileged over the individual's lived experience. There are felt consequences for individuals depending on how they navigate the cultural master narratives. Individuals navigate cultural master narratives by either aligning (adhering to), negotiating (bargaining through give and take), or deviating (rejecting) the master narrative (McLean et al., 2018; McLean & Syed, 2015). How someone navigates master narratives directly impacts their social standing. Aligning helps to secure belonging to the community and access to its privileges. Negotiating or deviating can result in marginalization, ostracization, or alienation, which can be traumatizing (Jacobsen, 2017; McLean et al., 2018; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Regardless, of how one navigates master narratives, they are restricting to everyone, including aligners (Syed & McLean, 2022).

The developers of the master narrative framework, Dr. Kate C. McLean and Dr. Moin Syed, primarily focus on the interdepend relationship of personal narratives and cultural narratives (McLean, Boggs, et al., 2020; McLean, Delker, et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2017; McLean & Syed, 2015; Syed & McLean, 2022; Syed & McLean, 2023; Syed et al., 2018). They are interested in how individuals experience master narratives, how they impact a person's sense of well-being, meaning-making and identity formation (Syed & McLean, 2023). McLean and Syed recognize that individuals are traversing multiple narratives and use the framework to understand the "dynamic relation between the self and competing narratives" (Syed & McLean, 2023, p. 5). To do this, they look at the "content" and "process" of master narratives (Syed & McLean, 2023, p. 6). Content is the details of the master narrative – what it is, how it is structured. The process is the relationship individuals have with the master narrative – are they aligning, negotiating, or deviating, and how they are doing it.

To garner a deeper understanding of the master narrative framework the five principles: ubiquity, invisibility, rigidity, utility, and compulsory will be discussed further. Additionally, how individuals navigate master narratives through alignment, negotiation, and deviation will be reviewed.

Ubiquity

The ubiquity of master narratives is integral part of their power (McLean, 2017). Master narratives are pervasive within the culture and integral part of what is deemed as culture. As a primary tool for teaching culture, they are found in cultural artifacts, presentations, and traditions. It is only when confronted with a counter narrative, that culture members see a different way to do culture (D'Andrade, 1981).

Invisible

All master narrative principles are interconnected, but ubiquity and invisibility are particularly so. Their ubiquity makes them invisible. Cultural members may have sense of master narratives, but are usually unable to articulate it, if they have not experienced or witnessed deviation. Pulitzer Prize winning historian and LDS woman, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich illuminates this when describing how she experiences being an LDS feminist:

> I have sometimes felt like a woman without a country. Perhaps the experience of "otherness" can be a source of strength. We are all prisoners of our culture, bound not by visible laws but by a net of assumptions and prejudices we cannot see. (Ulrich, 1994, p. 7)

Ulrich's provocative language aptly describes the dominance of cultural master narratives. They are the invisible bars that imprison all cultural members. She is accurate in attributing the confinement to everyone. Even people who align with the master narratives are prisoners.

Dengah et al. (2020) describes culture as an invisible hand "shaping, constricting, and channeling not only our thoughts, beliefs, and values, but also our motivations to act and thus our behaviors" (p. 62). Master narratives are the invisible hand. The implicit narratives that dictate how one is supposed to be and behave to be regarded as a good member of the culture (Meretoja, 2020). Interestingly, it is through doing culture correctly that one assimilates into the culture, intern becoming invisible (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Individuals who perform cultural in the expected and familiar way do not stand out. Those who do not are the ones who become visible and subjects for ridicule.

Rigidity

Master narratives obtain their rigidity from the repetition of enactment and reenactment. West and Zimmerman (1987) explain this concept when describing how housework becomes women's work. They refute it being the "essential nature" of women, but rather the biproduct of "produced and reproduced…activity and artifact of domestic life" (p. 144). When a behavior is done repeatedly for generations by a particular demographic, eventually the assumption will be that the behavior is essential to that demographic. The culture may then hold that demographic accountable for enacting that behavior.

Master narrative rigidity speaks mostly to the ability to stay within the culture. As already discussed, cultures adapt and evolve in response to personal and counter narratives. A hallmark of a master narrative is that it maintains its relevance as the cultures evolves. All that is needed is for most of the culture to align with the master narrative. Counter narratives can displace master narratives if they are able to gain enough traction and power. The difficulty with this, however, is that counter narratives often articulate the master narrative in their telling. They describe the cultural expectation/norm that they are countering and in doing so, contribute to the master narrative's rigidity (McLean et al., 2018).

Utility

Master narratives are used as guides and intimidation to indoctrinate cultural members. "[Master] narratives act as a guide for what is good, optimal, and valued" (Syed et al., 2018, p. 9). Master narratives set the standard for the ideal cultural member. They are a "script" that every member is expected to know and perform (D'Andrade, 1981, p. 186). One's cultural status is threatened if they do not know the script or do not perform it as prescribed. Gjerde (2004) calls this "cultural violence" (p. 145), violence that is culturally sanctioned and can be applied

covertly, such as microaggressions or jokes, or overtly, through physical harm or death. The threat of cultural violence ensures compliance.

Compulsory

Master narratives are political with moral implications. These implications are more evident in the process than the content of the master narrative, particularly with deviation (Syed et al., 2018). Communities sometimes use culture to maintain the status quo (D'Andrade, 1981; Davids, 2016) by restricting personal agency (Hochman & Spector-Mersel, 2020; Inouye, 2016). It is common for communities to have cultural variations and conflicts (Dengah et al., 2019). Individuals experiencing cultural conflict are often at odds with the dominant cultural narratives. This can lead to feelings of isolation and otherness (McLean et al., 2018), which is understandable given interdependency of personal and cultural identity development and maintenance (Syed et al., 2018).

McLean et al. (2018) conducted a study looking at the relationship between personality and identity development and cultural master narratives. They found that not "fitting in with the master narrative is about a loss of power, as well as a loss of belonging. This suggests that the work of constructing an alternative narrative is not a solitary activity —one must find another group with which to belong" (p. 643). Not only do non-conforming individual experience cultural violence, but they must also do the work of finding a new community. Jacobsen (2017) had similar findings in her study of LGBTQ+ Latter-day Saint women. She found that ostracization or fear of it had a significant effect on how these women identified, their relationships, and involvement with the LDS church.

Navigation

Individuals navigate cultural master narratives by either aligning, negotiating, or deviating (McLean & Syed, 2015). Navigation is the process by which cultural members consciously or unconsciously internalize or reject master narratives. Individuals engage in navigation repeatedly as they develop through learning, experiences, and relationships.

Aligning

Aligning is when a personal narrative is harmonious with the cultural master narrative. Syed and McLean (2023) found that aligning "reflects a lack of agency, as it consists of a largely unexamined, passive internalization of societal norms" (p. 8). For example, if someone is heterosexual in a heteronormative culture, there is little to no stimulus to examining one's sexual orientation. Aligners are not at risk of losing their cultural standing or experiencing cultural violence if they continue to reside within the bounds of the master narrative.

Negotiation

Negotiation happens when personal narratives do not fully align with the master narratives. Negotiators engage in more self-examination and use of agency than aligners in response to the narrative dissonance. They exercise their agency as they navigate conflicting narratives. A primary distinction between negotiators and deviators is negotiators find consonance while remaining in the culture (Bodine Al-Sharif & Curley, 2021). Some strategies negotiators use include choosing to align with only portions of the master narrative and reject the rest or reinterpreting the master narrative in ways that more align with their experiences and perspectives (Sumerau & Cragun, 2015).

In the context of religion, Ross et al. (2016) propose a negotiation theory as a way of understanding how some members stay in a faith when experiencing dissonance. An assumption

of negotiation theory is that members will incorporate aspects of the doctrine into their lives.

Drawing from a study conducted by Finnigan and Ross (2015) looking at LDS feminists use of

social media, Ross et al. (2016) proffer:

> If we use negotiation theory to understand what Mormons think and believe about gender
>
> in the church, we will likely find that many or most members occupy some sort of middle
>
> ground. Many will find elements of church teaching and policy on gender to be beneficial
>
> to women, but those same individuals will also point out ways in which church teaching
>
> and policy are not beneficial to women. Conservative Mormons and progressive
>
> Mormons, including Mormon feminists, engage in this process. The negotiation process
>
> is largely influenced by life experiences and so that leads members to take more
>
> conservative or more liberal stances. In this way, Mormon feminists are just doing what
>
> other Mormons do but reaching different conclusions as they negotiate gender in the
>
> church. (pp. 6-7)

Applying the master narrative framework to Ross et al. (2016), it appears that the majority of

Latter-day Saints might be negotiating the LDS gender master narratives. If that is the case, then

a minority of members are either aligning or deviating. Negotiating a master narrative can feel

radical and unsettling because belonging and cultural standing are at risk. Negotiators can feel

alone as they weigh cultural expectations against master narratives. There's significance in

acknowledging that the majority of individuals are in this space. Yes, they will come to different

conclusions based on their personal narratives, but they are not alone in having gone through the

process.

Deviation

Deviation occurs when community members are unable to find harmony with the master narrative and/or culture. Consequences for deviating from the master narrative vary and can range from disapproval to shaming to violence to expulsion. Deviators experience the highest levels of agency and self-awareness. They will often story their experience through rich counter-narratives. The master narratives become visible in counter-narratives because they are integrated into the story as the obstacle that had to be overcome. The counter-narrative challenges the reification of the master narrative placing it back into storied form and reinstating human authorship. This is frequently a painful experience but can also lead to greater sense of agency and empowerment (McLean et al., 2018).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality was a term coined by law professor and civil rights advocate, Kimberlé Crenshaw, when describing a metaphor for understanding the relationship between multiple identities. In her 1991 seminal article, Crenshaw describes a traffic intersection with streets representing different identities (or categories) such as race and gender. She reasoned that by viewing the intersection from different angles greater understanding could be gained about the human condition and how power is legitimized or weaponized based on identities (Crenshaw, 1990). Crenshaw argues that affirming identity was a sounder strategy than downplaying or dismissing it. "A strong case can be made that the most critical resistance strategy for disempowered groups is to occupy and defend a politics of social location rather than to vacate and destroy it" (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 1297).

Dr. Patricia Hill Collins (2019) in her book *Intersectionality as a Critical Social Theory* writes, "At its heart, intersectionality is a set of ideas that is critical of the established social

world" (Collins, 2019, p. 53). Master narrative research is a way of critiquing some of the means

for establishing societies. Studying master narratives with an intersectionality lens strengthens

both frameworks. Intersectionality is interested addressing inequalities. According to Collins,

when inequities are examined individually, they are viewed as natural or an unavoidable

byproduct of society. Intersectionality refutes this by calling attention to systems of power

(Collins, 2019). One way to oppose those systems of power is "standpoint epistemology," which

is the legitimization of experiences and knowledge of the oppressed and recognition that they

would have a deeper understanding of social systems and oppression than the privileged (Collins,

2019, p. 136). Standpoint epistemology validates the experience of master narrative deviators

and their counter-narratives.

For this study, cultural and master narratives are examined at the intersection of gender

and religion. Individuals have multiple identities that influence how they internalize their

experiences and shape their worldviews. The intersectionality of identities such as gender,

sexuality, race, ability, socioeconomics, and religion reveals the complexities of the human

experience and challenges monolithic thinking (Collins, 2019). Viewing people's experiences

through the lens of intersectionality challenges essentialism, the idea that people with a shared

identity have the same singular experience (Collins, 2019; Leavy & Harris, 2018; Qin, 2004;

Rhode, 1990). When cultural members have competing identities, there may be one that

overshadows the other (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). For this reason, it is important to seek out and

study the differences within shared identities to gain a more inclusive and accurate understanding

of what it means to be part of a particular community (Qin, 2004).

Women, Religion, and Master Narratives

> I assert both my Mormonism and my feminism. To claim multiple identities is to assert
> the insufficiency of any one label, including Mormonism.

– Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (1994, p. 5)

Gender and religion are areas where conflict with cultural master narratives can occur. Gender can be an integral part of a person's identity (Dengah et al., 2019; Greenfield et al., 2016). How gender impacts the lived experiences of women is well documented in the literature by the work of feminists, and gender studies social scientists, among others. This study seeks to further that knowledge by examining the intersection of master narratives, gender, and religion. McLean (2017) used the master narrative framework to examine how navigating cultural master narratives impacted "gender identity development" (p. 93). They found that those who deviated from the cultural master narratives constructed counter-narratives. However, these individuals tended to revert to the master narratives in social settings. The desire to mitigate disconnection and secure belonging can prevent people from challenging the cultural master narratives (Jacobsen, 2017; McLean & Syed, 2015).

Gender identity performance (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and religious orthopraxy contribute to the experience and perpetuation of culture (Davids, 2016; Dengah et al., 2019; Inouye, 2016). West and Zimmerman (1987) contend that gender is not about who one is, "but, more fundamentally, it is something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others" (p. 140, emphasis theirs). Gender is performative and the script is dictated by the culture but positioned as natural. West and Zimmerman further argue that the only thing natural about gender representations is that it is the byproduct of how humans learn through mimicry and approximation. Depictions of masculinity and femininity are not innate, they are reproductions of familial and community modeling. However, societal norms and systems were established on the presumption that they are natural, and the replication of these depictions further legitimize the

norms and systems. When cultural members to do not perform gender correctly, they are blamed, not the system or norm (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Ysseldyk et al. (2010) define religion as a "set of diverse yet commonly held belief systems from which individuals may gain benefits" (p. 61). Religious people benefit from belonging to a community and a set of beliefs that help them make meaning of their experiences (Jacobsen, 2017; Sumerau & Cragun, 2015; Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Religion interprets the natural world and dictates how people should be and behave based on their gender (Mikaelsson, 2016). Master narratives within the intersectionality of gender and religion often maintain gender roles and support patriarchal power structures.

There is a long history of Abrahamic religions and some Eastern religions weaponizing religious texts to oppress women (Mikaelsson, 2016). Traditionally in the Abrahamic religions, the interpretation of sacred texts has been the work of men, which, consequently, reinforces their power within a community. "[Religious] males look at the ecosystem that was designed to help them thrive, and if they thrive, they tend to see the ecosystem as divine" (Finnigan & Ross, 2015, p. 7), even when it oppresses women. The divinity of the ecosystem becomes a justification for the subjugation of women by some religious communities, or put another way, its Gods will that men should rule over women (Sumerau & Cragun, 2015). The religion then scaffolds beliefs that reinforce the cultural narrative of appropriate gender performance.

From a religious perspective membership and belonging are eternal, and this puts additional pressure on religious people to conform. Belonging is a subjective emotional attachment that can be described as a feeling of being at home and is a fundamental human need (Brown, 2017; Stroope & Baker, 2014; Walton & Brady, 2017; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Individuals want to be seen, recognized, and valued (Walton & Brady, 2017). A sense of belonging can

embolden individuals to increase participation and contributions to a group or community, and the absence of it can be a predictor of poor physical and mental health (Walton & Brady, 2017). When threatened, the potential loss of belonging can be felt acutely (Yuval-Davis, 2006), such as when an individual's standing within a community is compromised.

Religious communities are unique cultures (Inouye, 2016) and are a source of belonging for many Americans (Jacobsen, 2017; Stroope & Baker, 2014). Empirical research shows that communal worship and relationship-building with congregations can result in an increased sense of belonging (Stroope & Baker, 2014). Stroope and Baker (2014) analyzed belonging within religious communities and found that ideological unity and the opportunity for personalized networking were the greatest predictors of belonging. Religion provides a community and a framework for interpreting lived experiences which can provide positive health benefits (Jacobsen, 2017). Belonging within social constructs, including religious communities, is a type of group boundary maintenance with the majority determining who belongs and who does not (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Religious communities' master narratives laced with doctrine and social mores are often used to determine belonging boundaries.

Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has over 16 million members globally and 80 thousand missionaries (LDS Church, 2021a). The LDS church organizes its members geographically by wards (congregations), stakes (collection of wards), and regions (stake groupings) (LDS, 2021b). The leadership structure is replicated at every level of the organization, with men holding the highest levels (Beaman, 2001). Great emphasis is given to the importance of worshiping collectively (Campbell, 2016), and was affirmed in 2021 as services returned to being held in person as COVID restrictions lifted. The LDS church consists

of a lay ministry (LDS, 2021c). Therefore, on a ward and stake level, the administration, spiritual

development, and temporal welfare are provided by members volunteering their time and

resources (Jacobsen, 2017). This gives intimate and multiple social networking opportunities to

Latter-day Saints within their wards, stakes, and throughout the world. Latter-day Saints tend to

be close-knit communities, choosing to socialize primarily with their peers, resulting in wards

becoming a principal source of community, belonging, and support (Greenfield et al., 2016;

Jacobsen, 2017).

Latter-day Saints describe their level of participation and devotion to the church on a

spectrum of activity: fully active to inactive. LDS women tend to report being fully active more

frequently than their male counterparts (Campbell, 2016). One-way members demonstrate their

activity within the church is by performing a role or job, known as a calling, which contributes to

the functionality of their ward. Official LDS church policies dictate the rules and guidelines of

callings. These policies and LDS culture influence how one presents and behaves within wards

and families (Jacobsen, 2017).

According to Facts and Statistics on the LDS church's website, there are 6.7 million

members in the United States (LDS, n.d.-b), and as of 2020, Latter-day Saints make up 1% of the

total population in the US (Tonne, 2021). Latter-day Saints are highly concentrated in the state of

Utah (33% of membership in the US, 67% of state population), followed by California (11% of

membership, 2% of state population), Idaho (7% of membership, 26% of state population), and

Arizona (7% of membership, 6% of state population) (LDS, n.d.-b). Though in some of the states

the numbers may appear statistically low, they can be experienced as a large community due to

Latter-day Saints' habit of congregating. For example, Madison County in Idaho has the second

highest concentration of Latter-day Saints in the country, and 55% of the Latter-day Saints living

in Arizona are in Maricopa County (LDS, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Arizona*, 2022; n.d.-b).

The term "Utah Mormon" is frequently applied to members living in geographical area encompassing Utah, southern Idaho, and south-central Arizona, and refers to a "unique culture within the religion due to the history of the Mormon pioneers settling the state" (Jacobsen, 2017, p. 1320). Members do not readily identify as a Utah Mormon; the term is usually used to distinguish – "I'm not a Utah Mormon" or "Those Utah Mormons." Utah Mormons are characterized as being more rigidly adhering to LDS doctrine and cultural norms. Utah Mormons who relocate to areas outside of that geographical area, known as the mission field, are referred to as transplants. Utah Mormon transplants tend to drive the culture of wards in the mission field. For this reason, I do not anticipate there to be significant subcultures geographically. However, I do predict there to be subcultural differences generationally.

Jacobsen (2017) posits that the Utah Mormon culture is a result of the Mormon pioneers. There are multiple factors that go into shaping a culture; history being one of them. A full historical account of Mormon pioneers is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, a brief discussion on the expulsion of the early saints from the United States and the ramifications are relevant to a study on cultural master narratives. Culture is developed in response to events and how groups of people respond to those events – the stories they tell, how it is collectively internalized. Cultural master narratives are derived from those events, those cultural narratives.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized as the restored gospel of Jesus Christ on April 6, 1830. Missionaries were sent throughout the United States and Europe. Converts were encouraged to relocate to towns in the United Sates with large numbers of Latter-day Saints. Swells in LDS population disrupted power and resources. This coupled with

objections to LDS theology caused conflict between LDS communities and neighboring towns, leading to many clashes and migrations. This pattern played out in Kirtland, Ohio, then in Missouri, and finally in Nauvoo, Illinois. Some of the events that occurred during the Mormon-Missouri War of 1838 are particularly salient for Latter-day Saints. According to Hales et al. (2018), LDS towns were pillaged, men and boys murdered, and women beaten and raped. On October 27, 1838, Governor Lilburn Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order 44, also known as the Mormon Extermination Order:

> Your orders are, therefore, to hasten your operation with all possible speed. The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for the public peace—their outrages are beyond all description. If you can increase your force, you are authorized to do so to any extent you may consider necessary.

The Latter-day Saints were driven out of Missouri and migrated to Nauvoo, Illinois. By the early 1840s, the saints were facing increased violence and persecution, including the martyrdom of their leader and Prophet Joseph Smith. In 1846, the Latter-day Saints left the United States seeking religious freedom and safety. They decided to make their way to the Salt Lake Valley in what was then Mexico. The first company of Saints reached the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. The LDS church approximates that 60,000 to 70,000 pioneers crossed the plains to Utah between 1847 and 1868 (Cox, 2018).

Reading this history through a cultural master narrative lens highlights a journey from a group of people deviating from the American master narrative of who Christians are and how they are supposed to behave to the creation of a Latter-day Saint counter narrative of being sanctified through persecution entrusted by God to build a new Zion. As the Latter-day Saints

settled and built communities, they become the dominate culture. Their counter-narratives to the American master narrative became their own cultural master narratives. Though Latter-day Saints became Americans again with statehood granted to Utah in 1896, they did not integrate into the American culture until the middle of the twentieth century when American and LDS cultural master narratives aligned (Bowman, 2012). By the late twentieth century this alignment was being tested. American culture was changing regarding gender and sexuality. In response, the LDS church put out declarations like *The Family, A Proclamation to the World* (1995) asserting a belief in heteronormative and gender-role family structures leaving some LDS women (e.g., single LDS women and LDS feminist women) and LGBTQ+ Latter-day Saints to negotiate dual and sometimes competing master narratives (Jacobsen, 2017; McLean et al., 2018; Power, 2015).

Latter-day Saint Women

LDS theology views gender as an essential part of existence in mortal and spiritual realms (Beaman, 2001; LDS, 1995). This predicates the rituals, roles, and duties women can participate within their worship and callings. Contemporary LDS women are given mixed messages from general leadership and LDS culture about their expected roles and duties within their families and in the church (Dengah et al., 2019). Latter-day Saints are taught that men are natural leaders and providers, whereas women are innate nurturers (Beaman, 2001; Dengah et al., 2019; LDS, 1995). This is reflected in the patriarchal leadership organization within all levels of the church (Beaman, 2001) and women's contributions primarily focused in areas devoted to women and children. LDS teachings revere motherhood as the most sacred and important role for women (Anderson, 1988; Beaman, 2001; Benson, 1987; Greenfield et al., 2016; Leamaster & Einwohner, 2018). LDS women are counseled to develop their talents and intellect through

education (Madsen, 2016; Mihelich & Storrs, 2003) and to share their gifts for the benefit of others. There is a cultural expectation that once a woman becomes a mother, she should abandon secular academic and career ambitions to stay home and raise children (Dengah et al., 2019; Madsen, 2016).

Yet, within the community, all women, regardless of marital or parental status, are given leadership opportunities and encouraged to share their interpretation of scripture and faith experiences, most notably within the Relief Society. Established in 1842, the Relief Society claims to be the oldest and largest women's organization in the world (Madsen, 2016). From notes taken during the inaugural meeting of the Relief Society, the purpose of the organization was articulated by Eliza R. Snow and Emma Smith. Snow was the first secretary of the Relief Society, sometime acting as scribe during the meetings. She became the second president of the organization after the Latter-day Saints settled in the Salt Lake Valley. Emma Smith was the first president of the Relief Society and wife of the prophet, Joseph Smith. The following excerpt is taken from the *Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes,* which Snow preserved as she trekked across the plains and were used to reestablish the organization in 1867.

> Eliza R. Snow arose and said that she felt to concur with the President, with regard to the word Benevolent, that many Societies with which it had been associated, were corrupt,— that the popular Institutions of the day should not be our guide— that as daughters of Zion, we should set an example for all the world, rather than confine ourselves to the course which had been heretofore pursued— one objection to the word Relief is, that the idea associated with it is that of some great calamity— that we intend appropriating on some extraordinary occasions instead of meeting the common occurrences—

Prest. Emma Smith remark'd— we are going to do something extraordinary— when a

boat is stuck on the rapids with a multitude of Mormons on board we shall consider that a

loud call for relief— we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls— (Nauvoo

Relief Society, "Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book," 1842-1844, p. 12)

Both women's view of the purpose of the organization were realized; early members of the relief

society helped to meet the needs of their community in simple and great ways.

Present day Relief Society has a similar purpose and structure. The organization's

purpose is to, "prepare women for the blessings of eternal life as they increase faith in Heavenly

Father and Jesus Christ and His Atonement; strengthen individuals, families, and homes through

ordinances and covenants; and work in unity to help those in need" (LDS, n.d.-d, para. 1). It's

governed by three women, a president and two counselors, who act under the direction of the

First Presidency of the church (i.e., the Prophet and two counselors, all men) and are advised by

nine women who serve on the Relief Society Advisory Board. Each stake and ward have a Relief

Society Presidency consisting of a president, two counselors, and a secretary and report to male

leadership. In 2020, the Relief Society reported to have 7.1 million members across 170

countries (LDS, 2020).

In the lives of Latter-day Saint women, the Relief Society has profound influence. At the

age of 18, LDS women attend bi-weekly Relief Society meetings as part of their Sabbath

worship. The Relief Society host social events for women to build relationship, learn skills, and

preform service. The Relief Society Presidency oversees the ministering sister program in the

ward wherein every woman is assigned two sisters who check-in on her regularly (usually once a

month) to see how she is doing and offer fellowship. The Relief Society President meets

regularly with other ward leaders to discuss the temporal needs and spiritual development of

individuals and the ward. She can be viewed as a role model by members of the ward. Though LDS women have been called upon to be vocal and full partners (Nelson, 2015), it is still a cultural norm for women to ultimately defer to men for decision-making and leadership.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is patriarchal in worship practices and governance. And yet, LDS theology teaches of a Heavenly Mother working in equal partnership with a Heavenly Father (LDS, 2021). Similarly, the Edenic story is utilized by many Christian denominations to justify the subjection and oppression of women. In this interpretation, Eve committed the original sin and damned humanity (Fiorenza, 2013). Consequently, Eve was to be ruled over by Adam and is often cited as justification for the subjugation of women to men. However, LDS doctrine teaches that Eve did not sin, but rather transgressed a law for the benefit of humanity, and she is to be celebrated and emulated for her part in bringing forth humanity. And yet, the subjugation of women in LDS communities and worship has occurred and, in some ways, still occurs.

The Ideal LDS Woman

Latter-day Saints are instructed at an early age of how to be and behave as a member of the church. During Sunday services, children ages 18 months to 11 years old attend Primary to learn gospel principles, lessons based on the standard works (*Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon,* and *Doctrine and Covenants*) and sing songs that reinforce these concepts. These are mixed gendered settings where cultural expectations are modeled and taught covertly and overtly. LDS youth (ages 12 – 18) are separated by gender and continue to receive faith-based instruction on comportment and identity. By the time LDS women reach Relief Society, they are well versed in what is expected of an ideal LDS woman.

Some of the characteristics of the ideal LDS woman are ubiquitous within the culture (Dengah et al., 2019) and are embodied by the "Molly Mormon" archetype. A Molly Mormon is fully active in the church, magnifies her calling, has a strong testimony of the gospel, and is always righteous. She may have attended some college and/or served an 18-month proselytizing mission. She married young, in the temple, to a righteous LDS man and has many children. Her social network comprises family and ward members. She does not have a career, but has home-centered hobbies, and is completely fulfilled by motherhood. She does all of this happily, without any complaint (Greenfield et al., 2016). As the standard by which LDS women evaluate themselves and others, this archetype can provoke feelings of judgment, shame, guilt, and failure in LDS women (Greenfield et al., 2016). In efforts to belong, some LDS women abandon their personal desires and expressions to conform to cultural expectations. Left unexamined, LDS women may default to the archetype instead of choosing their own identity and boundaries for belonging (McBaine, 2017).

Sumerau and Cragun (2015) examined five decades of talks given during the bi-annual LDS General Conference and articles printed in the LDS magazine *Ensign* to see how LDS leaders and Latter-day Saint women jointly create an expectation of an ideal LDS woman. They found that LDS woman and leaders defined womanhood as "as an essential, God-given element of female personhood, and taught Mormon women (and men) that doing femininity required the development of feminine traits and obedience while taking care of house and husband" (p. 66). Leaders operationalize sacred texts to substantiate this essentialist framing of womanhood, which upholds the reification of gender norm master narrative that women's subjugation is divinely mandated (Sumerau & Cragun, 2015). General Conference talks hold significant weight within the LDS community and are the basis for Relief Society and Elders Quorum (male organization)

lessons where these expectations of how righteous LDS women are supposed to be hand behave are reaffirmed and internalized.

Deviating from the Ideal LDS Woman

Deviating from the ideal LDS woman can cause relational friction with other Latter-day Saints. Overtly challenging the gendered cultural narratives can provoke hostility. LDS feminists have been rebuked, ridiculed, and called to repentance for disrupting what they may consider the divine "male ecosystem" (Ross et al., 2016, p. 4). An ecosystem that privileges male experiences and perspectives and grants women conditional standpoint epistemology. Women who affirm the master narrative may be alluded as "righteous and faithful," while those who voice and/or embody counter-narratives can be demonized as "faithless troublemakers" (Ross et al., 2016, p. 4). This either/or thinking can position women against each other, complicating relationships within some Relief Societies and wards. The intersectionality of womanhood and Latter-day Saint faith and culture creates a dynamic and complex space to seek belonging (McBaine, 2017).

Jacobsen (2017) conducted a phenomenological study exploring the lived experience of LGBTQ Latter-day Saint women. LGBTQ Latter-day Saint experiences do not align with LDS master narratives. The women in this study reported feeling pressure from their peers to conform to heteronormative behaviors and relationships. The pressure to conform varied depending on the culture within their ward and their geographical location. Women in areas with higher LDS population felt more pressure. "Utah culture adds an additional layer of pressure to conform to social norms due to the domination of the Mormon religion in the socio-political landscape. Mormon values and beliefs seep into every aspect of an individual's life" (Jacobsen, 2017, p. 1320). In communities where the culture dominates, master narratives prevail reinforcing the misconception that social norms are natural and divine. Conversely, communities that have more

cultural diversity offer counter-narratives, giving community members more examples how one can be and behave in society. This is a situation where social media can be of great benefit to individuals living in cultural homogenized areas. Online groups can provide counter-narratives that may more align with personal narratives, providing a space for belonging (Finnigan & Ross, 2015). One of the themes that emerged from Jacobsen (2017) was the significance of the loss felt by LDS women when they were no longer part of the LDS community, whether by choice or exclusion.

LDS feminists can have a particularly difficult time finding places of belonging as they are not always readily accepted within their LDS communities or by secular feminists (Ross et al., 2016). Their positions on gender in the church may be seen as too radical for their LDS communities but not radical enough for secular feminists. LDS feminists provoke cognitive dissonance in both groups (Finnigan & Ross, 2015; Ross et al., 2016; Ulrich, 1994). Secular feminists might dispute the LDS feminist's identity as a feminist because she maintains membership in a patriarchal faith and culture. More traditional LDS members may question the LDS feminist's faith or call her an apostate (Finnigan & Ross, 2015). This experience is not unique to LDS women, it is a "contested space that religious feminists must negotiate" (Ross et al., 2016, p. 4).

Straddling Dual Master Narratives

LDS women in the United States are also navigating American master narratives. How LDS women negotiate LDS culture and American culture impacts their positionality within both cultures (Dengah et al., 2019). Dengah et al. (2019) conducted a study looking at the impact of cultural dissonance on the mental health of LDS women in Utah. Cultural dissonance is in response to living within two cultures with different and contradictory beliefs about gender roles.

They found that LDS women with a high awareness of straddling competing cultures experience increased psychological distress. Inouye (2016) found that Asian LDS women living in North America had a more expansive view of culture because they had been exposed to more than one set of cultural norms. Inouye (2016) argues that exposure to multiple cultural norms diminishes the power of a single set of cultural norms. A study done in Brazil with Pentecostals also found that the ability to move between cultures resulted in a greater sense of well-being (Dengah, 2014).

Resistance to Master Narratives

Religious women are agents negotiating the complexities of multiple cultural influences (Beaman, 2001). Women within patriarchal religious institutions often assert autonomy by exercising agency within the gendered boundaries of the culture (Leamaster & Einwohner, 2018). A growing body of research on women within patriarchal religious institutions posits that working within the confines of their faith traditions, these women are active agents either by maintaining the status quo or by resisting it (Leamaster & Einwohner, 2018). Agency is best understood when viewed within a social context and in relation to social norms (Brekus, 2011). When navigating cultural expectations, LDS women utilize agentic tools such as personal revelation, doctrinal and cultural separation, cognitive reconstruction, and rejection. LDS doctrine teaches that individuals can seek inspiration for their lives directly from God without an intermediary through personal revelation. This is one way LDS women negotiate male-dominated authority (Campbell, 2016). Another strategy is distinguishing doctrine from culture by believing LDS doctrine to be from God but that leaders are fallible humans (Beaman, 2001) and cultural expectations are constructs. Alternatively, others may reinterpret doctrine or cultural narratives (Beaman, 2001) in ways that promote their faith and choices. Finally, some LDS

women reject portions of doctrine or cultural norms because they do not align with their personal ethics or narrative.

LDS women who negotiate LDS cultural expectations while remaining active in the church may be practicing resistance (Leamaster & Einwohner, 2018) or "embedded resistance" (Mihelich & Storrs, 2003, p. 405). Leamaster and Einwohner (2018) were interested in understanding why some LDS women engaged in "gendered resistance" whereas others did not (p. 161). They found that LDS working mothers and LDS single career women were the most likely to resist gender expectations within the LDS community. They propose this might be because these women were not embodying the ideal LDS woman and were likely already engaging in some level of gender negotiation. Mihelich and Storrs (2003) suggest that a greater understanding of why LDS women stay in a patriarchal institution is gained when full consideration is given to what the church offers these women, namely purpose, meaning, and frameworks for understanding existential questions.

An overarching goal of this research project is to provide a greater understanding of the breadth and depth of LDS women's perspectives and experiences. Latter-day Saint women are more than a Molly Mormon archetype or oppressed women needing liberation from a patriarchal institution. They are individual agents negotiating a complex web of realities. This study was designed to illuminate those realities and these women's experiences. The master narrative framework contextualizes the lived experiences of Latter-day Saint women. However, counter-narrative theory ensures that diverse voices within the community are represented and that monolithic renderings are challenged.

Summary

This chapter consisted of a literature review of cultural and master narratives. Reification was discussed as a critical evolution from a cultural narrative to a master narrative. Relevant cultural beliefs and Latter-day Saint doctrine were shared to contextualize this study and the participants within LDS communities. Latter-day Saints hold an interesting position at the intersection of gender and religion; they belong to a minority religion that privileges maleness. Their faith community is underrepresented in the literature and their voices and perspectives are underrepresented in their community. The reification of LDS cultural master narratives, that which dictates who LDS women are supposed to be and behave, can be undermined by centering and amplifying their perspectives, experiences, and voices through standpoint epistemology. From a critical sociocultural lens, this study has the potential to disrupt power through the honoring of identity and personal agency. The next chapter details the steps taken to identify LDS cultural master narratives and how LDS women were recruited to participate.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Maybe, stories are just data with a soul.

– Dr. Brené Brown, *The Power of Vulnerability*

This chapter details how the anthropological methods (cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis) and identity development framework (master narrative framework) were employed to access Latter-day Saint women's knowledge of their culture to identify LDS cultural master narratives. Narrative methods were selected because culture members and culture are in a perpetual dance, with dance steps recorded in, and learned from, personal and cultural narratives. "Narratives, therefore, capture both the individual and the context" (Moen, 2006, p. 60). The work of a narrative researcher is to design a study that exposes cultural aspects that are so ubiquitous and invisible that that they are "unutterable" and apply "methods that will permit us to identify these covert--yet publicly available--presuppositions, so that we can make the same kinds of inferences that speakers must make when they find meaning in narratives" (Hill, 2005, p. 157).

Using narrative methods and standpoint epistemology when studying marginalized people can disrupt cultural power dynamics and defying master narratives by confronting socially agreed upon truths with diverse perspectives (Collins, 2019; Fivush, 2010). The purpose of this study is to identify LDS cultural master narratives from the perspective of Latter-day Saint women living in the United States. This study builds upon the findings from the capstone study wherein descriptors of an ideal LDS woman were identified.

The master narrative framework (McLean & Syed, 2015) is relatively new. Methods for cultural master narrative identification are still being explored and developed. This provides an opportunity for expanding the field of master narrative studies, which I sought to do through the

integration of cultural consensus analysis (CCA) and cultural consonance analysis with the master narrative framework. CCA was selected because it's a well-established method within applied anthropology for determining cultural member consensus of cultural domains and their level of consonance with those domains (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler, 2020; Romney et al., 1986). The scope of CCA and cultural consonance analysis appear to overlap with the master narrative framework principles of ubiquity, invisibility, utility, rigidity, and compulsory, suggesting that it would be an effective tool for identifying cultural master narratives. CCA and cultural consonance analysis were successfully used by Dengah et al. (2019) to better understand how LDS and American cultural norms impacted the well-being of women in an LDS-dominated community. Furthermore, CCA privileges the voices and experiences of individuals in the community, positioning participants as the experts in the domain being studied. The Latter-day Saint women who participated in this study are the experts. I looked to their expertise, experiences, perspectives, and thinking to identify LDS cultural master narratives.

As the principal research, I conducted all aspects of this study. I received approval from the Fordham Institutional Review Board (IRB) on September 10, 2021 (Appendix A). I preformed the pilot study in February 2022 and started the pile sorting interviews shortly thereafter. Data collection concluded in January of 2023. What follows is a comprehensive description of the steps taken to answer the research questions, including how participants were recruited, overview of pilot studies, and the sharing of epiphanies along the way. This study was conducted in two parts. Part one was a pile sorting analysis to determine cultural narratives. Part two was a master narrative/cultural consensus survey to identify cultural master narratives.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do LDS women think about and experience LDS cultural expectations?

RQ2: What cultural master narratives emerge from LDS women's experiences within LDS communities?

Step 1: Pile Sorting

Cultural domain analysis generally consists of free listing analysis, pile sorting interviews, factor analysis, ethnographic coding of the interview, and consensus survey (Dengah et al., 2020). A free listing analysis was conducted in the capstone study. Those findings were the basis for the pile sorting interviews conducted in this study. "Rather than forcing individuals to grapple with complex concepts in the abstract, a pile-sorting activity instead allows respondents to reveal their thinking via their sorting (grouping) of like and different items in a domain of understanding" (Dengah et al., 2020, pp. 27-28). This is an emic method focusing on how cultural members understand and make meaning of cultural domains – what is true and real for them (Dengah et al., 2020).

Measures and Procedures

A pile sorting method was used to solicit cultural knowledge from participants (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler et al., 2017). The findings from the capstone study, namely the 45 descriptors of an ideal woman, were the bases for the pile sorting exercises and interviews. The word or phrase for each descriptor, known as an item, was individually placed on a card with a unique number. The participants were instructed to sort the cards based on the prompts and directions given. The number was used to record how the participant sorted the cards for later analysis. Pile sorting exercises can be constrained or unconstrained. Constrained asks participant to sort the items into predetermined piles, such as "most important" or "least important." This is useful when testing hypothesis (Dengah et al., 2020). Unconstrained pile sorting is when participants sort items in ways that make sense to them, which exposes how they think about

items in relationship to each other. Constrained and unconstrained pile short exercises were used in this study.

Sort in Piles that Make Sense to You (Categories)

The first pile sorting exercises was unconstrained and asked participants to sort the items into piles that made sense to them. There were two rules (a) they had to create more than one pile; and (b) not every item could be its own pile. After the piles were sorted, the participant was asked to label each pile. The purpose of this exercise was to ascertain how participants would categorize these items and to help them become familiar with the items.

Sort into piles of Most Import and Least Import to the Culture (Importance)

This constrained pile sorting gave participants a binary choice – which items were most important to the culture, and which were least important. Of all the exercises, this one was the most challenging for many of the participants. Some participants struggled with maintaining the focus on being how the culture valued the items. They would slip into their own valuing of the item. In this instance, I would remind them that this exercise was focusing on the culture, not their opinion. Others wanted further clarification about what was meant by culture. This was most common from participants who had experienced different aspects of LDS culture generationally or regionally. These participants were encouraged to think of culture as it meant to them within the totality of their experience. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers just their experiences as the expert in the room. There were a few participants who pushed against the binary nature of the exercise. They were encouraged to try and put the item(s) in question in one of the two categories, but if absolutely necessary they could have a middle column. Only a few ended up with a middle a column with a couple of items. If time permitted, participants were asked what, if any themes, they saw in how they categorized these items. This

frequently led to deeper thinking and further insight to what participants were experiencing while engaging in the exercise.

Create LDS Women Archetypes (Archetypes)

The instructions for this unconstrained pile were for participant to think about LDS female archetypes and to create characters or avatars using the items. They were encouraged to lean into stereotypes and to pull from their personal experiences. The rules for this exercise were any number of avatars could be created, but at least one. Items could only be used once and not all items needed to be used in this exercise. If a participant used an item to describe one avatar, it could not be used to describe another. After the avatars were created, participants were asked to name the avatar and describe her. The purpose of this exercise was to expose stereotypes and archetypes, which is how master narratives often manifest. It was also a lot of fun and resulted in rich descriptions.

Ideals LDS Women are Supposed to Be (Supposed)

In this constrained pile sort, participants were directed to gather all the items the LDS culture said LDS women were supposed to be. Participants were demonstrating their cultural competency. Of the remaining items, participants identified the ones that LDS women were not supposed to be.

Ideals that You Embody (Self)

The final exercise focused solely on the participant. First, they claimed items that described them and then rejected the items that did not describe them. This was a consonance exercise. It revealed how the participants saw themselves in relation to the ideal LDS woman (Dengah et al., 2020). Sometimes, items would provoke participants to share personal experience

or philosophies. This exercise gave some clues into participants' consonance level with LDS cultural expectations.

Pilot

A pilot study that followed the procedures outline above was conducted with three key participants who are LDS women and representative of the participants that would be interviewed (Bernard, 2006). The objectives of the pilot study were to gauge the understandability of exercises, to see if the information obtained was answering the research questions, and to test the effectiveness of devices and platforms being used in both interview modalities (Bernard, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Key Participant #1 and #2 participated virtually, while Key Participant #3 was interviewed in person. After interviewing #1, it was evident that the instructions for creating the archetype needed to be simpler and clearer, adjustments were made before interviewing #2. Key Participant #2 thought that "covenant keeping" was missing from the descriptors, which led to a conversation about how it was different than "active" and "faithful", which were already included. After that conversation, covenant keeping was added to the list of descriptors. The distinction being that active meant participating in the ward, faithful is related to beliefs and testimonies, and that covenant keeping was honoring the promises made to God and doing the behaviors that went along with those promises. Additional rational for this choice, was that having three distinctive descriptors of how individuals practice religiosity could capture nuance and lead to dynamic results. After interviewing Key Participant #3, all the pilot study objectives had been met, and interview participant recruitment commenced.

Sampling

Participants were recruited through direct ask. Names and emails were voluntarily given by participants after the conclusion of the prior case study. I reached out to those women via email with the details about this study and invited them to be considered as an interview participant. They were given a link to a Google form where they provided their age and where they lived (city and state). From the Google form, twenty-three participants were selected, with attention to an equitable distribution of age and an eye toward their location. They were not asked their level of activity in the church. Wanting to include women with a breadth of life experiences and positionalities, I relied upon their answers to the question "Is there anything you'd like me to know?" to inform selection choices. For example, women were not selected who expressed limited availability, such as a woman who disclosed that she was anticipating giving birth in a matter of weeks and another who stated she was currently overwhelmed. Additionally, answers to this question give insight into how women were thinking about and experiencing being an LDS woman. This aided in efforts to select women with varying perspectives and experiences. For instance, a woman was selected who stated that her anger towards the church was moving her away from full activity and another who claimed to be unapologetically outspoken, while another woman was chosen because she was the only active member of her family.

Another factor that was considered when selecting participants was whether I personally knew them. Priority was given to individuals whom I did not know. However, four women were included with whom I have some level of personal relationship to bring more diversity of age and race into the study. Additional steps were taken to further diversify participants by recruiting

three participants through direct ask and two participants via networking. As a result of these efforts, two women in their 90s and three additional women of color were included in the study.

Since, I could expect to see variations in cultural master narrative saliency based on the stage of life (McLean et al., 2018), efforts were made to secure five participants per age group from various regions in the United States. Master narrative saliency across life stages is particularly useful in determining cultural master narratives because it can point to the principles of rigidity, ubiquity, and utility. Cultural narratives that transcend age could indicate a rigid lasting power within the community, while the spanning of generations indicates ubiquity. How LDS women understand and experience the narrative will illuminate how LDS communities utilizes the narrative.

Participants

A total of 92 individuals expressed interest in participating in this study. D'Andrade (2005) suggests recruiting 20-30 participants to gain consensus in cultural domains. Using the methods outlined above, 30 participants were interviewed. The participants belong to the following age groups: five were 18-29, six were 30-39, six were 40-49, four were 50-59, five were 60-69, and four were 70 years and older, and the oldest was 97 years old. The race/ethnicity makeup of the participants was 80% Caucasian; 3% Asian; 3% Pacific Islander; 3% Hispanic and Caucasian; 3% Hispanic; 3% Mestiza (Spaniard and Indigenous); and 3% African American. In terms of the level of activity in the LDS church, 60% very active, 23% active, 13% somewhat active, and 3% not active. Most of the participants reported being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day for more than 10 years (97%).

Data Collection & Interview Procedures

Interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes using the scheduling platform Calendly. Prior to attending the interview, participants were sent a consent form (Appendix B) using Adobe Sign. Interviews began with introductions, confirming understanding of the consent form, especially that participation was voluntary and could end at any time, and that the interview was being recorded and recordings would only be used for analysis purposes. Additional demographic information was gathered (e.g., age, marital and parental status, mission status, activity in the church, years as a member of the church, and race/ethnicity). The interview was contextualized in the larger research project, including a brief overview of the capstone study and an introduction of the descriptors of an ideal woman.

Participants were instructed to review the 45 descriptors for understanding and asked if they had any questions. The pile sorting process was then explained. Participants were guided through the five different prompts throughout these exercises, I encouraged participants to talk out their thinking. I would ask questions such as: What are you thinking? What is coming up for you? Do you see any themes in how you sorted these piles? After completing the exercises, I would ask participants if any descriptors were missing and if there was anything else they would like me to know. After a handful of interviews, interesting patterns emerge regarding three descriptors: "homemaker", "inclusive", and "progressing" (discussed more later). Depending on the time, I would ask participants to share their thoughts on those three descriptors. Participants who were not asked during the interview, were later emailed. The interview concluded with information about the intended timeline, that the findings would be shared with them, and asking permission to contact them if there were further questions. All participants gave permission for me to remain in contact with them.

Prior to starting the interviews, each participant was given a pseudonym. The pseudonyms utilized are the names of historical and contemporary Latter-day Saint women who I greatly admire or have profoundly impacted my life. A list of these women with a brief biography can be found in Appendix C. During the interview process, I took notes which were later recorded in MAXQDA (VERBI VERBI Software, 2021). I also wrote memos in my research log to capture epiphanies, insights, and moments from interviews that seemed particularly noteworthy. I created procedural documents to ensure that I followed the same steps with each participant from contact to memoing.

Virtual Interviews

Virtual interviews (n=25) were held over Zoom and recorded using the platform's save-to-cloud feature. Miro, a virtual collaboration board platform, was used for the pile sorting exercises. Each participant had a unique Miro board saved under their pseudonym. Participants were given a link to their board through Zoom chat. Zoom was kept open, so we could see each other and work together on Miro. On every board, there are five work areas, 45 digital sticky notes, and the title of the prompts. The descriptors were placed on digital sticky notes with its corresponding number (see Figure 2). Participants were informed that the size of the word was a result of Miro's design and the purpose of the numbers, in hopes that the word size and the numbers would not influence how the participant was thinking about the descriptor. Participants sorted the descriptors by dragging and dropping the sticky notes. Once the interview was completed, the audio was downloaded from Zoom and the participant's Miro board was saved as a PDF document and backed up. All these materials were saved to a secured drive under their pseudonym.

Figure 3

Pile Sorting Using Miro Board: First Prompt

Sort in piles that make sense to you

In-person Procedures

Of the five interviews conducted in-person, three of them were performed in participant's homes, one in my home, and one in a coffee shop. A handheld recording device was used to audio record these interviews. Each descriptor was written on an index card and post-it notes were used to create categories for the individual prompts (see Figure 3). Upon completion of a prompt, a picture was taken of the placement of the cards. After the interview, the photos and audio recording were saved to a secure drive.

Figure 4

Pile Sorting Using Index Cards
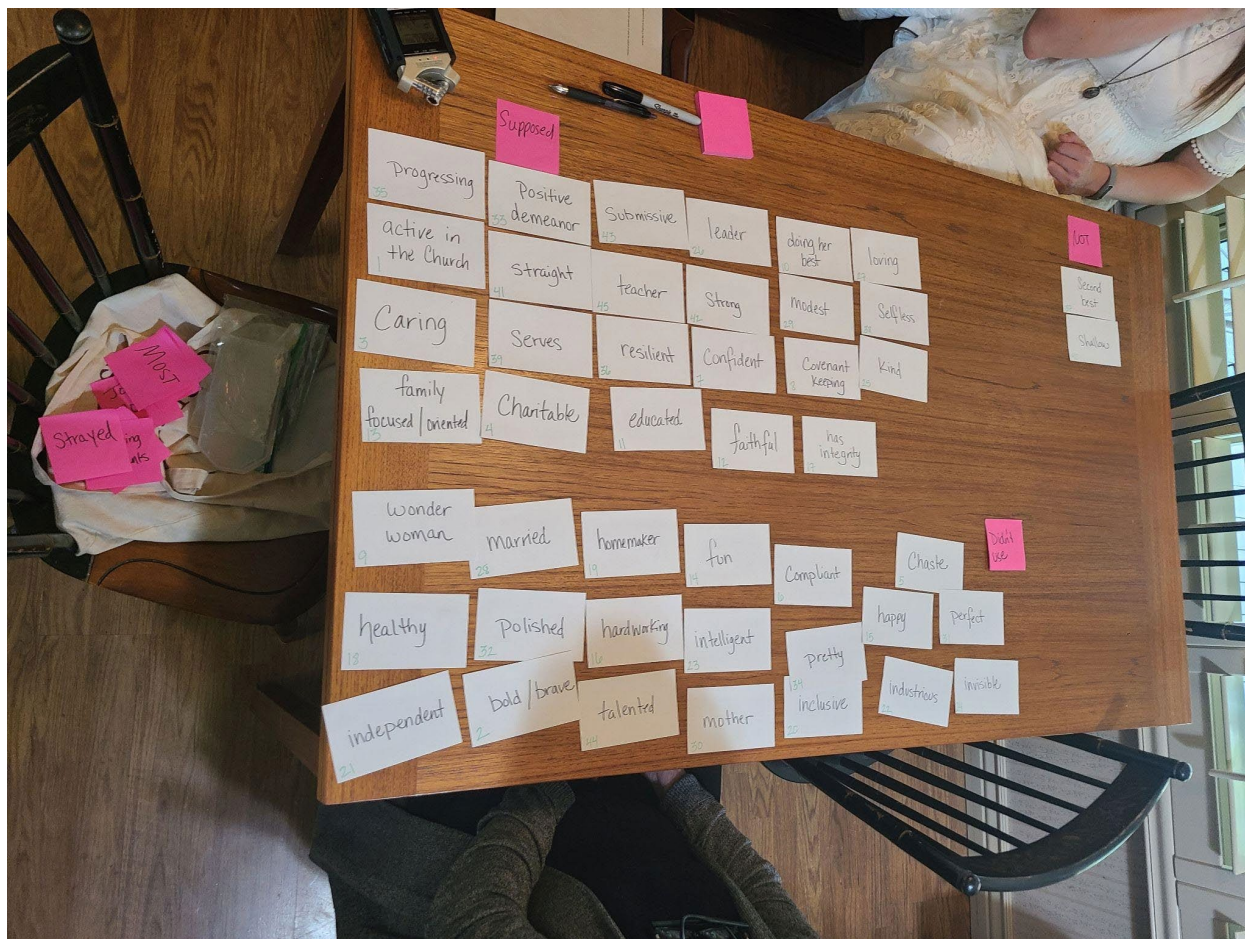
Data Analysis

The pile sorting interview data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Visual Anthropac (Borgatti, 1992), a CCA software, was used to conduct a factor analysis of the pile sorting data to determine consensus. Interview recordings were transcribed using Otter.ai, an artificial intelligence (AI) online platform. The AI transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy, any identifying information was omitted, and names were replaced with pseudonyms. The transcriptions and audio were saved to a secure hard drive and uploaded to MAXQDA for analysis. Transcripts were thematically analyzed (Saldaña, 2021) using the master narrative

framework (McLean et al., 2017), and counter-narrative theory (Halverson et al., 2011; Hammack, 2011; Hyvärinen, 2020) to identify potential LDS cultural master narratives. The findings from this step were used to create the master narrative survey (step 2).

Quantitative Analysis

The pile sorting data was prepared in Excel and imported into Anthropac using the methods outlined in Dengah et al. (2020). Pile sorting analyses were run on the five prompts to ascertain if participants shared a common truth of the domains. "CCA, via factor analysis, looks at culture at both the individual and aggregate level by comparing the amount of agreement between individuals (via an informant-by-informant matrix)" (Dengah et al., 2020, p. 41). There are four Anthropac outputs to consider when determining cultural consensus: multidimensional scaling, stress/fit, competency score, and eigenvalue/eigenvalue ratio.

Anthropac uses multidimensional scaling (MDS) to generate a two-dimensional plot that depicts the similarity and differences of variables (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler et al., 2017; Gatewood & Cameron, 2010; Sturrock & Rocha, 2000). A high volume of tight clustering indicates that there is a consensus with that domain. For example, when analyzing the archetype prompt, I was looking to see what words were clustered together, which meant participants were repeatedly using the same descriptors to describe an archetype.

MDS graphs are also useful for investigating why there is no consensus. Lack of consensus is often due to a violation of the common truth assumption of CCA, meaning there is not a shared understanding likely due to sub-cultures (Gatewood & Cameron, 2010). It is easier to identify outliers using a visual presentation of the data. Once identified, outliers can be inspected for reasons of divergence and for sub-cultural agreement.

The term "fit" is used in MDS to indicated if there is culturally shared knowledge (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler et al., 2017), a salient "set of beliefs, opinions, and expectations" (Gatewood & Cameron, 2010, p. 3). Stress is an assessment of fit. It denotes whether participant responses are random. High stress signifies randomness, not a good fit. Sturrock and Rocha (2000) created a MDS stress evaluation table that is highly regarded and frequently cited in CCA research. The table provides a stress threshold based on the number of objects and dimensionality of the MDS. This study has 45 objects (i.e., items or descriptors) and is using a two-dimensional plot, therefore the stress threshold is .360 (Sturrock & Rocha, 2000).

The competency score shows the frequency by which a participant provided a "culturally accurate response" (Dengah et al., 2020, p. 41). The expected range for competency scores is 0 to 1, with the majority of participants falling between .50 and .90 (Gatewood & Cameron, 2010). If a participant's competency score is .70 (or 70% accuracy), it can be inferred that the participant has high cultural knowledge, and if her score is comparable to others than there is shared cultural knowledge. Since the goal is to find cultural consensus, the ideal is for all participants to have a minimum competency score of .5 with no one receiving a negative score. Participants' competency scores are weighted and used to determine the eigenvalue ratio between the first and second factors. As a rule of thumb, consensus is said to be found if the ratio is greater than 3:1 (or 3.5). Low consensus values may indicate sub-cultural differences.

Qualitative Analysis

Relying solely on the quantitative data would only provide a partial rendering of the story and not fully access the participants' cultural wisdom. Integrating the voices of the participants into the study via direct quotes reinforces their positionality as experts. Qualitative analysis results in thick descriptions for the reader to gain a better understand of the participants

experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Saldaña, 2021). Mixed methods studies provide

triangulation and flexibility to the research design.

This study is situated within phenomenological qualitative research. Phenomenology is

the study of a "common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept

or a phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 75). Phenomenologists look beyond the individual

experience to see how a phenomenon is being experienced by a larger group of people (Creswell

& Poth, 2016). This study is looking at the phenomenon of cultural master narratives within the

LDS culture.

The findings from the quantitative analysis established the priori for the qualitative

analysis, namely the cluster labels. A codebook was created to guide the qualitative analysis. A

second coder was recruited to mitigate bias and to maintain rigor and trustworthiness of the

analysis. The qualitative analysis was conducted using MAXQDA software.

Codebook

The codebook (Appendix D) was created with the help of a second coder. The second

coder was recruited from my doctoral program. She was chosen because she was far removed

from the LDS culture and had familiarity with coding in MAXQDA. The second coder was

raised outside of the United States and does not identify as Christian. She has little to no

knowledge of LDS culture, outside of what she gleaned from participating in this study.

The codebook includes the name of the code, a definition, and interview segment

examples. The definitions came from the clusters and how participants defined the words during

the interviews. A draft of the codebook was reviewed by committee members and revisions were

made. The first version of the codebook was shared with the second coder during a training

session. The second coder received a set of three interviews of participants of different ages that

collectively capture all the codes. Interviews were edited to remove pleasantries and task instructions. Upon receiving the interviews from the second coder, a simple agreement analysis resulted in .28 agreement.

During a second training, the second coder and I reviewed the original set of interviews and talked through our coding choices. By the end, there were only two places of disagreement. The second coder suggested the addition of two additional codes to capture references to generational differences and cultural shifts. The codebook was modified to add the suggested codes and to clarify definitions and examples. The second coder received three new interviews and the same procedure was followed. The level of agreement dropped to .11.

Drawing heavily from Geisler and Swarts (2019), a new method for intercoder agreement was implemented. Instead of using edited interviews, a collection of segments from a range of interviews were utilized. Each segment was to be coded in its entirety with only one code. The codebook was revised one more time. I realized that in the prior versions of the codebooks, I had been trying to capture the nuances that I was seeing in the research. I shifted my thinking to view the codebook as an objective big picture instrument, that nuances would be shared in the writing of the dissertation. The codebook was revised one final time to tighten up the definitions. A third training was held, and the second coder was given four pages of segments. The third intercoder analysis resulted in a simple agreement of .74 and a Cohen's kappa of .72, which is considered substantial agreement (McHugh, 2012).

The interviews were coded in MAXQDA using the codes outlined in the codebook. The codebook helped keep the focus of the analysis on master narrative identification, with particular attention given to segments that pointed to expectations and stereotypes. Saturation was achieved

about halfway through the interviews. Nonetheless, all the interviews were coded to account for every participant's voice and perspective.

The pile sorting analysis resulted in the identification of ten hypothesized cultural master narratives and three themes. These finding are detailed in the next chapter. They also formed the bases for the final step – cultural master narrative survey.

Step 2: Cultural Master Narrative Survey

The hypothesized master narratives were tested for cultural saliency using a survey which combines the master narrative framework (McLean, Delker, et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2017; Syed & Nelson, 2015) with cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler, 2020). McLean and Syed's mixed-method research design could not be duplicated for the present study. They utilized existing inventories relevant to their research questions, interviews, and narrative producing prompts. The data was analyzed using a master narrative coding system. This research design works if (a) cultural narratives have been empirically identified, and (b) instruments exist that are relevant to the research questions. Since the present study did not meet either of these criteria, a new research design was needed.

Cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis were employed to pinpoint LDS cultural narratives. An instrument was needed to determine if the findings from the pile sorting analysis could be generalized to LDS culture. Bennardo (2018) recommends using a Likert agreement scale questionnaire to validate cultural hypothesis derived from prior steps.

Measures and Procedures

A cultural master narrative survey was created in Qualtrics. The survey was comprised of seven sections: welcome message and general information, statement of consent, qualifying items, typical LDS woman perspective, personal perspective, master narrative prompt, and any

additional information. The survey started with a welcome message and video that introduced me and the study. Next, was a statement of consent outlining the benefits and risks of participating in the study and how to contact the IRB office. Then, there were 4 qualifying items: participants needed to identify as female, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, reside in the United States, and be an adult.

Next, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement of the hypothesized cultural master narratives from a prototypical perspective (McLean, Delker, et al., 2020) and then from their own perspective. Participants were given 14 items from the perspective of a typical LDS woman and 26 items to be answered from their perspective. They rated their level of agreement with the statements using a four-point Likert agreement scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). A four-point scale was selected because the results could easily be transferred into a true/false assessment (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011).

Then, participants were invited to share an experience deviating from LDS cultural master narratives. The language for this prompt was adapted from Syed and Nelson (2015).

> Sometimes our lives, or aspects of our lives, do not completely match the storyline that the LDS culture expects us to have, or what is considered appropriate, normal, or accepted. Try and think of a moment from your life when this was the case. It can be a big or small moment. Describe this moment, including where you were, whom you were with, what happened, your reaction, emotions, and/or feelings, and the reaction(s) of anyone else involved.

The survey concluded by collecting demographic information and asking participants if there was any additional information that they would like share.

When designing a survey, it is customary to pair items by phrasing the item positively and negatively to ascertain if participants answer items consistently. However, this may not be the best practice if reverse wording of the item would not be "clear" or "natural" to cultural members (Gatewood & Cameron, 2010, p. 4). Reverse coding was used sparingly in this survey for three reasons: (a) the meaning of the statement would be convoluted; (b) it would no longer answer the research questions; and (c) because of my commitment to honor the voices of the participants. Reversing the words compromised the emic validity and in vivo wording of the participants. In an effort to enhance the rigor of the survey and to retain participants' attention, the same scaling structure was used throughout and statements were randomized based on master narratives (Office of Scale Office of Scale Research, 2022).

Pilot

The survey was shared separately with two key informants (Bernard, 2006). They were instructed to provide feedback regarding understandability of the tasks, readability of the items, language use, and their experience overall (Bernard, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Both reported that the instructions were clear, the language was understandable, and the word choice resonated with them as cultural members. One participant shared, "I noticed that as I answered the Cultural questions, it felt like I was affirming all of the sexist programming I had endured as an LDS youth. It was emotionally triggering." In response, the consent form was edited to be explicit that participants may experience emotional and/or psychological discomfort in participating in the survey. Prior to distributing the survey, it was reviewed by committee members. Based on their feedback, additional demographic items were added, and the sequence of items was adjusted. A copy of the Statement of Consent and survey are in Appendices E and F, respectively.

Data Collection & Sampling

Data was collected using the master narrative survey on the Qualtrics platform. Participants were recruited using direct ask and snowball sampling (Bernard, 2006). The survey was sent directly by email to the women who were interviewed and to LDS women in my network. A link to the survey was shared on my personal and the LDS Women Project Instagram and Facebook platforms. All recruiting material requested that individuals widely share the survey with LDS women in their networks. The same request was made at the end of the survey.

Participants

A total of 2,882 individuals started the survey and 2,346 completed it (see Table 2). The majority of participants fell within the 40-49 age group (n=736, 31%), followed by the 30-39 age group (n=728, 31%). As expected, most participants were Caucasian (n=2,175, 93%), and live in Utah, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, or Montana (n=1,523, 65%). The majority identify as very active (n=992, 42%) or active (n=811, 35%) in the LDS church. Nearly all the participants have been members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day for their entire lives (n=2,170, 92%).

Table 1

Participant Demographics from the Cultural Master Narrative Survey.

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-29	474	20%
30-39	728	31%
40-49	736	31%
50-59	268	11%
60-69	99	4%
70 and older	41	2%
Region		
WA, OR, CA	247	11%

MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM	1,523	65%
ND, SD, NE, IA, KS, MO	42	2%
AK, HI	10	<1%
MN, WI, MI, IL, IN, OH, KY	81	3%
OK, TX, AR, LA, TN, MS, AL, FL, GA, SC, NC	264	11%
ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, CT, RI, PA, NJ, WV, VA, MD, DE	195	8%
Race/ethnicity		
Caucasian	2,175	93%
Hispanic/Latinx	49	2%
Hispanic/Latinx, Caucasian	34	1%
Asian, Caucasian	15	1%
Asian	14	1%
Black or African American	5	<1%
Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian or Alaska Native	3	<1%
Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian or Alaska Native, Caucasian	3	<1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	<1%
Black or African American, Caucasian	2	<1%
American Indian or Alaska Native, Caucasian	2	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Caucasian	2	<1%
Middle Easter, Caucasian	2	<1%
Hispanic/Latinx, Black or African American, Caucasian	1	<1%
Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, Caucasian	1	<1%
Black or African American, Asian, Caucasian	1	<1%
Asian, Caucasian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	<1%
Preferred not to answer	26	1%
Church Activity		
Not active	153	7%
Somewhat active	390	17%
Active	811	35%
Very Active	992	42%
Length of membership		
Less than 1 year	2	0%
At least 5 years	17	1%
At least 10 years	9	<1%
More than 10 years	148	6%
Lifelong member	2,170	92%

Data Analysis

The data from the cultural master narrative survey data was analyzed for consensus and consonance. Cultural consensus analysis (CCA) provides a way for cultural researchers to delineate culture from the myriad of forces that influence human development and understanding (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011; D'Andrade, 2005; Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler, 2020; Romney et al., 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). CCA uses mixed methods to determine if cultural members have a consensus of understanding of a domain, which is more than agreement. "Agreement does not always imply getting it right. What the theory of consensus analysis does is work out the special circumstances under which agreement really does imply knowledge" (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011, p. 1). CCA does this by (a) discerning what culturally shared knowledge is and affirming that the participants belong to the same culture; (b) supplying a way to gauge cultural member's cultural competency; and (c) establishes an answer key of the culturally correct answers to questions that a researcher will ask participants (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011; Romney et al., 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

The raw survey data was converted to binary 1s and 0s – answers of agreement (strongly agree, agree) were assigned a 1 and answers of disagreement (strongly disagree, disagree) were assigned a 0 (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). For cultural consensus, the 14 items in the cultural perspective section were analyzed. Two of the items were reverse coded ("11. LDS women are not supposed to be independent"; "13. The LDS culture is inclusive." See full survey in Appendix F). An informal model consensus analysis was conducted using UCINET (Borgatti et al., 2002). UCINET generated eigenvalues for each participant and an eigenvalue ratio via a weighted factor analysis. Cultural members with the highest cultural competency were given more weight (Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler, 2020). The cultural consensus analysis produced an

answer key that was utilized to evaluate consonance. It is important to recognize that cultural competency is different than personal agreement. A high cultural competency score is demonstrating that the participants know the culturally appropriate answer. Whether the participants agree with the answer or behave in alignment with the answer is what consonance is deriving.

Cultural consonance looks at individual behavior in the context of their culture (Dengah et al., 2020; Dengah et al., 2019; Dressler, 2020; Dressler et al., 2017). Cultural master narratives put pressure on cultural members to be and behave in the prescribed way. Consonance detects how cultural members respond to that pressure. Some of the survey items in the individual perspective section were analyzed for consonance. The individual perspective items that correspond to cultural perspective items were used to tally a cultural consonance score for each participant (i.e., all of the 1's are added together. None of the individual perspective items were reverse coded).

A binary logical regression analysis in SPSS (IBM Corporation, 2020) was used to ascertain consonance. There were 26 items in the individual perspective section of the survey and 22 of them corresponded to the cultural perspective section. Therefore, participants could receive a score between 0 (no cultural consonance) and 22 (highest cultural consonance). The four items not included in the cultural consonance score were: "1. I strive to be an ideal LDS woman"; "22. I believe I was discouraged from going on a mission"; "25. Overall, I am happy"; and "26. Sometimes, it is stressful to live up to the expectations placed on LDS women". Items 1, 25, and 26 were isolated as dependent variables. Consonance score, age, level of activity, and degree of education were run as covariables.

Trustworthiness, Rigor, and Validity

At every stage, efforts were made to maintain a trustworthiness, rigor, and validity of this study. A review of the existing literature helped to frame the study and guide its execution. The chosen methodologies and theoretical frameworks are recognized within their respective fields. The mixed-method approach triangulated the data and provided thick descriptions. Multiple steps were taken to achieve triangulation. The pile sorting data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative cultural consensus analysis procedures. A second coder was employed to mitigate biases during the qualitative data analysis. The finding from the quantitative data were checked against the qualitative data. When discrepancies were found, biases were evaluated, procedures were examined, and adjustments were made. My experience with labeling the clusters for the pile sort is an example of when my biases came into play but were addressed by my fidelity to the data and the trustworthiness of the research project. The findings from the pile sorting were validated through a cultural consensus and cultural consonance analysis of the master narrative survey data. The quantitative findings from the survey were brought into conversation with in vivo data from both steps to center the participants' perspectives, experiences, and voices. As a cultural member, I was able to see nuances and understand what was being said and what was not being said in the silences, gestures, and word choices (Hochman & Spector-Mersel, 2020; Lucero Jones, 2022). I was able to construct thick descriptions of the phenomenon of LDS cultural master narratives.

As a halfie, a researcher and culture member (Abu-Lughod, 2008), I was continually aware that I was interpreting the data as a master narrative researcher and as a Latter-day Saint woman. I utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological practice of memoing my interpretations. Throughout the entire study, I documented how I was thinking and understanding master

narratives and the data. I recorded my epiphanies and frustrations, and the moments I was aware of my biases including what I did to address them, so that I could do better.

I was also conscious of the tension between the individual's narrative and the cultural narrative. I knew I needed to safeguard against reifying the LDS community by reducing their collective experiences to sound bites and generalities (Adams & Markus, 2001). I did this through standpoint epistemology by centering the participants as the experts and retaining the emic validity and in vivo wording of the participants whenever possible.

Ethics

I received IRB approval on September 10, 2021, and this study was conducted in accordance with assertions made in that appeal. In efforts to protect the participants' privacy and identity, the survey did not ask for personal contact information. The interview participants were given pseudonyms under which all data will be filed. Additionally, any identifying references within the interview transcripts was removed and names were replaced with their pseudonym. All quotes were attributed to the pseudonym. Interviews were audio recorded and video recorded if conducted via Zoom. All data was saved on an IRB approved secure folder. The raw data was only viewed and handled by me.

Any data collected outside of the secured drive with participant identifiable material has been removed from the respective platform. There is no participant identifiable information on the Miro platform. Each Miro board was labeled with a number. An Excel spreadsheet housed on the secure drive has the name of the participant and their corresponding Miro board number. The Zoom video recording have been deleted from the platform.

All participants were asked to sign Statements of Consent that outlined the benefits and risks of participating in the study. Interview participants were asked if they had any questions

about the Statement of Consent and were informed that they could stop the interview at any time without repercussions. I have stayed in contact with the interview participants and asked for clarification or additional information when needed. I have also provided them with periodic updates on the status of the study. I will make this dissertation available to them upon its completion.

Reflexivity

I treated and viewed the participants as experts in our shared culture. Borrowing from Lucero Jones (2022), I was a "co-constructionist of meanings" with these participants (p. 10). I looked to them, particularly the interview participants, to guide my interpretations. The interview dynamic was often conversational, as me and the participant made discoveries and talked through interpretations of what we were experiences and seeing. Being aware of the inherent power dynamics in the researcher-participant relationship, I explained the CCA expert assumption and reinforced this by referring to myself as their assistant during the pile sorting exercises. I would use phrases such as "I'll be your assistant and label these for you. What do you call this?" For those who were struggling with using Miro, I say, "I'll be your assistant, tell me where you'd like to move the sticky, and I'll place it for you." Considering Abu-Lughod (2008) and power dynamics, it occurred to me that it was problematic to think of or refer to the participants as my participants. They are not mine. They are autonomous agents who gifted their time, stories, and perspectives to this study. A gift I intend to use for the betterment of our community and our sisters in the faith.

I believe that my being a cultural member gave me access to a population that is often suspicious of researchers and can be hyper-protective of the culture. I suspect that this part generational trauma and part cultural, an inheritance from a persecuted people. It may also be the

consequences of being women in a patriarchal and minority religion. I am situated in the same intersection they are, with a shared language and culture. Perhaps, there was an unspoken understanding that any harm that I may possibly commit through this study, would also harm me and members of my family. Thus, they were willing to entrust me with their stories, perspectives, and experiences.

Summary

In this chapter, the methods for conducting this study were outlined in detail, as where the steps taken to answer the research questions. It started with a review of cultural consensus analysis, consonance analysis, and the master narrative framework, and how they were utilized. The actions taken in the first step of the study, pile sorting analysis, were outlined including the measure and procedures for in person and virtual interviews, how participants were recruited, and how the data was analyzed. Then, it was explained how the findings from step one contributed to the second step, master narrative survey. Similarly, the methods, procedures, sampling, and data analysis of this step were also described. The trustworthiness, rigor, validity, ethics of the study were reviewed. The chapter concluded with a reflection on my relationship with the participants. In the next chapter, the findings from the pile sorting analysis (step 1) and cultural master narrative survey (step 2) will be shared.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Being a woman is challenging and being an LDS woman is no exception.
– Sarah, participant

A cultural consensus analysis (CCA) and cultural consonance analysis were used in conjunction with the master narrative framework (McLean & Syed, 2015), standpoint epistemology (Collins, 2019), and phenomenological practices (Creswell & Poth, 2016) to analyze the data. The objective of this study was to identify Latter-day Saint cultural master narratives that emerge from LDS women's experiences and perspectives and to learn how LDS feel about these master narratives. The first step in this study, a pile sorting analysis, produced ten hypothesized LDS cultural master narratives.

These hypothesized LDS cultural master narratives were the bases for the second step of the study, the cultural master narrative survey. This survey yielded additional quantitative and qualitative data that was analyzed to determine (a) if there was consensus amongst LDS women living in the United States regarding the hypothesized cultural master narratives; (b) if so, did LDS women feel the pressure of these master narratives; and (c) if CCA and cultural consonance are effective methods for identifying cultural master narratives. In this chapter, the hypothesized cultural master narratives and themes from the pile sorting interviews are shared and the results from the analysis of the cultural master narrative survey data are reported. And the effectiveness of the research design to answer the research questions is evaluated.

Step 1: Pile Sorting

Each of the five prompts were analyzed using Anthropac to determine cultural fit. The multidimensional scaling results (see Table 1) showed that three prompts were a good cultural consensus fit: "Categories", "Archetypes", and "Self". Archetypes (eigenvalue ratio of 10.79,

stress of .21, competency mean of 0.44 with one negative) and Self (eigenvalue ratio of 3.88, stress of .10, competency mean of 0.44 with no negative) indicate that LDS archetypes are well known within the community, and that when describing themselves, LDS women sorted the ideal descriptions similarly. A consensus on Categories (eigenvalue ratio of 5.55, stress of .13, competency mean of 0.55 with no negatives) signifies that LDS women classify the descriptors similarly.

Table 2

Multidimensional Scaling Results from Pile Sorting Prompts

Prompt	Eigenvalue	Eigenvalue Ratio	Stress	Consensus	Fit
Categories	9.79	5.55	0.13	Yes	Fit
Importance	6.18	2.18	0.11	No	Subcultural differences
Archetypes	6.91	10.79	0.21	Yes	Fit
Supposed	5.27	2.78	0.11	No	Subcultural differences
Self	6.84	3.88	0.10	Yes	Fit

"Importance" and "Supposed" did not have cultural fit, due to sub-cultural differences, a common truth violation. Gatewood and Cameron (2010) suggest looking at demographic variables to see if there is sub-culture consensus on the second factor Importance and Supposed were analyzed to see if there was consensus when age was considered. For Importance, consensus was found in ages 30 and older (eigenvalue ratio of 3.62, stress of .11, competency mean of .817 with one negative). Though the analysis also showed a consensus amongst 18–29-year-olds, there were only 5 women in that group which is not enough to draw meaningful conclusions. Similarly, there was consensus for Supposed for women 40 years and older

(eigenvalue ratio of 3.33, stress of .11, competency mean of .402 with no negatives). There was no consensus with younger participants. It was not surprising to find that women in their 30s and older viewed the cultural significance of descriptors differently than their younger counter parts. This could be explained by cultural shifts or human developmental stages (Mehta et al., 2020).

The MDS two-dimensional plots for Categories, Archetypes, and Self were examined to glean a richer understanding of how LDS women internalized and thought about cultural expectations of the ideal (see Figures 4–6). Each cluster of items were given an umbrella label to capture its overall essence. The first attempt was theming the clusters based on all the pile labels provided by the participants. This was laborious and the preliminary results did not appropriately capture the items, which was most evident in umbrella labels for Categories. I realized that I was relying too heavily on my understanding of the culture and not on what the data was showing. For example, I was viewing the data with an eye towards the tension between mothers and single women. Participants had labeled categories "Mother" and "Single", but those labels did not match the clustering dataset. In response, a different approach was used. The individual clusters that matched the closest to the MDS cluster were isolated and their labels were reviewed. Label saturation was reached quickly (within 30 minutes). The data revealed that "Active LDS" and "Striving For" were more apt than Married and Single, respectfully. The improved upon method was used to ascertain the rest of the MDS cluster labels. The next step was to analyze the interview transcripts to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences with the descriptors of an ideal LDS woman.

Figure 5

Multidimensional Scoring Plot for Sort into Piles that Make Sense to You
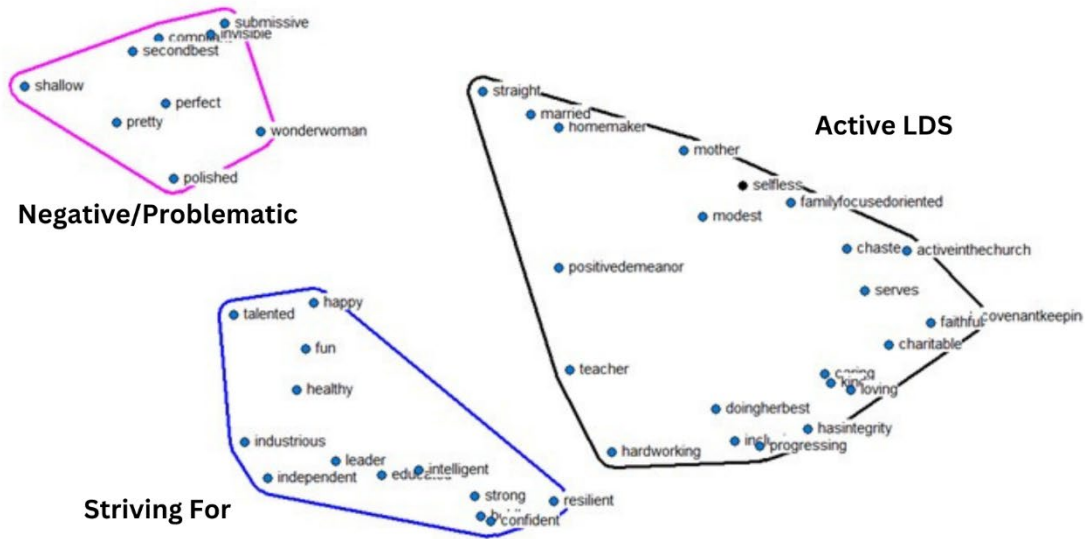
Figure 6

Multidimensional Scoring Plot for LDS Women Archetypes
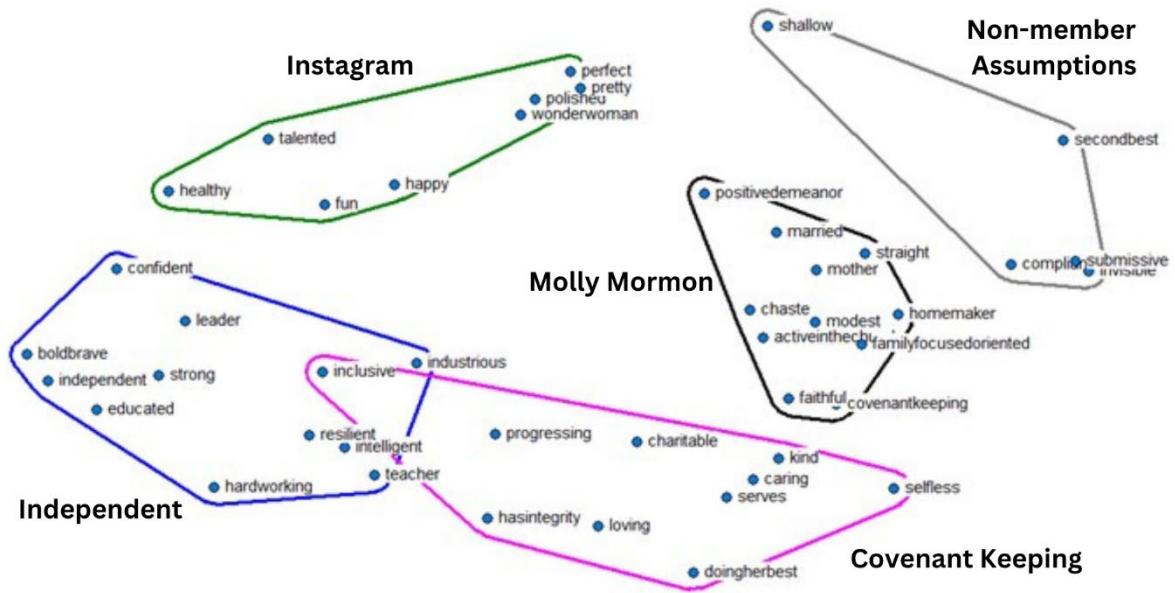
Note. MDS is a two-dimensional graph. Though it appears that "covenant keeping" and "independent" overlap, they do not. "Inclusive" is exclusively part of "covenant keeping".

Figure 7

Multidimensional Scoring Plot for You
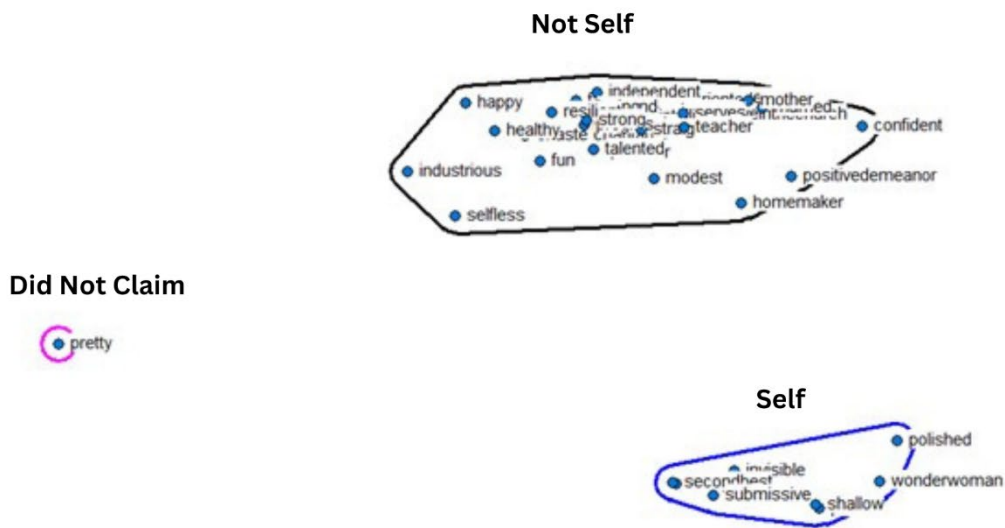
Pile Sorting Themes

The pile sorting analysis resulted in greater knowledge of how Latter-day Saint women think about "homemaker", "progressing", and "inclusion". During the interview process homemaking, progressing, and inclusion were acutely salient. The participants sorted and talked about these descriptors in unanticipated ways. The first theme to emerge was homemaking. Participants were sorting homemaking in unexpected ways. Some women who were stay-at-home-moms did not claim it as a descriptor when sorting for themselves, referring to it as "cultural baggage" (Sarah, participant), meaning that it evoked adverse emotions and thoughts. Meanwhile, other women who were single and childless did claim it. Both groups of women where using their agency to participate in master narrative negotiation (McLean et al., 2018).

Progressing was another theme that surfaced. Participants talked about the culture expectation spiritual progression was a straight and narrow path, however, they experienced spiritual progression as much more complex. The last theme to arise was inclusion. There appears to be tension between the LDS culture not being inclusive and participants highly valuing inclusivity. During the Importance sorting, many participants sorted inclusive in the least important to the culture pile. And when sorting for themselves, they would claim to be inclusive.

Potential LDS Cultural Master Narratives

The following are a list of hypothetical LDS cultural master narratives that emerged from the pile sorting analysis. The hypotheses were tested through a cultural master narrative survey.

H1: LDS women should receive an education just in case.

H2: It's important for LDS women to be educated but not necessarily intelligent.

H3: Being a mother is the most important role for an LDS woman.

H4: Mothers are supposed to stay home with their children.

H5: Living the Gospel results in a healthy, happy, joyful life.

H6: LDS women should be happy.

H7: Spiritual progress means staying on the straight and narrow path.

H8: LDS women are supposed to look pretty, polished, and perfect.

H9: It is necessary to be active in the church to be socially accepted.

H10: LDS women are not supposed to be independent.

<div align="center">

Cultural Consensus Analysis

</div>

The research design and execution of the study fulfill the three assumptions of CCA: common truth, local independence, and homogeneity of items (Romney et al., 1986). The data from the cultural master narrative survey was analyzed using an informal cultural consensus

analysis, which found an eigenvalue ratio of 4.593 and 66 negative competencies (3% of participants). The high eigenvalue ratio and scant number of negative competencies signify that there is cultural consensus with the hypothesized master narratives.

The participants' eigenvalues indicate their level of cultural competency (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). UCINET uses these competency scores to generate an answer key for the culturally correct answers to the survey questions (see Table 3). The answer key is created by the participants' answers. The answers from individuals with higher cultural competency (i.e., higher eigenvalues) are given more weight than those with lower competency scores. As seen in Table 3, all the hypothesized master narratives have cultural consensus. The answer key accepts narratives 1 – 9 but rejects narrative 10 (LDS women are not supposed to be independent).

Table 3

Cultural Consensus Answer Key

Hypothesized Master Narrative	True/False
H1: LDS women should receive an education just in case.	TRUE
H2: It's important for LDS women to be educated but not necessarily intelligent.	TRUE
H3: Being a mother is the most important role for an LDS woman.	TRUE
H4: Mothers are supposed to stay home with their children.	TRUE
H5: Living the Gospel results in a healthy, happy, joyful life.	TRUE
H6: LDS women should be happy.	TRUE
H7: Spiritual progress means staying on the straight and narrow path.	TRUE
H8: LDS women are supposed to look pretty, polished, and perfect.	TRUE
H9: It is necessary to be active in the church to be socially accepted.	TRUE
H10: LDS women are not supposed to be independent.	FALSE

Cultural Consonance

The establishment of consensus covers four of the five principles of the master narrative framework, namely ubiquity, invisibility, utility, and rigidity. It does not account for compulsory, hence the need for a cultural consonance analysis. Cultural consonance evaluates what cultural

members know and how they behave compared to the ideal (Dressler, 2016; Dressler, 2020).

Binary logistical regression analyses were employed to determine cultural consensus. For these

analyses, stress, striving, and happiness were the investigated outcomes. These were evaluated

based on participants' responses to the following items: 1. I strive to be an ideal LDS woman;

25. Overall, I am happy; and 26. Sometimes, it is stressful to live up to the expectations placed

on LDS women.

A binary logistic regression was used to analyze the relationship between stress and

cultural consonance, age, level of activity in the church, and degree of education (see Table 4).

The model was statistically significant χ^2 (1, $N = 2,346$) = 545.03, p = <.001, suggesting that it

could distinguish between those who experienced stress and those who did not. The model

explained 21% (Cox & Snell R Square) and 38% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance in the

dependent variable and correctly classified 88% of cases. It found that, holding all other

predictor variables constant, the odds of stress occurring increased by 82% (90% CI 1.73, 1.92)

for a one–unit increase in cultural consonance. This suggests that Latter-day Saint women's

stress increases the more they feel pressure of the master narratives.

Table 4

Logistical Regression Predicting Stress

Dependent Variable	B	SE	Wald	df	P	Exp(B)	90 CL for EXP(B)	
							LL	UL
Age	-.07	.06	1.21	1	.272	.93	.84	1.03
Activity	.06	.08	.69	1	.406	1.07	.94	1.21
Education	.03	.05	.38	1	.536	1.03	.95	1.11
Consonance	.60	.03	346.06	1	<.000	1.82	1.73	1.92

A binary logistic regression was conducted to analyze the relationship between striving

for the ideal and cultural consonance, age, level of activity in the church, and degree of education

(see Table 5). The model was statistically significant χ^2 (1, $N = 2{,}346$) $= 80.31$, $p = <.001$,

suggesting that it could distinguish between those who do and do not strive to be the ideal LDS

woman. The model explained 3% (Cox & Snell R Square) and 5% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the

variance in the dependent variable and correctly classified 61% of cases. It found that, holding

all other predictor variables constant, the odds of striving occurring increased by 15% (90% CI

1.12, 1.18) for a one–unit increase in cultural consonance. This indicates that as Latter-day Saint

women feel the pressure of the master narratives, they try harder to be the ideal LDS woman.

Table 5

Logistical Regression Predicting Striving

Dependent Variable	*B*	*SE*	*Wald*	*df*	*P*	*Exp(B)*	90 CL for *EXP(B)*	
							LL	*UL*
Age	.02	.04	.29	1	.591	1.02	.96	1.08
Activity	.05	.05	.93	1	.334	1.05	.97	1.13
Education	-.03	.03	1.45	1	.229	.97	.92	1.01
Consonance	.14	.02	76.15	1	<.001	1.15	1.12	1.18

A binary logistic regression was used to analyze the relationship between happiness and

cultural consonance, age, level of activity in the church, and degree of education (see Table 6).

The model was statistically significant χ^2 (1, $N = 2{,}346$) $= 27.36$, $p = <.001$, suggesting that it

could distinguish between those experiencing and not experiencing happiness. The model

explained 2% (Cox & Snell R Square) and 3% (Nagelkerke R Square) of the variance in the

dependent variable and correctly classified 87% of cases. It found that, holding all other

predictor variables constant, the odds of happiness occurring decreased by 12% (90% CL .85,

.92) for a one–unit increase in cultural consonance. Therefore, it can be inferred that Latter-day

Saint women's happiness decreases the more they feel the pressure of the master narratives.

Table 6

Logistical Regression Predicting Happiness

Dependent Variable	B	SE	Wald	df	P	Exp(B)	90 CL for EXP(B)	
							LL	UL
Age	.10	.06	3.35	1	.067	1.11	1.01	1.22
Activity	.11	.07	2.68	1	.101	1.12	1.00	1.25
Education	-.04	.04	1.13	1	.287	.96	.89	1.02
Consonance	-.12	.02	26.05	1	<.001	.88	.85	.92

The cultural consonance analysis of stress, striving, and happiness show that Latter-day

Saint women do feel the pressure of the master narratives, thus satisfying the compulsory and

utility principles of the master narrative framework. Therefore, this study successfully identified

the following LDS cultural master narratives from the experiences and perspectives of Latter-day

Saint women:

1. LDS women should receive an education just in case.

2. It's important for LDS women to be educated but not necessarily intelligent.

3. Being a mother is the most important role for an LDS woman.

4. Mothers are supposed to stay home with their children.

5. Living the Gospel results in a healthy, happy, joyful life.

6. LDS women should be happy.

7. Spiritual progress means staying on the straight and narrow path.

8. LDS women are supposed to look pretty, polished, and perfect.

9. It is necessary to be active in the church to be socially accepted.

Research Design Effectiveness

As demonstrated in this study, cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis coupled with the master narrative framework effectively identified cultural master narratives. The consensus analysis successfully fulfilled the master narrative principles of ubiquity, invisibility, utility, and rigidity. The remaining principle, compulsory, as well as utility, are addressed through cultural consonance analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, the finding from the pile sorting analysis, including the three themes homemaking, progressing, and inclusive, were shared. The findings from the consensus analysis and consonance analysis were detailed, and LDS cultural master narratives were identified. Lastly, the effectiveness of the method was evaluated. In the next and concluding chapter, the identified LDS cultural master narratives will be contextualized with in the Latter-day Saint culture. The participants' voices are brought into conversation with the cultural master narratives to demonstrate the impact of this phenomenon on LDS women. The study limitations will be discussed and recommendations for future studies will be made.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

> For investigators of meaning, there are no boundaries, and there is no end to data collection, only intermediate decisions to "pause" and communicate what one knows about the historical moment one has just documented.
> – Phillip L. Hammack & Bertram J. Cohler, *The Story of Sexual Identity*

In this concluding chapter, the results of the LDS cultural master narrative study are discussed. This study sought to learn how LDS women experienced cultural expectations and to discover what cultural master narratives might emerge from their perspectives. The interdisciplinary research design integrated anthropology methods and a human development framework to answer the research questions and contribute to the field of master narrative studies. This study successfully identified three themes and nine Latter-day Saint cultural master narratives. What follows is a deeper examination of the themes and master narratives by centering the voices of the participants and situating the narratives within the LDS culture. The origins of these cultural master narratives are beyond the scope of this dissertation but will be the focus of a future research project. Additionally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, and recommendations are made for future research. The chapter concludes with some final thoughts on the implications of this study on Latter-day Saint communities.

Pile Sorting Themes

During the pile sorting analysis of this study, interesting patterns emerged which resulted the classification of three themes: homemaker, progressing, and inclusion.

Homemaker

Participants were defining homemaker as a woman, mainly mothers, whose primary focus, and responsibility was in the domestic sphere – cooking, cleaning, and raising children. Emmeline described a homemaker as a woman who is "very family focused…very service

oriented…[She] sews all her kid's clothes." Bonnie adds, "I think of, like, a stay-at-home mom, typically. And someone who's, like, very focused on making the home beautiful and cooks, picks every meal. Like, does decor and gardens." Valery hints that homemaking is understood as the righteous choice. She is choosing her family over secular desires. "[A homemaker] keeps a happy, healthy home that is clean. And is there for her family when they need her. And is not off seeking after the worldly goods." Historically, church leadership has counseled Latter-day Saint women to be homemakers, resulting in cultural pressure for women to assume this role (Anderson, 1988; Benson, 1987; Rodriquez, 1989). This expectation was evident throughout the pile sorting exercises, which was supported by the responses to the cultural master narrative survey item 9. Mothers are supposed to stay home with their children. Wherein, 79% (N = 1,845) of the participants agreed that this was a cultural expectation. The same percentage (79%, N = 1,852) reported personally feeling pressured to be a stay-at-home mom if or when they had children.

An interesting pattern occurred with homemaker during the pile sorting for Self. Participants were instructed to claim the descriptors that they would use to describe themselves. Stay-at-home-mothers inconsistently claimed "homemaker". When asked about this, Addie shared:

> But I don't like that word, because, you know, I don't have a job outside of the home or a paid job outside of the home. But I am much more complex than just...You know, I don't stay at home all day and home-make. I just don't think it's a really good descriptor necessarily of all women who are...who don't have a job, a paid job inside or outside of the home. I just think life is much more complex than that.

Another participant, Sarah, expressed an affection for the word and the practice of homemaking, but did not claim it because of the "cultural baggage with that word. I mean, it's a beautiful word. But the cultural baggage is not beautiful at all. It's a beautiful word. It's a beautiful, like, thing for a woman to help make a home for others." Both Addie and Sarah are describing a level of consonance. They are aware of the cultural ideal but are unwilling to incorporate the label as part of their identity.

Another phenomenon that was observed was some of the single and childless participants in their 30s and 40s readily claimed to be homemakers. On example of this is Claudia. While speaking aloud her thoughts during the SELF sorting, Claudia picked up homemaker and said, "I take care of my house. I'm gonna put that there" and claimed it. This can be explained using counter-narrative theory (Hyvärinen, 2020; Meretoja, 2020). LDS women in their 30s and 40s are expected to be married and have children. LDS women in this demographic, who are single and childless are not emulating the ideal. When individuals, like Claudia, are negotiating and/or deviating from the master narrative, they construct a new narrative that is more harmonious with their personal narrative (Bodine Al-Sharif & Curley, 2021; McLean et al., 2018; Meretoja, 2020). Claudia identifies as inactive and therefore is already negotiating and deviating from cultural expectations. This may make her more comfortable and/or skilled a cultural negotiation and able to redefine descriptors, such as homemaker, in ways that work for her.

Progression

Another descriptor that had noteworthy observations was progressing. Latter-day Saint theology frames progression as eternal, that mortality is just one piece in a larger journey (LDS, 1997). For LDS women, the progressing descriptor would signify spiritual progression while implying a holistic eternal progression. As I was conducting the interviews, I noticed that

participants would describe progression as having to staying on the straight and narrow path, often pairing it with the need to be perfect. As a cultural member, I had a different perspective on progression. I understood it to be striving to live one's covenants, to practice being a disciple of Jesus Christ, with the recognition that life is messy, and that repentance was necessary and essential to growth. Because my definition of progression was different than what I was seeing, I initially categorized the straight and narrow definition of progressing as the participants personal or familial narrative. And then I interviewed Maxine.

Maxine is married with children and in her 40s, living in the Southwest region of the United States. She identifies as an active member of the church. At a moment in the interview, Maxine made a comment about people being in process, which ignited the following conversation.

Elizabeth Ostler: And do you feel like the culture honors that people are in process? Or has your experience been that the culture expects you to already have achieved the expectation? Does that make sense?

Maxine: Yes, it does. I think it's a great question. I think that the church culture honors the progress – boy, it's got to be visible, and there has got to be results. And the end is perfection. And I think that culturally…and I'm not talking doctrine here, right? Like, culturally, I think we have a high expectation of perfection. Doctrinally, we have a really great understanding that we're nowhere near that. And so, there's a lot more love and acceptance and acknowledgement of the process of becoming than our culture allows for. So, I think there's a huge disconnect. But I do think our culture supports progressing so long as it's in the way that the culture deems appropriate. Like, these questions are okay, and these are not. Or you can ask these questions, but you still better show up for church

and serve in your volunteer calling and pay tithing. Or, you know, you can struggle in

your family, but only so much. Like whatever, all of it. You can struggle in your

sexuality, but you better be chaste. Like it's...but it's progress in alignment with what the

culture expectations are.

Elizabeth Ostler: Yeah. One of the things I'm thinking as you're saying this is, you know,

that it's okay to question as long as the answers that are received fall into this

predetermined way.

Maxine: Yeah.

Elizabeth Ostler: These are the answers you're supposed to get.

Maxine: Yes.

Elizabeth Ostler: And if you're not, then…

Maxine: Then you asked the wrong way or misunderstood the problem.

Elizabeth Ostler: The problem is you.

Maxine: Yes, the problem is still yours. Yes.

This exchange initiated a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 2012) in how I understood progression in the

context of LDS culture. Maxine's standpoint that there was a cultural prescription for

progression echoed of the straight and now definition of progression I was seeing in earlier

interviews. Furthermore, and principally, her language was akin to the literature outlining master

narratives. I began to question my assumption that the viewpoint of earlier participants reflected

their personal or familial narratives. Perhaps, they were articulating the master narrative, and I

was living the counter-narrative. I took action by documenting the experience in my research

memos. I modified my interview script to include a question about how the participant viewed

and experienced progression in the culture. Additionally, I reached out via email to participants

asking for their thoughts on this matter. The feedback overwhelmingly suggested that in LDS culture, spiritual progression means staying on the straight and narrow path. Furthermore, the survey findings affirmed this, with 90% (N = 2,110) in agreement. However, when survey participants were asked if their personal narrative of spiritual progress aligned with the predominate narrative, only 39% (N = 911) agreed.

Inclusion

The third theme to emerge was the importance of inclusion. Jacobsen (2017) aptly captures the LDS social environment and the multiple factors contributing to inclusion when she writes:

> Although the same doctrine is taught in every Mormon church throughout the world because of established teaching curriculum, wards still vary in terms of whether they offer accepting or hostile environments. The people who live in the wards create a unique culture in this worldwide religion. Although no congregation can be an officially 'welcoming' church, some wards consist of people who hold more accepting attitudes of same-sex sexuality. (p. 1320)

Though, Jacobsen's study focuses on the experience of LGBTQ+ Latter-day Saints and her description of LDS environments is with them specifically in mind, her rendering is useful when considering the inclusive nature of LDS communities in general. Latter-day Saints often make a distinction between culture and doctrine (as seen in the conversation with Maxine). Therefore, attention was paid to how participants talked about inclusion in terms of doctrine and culture. What was not anticipated was how participants also differentiated themselves from the culture. Questions about inclusion in the culture elicited stories of exclusion. Conversely, when referring to themselves, participants shared perspectives and stories of inclusion.

During the "Importance" sorting exercise, participants were asked to sort the descriptors into two piles: most important or least important, according to LDS culture. Frequently, participants placed "inclusion" in the least important pile lamenting that they wished it was more important to the culture, particularly regarding LGBTQ+ individuals and inactive members. Violet said, "I mean, it hurts that I have to put inclusive and progressing in the [least important] category." Jane talked about how unfortunate it is when wards could be "clique and petty." Laura who raised three African American children in Utah recalled, "I was thinking about this the other day, and I don't believe I have ever heard a sacrament meeting talk address racism or inclusion." Another participant, Emmeline, disclosed that her family went inactive (stopped attending church) while she was on her mission.

> To me, [inclusion] is really important. I don't think it is, generally. But it is, to me, it's really important to me just because, um…So, a little bit of, I guess, a little bit of background. I was raised in the church, but my entire family left the church while I was on my mission. And so, I've witnessed a lot of, like, judgment. And my family has been the recipient of a lot of judgment and exclusivity. And so, to me, while my family leaving the church has obviously been incredibly hard, I think the harder thing has just been watching them be/feel so alone throughout the process. And it's taught me so much – the importance of just not judging people, accepting everybody for, like, who they are, and how they are. Because you really don't know what's going on in their life. And to just love everybody, no matter what, because, like, I mean, Jesus was a perfect example of that. That was all he was doing all day long. So that's something that's become…that's always been important me, but it's become incredibly more important to me these last

three years. But I don't feel like it's…I think it's something we need to do way better on

as a church culture.

Emmeline's experience with feeling judged and witnessing how her family has been treated strengthened her resolve to be inclusive and deepened her desire for the culture to become more generous. Other participants also expressed a similar desire for the culture to be more inclusive of all people.

When sorting for "Self", most of the participants described themselves as being inclusive. Mae said, "I'm not going to reject somebody for sexual orientation. I'm not going to reject someone because they are not active, or living the gospel the way I may live or somebody else may live." Addie was adamant that inclusivity within LDS culture needed to encircle everyone. "I want everyone to belong, no matter what...I feel like if this is God's church, then we are all God's children. And we should be including everybody… no matter what – their marital status, their sexual orientation, race, ethnicity." Sexual orientation was a common theme when participants spoke about inclusion. Like Addie, many said that they personally were inclusive of LGBTQ+ members and that this was an area for improvement for the culture as a whole.

There were five items from the cultural master narrative survey that focused on inclusion (see Table 7). From a cultural perspective, a large number of participants agreed (64%, N = 1,494) that the LDS culture is inclusive. Note: this does not mean that they personally agree that the cultural is inclusive. A more accurate way of thinking about this is that the majority of participants understood that they are supposed to view the culture as inclusive. When asked to answer from their own perspectives, a substantial number of cultural members (77%, N = 1,806) believe that cultural acceptance is contingent on being active in the church. Likewise, 75% (N = 1,751) of the participants report sometimes not feeling a sense of belonging in their wards or

branches. There are many factors that go into whether someone feels welcomed or excluded within LDS communities. Participants also shared stories of belonging and friendship within their wards and LDS communities. There were times that members rallied around them in times of difficultly or became surrogate family members. Nevertheless, there was an overwhelming desire for the culture to be inclusive and expressions of pain when it was not.

Table 7

Frequency Responses to Items of Inclusion

Item	Frequency		*N*	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Cultural Perspective				
13. The LDS culture is inclusive.	64%	36%	1,494	852
Individual Perspective				
6. I believe LDS doctrine is inclusive.	59%	41%	1,377	969
17. I feel like I have to be active in the church to be accepted by my LDS community.	77%	23%	1,806	540
19. I feel like I have to behave in ways that are different from my authentic self in order to be accepted in my ward or branch.	59%	41%	1,378	968
23. Sometimes, I feel like I don't belong in my ward(s) or branch(es).	75%	25%	1,751	595

Cultural Master Narratives

At the onset of this study, it was uncertain if the chosen methods would produce cultural master narratives or how many might be identified. Given that the purpose was to observe what master narratives emerged, as opposed concentrating on one domain, it is not surprising that multiple cultural master narratives were detected. Culture is multifaceted comprising a myriad of master narratives (Hochman & Spector-Mersel, 2020). This study managed to expose some of the Latter-day Saint cultural master narratives. This is by no means an exhaustive or all-encompassing list of the cultural master narratives Latter-day Saints navigate.

Cultural members are expected to adeptly traverse their culture's master narratives by aligning their behavior and identity appropriately. This is an unrealistic burden placed upon cultural members. "It's high expectations…Hard to do them all" (Laura, participant). Personal narratives are not always harmonious with cultural master narratives, degrees of negation and deviation are inevitable (Hochman & Spector-Mersel, 2020). Nonetheless, as this study found, when LDS women become well versed in the culture's master narratives, the more likely they were to strive to enact the ideal, which in turn could increase their stress. The tension between who someone is and who the culture expects them to be can be "shame inducing" (Zina, participant), painful, and isolating (Greenfield et al., 2016; Jacobsen, 2017; McLean, Boggs, et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2018). Hannah characterized it this way, "Are we looking for Miss Perfect? Which very few of those that do try, you know, always end up harming themselves in some way."

Cultural members' symbiotic relationship with their culture's master narratives is complex. These narratives can be experienced as problematic, even harmful, but they can also be experienced as empowering and desirable. Emma talked about the pressure she felt to always be progressing towards the ideal. Of this, Emma said, "I think it can be really empowering in some ways to always strive for something, but it can also be kind of exhausting." Amy acknowledged that the expectations were "pretty strong" and placed on "all of us." She adds, "we're not going to all be perfect in all of those, right? But those are the kinds of things that we identify as women, things that we want of ourselves and our friends." Both Amy and Emma position the attributes of the ideal LDS woman as something they are working towards embodying. Amy wants these attributes not just for herself but also for her friends. She also recognizes that neither

she nor her friends will be able to embody all the attributes. Cultural master narratives can be simultaneously oppressive and aspirational, depending on the personal narrative.

A closer look at the identified cultural master narratives is necessary to gain a better understanding of how they manifest in the lives of Latter-day Saint women. The participants' personal narratives and perspectives are brought into conversation with the master narrative. Though the master narratives had not been identified when the participants were being interviewed, bringing the two into conversation reveals how LDS women think about and understand these narratives.

The ideal life path for LDS women is to date (males), go to college (optional), serve a mission (optional), get married to a man, and have or adopt at least one child, in that order.

Cultures utilized master narratives to provide a "life script" (Syed et al., 2018, p. 10), a template for how one lives a good life (Meretoja, 2020; Syed et al., 2018). The church's *The Family, A Proclamation to the World*, states, "that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children." This prescriptive declaration greatly influence how Latter-day Saints view gender and family (Lucero Jones, 2022). Married couples are counseled to start having children as soon as possible (Andersen, 2011). Latter-day Saints are known for having large families, which is often modeled by LDS leaders. For example, the current Prophet, Russell M. Nelson, is the father of ten children.

The cultural life script for an LDS woman is to date males for the intended purpose of marriage. Serving a mission or attending college prior to getting married is optional, while LDS males are expected to do these things. Culturally and historically, missions and higher education, have been positioned as something for an LDS young woman to do while she waits to get

married, more emphasis was placed on developing skills that would help her be a good wife and mother.

The Molly Mormon archetype exemplifies this life script. During the pile sorting interviews, Molly was given the attributes of active in the church, faithful, covenant keeping, chaste, modest, family focused, homemaker, married, mother, positive demeanor, and straight. She is the stereotypically perfect LDS woman, able to accomplish all the things required of her. Lucy portrayed Molly as, "someone that somebody would look at and be like, you know, she's just a great lady. She's, like, kind of, who we should be. And kind of, who I would imagine is going to church with her little kids, and kind of being the lady in the church videos." Amy called Molly "too." When asked to expand, Amy explained, "Nobody can compete with her. Nobody can do all that Molly Mormon does." Molly represents the life script that LDS women are expected to enact, but as Amy pointed out, she is unattainable. She is too much.

One of the oldest participants at 93, Valerie, broke from the script when she got divorced in her early 40s. When asked if she felt stigmatized at the time, she replied, "You feel like – and then I go to church, and I feel all at once like an outsider." However, not long after getting divorced, she moved into a different ward where she felt welcomed. "My neighbors up there were LDS, and they were just angels. All of them."

Neylan, at 25, is grappling with not aligning with the life script:

Like, we're all doing our best…I think we forget that. Because there's just this ideal. And if we're not hitting this ideal…These amazing characteristics of being strong, being bold and brave, being inclusive, and independent…I think for me, I'm 25 and not married. I haven't really dated. And part of it is, I'm not the demographic guys love, which is fine.

Or at least that's kind of how it feels, sometimes. But I love myself. I guess all of that is

just like the weird thing of, like, how do you reconcile that?

Neylan is in a quandary. She knows the ideal and she is not embodying it. She feels this acutely

in her dating life. She attributes her lack of dating experience as a consequence of not presenting

as the ideal. However, she loves herself and implies that she does not want to change who she is

to be more appealing to LDS men. Neylan's story provokes questions about how LDS males are

socialized to want to marry a Molly Mormon type and play out the life script.

Neylan, also shared a story that illustrates how cultural members hold each other

accountable for the life script:

I did have an experience with somebody that I do consider a close friend. I was like,

yeah, I might not get married. I mean, by that time, I was also thinking, nobody's asking

me out on dates, and they're all asking me about you. When I said that…the reaction I got

from her was, this is what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to be married. We're

supposed to have a family. And I'm like, what if I can't meet that?

This interaction between emerging adults shows the rigidity of the cultural master narrative and

the strong influence peers have on each other (Vygotsky, 1978). Both are aware of what is

cultural expected, and when Neylan suggests that she may not follow the life script, she is

rebuked by her peer. Valerie and Neylan's experiences demonstrate that there are felt

consequences when cultural members deviate from the mandated life script.

Being a mother is the most important role for an LDS woman.

Motherhood is revered in Latter-day Saint culture and doctrine. "No more sacred word

exists in secular or holy writ than mother. There is no more noble work than that of a good and

God-fearing mother" (Benson, 1987, p. 1). Motherhood is frequently described as being sacred

and quantified as the most important. David O. McKay, LDS Prophet during the mid-twentieth century, said,

> Motherhood [is] the noblest office or calling in the world. She who can paint a
>
> masterpiece or write a book that will influence millions deserves the admiration and the
>
> plaudits of mankind; but she who rears successfully a family of healthy, beautiful sons
>
> and daughters, whose influence will be felt through generations to come, . . . deserves the
>
> highest honor that man can give, and the choicest blessings of God. (Benson, 1987, No
>
> More Noble Work section)

Valerie's perspective on motherhood echoes McKay. She is emphatic that motherhood is the most important role for woman. She acknowledges that careers can be "great" but is quick to assert the supremacy of motherhood. Motherhood and career are often placed in opposition within the culture (this is the focus of the next narrative).

> It's absolutely the woman's first priority to bear children and bring them up to be
>
> responsible, loving, serving citizens of the world. If a woman can somehow get support
>
> from an inside (working husband) or outside (family member, responsible day care) to
>
> have a career then that's great. But the role of "mother" is the only title that carries on for
>
> eternity.

Valerie's assertion of motherhood being the only title for women in the eternities is not accurate. However, her sentiment is, as Latter-day Saint theology teaches that parenthood is eternal (LDS, 1995). What makes this a master narrative is the quantification of motherhood being the most important role for an LDS woman, not that motherhood is valued within the culture.

However, the sanctification of motherhood is a double-edged sword. On one side, it is vital for mothers to be recognized and lauded. In the interviews, mothers expressed complex

feelings of joy, heartbreak, fulfillment, and struggle in the role as a parent. Many participants expressed appreciation and admiration for their mothers or women who had mothered them, and even for the iconic figure of a mother.

> This is the mom. She's been the person that's been a part of the church for forever. Her calling is to be a mother. And I see these characteristics in these women all the time...They're usually straight women, also strong, resilient, and these amazing homemakers that are family focused, that are very focused on their children. And I find that they… [are] very selfless and serving. And I will revere them in a way. Just because I think motherhood is just an amazing thing. And if mothers were paid, we would be the CEOs of the world, I swear. (Neylan, participant)

On the other side, canonization of motherhood can be wounding for Latter-day Saint women. As a childless cultural member, there have been times when the supremacy of motherhood rhetoric has caused me pain. Especially, when the messaging is no matter what contributions I make to my family, community, or humanity, the only one that would have any real merit is motherhood. This framing dismisses the personal revelations I have received regarding my calling and purpose.

As a mother, Emmeline said that she experienced this rhetoric as it did not matter that there were other things she wanted to accomplish, because she was already doing the most important thing.

> I guess it just kind of makes me sad that women aren't, like, especially mothers aren't really encouraged to be super educated or intellectual, and more just encouraged to focus on the more soft skills of being nurturing and kind. Because for me, it's like something that's really important is being a critical thinker and always…being a forever student, and

always trying to gather information. And I feel like…women, who are especially

mothers, aren't really encouraged to do that.

For Tsune, adhering to the life script and prioritizing motherhood has been damaging. Since she

was in fifth grade her greatest desire was to be a Rhodes Scholar. She became passionate about

her area of focus and dedicated her life to pursuing it.

So, when I got into [university], I worked very hard. I earned a master's and bachelor's

degree in four years. And I came to the point where I was ready to apply for the Rhodes

Scholarship, which would have been astounding…And then my missionary came home

from his mission and asked me to marry him. And the Rhodes Scholarship explicitly says

you cannot be married if you're going to apply. And so, I had to decide if I was gonna

even apply for this thing I've wanted my entire life. And I didn't, I got married. My

husband is a smart man. He also went to [university], but he's not as smart as I am. And

he's not as dedicated. He's not as motivated. So, I spent my entire life watching him

become more and more successful. I've raised three very intelligent children…But I've

been left behind. And I've gotten to the point where I really, really resent that. Because I

only have one life. I get one life to live. And I have wasted it in doing what I was told to

do, rather than what I wanted to do. I'm angry about that. I'm very, very angry.

The experiences of Tsune, Emmeline, and my own life highlight the pain that can be caused

when cultural mandates conflict with personal narratives. In LDS doctrine personal agency is

paramount and personal revelation is essential (*The Doctrine and Covenants*, 1835/2013). But

what are cultural members to do when their agency and personal revelation is contrary to the

cultural master narrative? This is an example of cultural master narratives not being amoral or

apolitical. Their compulsory nature does not hold space for alternative ways of being in the

culture. The misattributed authorship to the divine or nature results in the culture not being held to account for the wounding and pain that their master narratives can cause.

Another population that is negatively impacted by this cultural master narrative are women who want to be mothers but are not. In 2001, Sheri Dew, then a member of the General Relief Society presidency gave a talk entitled, "Are We Not All Mothers?" As a single, childless LDS woman in a leadership position, Dew argued that all women, regardless of the parental status, were mothers in Zion. She exhorted all LDS women to enlarge their understanding of motherhood and to actively nurture and strengthen the rising generation (Dew, 2001). Dew is engaging in master narrative negotiation. She found a way to stay within the bounds set by the cultural master narrative by expanding the definition of motherhood for herself and other LDS women. Zina, a childless woman in her 30s, is following Dew's example. "I'm not a mother, but I purposefully [claimed "mother"] because there's definitely people that I mother too. And I feel that pretty strongly."

Mothers are supposed to stay home with their children.

The definition of homemaker that emerged from the research is the ideal mother, who does not have a career outside of the home, primary focus is domestic responsibilities and raising children. Because the term homemaker holds cultural baggage, many contemporary LDS women prefer stay-at-home-mom. Historically, Latter-day Saint women have been instructed by church leaders to be at home (Anderson, 1986; Benson, 1987; Cook, 2011; Rodriquez, 1989). In a 1977, President Spencer W. Kimball, then prophet of the church, gave a speech calling upon LDS women to be homemakers.

> I beg of you, you who could and should be bearing and rearing a family: Wives, come
> home from the typewriter, the laundry, the nursing, come home from the factory, the

cafe. No career approaches in importance that of wife, homemaker, mother--cooking

meals, washing dishes, making beds for one's precious husband and children. Come

home, wives, to your husbands. Make home a heaven for them. Come home, wives, to

your children, born and unborn. Wrap the motherly cloak about you and, unembarrassed,

help in a major role to create the bodies for the immortal souls who anxiously await.

(Benson, 1987, Counsel of President Kimball section)

There are two things to note in this excerpt. One, that all married women are instructed to be at

home, making it comfortable for husbands and children "born and unborn." It was not just

mothers, but wives and potential mothers. Two, women were not asked to put down their

scalpels, gavels, and microscopes. They were asked to leave the same kind of work they would

be doing as a homemaker, but without pay. He also stated that it was inappropriate for married

women to take jobs from men.

A decade later, the then Prophet and President of the church, Ezra Taft Benson quoted

from much of Kimball's speech, including the excerpt above, in the 1987 General Conference

meeting. Benson's talk was made into a pamphlet that was liberally dispersed to members of the

church (Anderson, 1988). Benson explained that no one, including the church, school, or

daycares, could adequately do the work of a mother. He told them that they would be venerated

by their children. "Your children will remember your teachings forever, and when they are old,

they will not depart from them. They will call you blessed--their truly angel mother" (Benson,

1987, p. 4). Benson did make exceptions for widows and single parents. He also directed men to

provide for their families sufficiently enough for their wives could be at home. Tsune was in

high school when this talk was given. Of that time, she says,

Now, I was a senior in high school when President Benson gave his talk, telling mothers to go back home. And I was furious. And I'm grateful to say that I had a mother who was a working mom, who listened to that talk and got furious. And then she just got very quiet. And she said, look, my choices are my choices. And I know what I'm supposed to be doing, and I mean to just keep doing it. So, I'm really glad to have had that example from her. But it's that tug. It's that pull of saying, you can't be something else. If you're going to be a Mormon Mother, you have to only exclusively focus in on being that mothering person. Yeah, I have four letter words in response to that.

In more recent years, LDS leadership messaging about wives and mothers working as become more nuanced and mixed. A 2011 talk by Quinton L. Cook, Apostle, entitled "LDS Women are Incredible!" has residual energy of Kimball and Benson as he tells a story that reinforces and celebrates women choosing to be homemakers. The talk implies that staying home is the more righteous choice, however, at the end he does say, "we should be careful to not be judgmental or assume that sisters are less valiant if the decision is made to work outside of the home." (Cook, 2011, p. 21). Other church leaders have been more supportive of mothers working outside of the home, understanding that there are many factors that go into this choice (Ballard, 2017), including for personal fulfillment (Hall, 2022). Even though many leaders have shifted their position on working mothers, Lucero Jones (2022) reports that LDS mothers feel pressure from their peers and family members to stay at home.

Within the culture there is a tension between working women and stay-at-home-moms. Maud shares how she experienced that tension when she was pregnant and in graduate school. "There was a huge rift about like, Are you a stay-at-home mom? Or are you one of those wicked women who's going to work and be a mom?" Maud goes on to say that she thinks that the rift is

subsiding and speculates that it may be due to more LDS women receiving advance degrees and building careers.

Carol Lynn has internalized the tension and talks about how the pressure of the master narrative impacted her self-worth.

I don't know that homemakers is THE ideal role for women. It is a role women can participate in. When my children [were] small I had tremendous guilt that I had to work to support my family. This was not what I had pictured growing up. I thought I was always going to be home with my kids, doing the typical "housewife" things, and have a beautiful relationship with my husband. Turns out he couldn't get a job that would sustain the family so there was only one choice left. I put my children [in] daycare and started teaching (my degree is in music education and both of my children were born while husband and I were still in college). I was heartbroken. My college degree was just supposed to be a backup plan not the main plan. After a year, my kids started attending the elementary school I was teaching at. That was better. But I think about my time as a young mother, a middle-aged mother, and an empty nest mother and I don't know if I really would have done a better job had I been a "full time mom." (Moms' jobs are always full time). But since the idea of the best place for a woman is in the home was pressed so strongly upon me I still, to this day, feel guilt and shame. I see these cute young moms doing so much and doing so many cute things, and going so many places with their kids, and being in leadership positions in the church…[I] am not any of those things. I think this cultural idea has negatively impacted how I see myself and my worth.

Due to the lasting power of this master narratives, LDS mothers still grapple with working outside of the home (Lucero Jones, 2022). A 2008 study found that LDS women were

twice as likely to not work outside of the home as their secular counterparts, even though their

education levels were on par. Furthermore, as household income increased, LDS women tended

to leave their paying jobs (Cragun & Philips, 2008). Some LDS mothers negotiate the cultural

master narrative by finding paid work that they can do from home. "I have a lot of respect

for…stay-at-home moms. But I also do have a little bit of that piece of me that's like…I would

like to do something on the side as well. Like, I'd love to work as well" (Emmeline, participant).

LDS women should receive an education just in case.

From the standpoint of the cultural master narrative, LDS women should be educated but

more as an insurance policy than for personal or professional development. Since Latter-day

Saint women are expected to be mothers who put their efforts into building a home and family,

an education is just in case the life script goes array (Lucero Jones, 2022).

> For example, I feel like it's very emphasized that it's important that women be educated
>
> more as a just in case kind of scenario. Because there's also this, like, expectation of
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> being a homemaker. So, there's…I feel like there's an expectation to have an education,
>
> but not necessarily a career (Lucy, participant).

Carol Lynn conveyed skepticism about the culture valuing education for LDS woman. "They

always say it's important to be educated…Oh, you can be educated. You can do it if you want to,

but it's more important to have kids and be a mom." In the master narrative survey, 89% (N =

2,094) of participants affirmed that LDS culture believes that LDS women should be educated

just in case, 60% (N = 1,417) personally agreed.

During the interviews, some participants lamented not being encouraged to receive an

education for personal fulfillment. "I did hear the leaders expressing the importance of women

getting an education. It was always within the frame of in case something happens to your

husband you'll be able to take care of your children, but not for self-fulfillment" (Julie, participant). The master narrative survey asked if LDS women believed that education could be for personal fulfillment, 99.8% (N = 2,341) agreed. This suggests that there is a fervent desire for the culture to relinquish the just in case caveat. This desire was made even more evident during the survey collection. The predominant feedback received in the open-ended comment section was displeasure with the wording of the master narrative. It was fascinating to experience participants directing their ire towards me and/or the survey, and not towards the culture. It was surprising that 60% of them personally agreed with the master narrative.

The findings from this study show that the culture believes that LDS women should be educated. However, intelligence was not as equally valued. Participants frequently sorted "educated", "intelligent", and "independent" together, except when asked to sort for importance to the culture. Then, intelligent and educated where separated. "I definitely got messages like how important education was, but yet acting as an intelligent woman was like I played that down. I played down that intelligence because that wasn't liked culturally…but education was so important" (Sarah, participant). Intelligence was seen as threatening to men and authority. "Heaven forbid you are smarter than the men in the room" (Mary, participant). Claudia echoing this sentiment when she mimicked, "Don't let her get ideas." This was prevalent enough in the interviews that it warranted being included in the survey to see if there was cultural salience for the belief that it is important for LDS women to be educated but not necessarily intelligent. Fifty-two percent (N = 1,223) of participants disagreed from the cultural perspective, which indicates that it exists in the culture but may not be a dominate belief.

Living the Gospel results in a healthy, happy, joyful life.

The gospel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is sometimes called the plan of happiness (LDS, 2002). This master narrative is an example of what can happen when doctrine is storied. Religious doctrines can help make sense and meaning out of the chaos and uncertainty of mortality (Jacobsen, 2017; Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Sometimes, that manifests as if/then reasoning. If I do this, then this outcome is assured. "We ought not to think of God's plan as a cosmic vending machine where we (a) select a desired blessing, (b) insert the required sum of good works, and (c) the order is promptly delivered" (Christofferson, 2022. para. 10). What makes this a master narrative and not LDS doctrine is it casts the Gospel in the role of a cosmic vending machine. If members do all the things, then they will be inoculated from the hardships and challenges of life. "Well, it's bollocks. You know…I don't feel that that is true. And I would agree that is an expectation – that if you're doing the most important things, then the results will be a healthy, happy, joyful life" (Maxine, participant).

Lucy added another layer to how this master narrative can be internalized. Rather than questioning the narrative, the person blames themselves. They must not be doing it right and that is why they are not experiencing a healthy, happy, joyful life. She describes it as a "personal failure" and/or "letdown." She illustrates this through a story about her parents.

> My dad was always like a bishop, high councilor, stake president…I don't want to say high up there, but kind of high up, at a minimum high profile. And my mom was…a stay-at-home-mom, until her kids moved out. And then she was a teacher. And they did kind of everything in this list, but about, like, half of their children have not stayed in the church and are fairly against it, at this point. And I for a pretty extended period of time was part of the half of those kids…That's really been challenging for my parents…[They

think], I've done all of these things, so why aren't things going the way that I feel like I

was promised?...[It] has been really challenging, especially for my mom, who has been

really disappointed with the results of her doing all of these things.

Lucy's parents believed that because they were living the Gospel, they were entitled to a life for

themselves and their children that was healthy, happy, and joyous. When this master narrative

did not deliver on its promise, her parents were left to reconcile the reality of their children's

choices.

Spiritual progressing looks like staying on the straight and narrow path

In the cultural master survey, there was a substantial difference between the rating of this

master narrative from the cultural perspective agreement (90%, N = 2,110) and personal

perspective agreement (39%, N = 911). This suggests that though it is culturally understood that

spiritual progression looks like staying on the straight and narrow path, personal narratives are

more complicated. Participants described staying on the straight and narrow path as perfection.

They could not be in progress, they needed to already be perfect. Some of them referred to this as

performative perfectionism. Since, perfection is not obtainable, they had to pretend as though

they were. Emma details how and when it is culturally appropriate to be in progress:

There's maybe space to be in process, if you're new to the religion, or if it's obvious that

you've had a struggle. Like you were less active, and you're coming back…They allow

you space to grow if everyone's very aware of what you're going through, or what your

starting point was, per se. But if it's not an obvious thing, it's more like, you should

display perfection and that you're doing it right. Even though, you may have these really

personal internal struggles.

Performative perfectionism is an invisibility cloak, making it hard to see and know each other. Without modeling of vulnerability and showing the messiness of process, a culture of performative perfectionism persists.

It is necessary to be active in the church to be socially accepted.

Latter-day Saint communities tend to be close-knit (Maffly-Kipp, 2020; O'Brien, 2019; Power, 2015), which may, in part, be a consequence of being a minority religion. "It's just we have a common thread that pulls us together" (Power, 2015, p. 160). Some members maintain exclusive social groups out of desire to be with people who share their same values. Mae describes her mother as such a member:

> I think there are people like…well, my mother was just kind of afraid of reaching out of her ward…She's just never had a good friend who wasn't a member of the church…I think it's more fear based for her…it's hard for her to imagine being close to somebody who doesn't have those same, you know, LDS values and experiences that she does.

Some of these LDS values might be abstaining from alcohol and coffee, as well as Sunday commerce, and avoiding rated R-rated movies and music with explicit lyrics. Additionally, the LDS culture has a distinct vernacular, theological framework, and cultural norms, which have to be explained to non-members and may preclude Latter-day Saints from building close relationships with people outside of the faith. Therefore, wards and branches become the primary place for Latter-day Saints to socialize and build friendships.

Being an active member in the gospel and the ward signifies to other members that you are living the LDS values and a participant in the community. "[You're] supposed to be active" (Hannah, participant). As a Latter-day Saint the expectation is that you will participant in the functionality of the ward ecosystem. Zina's definition of active illuminates how it's visible and

prescriptive, "it's a lot of boxes ticked and attendance records." 77% (N = 1,806) of the

participants felt like they needed to be active to be accepted and 76% (N = 1,788) wanted to be

seen as active. The desire to be seen as active speaks to the compulsory nature of this master

narrative. Research shows that the consequences of not being active or perceived as active can

lead to ostracization (Beaman, 2001; Campbell, 2016; Finnigan & Ross, 2015; Greenfield et al.,

2016; Leamaster & Einwohner, 2018).

    However, being active does not guarantee a sense of belonging in wards. When asked

her level of activity in the church, Martha struggled between active and very active. She's doing

all of things required to be considered active (i.e., attending church, fulfilling callings, has a

testimony, keeping her covenants, etc.). But she's not as socially engaged nor as participatory as

she has been in the past. Martha does not feel a strong sense of belonging in her ward. Martha is

not alone; 75% (N = 1,751) of participants disclosed that sometimes they don't feel like they

belong in their ward or branch.

For a few of the older participants like Valerie and Amanda, participating in the ward to

the level they had in the earlier stages in their life was no longer feasible. Their inactivity is not

by choice, but nonetheless, they experience similar consequences. They reported feeling more

isolated and longed for the same level of connectivity they had once experienced.

> I feel bad that I can't do what I used to do in the church, involved. Yeah, I'm sitting on the
>
> sidelines. and I don't like that. I like to be involved and be in this committee and that
>
> committee and serving in that position. I just miss…serving, serving in the church. I
>
> really do. But there's not much I can do. (Valerie, participant)

LDS women are supposed to look pretty, polished, and perfect.

One of the common archetypes during pile sorting was described as a wonder woman – fun, happy, healthy, perfect, polished, and pretty. She was given different names, but the most salient were Instagram Influencer or Draper mom (Draper is an affluent suburb of Salt Lake City). She will be referred to as Influencer from here on out. It appeared that the Molly Mormon archetype might be shifting to the Influencer as a modern archetype for LDS women. When Bonnie was asked if she thought that Influencer was the rising generation's Molly Mormon, she agreed and added, "The influencers have more broad appeal outside the church too. Somebody like that would be popular kind of with everybody…There actually are, like, so many Mormon influencers. So many." The Influencer is the new LDS ideal, and she is pretty, polished, and perfect. 70% (N = 1,634) of participants felt pressure to be pretty and polished and 59% (N = 1,384) felt pressure to be perfect.

Centuries before Instagram Influencers, Mary Wollstonecraft observed and warned, "Taught from their infancy, that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison" (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 56). LDS culture tells Latter-day Saint women to adorn their prisons by prioritizing their looks and curating their lives. "There are some LDS women who feel like they have to be pretty. They have to be a mom. They have to whatever in order to fit in…it's not right" (Amy, participant). Carol Lynn shared how she feels the pressure to be pretty, polished, and perfect.

> In trying to live up to all of those perfect women that are around me…Gosh…Oh, you've got your six children all color coordinated sittin' there perfectly in a row. And, man, I just don't live up to that. It's really hard to be a woman in the church. It's so hard.

Mary described having to live up to this ideal as being shallow, "I feel like no one will admit to it, but to a degree, you're supposed to be a little shallow to be part of the legit LDS culture." She went on to describe spending hours curating the appearance of the talented and perfect mom. It appears that the perception is more important, more valuable than the reality. 58% (N = 1,378) of survey participants felt like they could not be their authentic selves and be accepted in their ward or branch.

Emmeline rejected the idea of having to be polished and perfect and thought people were just pretending. "I don't know anyone who could actually be that way. If anyone is that way, I think they're just really good at pretending." She felt the pressure to appear polished, that she had everything together, even when she was struggling. "Life is really hard and you don't feel polished and perfect, but you feel like you maybe have to pretend like you are." The master narratives are interconnected. Emmeline drew a connection between spiritual progress and looking polished and perfect. She reaffirmed that one cannot be in progress; they need to already be the perfect.

Eliza critiques the cultural expectation of being pretty, polished, and perfect by bringing into conversation with scripture and teaching from church leadership.

It's so funny, because we'll talk about the pride cycle, you know, in the Scripture wearing costly apparel. And then I have friends in Utah, who will wear, like, $1,000 shoes to sacrament meeting. And I'm like, is this really important to the culture? Like to the church culture? Because everything from across the pulpit I've ever heard, and everything from the scriptures is saying otherwise. And so, I could totally see why people would put those words like, polished and pretty and like perfect on there…I know a lot of people get like plastic surgery in Salt Lake, I used to work for a plastic surgeon in [a city in the

South], and I know like the statistics. It's like the highest per capita in the US is in Salt

Lake.

Eliza is referring to a report that came out in 2017 that found that Utah had the second highest

rate of plastic surgeries per capita in the United States (Bojorquez, 2017).

LDS women should be happy.

Latter-day Saint women are expected to be happy. 77% (N = 1,816) of participants felt

like they were supposed to be happy. There were four observations about happiness that emerged

from the study. First, that LDS women should be happy with what they have. "We're kind of

expected to just be like, happy with the life that's been given to us" (Emmeline, participant). This

is tied to gratitude. If LDS women want more from their life, especially outside of the domestic

sphere, then they may be seen as ungrateful. Second, if they are not happy, then it is their fault

for not doing the gospel correctly or for deviating from the life script. Third, the expectation to

be happy all of time was unrealistic and, at times, oppressive. Participants sometimes felt like

they had to appear happy, even if they were not. And lastly, that Latter-day Saint women report

to be happy, overall (87%, N = 2,051).

It may be tempting to dismiss this statistic – to question whether participants were

genuine in their answer, or if they were answering the way they thought they were supposed to.

The focus of this study leans towards the aspects of being a Latter-day Saint woman that are

challenging and hard. Just because the joyful, affirming, and delightful parts of being a cultural

member are not centered in this study, does not mean that they do not exist. There are a

multitude of reasons why Latter-day Saint women stay, to varying degrees, in the gospel and

culture, and one of those reasons might be that overall, they experience happiness.

The consonance analysis found the more LDS women felt the pressure of cultural master narratives, they were 12% more likely to experience a decrease in their happiness. This suggests that the expectation to be happy can contribute to LDS women experiencing unhappiness. However, it appears from the interviews that women who can engage in perspective taking were able to temper the pressure of the cultural expectations. They discern who they wanted to be and used the LDS gospel framework to strive to become that person. Thinking in terms of striving gave them permission to be in process.

During the pile sorting exercise, Chieko created a pile that included most of the 45 descriptions and labeled it positive. "These are positive, good things that women feel about the gospel." She said that they accurately describe herself and the LDS women she knew and added, "These are things that I'm striving for and things that I feel happy with." Chieko also described a type of women in her ward that she admired and wanted to emulate whom she calls the ward cheerleaders. "They give you the courage to be independent...They serve by just being your friend and making you feel good about who you are and where you are. And yeah, I strive to be one of those someday."

Amanda demonstrated perspective taking when she commented, "These are really nice, great traits that it would be nice if people had, and that a lot of them are struggling towards. But none of us are perfect." Amanda acknowledged the ideal and that it was a good thing to work towards, but let's herself and others off the hook when she says that no one is perfect. Addie's perspective taking comes in the form of a mantra. "I'm not perfect, but I am striving. And if I'm striving every day, then I'm going to be progressing…I'm going to becoming, becoming 1% or whatever percent better every day."

While sorting for self-determined categories, Eliza created a pile that she named disciple. As she did this, she talked out her thinking. This gave insight into how she was discerning which descriptors were aspirational.

I'm thinking about the Latter-day Saint woman that I aspire to be. I'm thinking about my discipleship with Christ, as I'm putting this pile together. I'm not worried about outside appearances. So, I'm not listing things that people identify themselves as, like, a homemaker or a mom, or polished. Or it's not about how I look, you know, like, when I look at these words, it's about what do I really care about embodying and becoming. Really speaking more about, like, exalting grace, like what I'm striving for and my progression. So, I'm going to actually say bold and brave too would fit in here. Sometimes it's hard to keep your moral rectitude in this world and stand up for what's right and not be contentious about it.

Though Latter-day Saint woman share a culture and faith tradition, they are diverse in their experiences and perspectives. All are navigating these cultural master narratives, but whether they align, negotiate, or deviate depends on their personal narratives. Also, this navigation is nuanced. It can look like an LDS woman negotiating a few of master narrative, deviating from a couple, and aligning with one. And sometimes, LDS women create counter-narratives.

Counter-narratives

"A lot of things can happen in your life…and that doesn't make me less of a daughter of God."

– Laurel (participant)

Frequently, during the pile sorting, when participants were asked to sort from the cultural perspective, they would remark that was challenging because the culture was shifting. "Ah, this is hard. I feel like culture is changing. It is changing" (Jane, participant). Mae referred to the

church as a teenager that was becoming more understanding and accepting as it matured. "I think we're learning as we go that we can allow people the ability to, you know, get off the path and come back…As it matures, it's progressing and allowing us to make mistakes." Violet drew attention to the changes she's seen in the way the culture views women having careers. "I think that the strong career-oriented woman was kind of looked down on in previous generations. And I think she's allowed to thrive now." The oldest interview participant at age 97, Beverly, also talked about the church changing, "It used to be that the church taught strict, strict rules on everything…But they are changing." Beverly attributed some of the changes the influence of former members. From a master narrative theory reading, Beverly may be accurate. Master narratives lose their power and standing in cultures when a counter-narrative becomes equally prevalent within the culture (Hyvärinen, 2020; Krondorfer, 2020; Meretoja, 2020; Syed et al., 2018).

This may explain why the CCA did not find consensus with the hypothesized master narrative, LDS women should not be independent. "Bold and brave" were the characteristics more often sorted with "independent". While contending with where to put bold and brave when sorting for cultural "Importance", Jane explained, "Because, before I'd be like, no you're not supposed to be bold and brave. And now, I feel like it's be bold and brave!" Jane is speaking about being bold and brave within the culture. Whereas Susa spoke about being bold and brave in more traditionally acceptable ways, "Sometimes being covenant keeping you have to be really strong. You have to be bold and brave to do that." The culture's grappling with LDS women independence was evident in the cultural master narrative survey results. 53% (N = 1,238) of participants disagreed that in the culture LDS women were not supposed to be independent. However, the majority (58%, N = 1,364) felt like they were not encouraged to be independent. "I

think in the 50s...you really weren't encouraged to be independent, or educated, or intelligent, or resilient. But I think now, they're encouraging resilience and education and intelligence, and even fun" (Mae, participant). Both these response rates are close to 50% (much closer than the master narrative response rates) coupled with the somewhat contradictory findings, suggests that this a belief the LDS culture is negotiating.

Negotiating

Expanding on negotiation theory and Finnigan and Ross (2015), I suspect that a majority of community member are negotiators, but assume that most people in their community are either aligning or deviating. Throughout this study, I frequently observed participants negotiating the master narrative in similar ways but claim to be the only one doing it. Martha exemplified this.

> I think that I have watched some of these stereotypes playout throughout my life. And I personally never saw myself as…being a part of those stereotypes, like, the more rigid ones…[Because] I've never felt that that was necessarily for me, or that I could live up to that kind of standard, or that I wanted to live up to that standard…I do sometimes feel myself, as kind of, an outsider in a way. Like, not necessarily fitting into those stereotypes…But at the same time, I know how to navigate the culture and the stereotypes. I know how to live in that world…I know how to navigate and know what I need to say. I know the right words. I know the culture enough to know how to navigate that, but I also still feel have a disconnect from me feeling like that is me. Even though I've checked off a lot of the boxes, I still don't feel like I necessarily belong.

Martha and the other negotiating participants believe they are different and or do not belong, because they do not readily see similar behaviors in their wards or being modeled by church

leaders. This may be a consequence of the progressing and polished master narratives require cultural members to appear perfect.

A common area of negotiation was with the ideal descriptor "submissive". As already established, the LDS women inhabit and participate in a patriarchal society and faith tradition. There is a long history of women in patriarchal communities being submissive to men. When participants sorted for what the culture thinks LDS women are supposed to be, they would be explicit that being submissive to the Divine was part of discipleship, but they were not supposed to be submissive to another person.

> Submissive…tends to have a negative connotation with me. So, I don't like that. At the same time, you know, if we're talking about submitting to Christ, you're submitting to God's will, then it's positive to me. But I if I'm thinking of being submissive to your husband or being submissive to anyone other than God...Yeah, then I would say you're not supposed to be that. (Addie, participant).

As some participants negotiated, they were quick to articulate their affinity for the gospel. "I also feel the need to almost defend. I promise I love the gospel. Like, I promise I'm already a member. I promise I love it. I go to church every week" (Mary, participant). Even Claudia, who identifies as inactive exclaimed, "Oh, my gosh, I swear, I do love the church." Humans are complicated and master narrative negotiation is complex. Sometimes it is highly visible, but it can also be subtle and nuanced. A deeper look at the phenomenon of master narrative negotiation is outside the scope of the present study. I intend to conduct a post-doctoral study to examine what tools and behaviors negotiators use to navigate cultural master narratives and stay within their communities.

Research Design

To conduct the present study, it was necessary to take an interdisciplinary approach because the established method for determining cultural master narratives (McLean et al., 2017; Syed & McLean, 2023) was not adequate for answering the research questions. The master narrative framework (McLean & Syed, 2015) from the field of human development was coupled with the anthropological theories and methodologies, cultural consensus analysis and cultural consonance analysis (D'Andrade, 2005; Dengah et al., 2020; Dressler, 2020; Romney et al., 1986). The present study benefited from a mixed-methods design, ensuring triangulation of the data and robust analysis. The research design successfully identified nine LDS cultural master narratives from examining the perspectives and experiences of Latter-day Saint women. This was accomplished in three steps (a) free list analysis that produced descriptors of an ideal LDS woman; (b) pile sorting analysis that revealed 10 potential cultural master narratives; and (c) a cultural master narrative survey, consensus analysis, consonance analysis, and the master narrative framework confirmed nine cultural master narratives. It is noteworthy, that this design incorporated the perspectives of aligners, negotiators, and deviators. The established method primarily relies upon deviators and negotiators.

Limitations

Every study has its limitations, and an ethical researcher is transparent about those limitations. As the sole researcher and cultural member, the quality of the data collection and analysis relied upon my abilities and was susceptible to my personal biases. Measures were taken to mitigate my biases and guarantee a trustworthy and rigorous study. Some the measures taken were memoing, thick descriptions, mix-methods analysis, use of a second coder, checking

cultural saliency through a survey, and viewing participants as experts and privileging their voices.

Another limitation was sampling distribution. Participants were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling. The majority of participants self-selected to be in the study by opting into the survey and to being interviewed. Efforts were made to enlist critical masses of individuals from different age groups and regions. Despite these efforts, the Midwestern states, and people 60 years and older are under-represented in the survey. The participants predominately identify as Caucasian. The lack of diversity in race and ethnicity is another limitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Identifying cultural master narratives provides researchers and cultural members greater understanding of the invisible forces governing peoples' lives. It is recommended that other disciplines utilize the design of the present study to identify cultural master narrators within their fields of interest, such as education, political science, or medicine. It would also be interesting to see if this is an effective model for identifying master narratives within organizations. Perhaps, it could be a useful tool for studying and improving corporate culture.

This study identified Latter-day Saint cultural master narratives from the perspectives and experiences of LDS women living in the United States, who predominately identified as Caucasian. It would be a worthwhile study to investigate what LDS cultural master narratives that would emerge from other demographics, in particular members who have disabilities, identify as LGBTQ+, do not live in the United States, or people of color. An important area of focus would be Pacific Islander members and Native American members, particularly those impacted by the Indian Placement Project (Lamanite Project).

Cultural Homemaking

I want a house with a crowded table/ And a place by the fire for everyone/ Let us take on the world while we're young and able/ And bring us back together when the day is done// The door is always open/ Your picture's on my wall/ Everyone's a little broken/ And everyone belongs.

– Brandi Carlile, Lori Mckenna, and Natalie Nicole Hemby, "Crowded Table"

I conclude this dissertation with cultural homemaking. Remember, I am writing for two audiences, the academy and Latter-day Saints. This final section is for the latter because these findings could have significant implications for them. Like the single, childless participants, who redefined and claimed homemaker, I too am redefining and claiming homemaker. I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the culture is my home. I want it to be a home of inclusion, where cultural members feel like there is room for them and that they belong. This study is how I engage in cultural homemaking.

As an LDS feminist, I have had to negotiate "contested spaces" (Ross et al., 2016, p. 4). In church meetings when I have advocated for more egalitarian governance, I have been counseled to be more faithful and my request ignored. When serving as the Young Women President in my ward, I was criticized by a member of the Stake Young Women Presidency for empowering the adolescent girls under my stewardship too much. During data collection, some survey participants wrote comments essentially labeling me a faithless troublemaker. I am always taken aback by these encounters. I marvel that the assumption is I am in a faith crisis or have a vendetta against the church. When, I am motivated to do this work from a place of deep faith and love for my community. Not only did I hear President Nelson's plea in his 2015 General Conference talk for women to "speak up and speak out" with the "courage and vision of our Mother Eve" (Nelson, 2015, para. 25), I believed him. My activism, including this dissertation, are a direct response to that plea.

I want to acknowledge that for some members of my community, this study will be experienced as radical, and for others it will not be radical enough. My hope is that Latter-day Saint readers will see that I am trying to address some of our cultural pain points. There is a painful gap between where our culture is now and what it will take for us to be like the city of Enoch – to be of "one heart and one mind" to "have no poor among us" (*The Pearl of Great Price*, 2013, Moses 7:18). I believe that the city of Enoch was real, not a fable, which means it is possible. It is possible for us to do mortality and church better.

As our Latter-day Saint foremothers and forefathers loaded their wagons and handcarts to cross the plains in search of a place they could call home – free of persecution, they packed items necessary for survival, items beneficial to building a new city, and items of sentimental value. As they walked and walked and walked over plains and mountains, and crossed rivers, items that were once precious were discarded because they impeded progress. Like our ancestors, we have been carrying cultural master narratives, passing them from generation to generation. Perhaps, it is time as a 2022 Instagram post suggests, to Marie Kondo (famous professional organizer), declutter, our cultural home (see Figure 7).

Figure 8

Instagram Post by Brittanynguyenart (2022)

One way we can do mortality better is by bringing awareness to the cultural master

narratives that are prescribing who and what we are supposed to be, who belongs and does not.

These are narratives. They are stories that are misattributed to the Divine or natural. Our culture

made them up. As cultural members, sometimes we propagate them, but we don't have too. Our

cultural master narrative can change; we can change them. "Culture is learned and can change"

(Abu-Lughod, 2008, p. 470). Just because they exist, does not mean that they should be

perpetuated, particularly those that are wounding members of our community. "What is wounded

in community, needs to be healed in community" (Capstone study key participant). Healing the

wounds within our community is how we make our culture a home. It is the work of disciples

and cultural homemakers.

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APPENDIX A

FORDHAM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

To: Elizabeth Ostler
From: Michele Kuchera, IRB Office
Subject: Protocol #1907
Date: 09/10/2021

The protocol **The Impact of Master Narratives on Mormon Women's Sense of Belonging** has been approved under the rules for expedited review categories 6 & 7 on **09/10/2021**.

The study is approved without the requirement for continuing review. You will receive a notification within one year to update the status of the study; i.e. whether the study is completed or if data collection is ongoing. If your study is completed before you receive this notification, please notify the IRB so that your study can be closed with the IRB.

You may obtain a pdf download of this notification by visiting your protocol page in Mentor.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact irb@fordham.edu

Michele Kuchera,
IRB Office

APPENDIX B

PILE SORT INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled *"The Impact of Master Narratives on Mormon Women's Sense of Belonging."* I will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. This study is being led by Elizabeth Ostler, Contemporary Learning and Interdisciplinary Research. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Lori Wolff Coles, Graduate School of Education.

What the Study is About

The purpose of this study is to identify LDS stories that define and create expectations for womanhood within LDS communities.

What I Will Ask You to Do

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed. We will meet either in-person or virtually for 60 minutes. During this interview, I will give you a list of characteristics and traits and ask you to sort these words into groups, based on your response to a prompt I provide. Prompts may be any of the following:

- Sort the characteristics and traits by what's important and want's not important
- Use the characteristics and traits into various LDS women stereotypes
- What characteristics and traits reflect LDS culture expectations

Risks & Discomforts

There is a possibility you may experience some discomfort as you grow in awareness of the impact LDS cultural stories and norms impact you personally. You may choose to end an interview or withdraw from the study at any time.

Benefits

LDS women are an underrepresented population in academia and in society. The information gleaned from this study could help academics, researchers, and society better understand the lived experience of LDS women. Furthermore, it is my hope that your participation in this study will result in greater agency and empowerment for you through increased awareness and the sharing of your perspectives and experiences.

Audio & Video Recording

Interviews will be audio recorded and possibly video recorded, if conducted via Zoom. You will have the option of turning off your camera, if you don't want your image recorded. These recordings will be transcribed for further analysis. I may also refer back to them to re-experience how you used your voice and silences when you spoke.

Please sign below if you are willing to have this interview recorded. You may still participate in this study if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

____ I am willing to have this interview recorded.

____ I do not want to have this interview recorded.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Privacy, Confidentiality & Data Security

In an effort to protect your privacy, you will be given a pseudonym. I will save all the research materials that pertain to you under this pseudonym. All identifying materials, like this consent form, will be saved separately from the research materials.

Please note that email communication is neither private nor secure. Though I am taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should be aware that information sent through email could be read by a third party.

All recordings, transcriptions, journal entries, photographs, and digital documentation of optional creations will be saved on Microsoft OneDrive and/or an encrypted folder on a password-protected laptop. Only I and my advisor will have access. At the conclusion of this study, all collected materials will be securely archived. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used. We cannot guarantee against the interception of data sent via the internet by third parties.

Taking Part is Voluntary

Your participant in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty.

Follow-up Studies

I may contact you again to request your participation in a follow-up study. As always, your participation will be voluntary, and I will ask for your explicit consent to participate in any of the follow up studies.

If You Have Questions

This study has been approved through Fordham University's Institutional Review Board. Should you have any questions about the study, please contact me at eostler@fordham.edu or my advisor, Dr. Lori Wolff at lwolff3@fordham.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact Michele Kuchera, IRB Manager at Fordham University, at IRB@fordham.edu or 718-817-0876.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature_____ Date_____

Your Name (printed)_____

Elizabeth Ostler, Primary Investigator_____Date_____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for five years beyond the end of the study.

APPENDIX C

PSEUDONYMS

Violet Bear Allen (1938 – 2015)

Allen was born on the Skull Valley Goshute Indian reservation. Allen was an active community supporter. At the time of her death, she was one of the last remaining elders of the Skull Valley Bank of Goshutes. Allen was an artist and known for creating silver jewelry and using traditional Native American beadwork in her designs of moccasins, tanning hides, and cradleboards. Her art could be found in shops throughout Salt Lake City. She lived her life in a way that honored her traditional Native American ways and her membership in the LDS Church (Kitterman, n.d.).

Maud May Babcock (1867 – 1954)

Babcock was born in East Worcester, New York. She was an educator and theater artist – playwright, director, and producer. She was the first female faculty member at the University of Utah, where she established the theater department. Her production of *Eleusthenia* (1895) was first production at the University of Utah and noted as the first play produced by a University in the United States. Babcock went on to direct over 800 more productions. She believed strongly in physical education and also established the Department of Physical Education. Additionally, Babcock served as chaplain in the Utah senate. She was the first woman to hold this position in any state senate (Watkins, n.d.).

Julie Bangerter Beck (b. 1954)

Julie was the 15th general president of the Relief Society (2007 – 2012). Under her stewardship the Relief Society logo was modified to be more assessable to members from around the world and the book *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of the Relief Society* was published. Prior to serving as Relief Society general president, Beck was in the Young Women's general presidency (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], n.d.-c).

Claudia Lauper Bushman (b. 1934)

Bushman was born in Oakland, California. She is a historian, author, and women's rights advocate. She is the co-founder of the LDS magazine *Exponent ll*. She created the Mormon Women Oral History Project at Claremont Graduate University. Bushman is the author of numerous books including, *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* and *Building the Kingdom: A History of Mormons in America* (LDS, *Claudia Lauper Bushman*, 2022).

Beverly Brough Campbell (1931 – 2017)

Campbell was born Wyoming. Beverly was an author, advocate, and held many distinguished positions throughout her life. For twelve years, she was the Director of International Affairs office at the LDS Church building relationship with world leaders. Campbell was the Director of the Joseph P Kennedy, Jr. Foundations for eight years, where she helped to establish the Special Olympics program. She authored a handful of books, including *Eve and the Choice Made in Eden* (*Beverly Brough Campbell,* n.d.).

Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon (1857 – 1932)

Cannon was born in Wales, United Kingdom. She obtained her medical degree from the University of Michigan (1880) and a pharmaceutical degree from the University of Pennsylvania (1882). Cannon helped to establish a nursing school at the Deseret Hospital. She was a suffragist.

In 1896, Cannon ran for state senator against her husband and three other prominent Utahans and won. She is the first women to hold the office of state senator in the United States (Clark, 2020).

Addie Fuhriman

Fuhriman is a scholar and psychologist. She was the Dean of Graduate Studies and a professor of psychology at Brigham Young University. She also served as Chair of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Utah. Fuhriman has been the president of the Utah Psychological Association, president of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists. Additionally, while Fuhriman was serving on the General Relief Society Board she gave a powerful speech during the 1980 General Conference entitled, "Singleness: How Relief Society Can Help" (Fuhriman, 1980; Y Magazine, 1998).

Susa Young Gates (1856 – 1933)

Gates was born in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory to Lucy Bigelow and Brigham Young. She was a writer, editor, and women's rights advocate. Gates served as president of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. She was a founded the *Young Woman's Journal* and was the first editor of the *Relief Society Magazine*. She wrote a biography of her father, *Brigham Young: Patriot, Pioneer, Prophet.* As a suffragist, she attended five congresses as a Utah delegate at the International Council of Women and was also an officer in the National Council of Women (*Susa Young Gates*, 2023).

Maxine Hanks

Hanks is a theologian and feminist. She is part of the infamous "September Six," a group of intellectuals who in 1992 were excommunicated from the LDS church for publishing works that were seen as oppositional to church leaders and doctrine. The work in question the anthology *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, which Hanks compiled and edited. She was re-baptized into the Church in 2012. Hanks has authored several more books and has served on boards, such as Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable, and Orrin Hatch's Women's Council (FAIR, n.d.; *September Six*, 2022).

Valerie M. Hudson (b. 1958)

Hudson was born in Washington D.C. She is a feminist writer and professor. Hudson's expertise is in political science. She as taught at Brigham Young University and Texas A&M University. She has authored and co-authored many books and articles. Hudson is one of the founders of *Square Two* and a principle investigator at the WomanStats Project (*Valerie M. Hudson*, 2022).

Hannah Kaaepa (1873 – 1918)

Kaaepa was born in Hawaii. She was an advocate of women's and Hawaiian rights. Hannah was a loyalist to Queen Liliuokalani and a suffragist. She was a Utah delegate and speaker at the third Triennial Congress of the National Council of Women (Hendrix-Komoto, n.d.).

Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball (1818 – 1898)

Kimball was born in Phelps, New York. She was a leader, women's rights advocate and suffragist. On her tombstone is engraved, "Strong-Minded and Warm-Hearted." Kimball was one

of the founding members of the Relief Society and together with Eliza R. Snow reestablished the organization in the Utah Territory. She was instrumental in the building the Relief Society Hall, a building dedicated to the work of the Relief Society. Kimball served in two general Relief Society presidencies and a member of the Utah constitutional convention of 1882 (Higbee, n.d.).

Amy Brown Lyman (1872 – 1959)

Lyman was born in Pleasant Grove, Utah. She was a social worker and leader. Throughout her life, Lyman was at the forefront of providing social services aimed at improving the lives of others. She became interested in sociology when it was an emerging field. She organized the delivery of food to those in need in her community. She established a welfare department at the Relief Society where she provided training on the basics of social work to thousands of women. She helped to establish a school for people with mental challenges to learn how to live independent lives. Lyman was the eighth general president of the Relief Society (Hall, 2023).

Jane Manning James (1822 – 1908)

James was born in Connecticut. James was an advocate for African American equality within the Church. She is one of the first documented African Americans to live in the Utah Territory. She was featured in the early days of the *Exponent* (Chipman, n.d.).

Neylan McBaine (b. 1977)

McBaine was born in New York City, New York. She is an author, non-profit leader, and women's rights advocate. McBaine is the founder of the LDS Women Project, formerly the Mormon Women Project. She is the co-founder of Better Days 2020. McBaine is authored numerous articles, essays, and books, including *Women at Church, Magnifying LDS Women's Local Impact* and *Pioneering the Vote: The Untold Story of Suffragists in Utah and the West* (McBaine, n.d.).

Tsune Ishida Nachie (1856 – 1938)

Nachie was born in Komasawa, Japan. After joining the Church in 1905, Nachie dedicated her life to supporting missionary efforts in Japan. She became a surrogate mother to many of the missionaries and built live long friendships with many of them (*Tsune Ishida Nachie*, 2022).

Chieko N. Okazaki (1926 – 2011)

Okazaki was born in Hawaii and raised as a Buddhist. She joined the church at the age of 15. In 1961, Okazaki became the first minority to serve on a general board when she was appointed to the Young Women board. In 1990, she became the first counselor in the Relief Society presidency. She gave many speeches and authored a handful of books, in which she advocated for creating spaces of belonging for all and to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ (*Chieko N. Okazaki*, 2023).

Bonnie Lee Green Oscarson (b. 1950)

Oscarson was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. She served as the general president of the Young Women from 2013 to 2018. She notably became the first woman to serve on the Church's Missionary Executive Council (*Bonnie L. Oscarson*, 2022).

Laura Lee Winn Ostler (1931 – 2016)

Ostler was born in Nephi, Utah. She was a faithful member of the Church and a loving mother and grandmother. She was the embodiment of unconditional love. Though Ostler never took college courses, she was a strong advocate for higher education. She was my grandmother. Ostler had a profound impact on my life, modeling the kind of LDS woman I strive to be. She loved and supported me through some of the most challenging years of my life. When I graduated with my undergraduate degree, she gifted me a pearl necklace that was an anniversary present from my grandfather. An accompanying note read, "If you ever need money to follow your dreams, sell these pearls." To this day, at pearl necklace is one of my most treasured positions.

Mae Timbimboo Parry (1919 – 2007)

Parry was born in Washakie, Utah. She was a storyteller and Native American right's advocate. Parry was a storyteller for the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. She is credited with recording the story of the Bear River Massacre. She went to Washington D.C. many times as a representative on the White House Council for Indian Tribal Affairs. She helped to establish the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in Utah (Parry, n.d.).

Carol Lynn Pearson (b. 1939)

Pearson was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. She is a poet, author, theater artist, and advocate. In her memoir. *Goodbye, I Love You,* Pearson recounts her relationship with her ex-husband who disclosed he was gay while they were married. They eventually divorced and remained good friends. When he contracted AIDS, Pearson nursed him in her home until his death. She does a lot of advocacy work for LGBTQ+ individuals within LDS communities. Pearson has written numerous other books (*Carol Lynn Pearson*, 2023).

Janice Kapp Perry (b. 1938)

Perry was born in Ogden, Utah. She is a composer, songwriter, and author. Perry has a catalogue of over 3,000 songs. She is a contributor to the *Children's Songbook*. Perry has written some of the most beloved songs in the LDS culture (*Janice Kapp Perry*, 2022).

Amanda Barnes Smith (1809 – 1886)

Smith was born in Becket, Massachusetts. She was a pioneer and suffragist. Smith was a survivor of the Hawn's Mill massacre. However, her husband and one of her sons did not survive. Another son was badly injured, Smith is reported have prayed and received inspiration on how to treat a shattered hip. He made full recovery. Smith was vocal in her defense of the Church and family. She also advocated for women's suffrage (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], n.d.-a).

Emma Smith (1804 – 1879)

Smith was born in Harmony, Pennsylvania. She was the co-founder and first general president and co-founder of the Relief Society. Smith compiled the first LDS hymn book. She was also married to Joseph Smith and acted as one his scribes while he translated the *Book of Mormon* (LDS, *Emma Smith*, 2022).

Lucy Mack Smith (1775 – 1856)

Smith was born in Gilsum, New Hampshire. She was a missionary and author. Smith was the mother of Joseph Smith and author of *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations.* She was a founding member of the Relief Society (*Lucy Mack Smith*, 2023).

Mary Fielding Smith (1801 – 1852)

Smith was born in Honeydon, Bedfordshire, England. She was the wife of Hyrum Smith, brother of Joseph Smith. She was widowed when her husband was martyred with his brother. As a single mother, Smith prepared to cross the plains with eight children. The captain of the company did not want her to join them claiming that she was under prepared and would be burden. Smith asserted that she would join the company, would not seek his help, and that she and her family would arrive in the Salt Lake Valley before him. She was true to her word, arriving one day before the captain (LDS, *Mary Fielding Smith*, 2022).

Eliza Roxcy Snow (1804 – 1887)

Snow was born in Becket, Massachusetts. She was a poet, leader and suffragist. Snow as a founding member of the Relief Society. She carried the original meeting minutes across the plains and was instrumental in re-establishing the organization in the Utah Territory. Snow served as the second general president of Relief Society for seven years. Under her direction, the Relief Society raised founds to open Desert Hospital, which was also a women's medical school. Snow was a prolific writer and penned over 500 poems (Reeder, n.d.).

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (b. 1938)

Ulrich was born in Sugar City, Idaho. She is an American historian and author. She is a co-founder of *Exponent II*. She taught Early American History and Women's Studies at Harvard. She wrote the famous quote, "Well-behaved women seldom make history." She is the author of many books including, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835 – 1870* (Harvard University, n.d.).

Emmeline Wells (1828 – 1921)

Wells was born in Petersham, Massachusetts. She was the editor of the *Woman's Exponent* for thirty-seven years. Wells was a women's rights advocate and suffragist. She represented Utah at the National Women Suffrage Association. She was the fifth General President of the Relief Society (*Emmeline B. Wells*, 2023).

Zina D. H. Young (1821 – 1901)

Young was born in Watertown, New York. She was the third general president of the Relief Society (1888-1901). Young was a midwife and active in establishing a health care system in Utah, including the establishment of the Deseret Hospital. She was also a suffragist and represented Utah at the National Women Suffrage Association (*Zina D. H. Young*, 2023).

APPENDIX D

CODEBOOK

Code	Definition	Example from the Interviews	Additional Example from the Interviews
Active LDS Woman	Behaviors and attitudes people do to participate in the life of the Church, live the Gospel, and/or keep their covenants	And if you do your best to keep your covenants and have charity in your heart, and be kind and faithful and resilient and charitable, then like you're doing everything God could possibly ask.	I think if you live your religion you become it.
Striving For	Behaviors/attributes /traits that are aspirational - intrinsic	I was like, these are these are positive, good things that women feel about the gospel. Most women I know, myself included, feel like this describes them within the context of the gospel and the culture. These are these are things that I'm striving for and things that I feel happy with, you know, working.	It's about what do I really care about embodying and becoming, okay. Really speaking more about, like, exalting grace, like what I'm, I'm striving for, and my progression.
Problematic	Participant's adverse feelings, experiences, ideas (all negative feelings)	And so sometimes, for me, it feels like I can't have both. It's either like, you're a good mother, or you're working or something. And, yeah, I don't like that distinction. Um, I feel like it's too limiting to women. And it's kind of rude to women on either side of the equation, or in the middle, right.	And if you don't hit those marks, if you're not fitting that box of being that person, yeah, then that's not valued.
Expectations	The belief that someone should be or act a certain way - external	There was a time when women, I think, also were expected to do their best.	I think we supposed to be married, loving, serve, Yeah, we supposed to be a lot of things.
Molly Mormon	Stereotypical persona that reflects the cultural expectations that are unattainable nor	I don't know how to describe it other than that, like stereotypical burdened woman who is like trying to be Wonder	And then, within that culture of wanting to do your best, there's the idea that we sometimes confuse perfection with

	sustainable. Perceived as perfect; a wonder woman who does all the things.	Woman. She's like defining herself in terms of homemaker and straight and mother and family focus and, and submissive - like to her husband. And like wow. She like...good things, but she's burdened by like...like she's burdened by cultural expectations	doing everything, and being everything, and being all things for everyone.
Single	Isn't married. The experiences, consequences, and expectations of not being married.	I haven't even been able to go do any sort of Temple worship without someone asking me if I'm married, or why I'm not married. And it's bothersome because there's nothing about my marital status that would preclude me from participating in anything	I'm 25 and not married, I haven't really dated. And part of it is I'm not the demographic guys love, which is fine
Relief Society President	References to leaders and leadership	You know, you want to be a leader and you want to be an exemplar. Yeah. But not from, like I said, not from keeping up appearances standpoint, but because that's part of your discipleship.	This is the this is the forward-progressive-thinking-lady who spans all generations from what I've observed. Very educated, very intelligent, usually called to be teachers and leaders.
Invisible	Subservient, does not have a voice, oppressed, second best	Um, whereas as a mother, I think you unconsciously you just put yourself in the second place like everyone else comes first.	She's kind of the working woman who doesn't ever get credit for all that she does.
Instagram	Prioritizes an outward appearance of happiness and beauty of herself and family. (Performative)	So like, although she is active, she's gonna try to be perfect. And make sure that everything's great. And make sure that everyone perceives her in that way.	She's like, really pretty. She has like, cute kids, always happy, like always put together stuff like that. And that's unachievable, like, in a different way.
Homemaker	Ideal mother, who does not have a career outside of	Well, me and my six kids go to church every single Sunday, they are perfect	I don't have a job outside of the home or a paid job outside of the

	the home, primary focus is domestic responsibilities and raising children	angels. They sit quietly and we take no snacks, no coloring, no nothing because we are perfect and everything we do.	home, but I am much more complex than just, you know. I don't stay at home all day and homemaker.
Progressing	Evolving/growing spiritually	Our spiritual lives take twists and turns, just like our physical lives. As we learn to balance work/spirituality/play/friends/family commitments/ mental and physical health, we have periods or bursts of spiritual growth and periods of spiritual trials, interspersed with periods of consistent faith, when we read the scriptures and pray and fulfill our callings and attend the temple.	I think that's just, you know, I'm just trying to grow, I'm trying to do better. I'm trying to, you know, repent when I see things in myself that are not congruent with the values that I have and realize that, you know, I'm not perfect and I make mistakes, and I'm just trying to be more aware and be a better person.
Career woman	Has a job outside of the home	If a woman can somehow get support from an inside (working husband) or outside (family member, responsible day care) to have a career then that's great.	It feels like it's becoming more acceptable to have a career
Bold	Thinks and acts differently than other people	My idea of modest may be different than other people's ideas.	I guess I have gotten a lot of comments in my life of - Oh, you're very, very intimidating. And that's always been kind of like, is it because I got a degree in accounting? And I speak my mind? And I ran headfirst into confrontation?
Tension	Observations and/or experiences that have dissonance	Well, it's hard to be compliant with all the things that are required when you really want to be independent.	And so there's a lot more love and acceptance and acknowledgement of the process of becoming,

			than our culture allows for.
Inclusive	Creating or denying a space of belonging. Welcoming or excluding of others.	I'm not going to reject somebody for sexual orientation. I'm not going to reject someone because they aren't active or living the gospel, the way I may live, or somebody else may live. I'm going to show love and acceptance to others that are not, you know, that live differently than me.	It's hard for her to imagine being close to somebody who doesn't have those same, you know, LDS values and experiences that she does
Generation	References to differences between age groups or life stages	I don't think I think the younger generation is better about self-care than the older generation was.	Like my idea of what was doing my best is different than what it is now
Shift	Changes in cultural expectations, ideologies, or behaviors	There was a time when women I think, also were expected to do their best and their best meant to do everything right, and to become invisible in the process.	So I get the sense that having health, emotional health, spiritual health, physical health is something that we've started talking about over the past five to 10 years. But it's not deeply embedded in the culture of who we are as a people.

APPENDIX E

CULTURAL MASTER NARRATIVE SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent
This study, "Latter-day Saint Cultural Master Narratives that Emerge from LDS Women Perspectives and Experiences" is being led by Elizabeth Ostler, Contemporary Learning and Interdisciplinary Research doctoral student. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Lori Wolff, Graduate School of Education.

What the Study is About
The purpose of this study is to identify the predominant cultural expectations and beliefs within LDS communities that dictate how LDS women are supposed to be and behave.

What I Will Ask You to Do
I will provide a series of statements and ask to what degree you agree or disagree with the statement.

Risks & Benefits
Your responses to this survey are anonymous. The statements in this survey revolve around cultural expectations. You may experience some emotional and/or psychological discomfort answering the questions.

Your participation could benefit LDS women. LDS women are an underrepresented population in academia and in society. The information gleaned from this study could help academics, researchers, and society better understand the lived experience of LDS women.

Privacy, Confidentiality & Data Security
Your responses to this survey are anonymous. Your IP address is not recorded.

Taking Part is Voluntary
Your participant in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty.

Study Oversight
This study has been approved through Fordham University's Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact the Fordham University IRB Manager at IRB@fordham.edu.

Statement of Consent
This survey will take roughly 15 minutes to complete. Your answers are completely anonymous. Would you like to take the survey?

APPENDIX F

CULTURAL MASTER NARRATIVE SURVEY

Qualifying questions

1.   Do you identify as female?
2.   Do you identify as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
3.   Are you 18 years old or older?
4.   Do you live in the United States?

Cultural Questions

When you answer these questions, do not think about your own personal life. Instead, think about what your religious community (LDS culture, not LDS doctrine) considers a typical LDS woman. Think generally, not about a specific person that you know. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1.   LDS women should receive an education just in case.
2.   LDS women are supposed to look pretty, polished, and perfect.
3.   Being a mother is the most important role for an LDS woman.
4.   Living the Gospel results in a healthy, happy, joyful life.
5.   LDS women are expected to do everything and be all things for everyone.
6.   It's important for LDS women to be educated but not necessarily intelligent.
7.   LDS women should be happy.
8.   Spiritual progress means staying on the straight and narrow path.
9.   Mothers are supposed to stay home with their children.
10.   It is necessary to be active in the Church to be socially accepted.
11.   LDS women are not supposed to be independent.
12.   The ideal life path for LDS women is to date (males), go to college (optional), serve a mission (optional), get married to a man, and have or adopt at least one child, in that order.
13.   The LDS culture is inclusive.
14.   Following the teachings of the Church is the only way a LDS woman can be happy.

Individual

When you answer these questions, please think about yourself - your perspectives and experiences. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1.   I strive to be an ideal LDS woman.
2.   I feel that LDS culture expects too much from LDS women.
3.   If I am a mother or were to become a mother, I feel like there would be an expectation for me to stay home with my children.
4.   I feel a sense of belonging in my ward.
5.   I feel like I'm expected to be perfect.
6.   I believe LDS doctrine is inclusive.
7.   I feel like I should be happy most of the time.
8.   I believe that women should get an education just in case.

9. Staying on the straight and narrow path is the only way I feel like I can spiritually progress.
10. My life has followed this path: dated (males), at least some college, serve a mission (optional), married a man, and had or adopted at least one child.
11. I feel like my intelligence is not valued in my LDS communities.
12. I feel pressure to look pretty and polished.
13. I want people to see me as active in the Church.
14. I believe that being a mother is the most important thing I could ever do.
15. I feel that living the Gospel provides me with a healthy, happy, joyful life.
16. I believe that an education can be for personal fulfillment.
17. I feel like I have to be active in the church to be accepted by my LDS community.
18. I feel like I have to do everything and be everything to everyone.
19. I feel like I have to behave in ways that are different from my authentic self in order to be accepted in my ward or branch.
20. I feel like I'm encouraged to be independent.
21. I feel/have felt pressure to get married and have children.
22. I believe I was discouraged from going on a mission.
23. Sometimes, I feel like I don't belong in my ward(s) or branch(es).
24. I consider myself well-educated.
25. Overall, I am happy.
26. Sometimes, it is stressful to live up to the expectations placed on LDS women.

Master Narrative

Sometimes our lives, or aspects of our lives, do not completely match the storyline that the LDS culture expects us to have, or what is considered appropriate, normal, or accepted. Try and think of a moment from your life when this was the case. It can be a big or small moment. Describe this moment, including where you were, whom you were with, what happened, your reaction, emotions, and/or feelings, and the reaction(s) of anyone else involved.

Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

Demographic Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where in the United States do you live?
3. What category best describes you? You may choose more than one.
    1. 1 - Hispanic
    2. 2 - Black
    3. 3 - Native
    4. 4 - Asian
    5. 5 - Poly

6.   6 - White
        7.   7 - Middle Eastern
        8.   8 - Prefer not to answer
4.   Do you have children?
        1.   No
        2.   Yes
5.   Highest Education Level Achieved
6.   Occupation
7.   What is your level of activity in the Church?
        1.   Not >>>Very
8.   How long have you been a member of the Church?
9.   Did you serve a mission?
        1.   No
        2.   Yes
10.   Are there any other comments, questions, stories you'd like to share?

Future Research

I intend to conduct a post-doctoral study looking at how the identified LDS master narratives from this study impact the lives of LDS women and their sense of belonging in their wards and branches. I anticipate starting this study at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024. Participants in this study would participate in multiple interviews.

If you are interested in participating in this future study please click here. You will be redirected to a separate form to provide your contact information.

If you are not interested, select next to exit this survey.

THANK YOU!!!

Your answers to this survey will help me identify some of the expectations of how an LDS woman is supposed to be and behave. I intend to use this information to elevate LDS women's voices and experiences in academia and in our LDS communities.

Please share this survey with other LDS women who are at least 18 years old and living in the US.

Thank you so much for participating!