

OF ONE VOICE? MORMON ATTITUDES TOWARD  
THE RELIGION CLAUSES OF THE  
FIRST AMENDMENT

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Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
December, 2010

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am so grateful to my dissertation chair, Dr. Jean Van Delinder, for the years of direction, encouragement, and editing assistance, both on this project and with my graduate education in general. I feel very fortunate to have had an advisor who found the perfect balance between letting me find my own way and stepping in before I became totally lost. I also wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Bin Liang, Dr. Andrew Fullerton, and Dr. Melanie Page, for their contributions. Their suggestions and critiques greatly improved this work, and their words of support made the process a more enjoyable one.

Thank you, as well, to my family. First, to my parents, Pat and Terry Brame, I am eternally grateful for a lifetime of support as I pursued my academic dreams. They helped to shape my love of education, listened in my moments of frustration, and always provided encouragement. I hope I have made them proud. And to my siblings, Brian, Brandi, Beth, and Chanie, thank you for the many moments of encouragement, and for at least pretending to be interested in my research subject matter. I love you all dearly, and I know I can rely on you to keep me humble and remind me of the things that are truly important in life.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The present study seeks to further explore the Mormon population's experience with the First Amendment religion clauses as well as provide information on the church-state attitudes of practicing Mormons. The Mormon Church, historically a persecuted minority religion, particularly targeted by conservative Christian groups, has in recent years become politically aligned with the Christian Right on many issues. Their tenuous alliance with Christian Fundamentalism is similar to alliances forged between other historically antagonistic religious groups such as conservative Catholics and Protestant churches. As a historically persecuted group, this is a difficult population to gain access to, and therefore Mormons have been largely overlooked in recent studies on religion and culture wars in American society. This study hopes to fill part of this gap by extending Hunter's (1991) Culture War theory and Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) Church-State Typology to the context of the Mormon religion.

#### Religion and Politics in American Society

In recent years, religious groups have played a prominent and public role in the political debate over sexuality (homosexuality and same-sex marriage) and pregnancy



(birth control and abortion). Over the past thirty years, the assertion of the Christian Right into politics, as well as the increasingly pluralistic nature of the religious landscape of the United States, raises many interesting questions about the role of religion and politics in American society. While religion plays a large role in the history and culture of the United States (Marsden 1990), that role has been shaped and restricted by the Deist tone in the writings of the Founding Fathers, the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses of the First Amendment and the legal battles that have resulted from these Constitutional provisions (Witte 2005).

One prominent sociological explanation of the current conflict between political rights and religion is Hunter's (1991) Culture War Theory, which suggests that the country is divided between two camps on many moral issues: the orthodox, who seek a return to historical or traditional "Christian" values, and the progressive, who favor greater accommodation of changing times and values. Although the "moral vision" of the ideal civilization held by each side is in actuality very complex, Hunter's (2006) approach smooths over the nuances of each position in his characterization of the dominant symbolic issues and polarizing political debates. While Hunter (1991) suggests that members of any given religion will often fall on both sides of the divide, most religious organizations are in either the orthodox or progressive camps. Mormonism is usually placed in the traditionalist, orthodox group, though its alliances with other orthodoxies have been strained by significant theological differences. For example, in recent decades, the Mormon Church has found itself in agreement with the "moral vision" of Christian Fundamentalism and the Christian Right, though they remain deeply divided in terms of religious beliefs and practices.

While the Culture War theory attempts to capture the ways in which religion can fuel cultural conflict, it is not without its critics, as Hunter (2006) himself details in a defense of his work. Broadly speaking, the criticisms seem to fall into two main categories. First, many have criticized the idea of a Culture War as seriously overstating the level of conflict and dissent present in U.S. culture, arguing instead that the vast majority of U.S. citizens remain unengaged in any such battle (Wolfe 2006; Fiorina 2006). A second criticism is that the dichotomous nature of the Culture War Theory understates the complexity of cultural conflict in the United States (Jelen and Wilcox 1997). Jelen and Wilcox (1997) explored a four-part Church-State Typology, based on the intersection of views over the scope of the religion clauses contained in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution: the Free Exercise clause and the Establishment clause. Their research confirmed the viability of the four-part model, with each of the four positions widely reflected among their sample population. Of particular interest, they noted that the division reflected in their Church-State Typology did not break down along religious-secular lines, which they view as near-synonymous with the orthodox-progressive division elaborated in the Culture War theory (Jelen and Wilcox 1997).

The present study seeks to further explore Hunter's (1991) Culture War theory and Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) Church-State Typology in the context of the Mormon religion. The Mormon population is a particularly interesting group to consider, given its history as a persecuted minority religion, its experience with the First Amendment religion clauses, and its current presumed status as an ally of conservative Christian groups that historically have disapproved of Mormonism. In addition to further

development of the above theories, this study will also provide information on the church-state attitudes of practicing Mormons.

### Statement of Research Problem

Studies of the Mormon population can be challenging because information about membership roles are typically unavailable for any use other than religious purposes. Moreover, outside of the Utah region Mormons tend to form too small a proportion of the general public to be captured through random sampling of the general population. This difficulty can be observed in Jelen and Wilcox's (1995) original study, in which Mormon respondents were of necessity consolidated into a "Nontraditional Protestant" category along with "Christian Scientists[] and other groups" (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:37). Even with the consolidation of these religious groups, the Nontraditional Protestant category made up only two percent of the total sample for the study (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:37). Further, there is no theoretical justification, to the researcher's knowledge, to expect a category formed of such disparate religious groups to produce data reasonably reflective of any of the individual religions. To compensate for the difficulty of obtaining a random sample of Mormon respondents, many studies on Mormon attitudes have confined sampling to the Utah region (Fox 2003), which is majority Mormon<sup>1</sup>.

However, this research strategy either produces results that are not generalizable beyond the Utah region or requires an assumption that Mormons living among a

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<sup>1</sup> *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000*. Collected by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) and distributed by the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)).

majority-Mormon population are representative of all Mormons. Fox (2003) has shown that there are limits to the common assumption of homogeneity among Mormons.

Therefore, this study builds on the findings of Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) in their Washington, D.C.-based study, and seeks specifically to answer the following three research questions related to assumed homogeneity among Mormons and their national geographical distribution:

1. What are the attitudes of practicing Mormons toward the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and how do these attitudes compare to the findings of Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) in their Washington, D.C.-based study?
2. What demographic variables help to explain any variation in the attitudes of study participants?
3. What, if any, regional differences are identified in Mormon attitudes, considering (a) the religion's place as a majority vs. minority segment of the local population, and (b) distinct religious regions (by style of pluralism) identified in existing literature.

It is anticipated that the data will show variation in respondent opinions, particularly when considering the majority or minority status of the Mormon religion in a specific locality as well as the broader religious and political culture of the area. Further, demographic variables are expected to show a similar influence to that found in previous studies. However, it is also anticipated that the data will show a conservative tendency among the majority of respondents.

## Methodology

Data were collected using a survey developed by Jelen and Wilcox (1995), which tests attitudes toward the two religion clauses of the First Amendment through a series of Likert-scale questions. As stated earlier, access to membership roles of the Mormon Church is restricted, and outside of the Utah region the Mormon population tends to be too small to be captured through random sampling of the general population. Since Mormon congregations are organized geographically, targeting specific geographic regions is a reliable method to reach Mormons outside of Utah since members are generally expected to attend the congregation within their assigned geographical area. Therefore, snowball sampling was utilized to collect data from the Utah region, which has the highest concentration of Mormons and three other geographic regions with a lower Mormon density: the Pacific Northwest, the South Central Plains region centered in Oklahoma, and the Mid-Atlantic area focusing on Washington, D.C. (Czaja and Blair 2005) the locale of the Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) study.

The data was analyzed using several different statistical methods of analysis discussed here briefly and more fully in Chapter IV. Mormon attitudes toward the First Amendment were described using simple descriptive statistics. Factor analysis was used to examine the underlying structure of the attitudes, and, finally cluster analysis to examine the extent of variation within the sample. These results were then compared to the factor analysis and cluster analysis finding of Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) in their prior Washington, D.C. study. Further, the positions of the two groups on individual survey items were compared using a test for comparison of proportions for any

significant differences. Finally, regression analysis was used to measure the impact of collected demographic variables on respondent attitudes, including the significance of majority versus minority status and region of residency on respondent attitudes.

There are several limitations to the proposed study. First, research on religious groups is complicated, because membership data is closely guarded and varies from group to group (Crawford 2005). Second, the use of snowball sampling, while justified in this case, means that the results will not be representative of the general Mormon population (Czaja and Blair 2005), and the value of the statistical analysis will be limited. Moreover, due to the unique qualities of Mormonism among religions, the results will likely not be reflective of other religions. Further, without conducting follow-up interviews, the motivations behind respondent attitudes will not be clear. For example, an opinion that the government should not provide financial aid to religious groups may reflect a general disapproval of religion, but it also may reflect a fear that the receipt of such funds would subject their religion to unwelcome governmental oversight. However, in spite of these limitations, I expect the data collected will provide a preliminary picture of Mormon attitudes and suggest future avenues for research.

## Conclusion

Before discussing the research design and results of this study, the next chapter provides a historical overview of the Mormon Church and its role in American society. The following chapter provides a review of the extant literature on the state of religious pluralism in the United States, as well as the manner in which Constitutional provisions

regarding religion help to shape the presence of religion in the social sphere. Chapter IV further explains the theoretical framework for this study, including a review of Realistic Group Conflict Theory and Social Identity Theory as well as a more in-depth exploration of Hunter's (1991) Culture War Theory and Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) Church-State Typology. Next, Chapter V sets out the methodology of this study, including a discussion of the study's limitations. The final two chapters present the findings of the study and discuss some possible avenues for future research.

## Chapter II

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF MORMONISM

This study is about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, abbreviated as the LDS Church and colloquially referred to as the Mormon Church. The LDS or Mormon Church is the largest denomination originating from the Latter-day Saint movement founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. in Upstate New York in 1830. The Mormon Church is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah and has established congregations (called wards or branches) worldwide. This study focuses only on the American Mormon Church. This chapter provides a brief introduction to the basic history, beliefs, and organizational structure of the Mormon Church in order to explore the Mormon population's experience with the First Amendment religion clauses as well as provide information on the church-state attitudes of practicing Mormons.

#### Early Origins

Mormonism has its roots in the search for religion of a young New York farm boy, Joseph Smith, Jr. in the early 1800s (Beneke 2006). Smith lived in an area known as the Burned-Over District, where numerous religious revivals had resulted in a confusing mass of religious options. According to Smith, when he prayed for guidance over which



religious faith to join, he instead had a vision and was instructed to join none of them (Beneke 2006). Several years later, Smith would formally incorporate The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Beneke 2006; Arrington 1980). The group became widely known as the Mormons because of their belief that the Book of Mormon was scripture additional to the Bible (Brackenridge 2002).

The origins of the Mormon Church are related to restorationism (or Christian primitivism) which is the belief that a purer form of Christianity could be restored using the early church as a model (Marsden 1990). The ideal of restoring a "primitive" form of Christianity grew in popularity in the U.S. after the American Revolution during the period known as the Second Great Awakening. This religious revivalism played a role in the development of many groups besides the Mormons including Baptists, Shakers and many other evangelical movements (Marsden 1990).

The Mormon Church shares teachings with other branches of Christianity including a belief in the Bible. However, some Christians do not accept it as part of Christianity as Mormon claims of religious truth, beliefs and practices are quite different from mainstream Christianity. Therefore, Mormons have encountered hostility and persecution throughout their history, particularly over widespread efforts to convert others to their religion (Brackenridge 2002). This marked hostility has contributed to a high level of group cohesiveness within the Mormon Church, which has further led to an assumption of homogeneity. This study proposes to distinguish between in group cohesiveness with regard to religious persecution and attitudes toward constitutional rights. This study does not address the religious persecution of Mormons, but rather to provide information on the church-state attitudes of practicing Mormons.

## Conflict over Religious, Cultural, and Political Differences

Though few in number to begin with, an active missionary effort resulted in the rapid growth of the Mormon Church (Arrington 1980). Roughly a year after officially organizing, the Mormons made the first of many moves to escape increasing hostilities from neighboring non-Mormons in New York (Arrington 1980). A map depicting the location and years of the various Mormon settlements is included in the Appendices.

For the next six years, the Mormon Church maintained two major settlements (Quinn 2001). Kirtland, Ohio, served as the official headquarters, Ohio, but a number of Mormons moved on to Missouri, to an area Joseph Smith publicly announced as “the” permanent gathering place, set aside as a divine inheritance for Mormons (Quinn 2001). While non-Mormons continued to object to the unique religious doctrines and practices, concerns over bloc voting, communal economic practices, and influxes of immigrants also emerged (Driggs 1988). Relations with the larger community were strained in Ohio, as they had been in New York, and the Mormons were forced to abandon the Kirtland settlement after suffering a financial crisis during a national depression (Quinn 2001). However, the level of conflict in Ohio was never as severe as that which would occur subsequently in Missouri and Illinois (Quinn 2001).

Relations with the Missourians were overtly hostile from the outset, because in Missouri the Mormons were a serious political threat through sheer number from the moment they arrived (Driggs 1988). Further, the Mormons’ level of cooperative organization, collective economic practices, and unusual religious practices particularly stood out on the nation’s frontier. As a final straw, the Mormons were anti-slavery and

friendly to Native Americans, issues of great concern to Missourians (Driggs 1988; Gayler 1963). At the initial Mormon settlement in Jackson County, violence broke out within the first year (Jennings 1969). After several incidents of aggression, the Mormons agreed in writing to leave the county; however, they subsequently sought to have this contract nullified on grounds it had been illegally coerced. The Missourians, believing the contract valid and determined to reclaim their community, increased the number of attacks. Ultimately, following a few deaths on both sides, the Mormons were forced out, many fleeing without belongings under threat of death (Jennings 1969).

Missourians in Clay County were willing to grant the group temporary refuge, but did not want the Mormons as permanent neighbors (Robertson 1974). In an effort to avoid a repeat of the violence that occurred in Jackson County, Mormons and Missourians reached a compromise: a separate county set aside for Mormon settlement (Robertson 1974, Gayler 1963). This solution provided a temporary respite from hostilities, but proved impermanent (LeSueur 2005). From the Mormon perspective, the newly formed Caldwell County was smaller than promised, an issue greatly exacerbated by an influx of Mormons migrating from the Ohio settlement. Further, the Missouri settlers already established within the boundaries of the newly-designated county did not agree to the proposal, and quickly adopted the patterns of harassment that had proved successful in Jackson County. From the Missourians' perspective, the Mormons failed to honor their agreement to restrict settlement to Caldwell County, with small settlements spilling across the borders into neighboring counties (LeSueur 2005).

Given the history between the two sides, it is not surprising that violence broke out again, first in connection with Mormon efforts to vote (Robertson 1974). The

Mormons sought legal redress from the state and intervention from the federal government, without success (Jennings 1970), and ultimately fell back into the old patterns of conflict. Meanwhile, the governor of Missouri became convinced that the Mormons were subversive, and in 1838, issued what has become known as the “Extermination Order,” stating in part: “The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state as necessary for public peace—their outrages are beyond all description ...” (Gayler 1963, quoting Missouri Executive Order 44)<sup>2</sup>. Joseph Smith and several others were arrested on charges of treason (Kimball 1971), and the state militia surrounded the main Mormon settlement (Robertson 1974).

Under this threat of extermination, the Mormons fled Missouri for Nauvoo, Illinois. There, the group obtained a charter from the state granting substantial political control of Nauvoo to the city government (Kimball 1971). Although this type of charter was common, the election of Mormon leaders to office in essence created a theocracy, a form of government desirable to the Mormons yet politically threatening to outsiders (Taysom 2006). Estimates of the city population vary, but it is clear that the Mormon influx changed the social landscape. One noted Mormon historian estimates that the population immediately before the arrival of the Mormons was around 100, but grew to 12,000 at its height (Black 1995). According to the Illinois census, Nauvoo had become the largest city in Illinois at the time of the 1845 census (Kimball 1971).

As in previous settlements, although welcomed at first, the Mormons quickly drew the disfavor of their non-Mormon neighbors. Their religious practices, including

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Missouri Executive Order 44, issued on October 27, 1838, by governor Lilburn W. Boggs, remained technically in effect for nearly 140 years. On June 25, 1976, Governor Christopher S. Bond issued an acknowledgment that the “Extermination Order” violated both the U.S. and Missouri Constitutions, formally apologized for the suffering caused, and officially rescinded Executive Order 44.

the first serious rumors that Mormon leaders had begun to practice polygamy, elicited the usual condemnation (Buckley 1997). But once again, politics and economics proved equally divisive; the theocratic structure of Nauvoo city government and Mormon bloc-voting habits highlighted the Mormons' potential for political power, as well as raising questions about the Mormons' ultimate loyalty (Buckley 1997; Kimball 1971). The conflict in Nauvoo differed in two significant ways, however. First, the Nauvoo city charter authorized the Mormon community to establish a formal militia, providing an organized means of responding to vigilante violence against the main settlement (Rugh 2007). Second, Mormon leaders had learned from the earlier political difficulties, and in Illinois sought to use the political process preemptively, including exploring the possibility of Joseph Smith running for president of the United States (Taysom 2006). Tensions reached a breaking point in the summer of 1844, when Joseph Smith ordered a Nauvoo printing press destroyed after its owner printed and distributed an anti-Mormon editorial (Pierce 2001; Ellsworth 1979).

The resulting outrage among non-Mormons led to the arrest of Smith and three others; Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were murdered by a mob while being held in an Illinois jail (Pierce 2001; Buckley 1997; Ellsworth 1979). Within months of Smith's death, the Nauvoo charter was revoked (Taysom 2006). Opponents believed the church would disintegrate with its founder and leader out of the picture, but a substantial number of Mormons accepted Brigham Young as Smith's successor (Buckley 1997). Recognizing that they could not safely remain in Nauvoo, Young began making plans to move west, beyond the boundaries of the United States at the time. However, the conflict between Mormons and non-Mormons escalated rapidly, before preparations for a large-

scale migration could be completed. The majority of the Mormon group was forced out of Nauvoo in winter of 1846 (Buckley 1997). It is estimated that more than a thousand Mormons died during that first winter (Bennett 1987).

In spite of the start, the Mormon migration was marked by an unusual level of order and planning (Buckley 1997). The Mormons built a temporary settlement in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and prepared to begin the major move west in 1847. A smaller group went ahead to plant crops in preparation for the main group's arrival, while others remained behind along the trail to establish way stations and temporary settlements along the route for future migrants. The Mormons were organized into groups and companies of wagons or handcarts, all under the direction of Mormon leaders (Buckley 1997). This organization extended beyond the initial flight from Nauvoo, with the migration of converted European immigrants also carefully coordinated over succeeding decades (Hartley 1993), including the establishment of a fund to help pay immigration expenses (Woods 2005b). “[S]uperiority in leadership and discipline” distinguished the Mormon migration from the general movement westward, although Mormons also benefited from a shorter than usual route (Taylor 1955:100). Over a fifty-year period, around 100,000 Mormons migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in the future state of Utah (Buckley 1997), approximately 90,000 of them European immigrants (Woods 2005a).

### The Battle over Polygamy and Utah Statehood

Once in Utah, the Mormons believed they would be forgotten and left alone, however different their culture (Crane 1995). Mormon leaders showed their increased

political savvy by waiting to apply for formal territory status until the election of a U.S. President willing to appoint a Mormon as Territorial governor and allow the Mormons to largely govern themselves. With the Millard Fillmore election, Utah became a territory under the political leadership of Church president, Brigham Young (Crane 1995). Far removed from mainstream America, and with the political structure of the territory in Mormon hands, some members of the group felt safe to begin practicing polygamy openly, a lifestyle they defended on biblical, historical, social, and constitutional grounds (Whittaker 1987). Mormon leaders had long been frustrated with the federal government's reluctance to intercede in state and local affairs to protect the civil rights of Mormon members, but now they counted on states' rights and local determinism to protect their lifestyle (Gordon 2002; Driggs 1988).

However, the Mormons had underestimated mainstream America's lack of tolerance for their chosen lifestyle. While Utah's theocratic government and the Mormons' collective economic practices were labeled un-American in national press and literature (Kerstetter 2003; Eliason 2001), it was the practice of polygamy that truly drew national ire (White and White 2005). Anti-polygamist activists collectively described the Mormons as immoral and depraved (Eliason 2001), and linked polygamy to slavery as the "twin relics of barbarism" (Burgett 2005:75; Gordon 2002). Interestingly, although anti-polygamists painted Mormon women as subjugated by the practice of polygamy, in practice Mormon women enjoyed greater access to power than did women in other regions (Quinn 2001). Women in Utah were extended the right to vote in 1870, were more likely to pursue a profession outside of their household domestic role (Quinn 2001), and were often left to run their households independently for long periods of time due to

the frequency with which Mormon men went abroad to pursue missionary efforts (Arrington 1984).

The Mormons also underestimated the current state of the federal government, which was in the process of increasing its level of control over state affairs (Gordon 2002). The balance of power had begun to shift from states to the central government with the Civil War, and the national furor over polygamy provided an ideal opportunity to strengthen the federalist movement (Gordon 2002). From 1862 through 1887, the U.S. Congress passed a series of laws aimed at criminalizing polygamy (Driggs 1988; Williams 1967). When the first attempts at criminalization proved difficult to enforce, Congress passed further provisions disenfranchising those who supported polygamy, even in cases where the supporter in question did not practice polygamy, suspending spousal immunity so that wives could be forced to testify against husbands, retracting female suffrage in Utah, and ultimately authorizing the liquidation and seizure of all Church assets (Driggs 1988). Neighboring state Nevada attempted to pass legislation requiring a voter registration oath that the registrant was not Mormon (Moody 1979), while the state of Idaho included language in its constitution denying all Mormons the right to vote (Driggs 1988).

Over 1300 Mormon men and women served time in jail for polygamy-related offenses (Taysom 2006). However, Mormon leaders remained convinced that the federal laws in question violated their Constitutional right to free exercise of their religion, and a practicing polygamist agreed to submit to arrest and trial to provide a test case to challenge the laws (Taysom 2006; Gordon 2002; Driggs 1988). Even after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the laws against polygamy in *Reynolds v. U.S.* (1878), the



Mormons only officially abandoned the practice of polygamy when the very existence of the Mormon Church was threatened with the Court also upholding a federal act dissolving the Church and authorizing the seizure of all Church property (Driggs 1988).

Even with the polygamy issue resolved, albeit not in the Mormons' favor, outstanding political and economic issues prevented Utah from being granted statehood for several years (Cain 1990). Ultimately, the Mormons found it necessary to adopt separation of church and state principals and the standard U.S. two-party system in order to gain statehood (Driggs 1988; Williams 1967). To avoid the appearance of formalism, as well as a continued party split along Mormon versus non-Mormon lines, Mormon leaders encouraged members to be open to joining either the Republican or Democratic parties (Williams 1967). Utah was subsequently granted statehood in 1896.

### Modern Mormonism

With the adoption of a more mainstream lifestyle, the Mormons gradually ceased to be viewed as a threat to the broader American culture, and as a result acts of overt hostility decreased substantially (Brackenridge 2002). Following World War II, the growth of Mormonism outside of Utah accelerated, with converts to the religion accounting for an increasing proportion of Mormon membership (Shipps 2007). This corresponded with an official shift in Mormon Church policy, encouraging converts to the religion to remain in their distant locations and seek to establish Mormonism there rather than migrate to the Utah region (Church Education System 1993). More recently, although still considered a western-based church, the religion has gained a greater

presence in the eastern United States (Crawford 2005). At the same time, the state of Utah has become more diverse (Shipps 2007), with Salt Lake County, Utah, home to the headquarters of the Mormon Church and the largest city in Utah, rapidly approaching the fifty percent mark for non-Mormon residents<sup>3</sup>.

Some scholars have questioned whether Mormonism can maintain its sense of solidarity and identity, given its growth, diffusion, more mainstream status, and increasing alignment with other conservative religions on moral issues (White and White 2005; Cain1990). However, others have pointed to some key characteristics of Mormonism that might counter these forces. First, the sense of organization that marked the migration to Utah continues today (Shipp 2007). The Mormon Church is hierarchical in nature with the same leadership structure in place in every locality. Further, the religious curriculum and extra-curricular programs for members are standardized, and even the buildings themselves are substantially identical (Shipp 2007; Church Education System 1993). Thus, in a significant sense, the experience of being Mormon is similar no matter the location.

Second, a shared Mormon religious identity continues to be shaped by the history of religious conflict (Olsen 1996-1997). The migration to Utah is celebrated annually with the Mormon holiday of Pioneer Day (Buckley 1997), which Olsen (1996-1997) has described as an Independence Day and Thanksgiving rolled into one, serving as a ritual celebration in the Durkheimian, solidarity-creating sense. Additionally, Mormon history is regularly included in Sunday lessons, and is formally taught at both the high school and

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<sup>3</sup> *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000*. Collected by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) and distributed by the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)).

college levels<sup>4</sup> to participating students (Church Education System 1993). Through the celebration of Pioneer Day and the regular focus on Mormon history in Sunday meetings and seminary and institute classes, the history of Mormonism is passed on to future generations and claimed as a cultural heritage by all Mormons, regardless of their duration of membership.

### Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief history of Mormonism in the United States and its relationship to other religious organizations. According to a recent study of the modern “Mormon village,” Mormon groupings do continue to exhibit a similar solidarity to the early Mormon Church, simply organized around local rather than central leadership (Goodsell 2000). As discussed earlier, this high level of social solidarity is attributed to a unique shared religious doctrine which requires a high level of internal commitment in relationship to the sometimes hostile non-Mormon culture. Their sense of solidarity is also related to the strong sense of community generated by a high level of cooperation in their day-to-day living, with Mormons encouraged to look at other members as a form of family (Goodsell 2000). Though Mormons are now more geographically distributed around the United States, their high level of in-group solidarity is sustained through a shared history of conflict as well as a sense of continuing conflict, even if it has been

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<sup>4</sup> The Mormon Church Education System operates a four-year weekday program known as seminary for high school students, with Mormon history comprising a substantial portion of the curriculum during one year. Students are either released from school for one period a day or meet before school. The college level program is known as institute, and offers classes on a weekly basis set to correspond to the local college semester schedule. Institute is intended to provide the same religious education as is mandatory for students at Mormon-owned universities. Seminary dates to the 1910s, and institute to the 1920s.

reduced more to a metaphorical level in recent decades. Thus, while Mormons do fit into the broader mainstream culture in the present day much better than they have historically, they have lost neither the sense of uniqueness nor the sense of community that has marked Mormonism from its inception.

The next chapter reviews the current literature on religion and the First Amendment. It discusses the tensions between religious groups and secular laws. Using the background information from this chapter on the history of the Mormon Church, it situates Mormons within the current American religious landscape. The literature review also provides an in-depth discussion of the gaps in the current scholarship as well as pointing out the future research needed in this area.

## CHAPTER III

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the relevant literature and debates surrounding religion and civil society. It begins with a brief overview of the sociology of religion, followed by an analysis of the unique status of the Mormon Church in the American political and religious landscape. Next it discusses the internal and external dynamics of religious groups in the context of religious pluralism. This is followed by an overview of the political and legal debates pertaining to the First Amendment and separation of church and state.

#### Sociology and Religion

Emile Durkheim (1975) provides an initial framework by which to discuss the manner in which religion is conceptualized as a collective experience which serves to create and maintain social solidarity within a group. Durkheim (1975) argues that religious beliefs are enacted through social rituals which in turn stir up emotions of solidarity, thus creating a sense of a shared experience that transcends discrete individuals. While his theories of collective effervescence and solidarity-creating ritual

have clear application to what occurs within a religious community, the implications for a modern, pluralistic society are not as clear.

Durkheim (1975:89) noted that those individuals who deviate from accepted religious beliefs may face social disapproval, while at best enjoying a “very relative level of tolerance.” However, Durkheim’s (1975) studies focused mainly on societies marked by low differentiation and the absence of a secular culture. But what occurs when multiple religious groups, each with different beliefs and rituals, compete to define social reality and social symbols? Further, what happens when these religious groups are confronted not merely with competing religions, but with secular groups which see little place for religion in the public sphere? This issue is of particular importance in the United States, which, unlike many European democracies, does not have a state religion.

### Religious Pluralism in American Society

The concept of religious pluralism in the United States has changed over time (Silk 2007). In the nation’s formative years, Protestant Christianity served as a strong mainstream majority; however, Silk (2007) suggests that over time, in the face of an increasing presence of more unusual religions, this mainstream group expanded to encompass additional Judeo-Christian based religious groups. Some argue that the U.S. has reached a state of true religious pluralism in recent years. Gill (2003) maintains that grouping similar denominations (i.e., “Christian” religions) vastly oversimplifies the religious landscape. He considers “organizationally and financially autonomous religious firms in the marketplace” (Gill 2003:329) as separate categories, arguing that these

groups compete for members and financial survival. Gill's marketplace analogy, taken to its full extent, separates mainstream religious groups normally placed under the umbrella of Protestantism into numerous discrete congregational units (Gill 2003).

Beaman (2003a, 2003b), however, discounts the marketplace analogy, noting that the vast majority of religious options continue to be Christian in nature, and most frequently Protestant. Within the United States, groups other than Protestants and Catholics continue to lack in raw numbers, and in some cases to exist outside of the dominant culture. Beaman (2003a) argues that the mere existence of minority religions must not be taken as evidence of a healthy religious pluralism. Marginalized religious groups are often portrayed negatively, and at best are portrayed as outside of "normal" religion, a type of religious othering (Beaman 2003a, 2003b). Beaman's concerns with the marketplace analogy are easily seen in the political context; differences in religious doctrine among mainstream Protestant religions are likely to appear relatively minor in comparison to a minority religion with a drastically different belief pattern and set of social norms.

Williams (2007:43) argues that the issue lies in the transformation of mere religious diversity into "a culturally valued 'pluralism;'" a distinction between the objective numbers of the religious landscape and their subjective placement in society and civic life. Similarly, Silk (2007:64-65) identifies a need to understand pluralism not as a mere synonym for diversity, but as a social norm, or "a cultural construct that embodies some shared conception of how a country's various religious commitments relate to each other and to the larger national whole." Thus, both Williams (2007) and

Silk (2007) reflect Beaman's (2003a, 2003b) concern that pluralism be considered from a qualitative as well as a quantitative stance.

Hecht (2007) suggests that it is not merely the number of minority religions that is at issue, but the style of pluralism. He distinguishes between "passive" pluralism and "active" pluralism (Hecht 2007:136). For much of the history of the country, the public sphere was occupied by a civil religion that subsumed all main religious groups; although different from any specific religion, this civil religion reflected a sort of secularized Protestantism in its structures and traditions. The minority religions of the time, Catholicism and Judaism, assimilated to this civil religion in the public sphere, because in return it allowed them to maintain their unique identities and beliefs in the private religious sphere (Hecht 2007). More recently, however, the religious makeup of the nation has changed. Hecht (2007) ties this shift to changes in immigration policy, which have resulted in an increase in religious adherents who do not fit within the Protestant-Catholic-Jew division. "Active pluralism seeks to impress religious meanings on public time and space" (Hecht 2007:144); for example, Jewish *eruvim*<sup>5</sup>, the addition of non-traditional religious holidays to the public sphere, and the entry of religious groups into "morals" politics. Such an active pluralism has undoubtedly resulted in conflict, as distinct religions vie for their share of the public space while others seek to erase all religious reference from the public sphere.

Silk (2007), on the other hand, explained how pluralism has developed in different forms dependent on the region of the United States in question. In the Middle Atlantic region, religion has been closely tied to ethnicity and Judeo-Christian religions

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<sup>5</sup> An *eruv* is a physical boundary enclosing a large public space, possibly as simple as a fishing line strung along the perimeter, which facilitates Jewish worship on their Sabbath (Hecht 2007).



shared more equally in the public sphere than elsewhere in the country. This resulted in a melting pot style of pluralism: distinct religious groups all equally “American.” In New England, however, following a history of conflict between Protestants and Catholics, the pluralistic style is one of marked separation between the religious and civil spheres. The Pacific region embraces a fluid pluralism, in which people of one religious faith feel free to borrow aspects of another religious tradition, and exploration is more valued than holding to tradition. Conversely, in the “Southern Crossroads” region the religious and civil spheres are strongly connected, based on the ideal that religious belief should guide political decision-making and that a Christian nation will be a strong nation (Silk 2007).

Each of these styles of pluralism has held sway at a national level for some time, but none has proven a permanent fit (Silk 2007). While Silk (2007) acknowledges that any of these styles could return to the national forefront in the future, he also offers a review of the pluralistic styles of the remaining four regions as possible solutions to the national issue of how to incorporate religion into the political sphere. The South is similar to the Southern Crossroads, only more inclusive and less given to conflict. The Pacific Northwest, meanwhile, is characterized as based upon a civil religion of environmentalism; the lack of strong religious institutions has required residents to work together across religious lines, including those without religious ties. However, Silk (2007) also notes that there is a developing evangelical counterculture that exhibits characteristics unique from evangelicals in other regions, likely in reaction to the style of pluralism largely embraced in the area. The Mountain West is composed of vastly different religious communities, who have learned to live side-by-side with the different religions adopting distinct and autonomous subregions. Finally, the Midwest reflects the

influence of its Methodist history, a church that finds itself at the center of the liberal-conservative divide while at the same time boasting members who trend toward both ends of the divide (Silk 2007).

Silk (2007) considers the Midwest style of pluralism to be the most promising for the future of the country. It is similar to the melting pot style of the Middle Atlantic, but with greater room for diversity and a greater focus on the common good. Ideally, this would encourage citizens to set aside their differences and focus on building communities (Silk 2007) rather than protecting their share of the public sphere. Whatever the future of religious pluralism in the United States, sociological theories relating to prejudice and intolerance can provide an increased understanding of what leads a religious group to assert its rights or demand special privileges at the expense of other groups.

### The Mormon Religion and American Society

As mentioned earlier, until recent decades, the two dominant American religious groups were Roman Catholics and Protestants. Johnson and Mullins (1992) consider whether Mormonism can fit within a Roman Catholic versus Protestant dichotomy, or whether the religion is sufficiently distinct so as to require a separate classification. Although largely considered as an orthodox (or conservative) religion on political issues, the Mormon religion has proven difficult to fully locate in either group.

Mormonism, like Judaism,<sup>6</sup> which is also largely overlooked in the American religious dichotomy, is quite similar to the other religious groups in terms of moral values but significantly dissimilar when comparing doctrinal religious beliefs (Johnson and

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<sup>6</sup> However, the Mormon Church is growing while Judaism, which prohibits proselytizing, is declining.

Mullins 1992). Of particular interest, while the Mormon and Southern Baptist denominations were most similar on several scales developed for the study, the two religions were the most dissimilar of all religions when evaluated on a scale constructed of items identified as both important and unique to Mormon beliefs. Further, when the data was re-analyzed with Mormon participants removed from the data pool, the amount of variance explained by religious differences decreased by almost 30% (Johnson and Mullins 1992). Thus, while placement with other conservative religions on moral issues may be appropriate, the grouping likely obscures important doctrinal differences that could hinder any long-term alliance.

A connection on moral values, but disconnection on religious doctrine, has been noted in other studies on the alliance of conservatives across religious denominations (the “orthodox” in Hunter’s terminology). Shupe and Heinerman (1985) reviewed the history of hostilities between Mormons and Baptists (particularly the more fundamentalist Baptist denominations), raising the question of how an alliance between the groups is even possible, much less workable. They identified several advantages to the New Christian Right, most notably an expanded geographical base and organized constituency for political purposes; however, those advantages must be weighed against the risk of lending legitimacy to Mormon beliefs which the New Christian Right has long denounced. The Mormons, on the other hand, received the same benefits as the New Christian Right, but also an increased legitimacy of religious beliefs through the association (Shupe and Heinerman 1985).

Shupe and Heinerman (1985) concluded their study by asking whether the two groups will experience a shift in ideology to become closer in nature through the alliance,

or if the alliance will crumble under the incompatibility of their disparate religious ideologies. Jelen (2007) has suggested that this lack of a common theological background has required such religious allies not only to overlook incompatible doctrine in favor of shared moral values, but has also lead them to shift their publicly advanced arguments from a religious tone to a more secular tone. Thus, for example, religious alliances might increasingly resort to scientific arguments, or suggestions that religious alternatives are presented in an interest of fairness (Jelen 2007).

Gedicks (1999) observed that Mormonism also differs from the conservative Protestant portion of the “orthodox” coalition in its generally apolitical nature. Political activity for the most part is viewed as outside the primary religious mission, with the Mormon Church refusing to engage in endorsing political candidates or speaking out on most issues. However, the few issues on which the Mormon Church has adopted an official position—the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, legalized gambling, and pornography related issues—all fit within the concept of a Culture War over moral issues (Gedicks 1999).

Most research has assumed a fairly high level of homogeneity and a distinct conservative tendency among Mormons. Fox (2003) sought to test this assumption, noting that many studies obtain samples from Utah, ignoring the rapidly growing, ethnically diverse, non-Utahan Mormon population. After surveying Mormons from various states, Canada, and Mexico, Fox (2003:284) concluded that, although there were similarities, “there are limits to [Mormon] homogeneity, even on issues clearly addressed in [Mormon] doctrine.” For example, while he found that social conservatism was fairly standard, economic ideologies and trust in the U.S. Government were much more varied

than previous studies suggested (Fox 2003). Similarly, King and King (2000) note that, although the data is limited, where the issue of cross-party Mormon political candidates has been analyzed Mormons have voted along party rather than religious lines.

How Mormons fit into the Church-State typology developed by Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) is even less clear. While there were apparently at least a few Mormon participants in the Jelen and Wilcox (1995:37) study, they were few enough in number to require consolidation with other non-Mormon groups. Jelen and Wilcox (1995:37) grouped Mormons with Christian Scientists and other religious groups in a category labeled “Nontraditional Protestants.” While this may be the most appropriate decision given the sample population in question, categorization with highly dissimilar religious groups does not allow for a realistic conclusion regarding where Mormonism fits within the four-part Church-State typology. Further, the ideological differences noted in previous research may be significant when exploring attitudes toward First Amendment issues rather than matters considered moral issues. In the next section, there is a discussion of religion and civil society which provides some background to understanding the First Amendment and separation of church and state debates.

### Religion and Civil Society

For much of recorded human history, religion has played a role in inter-group conflict. These conflicts are broadly shaped by religious disputes within and between different communities of faith; for example, the current Islamic dissension in the Middle East, clashes between Catholic and Protestant Irish, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian

struggle (Blancarte 2002-2003). There are also less violent instances of religious influence throughout the world, such as the role of the Catholic Church throughout Latin America in social justice movements and the re-emergence of open religious worship in secular nations such as in former Soviet bloc countries. Blancarte (2002-2003) argues that the world is seeing a re-emergence of religious influence on civil society, which had been obscured by the separation of church and state throughout the modern era. This assertion for religious freedom within secular nation states is fueled by the following scenario: “First affected are thus the freedoms, not only of the religious minority, but of the citizen majority, which may or may not be a part of the religious majority, but which sees the capacity for decision and action limited, by reduction of the space of individual conscience” (Blancarte 2002-2003:44).

As disputes over religious freedom play out in the political realm, religious values and norms can influence social life in more than a merely spiritual sense. Through secular laws, governments have the capacity to strongly shape religious practices. Sandgren (2001) cited numerous examples of political difficulties faced by minority religious groups, including termination of employment based on religious membership, criminal prosecution for proselytizing activities, and imposition of stringent requirements for formal recognition and an enhanced political status. Similarly, Gvosdev (2001) identified common strategies governments have used to limit religious freedom: inserting an “interest of the state” provision in constitutional or statutory language; including a contradictory provision in the law to counteract promises of religious freedom; or narrowly defining “religion.” However, Gvosdev (2001) noted that the issue ultimately rests on the manner in which political institutions reflect the norms of the underlying

society. Thus, there is not only the question of citizens being prevented from acting on their beliefs, but the question of citizens being compelled to act in accordance with religious beliefs they do not hold.

Some might believe the United States exempt from such discussions because of its Constitutional provisions for freedom of religion and separation of church and state. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states very succinctly that “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . . .” However, the exact meaning of these two provisions has been frequently contested. Marsden (1990) tracked the historical connection between religion and culture in the United States, noting that both the search for religious freedom and the persecution of unwelcome religious minorities predate the founding of the country. In fact, this contradiction repeats itself many times in the nation's history: the United States both expressly provided Constitutional protections for religious freedom and repeatedly defined those Constitutional protections in a manner that protected the morals and values of the majority of its citizens. Although what constitutes the “majority” has broadened from Protestantism to Christianity to a Judeo-Christian foundation, the common pattern has featured some excluded minority religious group serving as the religious “other” (Marsden 1990)

Thus, the First Amendment may provide neither the freedom of religious practice that minority religious adherents desire, nor the degree of separation between Church and State that some advocate. These two issues have proven to be fruitful grounds for litigation, and the ultimate meaning of the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses has continued to evolve with each new Constitutional challenge.

## Constitutional Challenges

The Free Exercise Clause. In the first real challenge regarding the actual meaning of “free exercise,” *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), the United States Supreme Court held that the First Amendment shields religious beliefs, but does not protect actions. Under this rule, known in legal terms as the Deferential Rule, members of a religion had no legal right to engage in a generally prohibited act, no matter how sincere the religious motivation behind the act. *Reynolds* involved the early Mormon practice of polygamy, which had been criminalized during the mid-1800s through a series of federal laws specifically designed to stop the Mormon practice (Gordon 2002). While the Mormons defended their custom under the Free Exercise clause, opponents attacked it as an extreme violation of social norms. In deciding *Reynolds*, the Court not only sided with the social customs of the majority, but also set a precedent under which carefully crafted legislation could be used against unpopular religious groups (Gordon 2002).

The *Reynolds* Court was tasked with determining what the framers of the Constitution actually intended by their chosen language, a common problem in Constitutional litigation. The *Reynolds* Court relied extensively on the writings of Thomas Jefferson, one of the framers of the Constitution, quoting his statement that “the legislative powers of the government reach actions only, and not opinions” (*Reynolds* 1878:164). Conversely, in later legislation Justice O’Connor would refer to the free exercise clauses included in state constitutions which predate the federal version, concluding that these state provisions allowed government to curtail religious practice “only when necessary to protect the civil peace or to prevent ‘licentiousness’” (*City of*



Boernes v. Flores 1997:2180). As a practical matter, the private religious practices of mainstream Judeo-Christian religions are rarely challenged: at issue under the Free Exercise clause is most often whether the majority should have the right to restrict unusual minority religious practices that the majority finds distasteful, or whether minority religions should have extra protection against the whims of the majority (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

The Court briefly softened the Deferential Rule almost a century later, holding in *Sherbert v. Verner* (1963) that the government must have a compelling reason to enact and enforce a civil law that infringes on a citizen's religious practices. This standard, the Compelling State Interest Rule, was extended to criminal prosecutions in *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), with the Court stressing that "there are areas of conduct protected by the Free Exercise Clause . . . and thus beyond the power of the State to control, even under regulations of general applicability." The culturally sympathetic nature of the litigants involved in these cases almost certainly facilitated the Court's shift to the Compelling State Interest Rule. *Sherbert* challenged the denial of unemployment benefits to a Seventh-day Adventist who refused to work on her religion's prescribed day of worship, while *Yoder* overturned the conviction of Amish parents who failed to enroll their child in public school beyond the eighth grade—both actions decidedly less controversial than the practice of polygamy. Further, both decisions came under the Warren Court, famous for its unprecedented extension of civil rights.

However, the heightened protection for religiously-motivated actions was short lived. By the 1980s, although the Compelling State Interest rule continued to be the law of the land, the Court had begun to routinely defer to the stated governmental interest in

Free Exercise litigation (Titus 1995). In *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), which centered on the religious use of peyote by a Native American, the Court formally returned to the Deferential Rule first announced in *Reynolds*: laws must be followed, even those that conflict with basic religious beliefs, as long as the law is neutral on its face and as enforced. In response to the *Smith* decision, the United States Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993 to mandate a compelling state interest standard for Free Exercise lawsuits (Jelen 2000). However, the Supreme Court ruled the Act unconstitutional, holding that it represented an attempt by Congress to modify the Constitution outside of the constitutional amendment process. Members of Congress have proposed constitutional amendments to clarify the meaning of the Free Exercise Clause; to date, although several measures have been supported by a basic majority, none have gained the necessary super-majority to pass (Jelen 2000).

It is the Constitutional protection of belief, but not practice, which makes religious tolerance and attitudes toward freedom of religion so significant. Majority interests and norms help to shape the law and the actions of public officials, sometimes very forcefully and directly (Jelen 2007). In fact, proponents of the Deferential Rule point to the “facially neutral” requirement of Free Exercise jurisprudence as providing sufficient protection to religious minorities: after all, the majority cannot pass any law that it is not itself willing to follow (Fry 1993). Further, the Court has stepped in to protect minority religious groups from facially neutral laws if the group has been able to prove that the law in question, although carefully phrased to apply to all citizens, in effect was implemented solely to attack the group’s unpopular religious practices. For example, in *Church of the Lukumi Babula Aye v. City of Hialeah* (1993), the Court struck down a

city ordinance prohibiting animal sacrifice which was passed only after the church in question began efforts to build a place of worship within the city limits.

However, the burden of establishing that a facially neutral law has been targeted toward a minority religion is substantial, and the United States has a long history of finding creative ways to legally deny equal rights to minorities. For example, Gamble (1997) reviewed civil rights initiatives over a 34-year period to determine how minority rights fared in a direct public voting process. The ballot measures concerned housing and accommodation, desegregation, English language laws, gay rights, and AIDS policies. Majority-based groups sponsored more than 90% of the initiatives, suggesting that the majority is more likely to successfully access this form of lawmaking. Of the 74 initiatives that reached the ballot stage, 78% resulted in outcomes adverse to minority civil rights, while only a single ballot measure favorable to minority civil rights passed (Gamble 1997:254). Further, many of the ballot initiatives were instigated in response to legislation intended to protect or extend minority rights. Gamble thus concluded that: “[c]itizens in the political majority have repeatedly used direct democracy to put the rights of political minorities to a popular vote. Not only that, anti-civil rights initiatives have an extraordinary record of success: voters have approved over three-quarters of these, while endorsing only a third of all substitute measures” (Gamble 1997:261). If the Constitution does not protect religious practices, then regulations and laws motivated by majority values have a great potential to oppress the freedom of minority religions.

The Establishment Clause. The presence of religion in the public sphere is further complicated by the other provision regarding religion in the First Amendment, the

Establishment clause. In fact, the two clauses are often viewed as in tension with one another (Deverich 2006; Jelen and Wilcox 1995). If the Supreme Court allows a group to violate a general law in its pursuit of the free exercise of its religion, has it effectively “established” that religion? Conversely, if a public school district prohibits Christmas celebrations in official school activities, out of concern over the Establishment clause, has it also impeded the free exercise of those students who wish to celebrate Christmas? And for those who see conflict between the two clauses, which should prevail? On the other hand, some have argued that the clauses should be interpreted together, focusing on their mutual interest in religious liberty rather than their separate directions of impact (Deverich 2006). Proponents of a unified reading of the religion clauses have argued that a bifurcated approach tends to lead to the marginalization of one clause. Deverich (2006) suggests that the Supreme Court’s bifurcated approach to First Amendment jurisprudence has resulted in a broad interpretation of the Establishment clause that favors marked separation of church and state, at the expense of protection for the free exercise of religion.

In many respects, the Establishment clause is even more complex than the Free Exercise clause. The interpretations of the U.S. Supreme Court have historically ranged from a strict separationist policy, prohibiting any governmental support for religion, to an accommodation policy, advocating support for religion in general so long as no religion is treated preferentially (Witte 2005). As with the Free Exercise clause, there is debate over what the framers of the Constitution intended. Accommodationists focus on the perceived positive effects of religious values on social life (Jelen and Wilcox 1995), and the general role of Christian belief in the history and foundation of U.S. society

(Anderson 2004; Bell 2001). Separationists instead see religious beliefs as potentially politically volatile and thus best confined to the private sphere. (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

In the landmark case of *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), the Supreme Court adopted a neutrality standard, creating a three-pronged test intended to bring predictability to Establishment clause jurisprudence (Witte 2005; Levy 1986). *Lemon* addressed two state laws that would provide public funds to private schools, including Catholic schools, to offset the cost of teaching secular subjects. In holding the laws unconstitutional, the Court set out the following standard for determining excessive entanglement between government and religion: “we must examine the character and purposes of the institutions that are benefited, the nature of the aid that the State provides, and the resulting relationship between the government and the religious authority.” Although presented as a neutral standard, subsequent interpretations of the *Lemon* rule tended toward the separationist end of the spectrum (Witte 2005).

The *Lemon* test was modified in *Agostini v. Felton* (1997), which concerned teachers being provided to parochial schools to teach secular subjects. *Agostini* set out a two-part test, examining whether (1) the governmental purpose and (2) the resulting effect served to advance or inhibit religion (Witte 2005). Finally, in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002), the Court addressed whether the government could help pay for a parent’s choice of private schooling. In the *Zelman* decision, the Court spoke in terms similar to its *Smith* free exercise analysis: facially neutral and neutrally applied laws do not violate the establishment clause. Additional variations on the *Lemon* test have considered whether the state’s actions could be interpreted by a reasonable observer to endorse

religion<sup>7</sup>, or whether the state's actions could potentially coerce the practice of religion<sup>8</sup> (Deverich 2006). While most Supreme Court cases have dealt specifically with entanglements between religion and education, lower courts have extended the Lemon test and its progeny to other issues, including religious charities, religious holidays, religious displays on public property, and so forth (Witte 2005).

While the current legal test for Establishment clause cases is relatively clear, the situations covered by the Establishment clause are sometimes more cloudy. Some historical expressions of religion have been exempted from Establishment clause jurisprudence because of their traditional stature in the U.S.—phrases such as “In God we Trust” on official currency and “one nation, under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance (Bell 2001). In essence, the Court has suggested that these and similar expressions have become secularized through their long history or due to their context, and thus should not be subjected to the Lemon test. Critics have noted that this secularization approach has been used in situations that would almost certainly fail a Lemon analysis, thus resulting in incompatible outcomes; for example, the Court has allowed open prayer in legislative sessions, yet disallowed a moment of silence in public schools (Bell 2001).

However, some have suggested that this secularization approach represents the Court's tacit acknowledgment of public opinion; the majority simply is not prepared to have the entire religious heritage of the U.S. erased from the public sphere (Levy 1986). Anderson (2004) suggests that the issue with a strict separationist reading of the

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<sup>7</sup> Lynch v. Donnelly (1984), a lawsuit over the public display of a crèche. Because the crèche was displayed as part of substantial Christmas exhibition that was otherwise secular in nature, its inclusion was held not to violate the Establishment clause.

<sup>8</sup> Lee v. Weisman (1992), a lawsuit over an invocation offered at a graduation, held to violate the Establishment clause because those present might feel compelled not to object outwardly, thus offering the appearance of support for the practice.

Establishment clause is that it treats the goal of a Christian America as the exact equivalent of a desire among Christians to participate in the public sphere without being forced to hide their religious identity. To Anderson (2004), the first goal is clearly prohibited by the Establishment clause, while the second is a reasonable demand. In essence, Anderson (2004) acknowledges the complaints of many religious adherents that a separationist stance on the Establishment clause is actually hostile to religion, and argues that the U.S. can find a middle ground that publicly recognizes religion without crossing the line to establishment.

### Theoretical Issues over Religious Involvement in Politics

Although legal battles over the Establishment clause have been confined to the issue of governmental involvement in religious matters, some have argued that the theoretical wall of separation should also prohibit religious involvement in political affairs (Beneke 2006). The argument is simple: religious freedom for all depends on religious tolerance of the values and beliefs of others, and this cannot occur if one religious group seeks to force its values and beliefs on others through political action. Of course, this position is often much easier for the religious majority to adopt, while religious minorities may view political involvement more as a means to protect their religious freedom than as a means to force their views on others. For example, Beneke (2006) details the long debate between Protestants and Catholics over common public schools in the mid-1800s. The Protestant groups could not fathom the Catholic objection to basing public education on the Bible, a system the Catholics recognized as “ostensibly

nonsectarian yet thoroughly Protestant” (Beneke 2006:212). Absent public dissent, the religious majority may not even recognize where the social system has adopted its values to the exclusion of others.

Beyond the issue of whether religious institutions constitutionally can engage in politics is the issue of whether they should do so. For example, Hecht (2007:138-139) details the refusal of one reverend to publicly support political candidates and causes from the pulpit and through church activities. When the reverend announced his position that religion and politics do not mix, twenty percent of his congregation defected—even though the reverend’s personal stand on the moral matters in question largely coincided with theirs (Hecht 2007). Proponents of religious involvement argue that religious organizations have an obligation to take a stand on moral issues in an effort to improve the world, as well as a legal right to defend their interests through political channels (Williams 1967). On the other hand, official religious involvement in a political cause may be unduly influential on members of that religion, or alternatively may threaten group unity as some members object to the official stance. The waters may be further muddied when prominent members of a religion choose to engage in political causes individually, with their actions sometimes interpreted as an endorsement of a candidate or cause (Williams 1967).

The official policy of the Mormon Church has been to take no position in support of political parties and on most issues, but to encourage its members to become educated and active voters (Williams 1967). However, policy issues that can be categorized as “moral” in nature have been addressed formally on occasion, with the Church actively engaging in the public campaign in rare circumstances (White 1985; Williams 1967).



One oft-cited example is the Church's opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Following the announcement that the Mormon Church formally opposed the ERA, there was a substantial shift from pro-ERA to anti-ERA positions among Mormons (Quinn 1994; White 1989). Further, some internal conflict followed the announcement, with objections raised by both those who continued to individually support the ERA and by those who agreed with the Church's position on the ERA but opposed the political involvement (Quinn 1994; White 1985). At least one member was formally excommunicated from membership for publicly campaigning against the Mormon Church taking an anti-ERA position (White 1985). While opponents point to these types of outcomes as representative of the dangers of religious involvement in politics, Quinn (1994) argues that religious organizations are simply another type of special-interest group in the political process, and the sanction of public reaction is a sufficient check.

## Conclusions

This chapter has discussed some of the issues that arise in a pluralistic society. In spite of the Constitutional provisions governing religious freedom and church-state relations, the public presence of religion remains a contested area in the U.S. The following chapter reviews Realist Group Conflict Theory and Social Identity Theory, two theories arising out of the sociological concept of in-groups, each of which provides a possible explanation for religious conflict and intolerance. Chapter IV also explores Hunter's (1991) Culture War Theory and Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) Church-State Typology, which provide the framework specific framework for this study.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework used in this study. As discussed in Chapter II, Mormons have a history of persecution and hostility from mainstream Christianity. Because of this experience, Mormon communities have high levels of solidarity which creates a communication barrier to those outside the faith. Just as Mormons have experience prejudice and intolerance, so have they been accused of engaging in these behaviors. The next section reviews the relevant sociological theories on prejudice, intolerance and their relationship to intergroup conflict. Specifically, this study makes use of two theories of intergroup conflict, Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGC) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). RGC and SIT provide a framework to better understand how prejudice and intolerance, largely conceptualized as individual attributes, are embedded within the context of group membership. As discussed in preceding chapters, the Mormon sense of identity and group cohesion is related to a shared history of persecution. In order to better understand the attitudes of practicing Mormons toward the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, it is important to consider the dynamics of the social processes responsible for building in-group solidarity and out-group aversion.

## Prejudice and Intolerance

Numerous explanations have been advanced to explain intolerance, prejudice and discrimination, from the psychological in nature to the macro-sociological (Levine and Campbell 1972). While each approach contributes to an understanding of these phenomena, Brown (1995) suggests that social psychology is the most logical place to begin. Individual motives and emotions contribute to attitudes and behaviors toward others, but they are “deflected, organized, and transformed in group settings” (Sherif 1953:152). Further, the subjects of such attitudes and behaviors are identified by their group membership. Brown’s (1995:6) definition of the term “prejudice” captures the essential group nature of the term: “a social orientation either towards whole groups of people or towards individuals because of their membership in a particular group.” Thus, while specific instances of intolerance or discrimination may occur between individuals, this does not remove the incident from the underlying group processes at work.

In a classic study on intergroup relations, Sherif (1953:2) defined a group as:

a social unit (1) which consists of a number of individuals who, at a given time, stand in more or less definite interdependent status and role relationships to one another and (2) which explicitly or implicitly possess a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members at least in matters of consequence to the group.

Two theories of intergroup conflict, Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGC) and Social Identity Theory (SIT), build on this idea of groups, and the related concepts of in-groups and out-groups. Simply put, an in-group is a group of which an individual is a part and with which he or she identifies, and an out-group is correspondingly a group of which an individual is not a part and with which he or she does not identify (Sherif 1953). RGC

focuses on the manner in which group interests shape intergroup attitudes and behaviors, while SIT examines the manner in which group members employ intergroup comparisons biased in favor of the in-group to achieve and maintain a positive self-concept (Brown 1995). Each theory is considered in depth below.

### Realistic Group Conflict Theory

Realistic Group Conflict Theory rests on a fairly simple hypothesis: “intergroup attitudes and behaviour [sic] will tend to reflect group interests” (Brown 1995:163). When two groups have incompatible interests, such as competition for scarce resources, RGC anticipates hostile intergroup relations. Conversely, if group interests are compatible or complementary, then intergroup relations should be positive (Brown 1995). Levine and Campbell (1972:29-41) delineated several propositions building off of this basic premise, including that perceived threats to group interests causes both hostility toward the source of the threat (the out-group) and increased in-group solidarity, even when the perceived threat is, in fact, false.

Sherif provided much of the early support for RGC through a series of experiments performed at boys’ summer camps (Brown 1995). His book, *Groups in Harmony and Tension*, details one such experiment in Connecticut in 1949 (Sherif 1953). The experiment began with a homogenous group of campers without preexisting relationships, who first were permitted to informally group themselves according to interests and personalities. In the second stage of the experiment, campers were formally divided into two groups, each of which participated separately in activities designed to

encourage in-group formation. Finally, in the third stage, Sherif introduced competition between the two groups, with highly desirable rewards available to members of the winning group (Sherif 1953).

Although the competition stage began with positive feelings expressed by both groups, signs of friction emerged as one group established a lead, including accusations of cheating, increased solidarity in the victorious group, some disintegration within the losing group, and significant fighting and name-calling between the groups (Sherif 1953). Following the experiment, camp staff worked to break down group barriers and encourage a unified camp, yet overall social patterns among the campers continued to follow the group boundaries established during Stage Two and amplified by competition during Stage Three (Sherif 1953). Through this and similar experiments, Sherif (1953) explored the most basic premise of RGC, that incompatible group interests lead to hostile intergroup relations.

A variety of studies on real-life national and international conflicts, including the first Gulf War and the attack on Pearl Harbor during World War II, also provide empirical support for RGC (Brown 1995). Duckitt and Mphuthing's (1998) longitudinal study of black South Africans' attitudes toward various white ethnic groups provided further field evidence in support of the theory, finding a substantially more negative attitude toward white Afrikaners than toward other white ethnics during an election period.

One of the strengths of RGC is that it explains not only intergroup hostility, but also the ebb and flow of hostility across time in response to changing structural relations between groups (Brown 1995). However, RGC is not without criticism. Early

conceptualizations of RGC focused heavily on the actual presence of conflict or threat; however, this critique has been mitigated by the recognition that conflict or threat need only be perceived to elicit intergroup hostilities (Brown 1995; Levine and Campbell 1972). This expansion of RGC to include perceived threats encompasses the frightening potential for political bodies to “create” threatening out-groups as a means of enhancing in-group solidarity and further strengthening positions of power (Brown 1995; Levine and Campbell 1972).

More significantly, although intergroup hostility may not be as apparent in the absence of conflict, studies have found evidence of in-group bias even in situations where two groups have complementary interests (Brown 1995). In fact, Sherif’s (1953) summer camp study demonstrated this, with the continuance of in-group patterns of socializing even as camp staff worked to create a single, unified group. Thus, while RGC is useful to explain negative intergroup relations during times of conflict or threat, it is less helpful in understanding why negative intergroup attitudes and behaviors arise or persist in non-conflict, non-threat periods. Social Identity Theory helps to fill this void.

### Social Identity Theory

Whereas RGC in essence presumes the existence of in-groups, Social Identity Theory places more emphasis on in-group formation and how individual members gain an identity through group membership (Duckit and Mphuthing 1998). Social identity has been defined as ““those aspects of an individual’s self image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself belonging”” (Tajfel and Turner 1986:15). A

significant premise of SIT is that the need to create and maintain a positive identity motivates intergroup relations (Brown 2000). Intergroup differentiation follows from three variables: “people must be subjectively identified with their ingroup; the situation should permit evaluative intergroup comparisons; the outgroup must be sufficiently comparable (e.g., similar or proximal) ... that pressures for distinctiveness should increase with comparability” (Brown 2000:747, citing Tajfel and Turner 1986). As a result of these factors, group members are expected to demonstrate a bias in favor of the in-group, even absent objective causes to favor the in-group, although numerous studies have also found an interactive effect between SIT and RGC (Brown 2000).

In-group favoritism has often been tested through experimental settings in which members of an in-group are asked to allocate some reward between fellow in-group members and members of an out-group (Tajfel 1982). For example, a study of children’s methods of distributing money to others found that the child participants most often used a maximum difference strategy with occasional use of a maximum in-group payout strategy, each of which involved distribution of a higher amount to in-group member (Vaughn, Tajfel and Williams 1981). However, a study in which respondent’s were asked to rate their in-group and an out-group found that the experiment design heavily influenced the level of in-group bias (Mummendey and Schreiber 1983). Mummendey and Schreiber (1983) tested respondent’s ratings under three distinct conditions: one in which a total number of points had to be allocated between the two groups, one in which each group was separately rated on the same scale, and one in which respondents were able to choose dimensions to rank the two groups. Contrary to what SIT would predict, that the subject should display in-group favoritism at all times, Mummendey and

Schreiber (1983:395) found that “outgroup discrimination only takes place when there is no other alternative to guarantee one’s own positive identity than one at the expense of the outgroup.... As soon as a good result is possible for both groups at the same time ... it appears that the judgments are influenced in a sense of fairness.”

Issues such as level of group identification, group status, boundary permeability, and so forth are significant in their implications for both in-group and out-group attitudes (Gini 2007; von Hippel 2006; Rubin and Hewston 2004; Brown 2000; De Cremer 2000; Ellemers et al 1988). De Cremer (2000) conducted a lab experiment in which participants were informed of group failure or success after a task and were then asked to rank the reasons for that outcome. He found that group success was more often attributed to group-member efforts, while group failure was more often attributed to external factors; however, he also found that high-level group identifiers made more use of group-serving attributes than those with a lower level of group identification (De Cremer 2000). Likewise, in a field study of an organization, Hennessey and West (1999) found a positive correlation between the level of work-group identification and the level of in-group favoritism exhibited by that work-group. (See also Sidanius, Pratto and Mitchell 1994).

Ellemer, Van Knippenberg, DeVries and Wilke (1988) conducted an experiment in which participants individually completed a meaningless task, while manipulating participant belief as to where their individual score ranked compared to other fictitious in-group members and where their fictitious in-group ranked in comparison with other fictitious groups. They found that subjects who believed they were part of a high status group (i.e., scored better than other groups) tested higher for in-group identification,



while subjects who believed they were part of a low status group identified considerably less with their fictitious groups, particularly when participants were lead to believe that group boundaries were permeable or that the individual received a high score on the task (Ellemers et. a 1988). Nesdale and Flesser (2001) achieved similar result in children as young as five years of age, finding that group status has a significant effect on the children's identification with and desire to continue as a member of an arbitrarily designated in-group. Somewhat similarly, Gini (2007) tested the effect of status on in-group and out-group biases through telling children a story which cast them in either the role of the bully or victim in a playground incident, and also as either very good or not good at the game in question. While both the high and low status groups attributed more blame for the bullying incident to the out-group, whether cast in the role of bully or victim, the low status group demonstrated a more significant gap in the relative blame assigned to the bully and victim (Gini 2007).

Status implications were also found in a field study of nursing students, in which a high status group and a low status group were about to be merged (Skevington 1981). The high status group resisted the proposed merge, while the lower status group welcomed the opportunity to move between groups or to abandon the separate groups altogether with the merge (Skevington 1981). Similarly, von Hippel (2006) studied differences between permanent and temporary employees, conceptualizing temporary employment as a low status group with permeable boundaries. In line with numerous other studies, she found that permanent employees exhibited in-group favoritism while temporary employees actually showed an out-group favoritism, suggestive of a desire to change groups (von Hippel 2006).

Brewer (2001:19) suggests that issues of in-group favoritism and out-group hostility are best conceptualized as “a systematic progression along a continuum of possible relationships between ingroup formation and intergroup behavior in which each element in the progression provides a necessary but not sufficient condition for occurrence of the subsequent element.” These progressive elements are:

1. Human social groups are organized into discrete ingroup-outgroup categories (the social categorization principle).
2. Individuals value their ingroups positively and maintain positive, cooperative relationships with members of the ingroup (the ingroup positivity principle).
3. Ingroup positivity is enhanced by social comparison with outgroups in which ingroup attributes and outcomes are evaluated as better than or superior to those of outgroups (the intergroup comparison model).
4. Relationships between ingroup and outgroups are characterized by antagonism, conflict, and mutual contempt (the outgroup hostility principle)

(Brewer 2001:19). Thus, negative out-group attitudes are completely distinct from in-group formation, which requires only social categorization and positive attachment to a group; negative out-group attitudes and out-group hostility require additional motivation and structural conditions. Without such further impetus, out-groups never move from “not us” to “them” (Brewer 2001:23-24). A threat to positive in-group identity is likely to move intergroup relations from a mild negative out-group bias to open hostility (Brown 1995). While recognizing that RGC offers one possible explanation of an additional structural and motivational condition which might lead to out-group hostility, Brewer (2001) similarly notes that many conflicts concern symbolic or subjective threats, or stem from previous antagonistic inter-group relations.

Despite the distinction between the two processes of in-group favoritism and out-group negativity, SIT’s most likely and useful contribution to modern social life will be

found in its contributions to understanding intergroup conflict (Brown 2000). SIT has been lauded for its ability to explain varying levels of in-group favoritism, and for its ability to recognize non-economic sources of intergroup conflict (Brown 1995). However, several criticisms have also emerged. For one, empirical evidence on the correlation between levels of in-group identification and in-group bias have tended to find a weak positive correlation at best, with suggestions emerging that the expected link may only exist in certain types of groups (Brown 1995). More seriously, several studies have found an unexpected level of independence between measures of in-group favoritism and out-group negativity, where SIT would predict some level of correlation (Brown 1995). Finally, at least one study has found SIT to be inapplicable in an East Asian cultural context (Yuki 2003). An additional challenge for SIT going forward is to accommodate the increasingly multicultural nature of modern society (Brown 2000). For example, Goar (2007) was not able to defeat the salience of race in a short-term group of one black and two white women in a study designed to test the ability of cross-cutting categorization to reduce racial inequality. (See also, Tajfel 1982).

### RGC and SIT in the Context of Religion

One noted difference between RGC and SIT is the proposed direction of causality; RGC suggests that out-group threats and hostilities lead to in-group identification and SIT suggests that in-group identification leads to out-group biases (Duckit and Mphuthing 1998). Perhaps, like many other apparently competing social science theories, it is not that one is better than the other, but that they address different

facets of similar social issues. In fact, in the context of religious intolerance, many studies rely on both theories to explore the causes of prejudice and discrimination toward different religions.

According to Seul (1999:558), “[n]o other repositories of cultural meaning have historically offered so much in response to the human need to develop a secure identity. Consequently, religion is often at the core of individual and group identity.” (See also, Verkuyten 2007). The common religious focus on history, tradition and continuity, as well as frequent rituals and rites, enhances both individual and in-group identity formation (Seul 1999). Further, by its very nature, the religious focus on what is “right” and “true” in essence means that the strongly held beliefs of one religion may be incompatible with, or even antithetical to, the strongly held beliefs of another group (Verkuyten 2007). While many religions textually encourage peace and tolerance, their members live in a world of scarce material resources and social struggle over symbolic issues. Thus, when faced with material or social needs, a religious group may simply emphasize those traditions and teachings which justify the required level of conflict or violence to satisfy said needs (Seul 1999).

Verkuyten (2007) tested the relative strength of the religious and national identities of Turkish-Dutch Muslims to identify issues involved in dual identities. With respect to religious identification, the study found a very strong Muslim in-group identity in the majority of subjects. While overall there was a slightly negative correlation between Muslim and Dutch identities, roughly one-third of respondents ranked as highly identifying with both identities, suggesting that a strong religious in-group identity to a

minority religion does not necessarily indicate a unwillingness or inability to also identify on a national basis with a Western nation (Verykuyten 2007).

A study of religious tolerance among the Jewish Israeli population pointed to threat and in-group identification as the primary sources of intolerance (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006). The study, consisting of five national surveys exploring political tolerance toward Arabs, was conducted during an intifada within Israeli territory, with “fighting over both tangible (territory) and intangible (identity) resources” (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006:570). While respondents were generally more concerned over threats to security than symbolic identity, those who ranked Arabs as posing the greatest level of danger saw Arabs as posing both a material and symbolic threat. Further, the level of group identity, measured by respondents ranking their desire for a Jewish state higher than their desire for democracy or peace, increased with the initiation and continuation of conflict. Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter (2006) attempted to control for the incremental influence of conflict, threat and identity, as well as any interactive effect between the variables, in the overall decrease in tolerance toward Arabs. To their surprise, although Jewish in-group identification did produce intolerance, the level of intolerance did not increase statistically during the period of conflict. However, the authors noted that, given the long history of conflict between the groups, the intifada was perhaps not significant enough to produce a measure fully sensitive to the role of conflict. Ultimately, Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter (2006) concluded that RGC was more significantly implicated in their results than SIT, based upon the respondents placing more emphasis on material threats rather than symbolic ones.

## The Culture War Theory and Church-State Typology

Elements of Social Identity Theory and Realistic Group Conflict Theory can be seen in Hunter's (1991) book *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. He briefly discusses the history of conflict between religious groups in the United States. However, his true interest lies in his theory of a modern Culture War, not between any two specific religions, but between cross-religion orientations that he terms "orthodox" and "progressive" (Hunter 1991:107). Hunter (1991:44) defines "orthodoxy" as "the commitment on the part of adherents to an external, definable, and transcendent authority." The orthodox camp tends to be conservative on social matters, with beliefs and actions based upon a literal interpretation of the Bible. On the other hand, "progressivism" is defined as "the tendency to resymbolize historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life" (Hunter 1991:44-45). Progressivists tend to be liberal on social matters, believing that experience and modern customs are as legitimate a basis for personal choices as historical religious values and beliefs (Hunter 1991). At a deeper level, the split reflects a conflict over the source of truth, and whether there is an ultimate reality and morality that transcends human experience (Hunter 2006). Within this progressive-orthodox framework, Hunter (1991) envisions a struggle over the right to claim what it means to be "American," specifically concentrated around issues such as how to define "family," what should be taught in schools, and what and whether art should be censored. He refers to this as "a tug of war over the dominant symbols of our public culture" (Hunter 1991:273).

Other scholars disagree with how extensively Hunter has portrayed this culture war. For example, Wolfe (2006) argues that any conflict exists among the elites of society, specifically among politicians and a few prominent organizations. He cites the Schiavo right-to-die case, noting that despite efforts on both sides to make Schiavo a political rallying point, the vast majority of Americans remained unengaged in the battle, no matter their personal opinion on the issue itself. Wolfe thus concludes that the concept of a culture war is overblown; even as politicians and religious organizations attempt to create social issues over cultural meanings, the majority of Americans have settled on a comfortable middle ground (Wolfe 2006). Similarly, Marsden (1990) views most Americans as standing somewhere in the middle of the two extremes, noting that it is simply easier to talk in terms of two poles rather than acknowledging the nuances in between. Fiorina (2006) further argues that Hunter overstates the importance of cultural matters in comparison to the more traditional economic divide in politics.

In response, Hunter (2006) concedes that his Culture War is often seized upon by politicians in search of a political advantage, yet maintains that critics are wrong to focus so heavily on the political aspects. Even allowing for a passive mass of citizens in the “middle,” Hunter (2006) maintains that this in no way signifies that society is not fragmented. Rather, he sees it as evidence of disaffection with the political process and an unclear vision of what the future should hold. Further, he clarifies that the Culture War theory does not describe a simple dichotomy in attitude or opinion. Rather, people on both sides hold nuanced opinions over very complex issues; however, this nuance may be lost as issues become politicized (Hunter 2006). Hunter (2006:13-14) cites the battle over abortion rights as an example; the political and legal issues form the public face, yet

underneath the public debate lies conflict “over the meaning of motherhood, of individual liberty, and of our obligations to one another.”

Jelen and Wilcox (1995) also move beyond the basic concept of a two-sided Culture War in examining public attitudes toward the two clauses of the First Amendment. Attitudes toward the Establishment clause were identified as either separationist or accommodationist. Separationists believe that government must refrain from aiding any and all religions, while accommodationists believe that government may support religion in general, so long as no religion is favored over another. Attitudes toward the Free Exercise clause contrasted a communitarian approach, under which religious practices may be curtailed where such practices offend the morals of the majority, with a libertarian approach, under which the free practice of religion must be allowed to all so long as the practice in question does not violate the fundamental rights of other citizens (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

By taking the possible combinations of attitudes on the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) thus identify four possible positions in a Church-State Typology. The Christian Preferentialist would both allow governmental aid to religions and be willing to restrict some minority religion practices, while the Religious Nonpreferentialist would also allow governmental support to religions but would require that all religious practices be protected equally. On the other hand, Religious Minimalists would limit both public support for religion and special protection for the practices of religious minorities, while Religious Free-Marketeers support equal recognition of a neutral governmental stance toward all religions as well as what Jelen and Wilcox (1995:25-26) term “irreligions.”



Jelen and Wilcox (1995) thoroughly explored public opinions within the context of this typology, and it would be impossible to review all of their findings here. One of the significant findings was that public attitudes toward concrete issues concerning the connection between church and state were structured largely into a few distinct areas. With respect to the Establishment clause, attitudes broke down into three areas, related to concrete issues involving the influence or presence of religion in public education, the use of public funds for religiously related purposes, and the public display of religious symbols. Free Exercise clause issues also broke into three areas, although the breakdown here concerned the nature of the religion to be granted the privilege of worship. Jelen and Wilcox (1995) categorize these groupings as dangerous religions, harmless religions, and immigrant religions. As a caveat, the “dangerous religion” category included practices that could harm other humans or animals, and also religious practices that might be considered merely as annoying (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

A second important finding dealt with the connection between the opinions expressed on abstract survey items compared to items concerning concrete issues (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). In the abstract, the majority of the sample favored a separatist position when asked generically about government aid to religion or the theoretical wall of separation between church and state, but an accommodationist position when asked about the government protecting a Judeo-Christian heritage. On the concrete items, however, attitudes most often tended toward an accommodationist stance.

While acknowledging that this could simply be reflective of respondents not carefully considering the questions, or not holding formed opinions to guide them in responding, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) also offer several possible explanations for this

apparent inconsistency. First, the surface inconsistency may represent the difficulty in distinguishing between establishment and free exercise issues; while the researchers classified the items as Establishment clause related, it is possible that respondents answered the items in the context of the Free Exercise clause. A second possibility is that survey respondents viewed the concrete items as representing consensual practices within a community; in fact, in follow-up discussion groups many respondents changed their answers from an accommodationist stance to a separatist stance when presented with the idea that a specific practice might result in conflict within the community. Finally, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) recognized that some respondents might have knowledge of the current state of the law, with their knowledge of recent Supreme Court decisions reflected in their answers. Given the manner in which the concrete items were structurally organized into three distinct and meaningful categories, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) concluded that the apparent inconsistency was not a random occurrence, but reflective of meaningful attitudes. Further, they concluded that religious variables provided the best explanation for variations in attitude, better than other demographic variables considered (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

Abstract items addressing the Free Exercise clause demonstrated an extremely strong position in favor of protecting free exercise, so long as this did not result in a violation of the law (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). Yet, while the majority favored protection of free exercise on many of the concrete issues, none of the concrete issues received as much support as the idea of free exercise in the abstract. Nevertheless, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) conclude that there is not a substantial inconsistency between abstract and

concrete attitudes toward the Free Exercise clause, considering the structuring of attitudes along the lines of any danger the religious practice in question might pose.

In a follow-up study, Jelen and Wilcox (1997) tested the value of their theoretical four-part Church-State Typology through a cluster analysis of respondents. They concluded that a four cluster solution represented the best of various tested solutions; further, each of the four types was represented in nearly equal numbers among the sample. Surprisingly, Jelen and Wilcox (1997) found that the Religious Minimalist group, which holds strong separationist Establishment clause attitudes and disapproves of the more controversial forms of free exercise, scored unexpectedly high on church attendance and belief in the literal truth of the Bible. This challenges what they see as the common assumption that those who hold separationist positions are non-religious. Further, the secularly-inclined Religious Free Marketeer group, while holding a strong separationist viewpoint on Establishment clause issues as one would expect, was highly supportive of Free Exercise rights for Christians and non-Christians alike. This again challenges what Jelen and Wilcox (1997) consider as the religious-secular division in society advanced by the Culture War theory.

## Conclusion

Jelen and Wilcox (1997) suggest that the presence of all four combinations in empirical testing shows the complexity of attitudes toward the presence of religion in the public sphere, and thus demonstrates that the idea of a dualistic Culture War is oversimplified. It seems quite possible, however, that Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995)

Church-State Typology in actuality explores the nuances of attitude that Hunter (2006) referred to as existing outside of political battles over the issues, or at least for those attitudes related to religious involvement in the public sphere.

Further, the religious makeup of the four types fits with Hunter's (1991) description of the progressive-orthodox split as cutting across demographic lines. For example, Catholics were substantially represented within each of the four types; they formed over one-third of the three types other than Christian Preferentialist, but also formed over twenty percent of this group (Jelen and Wilcox 1997). Similarly, mainline Protestants, while most represented in the Religious Minimalist group, constituted at least ten percent of the remaining three types. Evangelical Protestants formed a significant proportion of the three of the types, excepting only the Religious Free Marketeer category. Finally, while those professing no religious affiliation or non Judeo-Christian faith were most substantially represented in the Free Marketeers type, they also were reasonably well represented across the remaining three categories (Jelen and Wilcox 1997).

It is also possible that the Church-State Typology could help identify those who feel sufficiently engaged over such issues to join sides in a Culture War, compared to those of more moderate views who prefer to remain in the vast middle. This could be reflected in the strength of respondent attitudes toward the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses. However, this also may be something to explore in future research, comparing voting patterns and political involvement against the Church-State Typology.

The next chapter discusses the methodology used in the study, including a description of the survey instrument. Two-sample comparisons of proportions, cluster

analysis, factor analysis, and regression analysis both provide an overview of Mormon participant attitudes toward First Amendment issues and allow for the comparison of the Mormon sample to the results obtained in Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) study. Finally, the limitations of the present study are discussed.

## CHAPTER V

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research methodology, to provide an overall impression of Mormon attitudes and statistical comparison both to the earlier Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) study and among Mormon participants from different regions of the country. Data was collected using a survey instrument developed by Jelen and Wilcox (1995), adapted from an earlier study and designed to test respondent attitudes toward the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Several statistical tests were used in the data analysis. The findings of these tests are discussed in Chapter VII. As discussed in Chapter I, three research questions are addressed in the present study:

1. What are the attitudes of practicing Mormons toward the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and how do these attitudes compare to the findings of Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995) in their Washington, D.C.-based study?
2. What demographic variables help to explain any variation in the attitudes of study participants?

3. What, if any, regional differences are identified in Mormon attitudes, considering (a) the religion's place as a majority vs. minority segment of the local population, and (b) distinct religious regions (by style of pluralism) identified in existing literature.

### Overview of the Research Design

Based on the existing literature, it is anticipated that the attitudes of the participants will differ from the general attitudes identified by Jelen and Wilcox (1995). Previous studies would suggest that, at least on issues of a moral nature, Mormons will fall on the conservative side of most matters. Given the historical conflict Mormons faced in pursuit of exercising their religious beliefs, it is anticipated that the majority of participant attitudes will favor the protection of religious free exercise. Based upon the recent participation of the Mormon Church, as an institution, and its publicly-stated stance on certain political matters of a "moral" nature, it is anticipated that the majority of study participants will favor religious accommodation on establishment issues.

In the context of Jelen and Wilcox's (1997:279-280) Church-State typology, this would place the majority of study participants in the "Religious Non-preferentialist" category. However, it is also quite possible that the more recent mainstream (if conservative) lifestyle embraced by Mormons since Utah's statehood has somewhat counteracted the collective memory of religious intolerance in the early history of Mormonism, in the attitudes toward other minority religions if not in the realm of collective identity, shifting the majority of participants to the "Christian Preferentialist"

category (Jelen and Wilcox 1997:279-280). Further, the location of the subject sample within Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) Church-State typology, coupled with the relative strength of opinions expressed, may speak to the place of Mormonism in Hunter's (1991) Culture War theory.

In their Washington, D.C.-based study, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) used regression analysis to test the contribution of various demographic variables to respondent attitudes on both establishment and free exercise issues. Although only education proved a consistently significant variable in attitudes on concrete issues, other demographic variables were significant with respect to specific issues raised under either the Establishment or Free Exercise clauses (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:91, 127). While the available demographic variables in the present study will be fewer, due to sampling from a specific religious population, the commonly used demographic variables of age, sex, and political party have been included in the survey for analysis. I anticipate that the demographic variables in the present study will have a similar significance. However, should demographic variables outside of religion prove not to have a statistically significant relationship to First Amendment attitudes, this may suggest that participation in the Mormon religion has a substantial influence in counteracting normally relevant demographics.

Silk's (2007) theoretical review of variations in attitudes toward religious pluralism among different regions of the United States would suggest that there will be some variation in attitude based on the participants' regions of residence. If differences among region are found in the present study, it may provide some preliminary empirical support for Silk's (2007) theory. While a lack of difference in opinion cannot be viewed



as disproving the theory, given the small proportion of citizens Mormons constitute in all regions outside of the region containing Utah and surrounding areas, it again would raise the possibility that participation in the Mormon religion is a substantial force in shaping attitudes toward Church-State relations. I anticipate that the attitudes of participants will reflect the regional culture of their residence, at least to some extent. However, it is also possible that residence in a region identified as favorable to strict separation of church and state would have a contrary effect on a highly religious person, pushing them toward a stronger position in favor of accommodation in reaction to the views of their neighbors.

### Description of Survey Instrument

As stated earlier, data for the present study was collected using a survey instrument developed by Jelen and Wilcox (1995), adapted from an earlier study and designed to test respondent attitudes toward the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The survey instrument consisted of twenty-eight Likert-scale items, including three items testing respondent opinions on the Establishment clause in an abstract sense, nine items over concrete Establishment issues, two items on the Free Exercise clause in an abstract sense, and fourteen items over concrete Free Exercise issues. Likert scale items are useful for determining a respondent's relative intensity of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). Additionally, twelve demographic questions were adapted to the target population, practicing members of the Mormon Church. The survey instrument was extensively pre-tested by Jelen and Wilcox (1995, 1997) prior to

use in the original study, including an analysis of the significance of question ordering. The complete list of survey questions is set forth in the Appendices.

Studies of the Mormon population can be challenging because membership roles are typically unavailable for any use other than religious purposes. Moreover, outside of the Utah region Mormons tend to form too small a proportion of the general public to be captured through random sampling of the general population. This difficulty can be observed in Jelen and Wilcox's (1995) original study, in which Mormon respondents were of necessity consolidated into a "Nontraditional Protestant" category along with "Christian Scientists[] and other groups" (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:37). Even with the consolidation of these religious groups, the Nontraditional Protestant category made up only two percent of the total sample for the study (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:37). Further, there is no theoretical justification, to the researcher's knowledge, to expect a category formed of such disparate religious groups to produce data reasonably reflective of any of the individual religions. To compensate for the difficulty of obtaining a random sample of Mormon respondents, many studies on Mormon attitudes have confined sampling to the Utah region (Fox 2003), which is majority Mormon<sup>9</sup>. However, this research strategy either produces results that are not generalizable beyond the Utah region or requires an assumption that Mormons living among a majority-Mormon population are representative of all Mormons. Fox (2003) has shown that there are limits to the common assumption of homogeneity among Mormons.

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<sup>9</sup> *Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000*. Collected by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) and distributed by the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)).

To produce a sufficiently sized sample of practicing Mormons, including from regions outside of Utah and the surrounding areas, the present study utilized snowball sampling, originating in the Northwest, the Utah region, Oklahoma, and Washington, D.C. (Czaja and Blair 2005). Snowball sampling is appropriate to reach a population that is otherwise difficult to locate, and involves beginning with members of the target population known to the researcher, then reaching out to additional participants known to the initial participants (Czaja and Blair 2005). In the case of the present study, email invitations to participate in the survey were sent to fourteen initial participants, who were requested to forward the survey invitation to other practicing Mormons who might be willing to participate. In an effort to assure alternative voices were reached, to the extent they exist, attempts were made to also post survey invitations at several Mormon chat rooms and blogs, popularly known as either liberal or conservative in nature. Unfortunately, in spite of positive initial contacts, the administrators of the contacted blogs and chat rooms were ultimately either non-responsive or declined to participate.

To assist in collecting data across a wide geographic area, as well as to facilitate snowball sampling, the surveys were conducted through Survey Monkey<sup>10</sup>, a secure online survey website. Web surveys offer many benefits in comparison with traditional paper surveys (Dillman 2007). They are very cost effective, particularly when a large number of participants are anticipated, as copying and postage costs are avoided. Further, web-based surveys provide a greater level of interaction with respondents than traditional paper surveys, including mid-survey prompts or helps on an as-needed basis and direct skips to relevant questions as appropriate following screening questions (Dillman 2007). Survey Monkey also offers substantial protection of participant identity,

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<sup>10</sup> See [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) for additional information.

including secure socket layer (SSL) encryption during transmission, a secured and password protected server for data storage, and data results provided without participant IP addresses listed (see [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The main drawback of internet surveys is the risk of screening out potential respondents who either lack internet access or who do not believe their computer skills are sufficient to access or complete the survey; however, these limitations are becoming less of a concern with increasing computer availability and competency (Dillman 2007). Additionally, Utah has been identified as one of the top states for percentage of residents with internet access, with over 80% of individuals living in a household with internet access (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). This is likely influenced at least in part by the Mormon religion's extensive use of computers in family history research and its emphasis on education.

Because the research design includes the participation of human subjects, approval was obtained from the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board. A copy of the IRB authorization is included in the Appendices. Data were collected during Spring Semester, 2010. Survey items were subsequently coded on a scale of one to five, with the directionality of items reversed as necessary such that a score of five consistently represented an attitude favorable to strict separation of church of state on the Establishment clause items and an attitude favorable to strong protection for free exercise of religion on Free Exercise clause items. Jelen and Wilcox (1995:25) defined these attitudes as "Separationist" and "Libertarian," respectively, in their original study. Conversely, a score of one consistently represented an attitude favorable to accommodation of religion on Establishment clause items ("Accomodationist") and an

attitude favorable to restriction of unusual religious practices on Free Exercise clause items (“Communalist”).

For the demographic items in the survey, the ordinal item, education, was coded numerically from least education to most. Nominal items, including political affiliation, region of residence, length of church membership, and description of religious beliefs, were coded as dummy variables, with republican affiliation, residence in the Utah region, lifelong membership in the Mormon Church, and self-identification as neither liberal nor fundamentalist serving as the designated reference groups. Respondent zip codes were used to categorize the participants by region of residence, utilizing the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)) to determine both geographic residency and the relative presence of the Mormon Church within that geographic area. Where necessary, variables (specifically, the items on participant education level and region of residence) were collapsed into categories sufficiently large to permit statistical analysis. A few variables, specifically frequency of church attendance, view of the Bible’s literal truthfulness, and race/ethnicity, proved unusable, due to a near total lack of variation within the sample; these variables are presented in the demographic description of the study sample, but have been excluded from further statistical analysis.

### Statistical Analysis

Several statistical methods were used in analysis of the collected data. The first statistical test utilized was a z-test for comparison of proportions, to compare the percentage of respondents adopting accommodationist or separationist positions on

Establishment clause issues and positions in favor of maximum Free Exercise protection from the earlier Jalen and Wilcox (1995) study with those adopting these positions in the present study. Testing for a significant difference between two groups is one of the most basic statistical methods (Brown and Melamed 1990). However, it must be noted that here, as with most of the other statistical methods discussed below, the quality of results depends in large part on the data satisfying the underlying assumptions, including an assumption of random sampling (Brown and Melamed 1990). Because this is an exploratory study, statistical testing was used to highlight future research possibilities rather than to draw final conclusions about the Mormon population and its comparison to the general population.

Second, a hierarchical cluster analysis was performed to identify the presence of study participants across the Church-State Typology developed by Jalen and Wilcox (1997, 1995). Jalen and Wilcox (1997) concluded in their study that clustering in four groups was the best fit for the data as well as matching their theoretical typology. Here, cluster analysis should demonstrate both whether there is real variability within the Mormon population and whether Mormons appear to be possibly overrepresented within any of four First Amendment typology categories. Cluster analysis is appropriate for organizing data into useful sub-groups (Kettenring 2006; Arabie and Hubert 1996). As a general goal, clustering seeks “to maximize the similarity/ cohesiveness/homogeneity within each cluster while maximizing heterogeneity among clusters” (Arabie and Hubert 1969:15), or more simply put, to form tight-knit groupings that are also distinct from one another (Kettenring 2006). Cluster analysis assumes nothing about the appropriate number of groups, nor their content. In spite of its utility, cluster analysis is a fairly

recent addition to the field of multivariate analysis, and is not as theoretically developed as other multivariate methods. Exploration of issues such as scaling and weighting of variables, and even the preferability of cluster analysis over other statistical methods, are still in the early stages. In fact, it is sometimes considered more art than science; nevertheless, its use as a statistical method is increasing in many fields (Kettenring 2006).

An argument could be made that discriminant analysis would be more appropriate in the present study. Discriminant analysis is utilized to place an unknown individual respondent into known groups (Kettenring 2006). Because Jelen and Wilcox (1997) have already defined and begun to explore four categories, some might prefer to place the participants in the present study into those categories rather than start fresh with a new cluster analysis. However, cluster analysis is preferable in this case for two primary reasons. First, Jelen and Wilcox's (1997) data was collected solely in Washington, D.C., and thus what is "known" about the Church-State Typology is quite possibly skewed by the local nature of their data. Second, one of the goals of the present study is to explore how the Mormon population compares to the original study; thus, it is preferable to determine how the sample population clusters, not merely to categorize the participants according to the results of the previous study. In the present study, hierarchical cluster analysis with Euclidian distances was used. The results of the cluster analysis were further explored through an XY plot of simplified Establishment and Free Exercise scales to graphically represent the positioning of respondents on the Church-State Typology.

Factor analysis was also used in the study to explore the underlying structure of participant attitudes toward the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses. Jelen and Wilcox (1995) employed factor analysis in the original study to determine whether there

was a meaningful organization behind respondent responses, concluding that each of the First Amendment clauses broke into three main issues. Factor analysis is useful to organize a number of variables into underlying factors, or groups of correlated variables that are distinct from other variable groupings (Martinez, Marshall, and Sechrest 1998; Kim and Mueller 1978). While there are several methods of factor analysis, the general steps include determination of the covariance among the variables, extraction of initial factors, and rotation to find the best terminal solution (Kim and Mueller 1978). The resulting factors can be used to create scales, either using the factor loadings as a means of weighting the variables or using a factor-based scale that selects variables which load heavily on each factor for inclusion, thus simplifying further analysis of the data (Kim and Mueller 1978). However, similar to cluster analysis, factor analysis has been criticized for the degree of subjectivity in the process, including the choice of variables, the number of factors to be extracted, the rotational method, and the eventual interpretive labeling of the extracted factors (Martinez et al. 1998; Kim and Mueller 1978). The number of appropriate factors is often guided by the produced eigenvalues, with an eigenvalue of 1 often being used as the cutoff; an eigenvalue of 1 signifies that the factor explains more variance than a single variable. However, the cutoff value can be set at another level as the researcher determines (Martinez et al. 1998; Kim and Mueller 1978). Another possibility is to use a scree plot to determine when the explanatory value of the factors begins to “level off,” which is considered particularly effective when minor factors are present to complicate the picture; however, this again is an area of criticism due to the ambiguity involved (Kim and Mueller 1978).



Here, principle axis factoring with varimax rotation was utilized. Because the factor analysis was exploratory in nature, several possible solutions were tried. These included different combinations of variables as well as a varying number of factors. Jelen and Wilcox (1995) observed that one issue with First Amendment analysis is the overlap between the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses. As such, it was determined to factor all concrete item variables together, as well as to conduct a factor analysis of the free exercise and establishment items separately, to fully examine the structure of respondent attitudes. Further, a cutoff line above an eigenvalue of 1 was considered in some cases, in conjunction with a careful examination of the associated scree plot, due to some issues with convergence in attempting to extract the specified number of factors. Once the factor analysis was completed, factor scales were created for use in subsequent regression analysis.

Finally, regression analysis was used to test the impact of several demographic variables on the First Amendment attitudes of participants. This allowed both a determination of what factors aside from religion influence Mormon attitudes and an evaluation of whether demographic variables influence Mormon attitudes in the same manner and to the same extent as Jelen and Wilcox (1995) found for other categories of people in the original research. Regression considers the relationship between two or more variables, and particularly helps to determine the influence of each independent variable, or interactive effect of independent variables, on the dependent variable by controlling for the effect of other independent variables (Lewis-Beck 1980). At its most basic, regression analysis determines the linear relationship between two variables through finding the linear equation that minimizes the cumulative squared distance of all

data points to the line, the least squares method (Schroeder, Sjoquist, and Stephan 1986). Multiple linear regression allows the evaluation of the impact of more than one independent variable, estimating the effect of each individual independent variable by holding the other independent variables constant. Regression analysis can also be adapted to categorical data through the use of dummy variables, by transforming the variable in question into one or more dichotomies as necessary (Schroeder et al. 1986). Regression is considered a robust statistical test (Lewis-Beck 1980).

### Limitations

There are several significant limitations to this study. First, research on religious groups can prove difficult, because membership data is not consistently maintained from group to group and much is not made publicly available (Crawford 2005). Some religions have no membership requirements beyond attendance, while others may have extensive requirements to join or to maintain membership. Further, it is often unclear whether the membership numbers that are made available include only active participants or also those who once participated but no longer do (Crawford 2005). This difficulty substantially influenced the research design of the project; because the membership records necessary to perform valid random sampling were unavailable, snowball sampling was instead utilized. The survey design leads to the second significant limitation. Because the sampling design was not random, the results must not be assumed to be representative of the general Mormon population. Moreover, due to the

unique qualities of Mormonism among religions, the results will likely not be reflective of other religions, nor of the general public.

Third, there is a causation issue that cannot be fully resolved given the nature of this study. To the extent that there is a high level of homogeneity among Mormon opinions, it will remain unclear whether Mormonism influences the attitudes of its members toward the First Amendment, or whether people who share common attitudes are attracted to Mormonism. A question regarding the respondent's timing of respondents' joining the Mormon Church (born a member, childhood conversion, or adult conversion) was included in the survey to address this issue in part. However, except in cases of very recent conversions, it will remain unclear how much the respondent's attitude has been shaped through membership in the Church and association with other Mormons.

A fourth limitation of the present study results from a conscious decision to keep the survey instrument relatively concise. The assumption underlying this decision was that greater participation would result from limiting the time and effort required for participation, as well as the threat to participant anonymity that results from collecting additional demographic information. However, this decision limits the strength of any conclusions related to participants' residence. The survey instrument asked for only the respondent's current zip code, which was then used to determine the Mormon adherence rate for the county of residence utilizing a database maintained by the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theARDA.com](http://www.theARDA.com)). Even with this single residency question, fifteen participants declined to provide their zip code, the second lowest item response rate in the survey. In order to allow stronger conclusions regarding the effect of

residency in particular regions, a series of follow up questions regarding length of current residency and previous residences would have been necessary. It was decided that obtaining the extra data was not worth the risk of discouraging participants from completing the survey, whether out of inconvenience or concern for their anonymity, particularly given the preliminary nature of the present study.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) found during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions over the subject matter that respondents with different motivations sometimes reached similar answers on the survey. For example, on the issue of government support for religion, respondents might favor a high wall of separation out of a belief that the federal government should have less influence in general or out of a belief that government resources should not be dedicated to religious endeavors, but they might also favor a high wall of separation out of a belief that governmental involvement comes with “strings attached” that would weaken a religion’s ability to remain independent (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:60). At some level, the motivations behind a position are not particularly meaningful in the outcome driven world of politics and voting; nevertheless, this does contribute to the difficulty of interpreting survey data.

A similar issue emerged during the interviews and focus groups with respondents modifying their positions when presented with additional hypothetical information. For example, one respondent who initially supported the idea of school prayer appropriate to the majority religious views of the community became less committed to this point of view when presented the hypothetical of a majority Catholic community; when the hypothetical was changed to a majority Buddhist community the same respondent opined

that Christian schoolchildren should not be subjected to Buddhist prayers (Jelen and Wilcox 1995:84-85). Meanwhile, multiple respondents struggled with what can best be termed a shades-of-gray problem with free exercise issues, such as the wide gulf in proselytizing activities between handing out pamphlets and brainwashing (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). This final difficulty was definitely experienced by at least some participants in the present study, as several felt sufficiently motivated to voluntarily contact the research after completing the survey in order to clarify their position on specific issues.

## Conclusion

The limitations discussed above restrict the conclusions that can be drawn from the collected data. The present study is intended to provide a preliminary picture of Mormon attitudes and to suggest directions for additional research. Further research will be required to gain a full understanding of the issues presented herein. The next chapter discusses the results and findings of this study. First, a demographic description of the study participants is provided. This is followed by an in depth analysis of participant attitudes on the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses and a discussion of participant placement within the Church-State Typology. Finally, the contribution of demographic variables to differences in First Amendment attitudes is examined.

## CHAPTER VI

### FINDINGS

One hundred thirty respondents agreed to participate in the present study. Excluding six surveys that were not completed and one survey completed by a non-Mormon, data collection produced a total of one hundred twenty three usable surveys. Data analysis produced some unexpected results, including a high level of homogeneity in several demographic categories and greater level of homogeneity in participant attitudes than anticipated.

#### Demographic and Religious Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic and religious characteristics of the sample population are summarized in Table I below, given as percentages of participants in each category. Because respondents were able to skip questions they did not wish to answer, the number of responses for each item is also provided.

The sample population was 61.5 percent female and 38.5 percent male. The average age of respondents was just over forty years old; however, the age item on the survey was left unanswered more than any other item, with twenty participants declining to provide a response. Respondent age ranged from eighteen to seventy-nine years of

age, with most respondents falling in their thirties. Over 98 percent of respondents identified as White on the race/ethnicity question, with one participant identifying as Asian and one as Hispanic. Although the survey instrument offered the option of selecting multiple racial or ethnic categories, none of the respondents identified as such. As a result of the racial and ethnic homogeneity of the sample population, the racial demographic will be left out of the statistical analysis.

The sample population proved to be more educated than the general public, with every participant holding the minimum of a high school diploma or the equivalent. Only 4.1 percent of the sample population had no education beyond the high school level, and of this group one respondent was only eighteen years of age. Respondents with some college or vocational training, but without a bachelor's degree constituted 23.8 percent of the sample population (3.3 percent with vocational training and 20.5 percent with some college). The majority of the sample population holds a college degree, with 44.3 percent having attained a bachelor's degree and another 27.9 percent having attained an advanced degree (9.8 percent professional degrees, 15.6 percent master's degrees, and 2.5 percent doctorate degrees). Due to the small number of respondents falling in the vocational training and doctorate categories, these categories were consolidated with others to facilitate statistical analysis. In the case of master's and professional degrees, the categories were combined into an "advanced degree" category to avoid the difficulty involved in ordinal rankings, particularly given the need to combine doctorate degrees with one of the two. Even allowing for the particular emphasis the Mormon religion places on its members pursuing educational training (Church Education System 1993), the sample population would appear to be unusually educated.

Table I

Demographic and Religious Characteristics of Respondents (percentages)			
<u>Sex</u>		<u>Church Membership</u>	
Male	38.5	From Birth	82.1
Female	61.5	Converted as Child	7.3
(n=122)		Converted as Adult	10.6
		(n=123)	
<u>Education</u>		<u>Church Attendance</u>	
High School Diploma	4.1	Weekly	95.0
Votech/Some College	23.8	Few Times Monthly	2.5
College Degree	44.3	Few Times Annually	2.5
Advanced Degree	27.9	(n=121)	
(n=122)			
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		<u>Description of Religion</u>	
White	98.3	Liberal Christian	13.6
Other	1.7	Fundamentalist Christian	13.6
(n=121)		Evangelical Christian	0.8
		None of the Above	72.0
		(n=118)	
<u>Political Affiliation</u>		<u>Born Again Experience</u>	
Republican	50.8	Yes	55.7
Democrat	9.0	No	44.3
Independent	22.1	(n=122)	
No Affiliation	18.0		
(n=122)			
<u>Region of Residence</u>		<u>View of Bible</u>	
Utah/Other Majority	40.0	Literally True	1.6
West	27.0	Inspired, but Figurative	3.3
South	11.3	Contains Human Errors	94.3
Other Strong Presence	9.6	Not the Word of God	0.8
Other Weak Presence	12.2	(n=122)	
(n=115)			



Forty percent of participants resided in Utah or southern Idaho in a county that is majority Mormon. The lowest concentration of Mormons within this region is 541.3 adherents to the Mormon faith per 1000 population, while the highest concentration is an incredible 881.3 adherents per 1000 population in Utah County, Utah, home to Brigham Young University which is owned by the Mormon Church. Twenty-seven percent of participants were residents of the states of Washington or Oregon. Mormon adherence rates for this region range from 23.3 per 1000 to 72.7 per 1000. Texas and Oklahoma were home to 11.3 percent of participants, with adherence rates ranging from 5.5 to 13.3 adherents per 1000.

The remaining respondents who gave a zip code resided in one of two “other” categories. The first “other” category includes counties within the states neighboring Utah which failed to reach the majority cutoff, but which nonetheless have a Mormon adherence rate of greater than 100 adherents per 1000. There was one anomaly in this category, a county in Virginia with an unexpectedly high adherence rate of 147.6 Mormons per 1000 population. This county is home to a university which claims an unofficial affiliation with the Mormon Church, which likely explains the high number of Mormons. This “majority other” category constitutes 9.6 percent of the sample population. The second “other” category includes all respondents residing in a county with a Mormon adherence rate of less than 100 members per 1000 population, other than in Washington, Oregon, Oklahoma, or Texas. The respondents in this “minority other” category, which constitutes 12.2 percent of the sample, fall across several of Silk’s identified regions, from California to Michigan to Virginia.

With respect to the political affiliation of participants, roughly one-half (50.8 percent) of the participants identified as Republican, 22.1 percent as Independent, and 9.0 percent as Democrats. Eighteen percent of respondents claim no political affiliation. In keeping with common perceptions of “red” and “blue” states, none of the Democratic participants resided in the Utah or southern regions.

The survey invitation particularly specified practicing Mormons as the target population of the study, so it is not surprising that there was a high level of homogeneity among some of the religious characteristics included in the survey. Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated they attend church services weekly, while an additional 2.5% indicated they attend several times per month. Additionally, with respect to their beliefs on the authenticity and origin of the Bible, 94.3% answered that the Bible is inspired by God but contains human errors. This is not particularly surprising, as the question corresponds closely to an article of official Mormon doctrine<sup>11</sup>.

Over eighty percent of participants indicated they were born into the Mormon Church. While this does seem unusually high, it is likely an incongruity resulting from the snowball sampling method utilized. When asked about a “born again” experience, 55.7 percent of participants claimed such an experience, while 44.3 percent did not. Finally, seventy-two percent of respondents did not feel that their religious fit into a liberal/fundamentalist/evangelical Christian concept, perhaps reflective of the difficulties researchers have had in placing Mormonism among other Protestant religions. Of those participants who did choose a category for their religious beliefs, equal numbers (13.6

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<sup>11</sup> In 1842, Joseph Smith issued a statement of basic Mormon beliefs, referred to by Mormons as the Articles of Faith. One of the articles states in part “[w]e believe the Bible to be the Word of God, so far as it is translated correctly.” Practicing Mormons learn the Articles of Faith from childhood, so it is not surprising so many would answer this question similarly. (Church Education System 1993).

percent each) selected the liberal and fundamentalist categories, while only a single respondent identified as an evangelical Christian.

### Mormon Attitudes on Free Exercise Issues

Respondent positions on individual Free Exercise clause issues are summarized in Table II below. Mean response scores range from a possible minimum of one to a possible maximum of five, and reflect coding of the items such that a higher score indicates an attitude strongly in favor of protection for free exercise for all religious groups, including those that violate the cultural norms of the U.S. in their worship. In other words, a high score does not necessarily reflect agreement with the statement as it appeared in the survey, but with the position that most strongly reflects allowing religious beliefs to be put into practice. The use of recoding permits a researcher to reverse-word likert-scale items, to limit the risk of respondents falling into a tendency of responding in a specific direction regardless of question content. For clarity, the wording on survey items as listed in Table II has been modified to align with this coding scheme. The original wording of items has been retained in the survey questions included in the Appendices, with items that were recoded designated as such.

The mean response scores for the two abstract items—permitting the free practice of a strange religion, and obeying the law over religious beliefs—fall on opposite extremes, with respondents strongly favoring free exercise of strange religions (mean response 4.60) *except* for religious practices that violate the law (mean response 2.22). While this split in abstract position seemed odd at first glance, the opposing positions are

actually consistent with the results of Jelen and Wilcox's (1995:116) Washington D.C. study.

On the concrete Free Exercise clause items, mean response scores range from a high of 4.06, favoring the right of religious leaders to picket stores they believe to be selling pornographic materials, to a low of 2.70, reflecting an overall disapproval of the right of Christian Scientists to withhold medical treatment from their children. When reviewing the ranking of items in comparison to one another, it appears that study participants were generally more in favor of religiously-motivated actions that did not impact the well-being of other citizens (i.e., allowing immigrants to maintain their native religious beliefs, supporting the wearing of religious headgear in public schools), compared to religiously-motivated actions that might be seen as harming others or violating the law (i.e., withholding medical treatment, the use of peyote, or the practice of animal sacrifice).

The first research question asks not only how Mormons view First Amendment issues, but how those opinions compare to the earlier study. In their Washington, D.C. study, Jelen and Wilcox (1995:116) reported the percentage of their respondents who favored free exercise for all religions. Table II lists the corresponding percentages of respondents in the present study who broadly support the free exercise of religion. Statistically significant differences between the percentages from the earlier study and the present one are also designated, as indicated in Table II. As shown, more respondents in the present study favored free exercise for the items related to the picketing of porn shops, a mandatory Pledge of Allegiance, membership recruitment by cults, the practice

Table II

Responses to Individual Survey Items – Free Exercise Clause Issues		
<u>Survey Item</u>	<u>Mean Response</u>	<u>% Favoring Free Exercise</u>
Religions able to practice as see fit, even if strange	4.60	98.3
Picketing of porn shops permitted	4.06	83.7***
Immigrants not be pressured to convert	4.11	81.3†
FBI not permitted to infiltrate all Moslem groups	4.02	77.7
Wearing of religious headgear in school supported	4.06	77.5
Fundamentalist preachers permitted on campuses	3.57	65.9
Jews granted leave from work on religious holidays	3.58	64.2†††
Schoolchildren excused from Pledge of Allegiance	3.30	60.2**
No laws against cults recruiting teens	3.37	55.4***
No laws against practice of Satanism	3.07	48.0**
No laws against solicitation by Hare Krishna	3.17	44.3
Conscientious objectors excused from war	3.08	42.6†
Animal sacrifice permitted in religious worship	3.07	41.5**
Native Americans may use peyote in worship	2.92	35.0†††
Parents allowed to withhold medical treatment	2.70	26.2**
Laws restricting religion may be disobeyed	2.22	10.6†

In comparison to Jelen and Wilcox's (1995:116) Washington D.C. findings:

Current sample more in favor of free exercise \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Current sample less in favor of free exercise † $p < .05$ ; †† $p < .01$ ; ††† $p < .001$

of both Satanism and animal sacrifice, and the right of parents to withhold medical treatment from their children.

Conversely, significantly fewer respondents favor free exercise when considering whether immigrants should convert to Christianity, whether Jews should be entitled to take Jewish religious holidays off from work, whether conscientious objectors should be excused from military service, and whether Native Americans should be allowed to use peyote in religious ceremonies. Additionally, the Mormon respondents in the present study were significantly less likely to approve of freedom to engage in religious practices that violate the law. As a general statement, it thus appears that Mormons (to the extent that the present sample is representative of the Mormon population) are more likely to favor protection of unusual or unpopular religious practices, provided that the practice does not violate the law or extend a type of special social privilege. While the item regarding immigrant conversion to Christianity does not fit this general statement, opinions on this particular item may reflect Mormonism's emphasis on proselytizing as much as a Christian xenophobia. Finally, it should be emphasized that even where a substantially greater number of Mormon respondents supported a practice than in the Washington, D.C. sample, this does not mean that the practice received widespread support; for example, although a significantly larger proportion of respondents from the current study favored allowing parents to withhold medical treatment from a child, only 26.5 percent of participants supported this right.

Jelen and Wilcox (1995:118-124) performed a factor analysis of the Free Exercise clause items to explore whether there was an identifiable and meaningful structure to respondent attitudes, identifying three factors. For the first factor, attitudes toward

dangerous religions, the items that loaded heavily included FBI infiltration of Muslim groups, cult recruitment, Satan worship, and the fundamentalist preacher and Hare Krishna items. A second factor, labeled “harmless” religions, loaded heavily with items concerning the wearing of religious headgear, the use of peyote, and excusing Jews from work on important Jewish holidays. Finally, items concerning the practice of strange religions, immigrant conversion to Christianity, and again, FBI infiltration of Muslim groups loaded heavily on the third factor, which Jelen and Wilcox (1995) termed either immigrant religious or religious xenophobia.

In the present study, an exploratory factor analysis of the concrete Free Exercise clause items proved rather messy. Using an eigenvalue of 1 as the cutoff, the factor analysis suggested a six factor solution; however, the eigenvalue for each of the final three factors was only slightly above the cutoff, and six, five, and four factor solutions failed to converge in the initial solution. Raising the eigenvalue cutoff to 1.1 produced a three factor solution that did converge, and a visual review of the scree plot suggested this was a reasonable solution. Thus, the three factor solution was retained. However, although the number of factors proved identical to the earlier study, the survey items loaded differently.

Items loading heavily on the first factor extracted included FBI infiltration of Muslim groups, immigrant conversion to Christianity, the mandatory pledge of allegiance, and the items on Satanism and animal sacrifice. The items on Satanism and animal sacrifice also loaded on other factors. Finally, although the factor loading was quite weak (.185), the item on Christian Scientist parents withholding medical treatment from children loaded most heavily here. This factor seems to be something of a cross

between Jelen and Wilcox's (1995) "dangerous" religions and immigrant/xenophobia factors. The second factor included the items on cult recruitment, fundamentalist preaching on college campuses, and Hare Krishna solicitation; both items on Satanism and animal sacrifice also had reasonably high loadings. This factor again corresponds most closely to the "dangerous" religion factor in the original study. Finally, the third factor loaded most heavily with the items regarding the wearing of religious headgear, conscientious objector status, Jewish holidays, the use of peyote, and (again) animal sacrifice. Picketing of suspected porn shops loaded most heavily here, although its factor loading was relatively quite weak (.191). This factor would seem to correspond to Jelen and Wilcox's (1995) "harmless" religion factor.

The variation in the underlying structure suggests that the Mormon participants in this study not only rank the seriousness of Free Exercise items differently, but also view the underlying issues a bit differently. While data from each of the sample populations produced a factor that could reasonably be labeled as "harmless" religions, with a fair amount of consistency on variables included, the Mormon sample was actually less supportive of free exercise on a number of these items, and a lower percentage of participants supported free exercise on some of these items than for other items that loaded on the "dangerous" religions factor. This reflects one of the criticisms of factor analysis, the difficulty of interpreting the factor (Martinez et al. 1998; Kim and Mueller 1978). While the "harmless" label fits the data and relative mean scores from the original study, the Mormon sample might fit better with a less positive interpretation. When coupled with the relatively strong agreement among participants in the present study that the law trumps religious freedom, the lesser support for conscientious objectors, Jews



excused from work on holidays, and the religious use of peyote, the third factor might be better labeled "special privileges;" rather than simply freedom to worship as they choose, the concrete items that loaded on this factor largely featured religious adherents being excused from some regulation or social obligation to which other citizens would still be held.

The redistribution of items over the original dangerous and immigrant/xenophobia labeled factors is also quite interesting. The second factor in the present study seems to have separated out the items that involve proselytizing. While these items were largely grouped on the dangerous religions factor in the Jelen and Wilcox (1995) study, they did specifically note that some of the items on that factor would be better classified as annoying than truly harmful to others. Given the strong place of proselytizing in the Mormon religion, it is not surprising that participants in the present study would see these types of activities in a different light. Meanwhile, the first factor included items found on both the dangerous religion and immigrant/xenophobia factors in the original study. This final factor might still fit the original label of "dangerous" religious practices, in the sense that some might argue these religious practices have the potential to harm others or the larger social structure.

### Mormon Attitudes on Establishment Issues

Respondent opinions on the Establishment clause issues are summarized in Table III, below. As with the Free Exercise clause items, mean response scores range from a possible minimum of one to a possible maximum of five. Items were coded such that a

higher score indicates an attitude that favors maximum separation of church and state. In other words, a high score does not necessarily reflect agreement with the statement as included in the survey, but with the position with regard to the statement that most reflects prohibiting government support for or involvement in religions and religious causes. The responses are more consistent on the abstract Establishment clause items than they were for the Free Exercise items, with respondents taking the strongest positions in favor of separation of church and state on two abstract items: disfavoring government help to religion (mean response 4.01) and favoring a high wall of separation (mean response 3.25). The third abstract item, government protection of a Judeo-Christian heritage, falls at the middle of the scale, with a mean response of 2.50. The more accommodationist position on this third abstract item is consistent with the findings in the original study (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). This may reflect participant understanding of the first two abstract items as involving financial support to religious groups, compared to the more amorphous support of heritage, or it may reflect an assumed distinction between support for specific religious groups as opposed to support for the generic religious history of the nation.

For the concrete Establishment clause items, mean response scores range from a high of 3.27, for an item on whether Judeo-Christian values should be emphasized in schools, to a low of 1.73, regarding whether manger scenes on government property are appropriate at Christmastime. With scores closer to one signifying an accommodationist position, this reflects participant support for allowing the display of manger scenes. In fact, overall participants tended to favor accommodation on the concrete items, with eight of the nine items having a mean score of less than 3, the midpoint on the one-to-five scale

range. The only concrete item with a mean score higher than 3 was on the teaching of Judeo-Christian values in school; the more separationist stance on this item may reflect concern over exactly which values, and whose version of values would be taught, or it may reflect a belief that values should be accommodated in the public sphere but taught in the home.

In comparing the concrete Establishment clause items, it appears that study participants are strongly supportive of the public display of religious symbols, both Christian (1.73) and Jewish (2.13), and strongly supportive of the government funding chaplains in the military, both Christian (2.17) and Buddhist (2.35). The remaining items all relate to the presence of religion in public schools, for which participants overall took a moderately accommodationist position. Thus, in general, it would seem that study participants favor granting all religions a place in the public sphere, particularly where the role of religion is somewhat passive, but are slightly less in favor of accommodating active religious practices (such as public prayer or requiring certain religiously-based beliefs be taught in school). The separationist stance on abstract items and accommodationist stance on concrete items is consistent with the findings of Jelen and Wilcox (1995),

With respect to attitudes toward Establishment clause issues, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) reported the percentages for both those who supported a separationist stance and those who supported an accommodationist stance. The same positions have been reported for participants in the present study in Table III. Overall, the respondents in the current study tended more toward an accommodationist position than the participants in the original Jelen and Wilcox (1995) study. A significantly lower percentage of

participants in the present study agreed with a separationist position on eight of the twelve Establishment clause items, including the abstract item on a high wall of separation and protecting the Judeo-Christian heritage, and the concrete items over prayer before high school sporting events, teaching creationism in public schools and allowing

Table III

Responses to Individual Survey Items – Establishment Clause Issues			
<u>Survey Item</u>	<u>Mean Response</u>	<u>% Favoring Separation</u>	<u>% Favoring Accommodation</u>
Government should not help religion	4.01	71.4	10.9††
Support for a high wall of separation	3.25	49.6***	24.4
Judeo-Christian values not emphasized	3.27	48.0	24.4†
No school prayer	2.64	27.7	45.5†††
No prayer in school sporting events	2.65	23.6***	44.7
Judeo-Christian heritage not protected	2.50	21.5**	55.4
Creationism not taught in schools	2.29	18.2***	65.3^^^
Student religious groups allowed to meet	2.31	17.9**	67.5
Buddhist chaplains not paid for	2.35	13.8**	67.5
Christian chaplains not paid for	2.17	11.4	76.4
No menorahs on government property	2.13	8.1***	78.0^^^
No nativities on government property	1.73	4.1***	88.6^^^

In comparison to Jelen and Wilcox's (1995:78) Washington D.C. findings:

Current sample less in favor of separation \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Current sample less in favor of accommodation † $p < .05$ ; †† $p < .01$ ; ††† $p < .001$

Current sample more in favor of accommodation ^ $p < .05$ ; ^^ $p < .01$ ; ^^ $p < .001$

student religious groups to meet on school grounds, providing Buddhist chaplains to the military, and both Christian and Jewish displays for religious holidays. Correspondingly, a significantly higher percentage of respondents favored accommodation in teaching creationism and the public display of Christian and Jewish religious symbols.

The greater support for accommodation, however, did not hold for three items; a significantly lower percentage of participants in the current study agreed with an accommodationist position on the items related to government help to religion, stressing Judeo-Christian values in public schools, and having a moment of silence for prayer in public schools. This may reflect concern over whether such government involvement in religion can remain neutral or would ultimately favor mainstream religions to the exclusion of less common or socially popular groups. Again, it must be emphasized that the comparison between study samples reveals only where significant differences were noted between outcomes of the two studies, and nothing about the overall support for an accommodationist or separationist stance on any particular item.

As with the Free Exercise items, Jelen and Wilcox (1995:88) performed an exploratory factor analysis of the Establishment clause items to determine the underlying structure of attitudes. Again, three factors emerged. The first included public prayer and public religious displays of Judeo-Christian symbols; the second, use of public funds to provide chaplains in the military; and the third, involvement of religion in the public education system. One item, concerning allowing student religious groups to meet on school property, loaded on both the public funding and public education factors.

An exploratory factor analysis of the concrete Establishment clause items for the present study again presented some difficulties. With an eigenvalue of 1 as the initial

cutoff value, the proposed solution featured three factors. However, as with the factor analysis of the Free Exercise items, the three factor solution failed to converge. Raising the eigenvalue cutoff slightly to produce a two factor solution instead provided a workable solution, with the two items regarding military chaplains loading heavily on the second factor and the remaining items loading on the first factor. In this case, none of the items loaded heavily on both factors, and none of the items failed to load. Thus, while the participants in the current study viewed public funding as a distinct dimension similar to the original study, they viewed what Jelen and Wilcox (1995) termed the public display and public education/socialization factors as posing a single dimension. The first factor might therefore be better termed as the public presence of religion, excluding direct financial support. Overall, a higher percentage of the Mormon respondents favored accommodation on this first factor than those in the original study, while the support for military chaplains, the second factor, was similar in both studies.

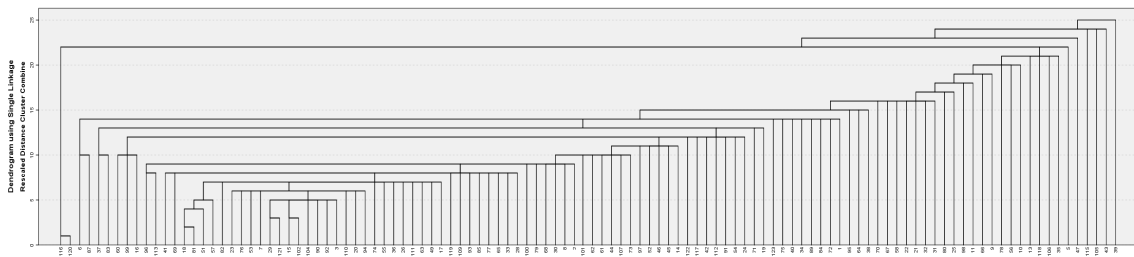
### Placement in the Church-State Typology

Jelen and Wilcox (1997) tested the appropriateness of their four-part Church-State Typology through a cluster analysis of study participants. In the Washington, D.C.-based study, respondents clustered into four groups of roughly equal size. Further, these four clusters corresponded to the four types identified in their Church-State Typology (Jelen and Wilcox 1997). A cluster analysis of the Mormon sample, however, resulted in a single large cluster accompanied by much smaller clusters of one or two participants for a number of attempted solutions. This clustering pattern is reflected in the dendrogram

below (Figure I). At the point of a four-cluster solution, the clusters consist of three individuals and a mass cluster of the remaining participants.

Figure I

Dendrogram



Of course, although it is quite interesting that the participants in the current study clustered relatively tightly, this does not give any indication of where this cluster of Mormons would fall within the Church-State Typology. It is quite possible that the cluster overlaps multiple categories. Two additional steps were taken to clarify how this large cluster fits into the four-part scheme. First, a graphic representation, created from simplified Free Exercise and Establishment scales, is set forth in Figure II. The mean score for each participant on the concrete Free Exercise and Establishment clause survey items were calculated, then used to create a basic scatterplot. Because the items were scaled such that each had a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5, with high scores representing libertarian and separatist positions respectively and low scores communitarian and accommodationist positions, the plot provides a basic reference of each participant's attitude on the two clauses. While the plot does not provide a

Figure II

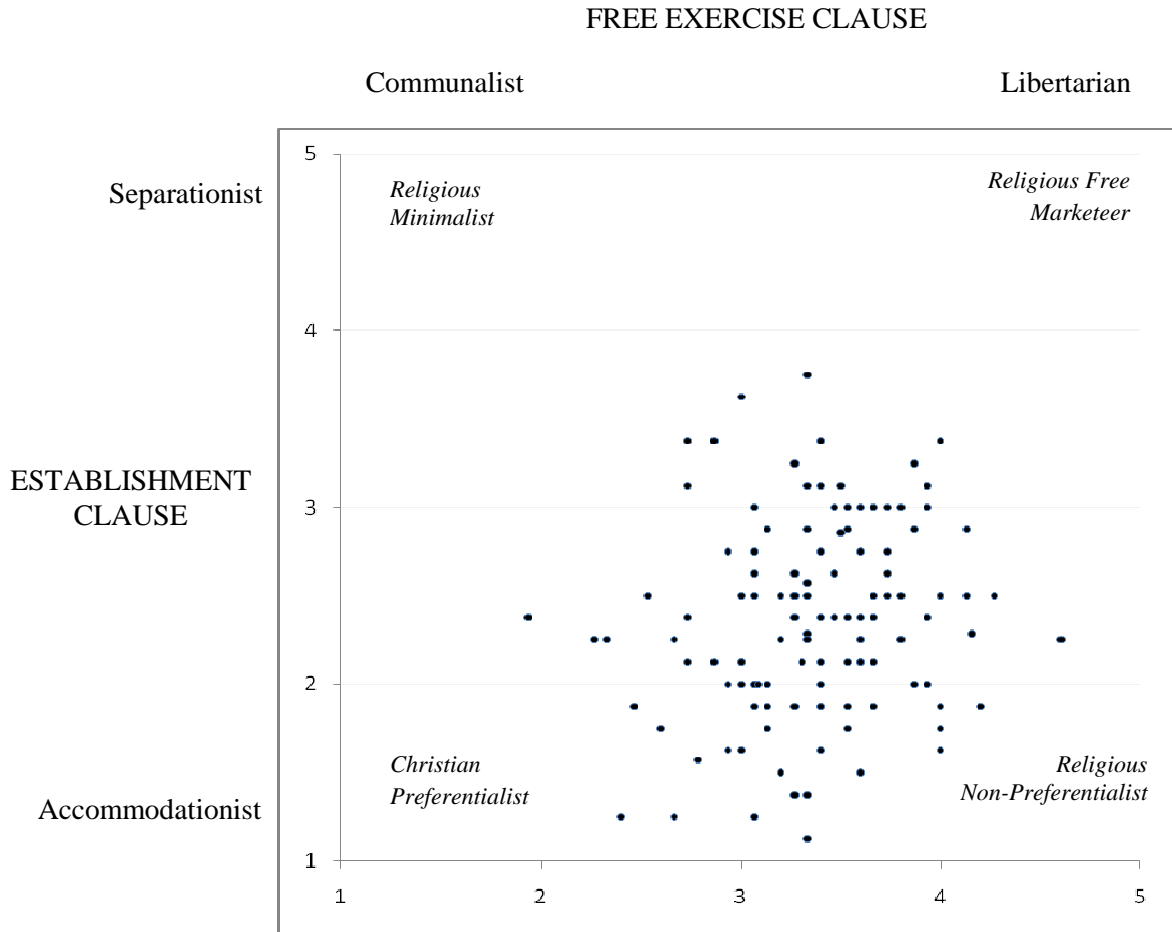
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Respondent Placement within Church-State Typology

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Source of Typology: Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995)

sophisticated analysis of the data, it does permit participant attitudes to be represented in two-dimensional space. This simplified plot shows the relatively clustered grouping of respondents, as well as that the cluster tends to lie largely within the quadrant of the scatterplot that represents the Religious Non-Preferentialist type.



To further evaluate where the current sample fits within the Church-State Typology, the mean score for each First Amendment item from the survey was compared to the mean score for the four different types, provided in the Jelen and Wilcox (1997) article. For fourteen of the twenty-eight items, the mean score for the current sample matched most closely to the mean score for the cluster identified as Religious Non-Preferentialist by Jelen and Wilcox (1997); this included seven of twelve Establishment clause items and seven of sixteen Free Exercise items. For one additional item, the conversion of immigrants to Christianity, the mean score was equally close to the Religious Non-Preferentialist and Religious Minimalist types.

For the remaining Establishment clause items, an additional three items ranked most closely to the Christian Preferentialist type, which shares an accommodationist stance with the Religious Non-Preferentialist type on Establishment clause issues. While the Christian Preferentialist type is marked by its favoritism toward traditional, Christian-based religions, the higher scores here for the Mormon sample might be more reflective of a general favoritism toward religion, considering their strong accommodationist stance on non-Christian religious issues as well. On only two Establishment clause items did the Mormon sample take a collective position that matched most closely with one of the two separationist types: government aid to religions and a moment of silence for school prayer. While it is not clear why the Mormon sample would change its general accommodationist stance on the issue of school prayer, it could possibly relate to concerns over disparate styles of public prayer, or perhaps simply reflects the idea that a formal moment of silence is not necessary to permit a student to offer a silent prayer.

The separationist stance on government aid to religion likely stems from a desire to avoid any issue of governmental oversight, an issue discussed by Jelen and Wilcox (1995).

For the remaining Free Exercise clause items, an additional three items ranked most closely to the Free Marketeer type, which shares a libertarian stance with the Religious Non-Preferentialist type on Free Exercise clause issues. Here, the Mormon participants matched most closely to a communalist position on six items, matching most closely to the Christian Preferentialist group on items regarding fundamentalist preachers on college campuses and picketing of suspected porn shops and most closely to Religious Minimalists on items including obeying the law, Jewish days off, and use of peyote. With respect to the first two items, as with the alignment between the Mormon sample and the Christian Preferentialist type on a few Establishment clause items, both items on their own could quite easily be interpreted as favoring religious freedom, thus challenging the communalist interpretation. It is also possible that they were interpreted more in the light of freedom of speech than as a religious issue. The final items seem to fit with the law abiding, good citizen stance the Mormon religion has adopted; this may reflect their heritage and the historical conflict over the practice of polygamy.

While there are some anomalies, such as the stance on school prayer and allowing Jews to take religious holidays off work, as a whole it seems reasonable to conclude, to the extent the participants in the current study reflect the attitudes of Mormons in general, that Mormons overall favor accommodation of religion in the public sphere and favor protecting the religious freedom of all groups, including less popular or mainstream religions. This places Mormons within the Religious Non-Preferentialist group of Jelen and Wilcox's (1997, 1995) Church-State Typology. This is a bit interesting, as the

majority of the existing literature tends to place Mormonism with groups that are better represented in the Christian Preferentialist group. The Religious Non-Preferentialist group from Jelen and Wilcox's study was nearly 40% Catholic (Jelen and Wilcox 1997). However, placement in the Religious Non-Preferentialist group makes a great deal of sense given the Mormon's history.

### Sources of First Amendment Attitudes

The second and third research questions both seek to discover what demographic variables contribute to attitudinal differences among the participants. In their Washington, D.C.-based study, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) indicated that religious variables were significant predictors on concrete Free Exercise clause issues tied to their immigrant religion and harmless religion factors, but were not relevant to predicting attitudes toward the practice of “dangerous” religions. Education, age and ideology were helpful in predicting all three factors, while sex and race were occasionally significant. The regression models for these concrete factors met with varying success, ranging from eleven percent to 33 percent of the variance explained; the model for immigrant religions was the most successful. On the abstract items, very few demographic variables were significant, and the variables analyzed explained only five percent of the variance (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

Somewhat similarly, on the Establishment clause items, age was a significant predictor for each model, based on the three identified factors of public funding, public displays, and involvement in public schools (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). Sex, race, and

ideology proved only occasionally significant, while religious variables were identified as providing the greatest prediction value. However, none of the models were able to explain a substantial amount of the variation; explanatory value ranged from eleven to 23 percent, with the public displays regression model explaining the most variation (Jelen and Wilcox 1995).

It is impossible to make a direct comparison between the Washington, D.C. study and the current one for two significant reasons. First, because the factor analyses in the two studies resulted in different factors and factor loadings, the dependent variables to be explained differ. Second, due to the homogeneity of the sample, several of the conventional demographic variables were not available for the analysis. Similarly, some of the religious variables used by Jelen and Wilcox (1995) could not be analyzed in the current study due to lack of variation in the sample. On the other hand, this study specifically included region of residency as an independent variable, while Jelen and Wilcox (1995) collected their data in a single location. Nevertheless, it is possible to make a general comparison of the predictive value of available independent variables. The independent variables included in the regression analysis for this study included sex, age, education level, political affiliation, self-identification as a fundamentalist or liberal Christian, length of Church membership (lifelong, adult conversion, or childhood conversion), and region of residence. For categorical variables, which required dummy coding, the designated reference groups included republican affiliation, residence in the Utah region, lifelong membership in the Mormon Church, and self-identification as neither liberal nor fundamentalist. The regression models for each of the abstract items, as well as the five scales produced through factor analysis, are set out in Tables IV and V.

For the two abstract Free Exercise items, regarding the practice of strange religions and whether religious beliefs should excuse one from obeying a specific law, the regression models explained only 11.1 and 12.3 percent of the variation, respectively. Further, none of the individual demographic variable coefficients reached the level of statistical significance in either model. However, this result would appear consistent with the near total lack of variability among responses to these two items. With respect to the practice of strange religions, 98.3% of respondents supported protection of free exercise, with 1.7% favoring the restriction of free exercise for unusual religious practices. With respect to laws which restrict a religious practice, while the responses were not quite as uniform as to the preceding item, a mere 10.6% of respondents believed religious adherents should be entitled to disobey such a law while 75.6% believed obedience to the law should take precedence.<sup>12</sup> With such slight variation in the dependent variable, there is little for independent demographic variables to explain.

Meanwhile, for the three Free Exercise clause factor scales, the regression equations produced accounted for 20.7% of the variation in attitudes toward dangerous religions, 18.3% of the variation in attitudes toward proselytizing activities, and 20.3% of the variation in opinions on special privileges extended to religious adherents. However, very few of the potential predictor variables were significant in these models. On the dangerous religions item, only age and residence in an “other majority” area reached the level of significance. Younger respondents were typically more supportive of free exercise rights for “dangerous” religions than were older respondents, which may be reflective of growing up during a period of greater religious diversity. Residents of “other majority” regions, largely areas near the Utah borders, were the least supportive of

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<sup>12</sup> On this item, 13.8% of respondents selected the neutral response option.

any region toward free exercise rights for such religious groups. This may simply be an anomaly due to the small sample size. Alternatively, the result may be reflective of the social position of this group; too great in number to have the type of interactions with other religious groups that reduces the fear of the unknown, yet too few in number to feel secure in their social power as a group.

Only one variable reached the level of significance for the equation based on the proselytizing scale as well, that of self-identification as a fundamental Christian. Respondents in this category were significantly more supportive than other groups of the right to free exercise in this category of religious activities, which appears generally consistent with common perceptions. Finally, for the special privileges factor scale, education, non-affiliation with a political party, and conversion to Mormonism as an adult all proved to be significant predictors. For those with no political party affiliation and adult converts, each of these demographic groups were more supportive than average of religious-based privileges deserving Constitutional protection; in the education variable, those with a greater level of education tended to be more supportive. The increased support for religious diversity and rights among those with higher levels of education would appear consistent with common perceptions and general trends in attitudes. In the case of the other two variables, again, small sample sizes for those demographic groups may likely be a contributing cause to the variables' significance. However, with adult converts to the religion, it is also possible that the purposeful adoption of a new religion at a later stage of life may contribute to a greater appreciation for the need to fully embrace the unique attributes of that religion.

Table IV

Sources of First Amendment Attitudes - Free Exercise Clause					
	Practice as see fit	Law over religion	Dangerous religions	Proselytizing	Special privileges
Sex	-.132	-.229	-.115	-.225	-.130
Age	.005	-.008	-.017*	.012	-.002
Education	.084	.218	.115	.113	.198*
No Political Affiliation	.103	.428	.269	.206	.522**
Democrat	-.151	.169	.457	-.149	-.010
Independent	-.260	.243	.619	.268	.138
Liberal Christian	.041	.048	.214	.276	.232
Fundamental Christian	-.049	.166	-.068	.504*	.035
Child Convert	-.123	.136	.017	-.022	.279
Adult Convert	.167	-.064	-.084	-.140	.742**
Pacific Northwest	.194	.327	-.104	-.066	-.070
Southern Crossroads	-.093	.034	-.214	-.164	-.182
Other Majority	.024	.083	-.659*	.188	-.214
Other Minority	-.103	.281	-.050	.147	.005
Constant	4.321***	1.941***	.568	-.720	-.404
R <sup>2</sup>	.111	.123	.207	.183	.203

Significant at \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

For the abstract Establishment clause items, the demographic variables collected explained only 11.8% of the variation in the item regarding government aid to religion, 11.0% of variation in the “wall of separation” item, and 24.8% of the variation in the item regarding protection of a Judeo-Christian heritage. None of the demographic variables included reached the level of statistical significance for the first two abstract items, government aid to religion and support for a wall of separation. However, for the item regarding a Judeo-Christian heritage, self-identification as a fundamentalist Christian proved a significant predictor, with respondents in this category more strongly favoring an accommodationist position; in other words, respondents who self-identify as fundamentalist Christians are significantly more in favor of governmental policies that protect what is seen as a Judeo-Christian foundation of the nation. This result again would seem consistent with common perceptions.

For the two Establishment clause scales, public funding and public presence, the regression equations produced explained 22.5 and 17.8 percent of the variation, respectively. Only affiliation with the Democratic Party proved to be a significant predictor on the public presence scale, with participants affiliated with the Democratic Party adopting a more separationist position than the other groups. As with many of the other significant predictors, this position would appear consistent with common assumptions. None of the demographic variables reached the level of significance for the public funding scale. However, it is worth noting again that the two main survey items that factored onto this scale both involve the provision of military chaplains (specifically, Christian and Buddhist), and both individual items received strong support among respondents as a whole.



Table V

Sources of First Amendment Attitudes - Establishment Clause					
	Government aid	Wall of separation	Protect heritage	Public presence	Public funding
Sex	.364	.306	.005	.242	.188
Age	.011	-.001	-.013	-.010	-.014
Education	.065	.242	.037	.217	-.149
No Political Affiliation	.244	-.189	.159	.172	-.347
Democrat	.179	.288	.652	.880*	.585
Independent	.288	.176	.023	.192	-.283
Liberal Christian	.212	.546	.362	-.049	-.439
Fundamental Christian	.373	-.052	-.756*	-.319	.062
Child Convert	-.011	-.045	.025	.138	.090
Adult Convert	-.606	.060	-.360	-.549	-.061
Pacific Northwest	.305	.217	-.213	-.029	-.419
Southern Crossroads	-.048	-.159	-.585	-.158	-.328
Other Majority	.614	.169	-.230	-.374	-.036
Other Minority	.223	.181	-.577	-.140	.258
Constant	2.909***	2.454***	3.159***	-.165	.974*
R <sup>2</sup>	.118	.110	.248	.225	.178

Significant at \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Overall, for this study, none of the demographic variables proved to be a consistent predictor of variations in attitude. In fact, the only independent variable to reach a statistically significant level in more than one regression model was self-identification as a fundamentalist Christian. This does provide some support for Hunter's (1991) general hypothesis of a Culture War split along progressive and conservative lines rather than between religious groups. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of these results is the inability of non-religious variables to consistently help explain variation in participant attitudes. However, this is fairly consistent with Jelen and Wilcox's (1995) Washington, D.C. study, in which much of the variation within each model remained unexplained.

### Conclusion

Presumably, the religious variables that are subsumed in the sample itself, denomination and frequency of church attendance, as well as the demographic variable of race that simply was not captured in this sample, play some role in shaping respondent attitudes. However, it is impossible to determine in this analysis how much prediction value these missing variables hold. In the Jelen and Wilcox (1995) study, the frequency of church attendance was significant for each of the concrete Establishment clause factor scales; however, race and denomination were only occasionally significant. In fact, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) concluded that religious-based demographic variables were among the most significant predictors of attitudes toward the First Amendment religion clauses, based upon their comparison of regression models including religious demographics to

those without. While the predictive strength of membership in the Mormon religion and church attendance could not be measured here, due to the fact that the sample was limited to highly active Mormons, the lack of explanatory value among non-religious variables is consistent with the idea that religious variables have more of an explanatory value. The next chapter discusses some of the implications of these findings, as well as providing some ideas for possible directions for future research.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

Conflict over religious beliefs and practices has returned to the forefront of political life in the United States in recent decades. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslim-Americans have experienced an increased scrutiny over their religious beliefs. More recently, religious groups have joined forces throughout the country to challenge laws that would restrict same-sex marriages. And in the 2010 elections, religion has been made a substantial issue in races for political office and retention votes for state judges. As such, an understanding of the sources of tolerance and underlying attitudes toward the practices of nontraditional religions, as well as attitudes toward the appropriate place of religion in the public sphere, is becoming increasingly important.

The Mormon sample that participated in the current study proved to be quite similar in opinion, much more so than was anticipated at the beginning of the project. Some of the lack of variation in attitude is likely a result of the snowball sampling method employed in this study. However, the similarities in opinion do suggest that further studies on the level of homogeneity of attitudes among Mormons are warranted.

At the same time, there was variation within participant opinion, at least partially explained by differences in respondent demographic characteristics. Further, the results

of this study confirmed the difficulties of earlier studies in placing Mormonism in the overall religious landscape of the United States. Much of the research on political participation would suggest that Mormons align with other conservative religions, the Moral Majority, and the Christian right (Shupe and Heinerman 1985), while a few studies have suggested that Mormons only match closely with this group on issues considered "moral" in nature (Geddicks 1999; Johnson and Mullins 1992). Several studies have pointed out that, regardless of any political alliances, Mormons remain quite distinct doctrinally (Johnson and Mullins 1992; Shupe and Heinerman 1985), and at least one study has argued that Mormons are nowhere near as homogenous as the extent literature assumes (Fox 2003). In some ways, this study merely adds to the confusion regarding the place of Mormonism in the religious landscape. The importance of the findings herein, as well as avenues for future research, is discussed below.

#### Of One Voice: Mormon Similarities

The overall level of consensus among study participants reflects the assumption in much of the research that Mormons are a rather homogenous bunch. The data collected for this study cannot answer the question of how much attitudes are influenced by religion compared to how much people who hold certain attitudes are drawn to a religion. Practically speaking, the two are likely mutually reinforcing. Those who hold opinions quite distinct from the majority position are unlikely to continue attending or convert to the religion, while once involved in the religion the frequent interaction with others might shift opinions closer to the consensus and reinforce opinions that are already shared.

The result on several of the survey items strongly reflects the doctrine and heritage of the Mormon Church. The historical struggle over the practice of polygamy, as well as the even earlier conflicts in Missouri and Nauvoo over the Mormon's collectivist lifestyle, likely contributed to the opinions on both abstract Free Exercise items, influencing their support for the practice of unusual religions as well as their commitment to following the law. Some might suggest that the legal battles over polygamy would encourage Mormons to favor religious practices over the law; however, the Mormons' focus on becoming law-abiding, mainstream citizens in the wake of the Reynolds decision and the desire for Utah to attain statehood would appear to be more in play here. The generally stronger than average commitment to supporting Free Exercise for unusual practices, such as animal sacrifice and the rejection of medical care by Christian Scientists, is reflective of their abstract support for strange religions. At the same time, the lower than average support for the use of peyote by Native Americans reflects both a commitment to the law and a doctrinal belief against the use of recreational drugs. Another religious doctrine, the emphasis on proselytizing, is echoed in the different underlying structure of attitudes identified through factor analysis. Not only did the Mormon sample distinguish proselytizing activities from the broader study's dangerous/annoying practices factor, they were also significantly more supportive of Free Exercise on the item regarding recruitment by cults and significantly more in favor of immigrants converting to Christianity.

On the Establishment clause side, the Mormon sample was generally accommodationist in nature. They were less committed to a high wall of separation in church-state relations and significantly more in favor of public displays of religious

symbols. This should come as no surprise given the theocratic history of the early Mormon Church. Further, although this item was technically classified as a Free Exercise issue by Jelen and Wilcox (1995), respondents in the current study were significantly more supportive of the right of religious leaders to picket suspected porn shops, at its heart a version of religious political engagement. The responses to these items demonstrate that Mormons join with those who favor a religious presence in the public sphere.

Of course, the strength of these conclusions is limited by the narrow focus of the current study. The items included in the survey were heavily targeted toward religious issues related to the First Amendment of the Constitution. It seems logical that the level of consensus among adherents of a specific religious denomination, and particularly one with the high level of similarity between congregations as is displayed in the Mormon church, could be higher on religious issues than on non-religious matters. On the other hand, the concern over religious influence in political matters typically relates to the efforts of some group to legislatively force their moral beliefs and values on the broader society. Thus, at some level, it is not particularly important if Mormons exhibit a higher level of heterogeneity on other issues.

A further limitation on the strength of any conclusions drawn here is the research design. Much of this depends on the extent to which the study sample truly reflects the attitudes of the larger Mormon population. With the reliance on snowball sampling, it is quite possible that the gathering of participants did not move far enough beyond the initial core to capture the full extent of existing variation in the larger population. Nevertheless, such a high level of consensus suggests that concerns over the political

participation of religious organizations could be well-founded. In fact, Mormon history from its early days through its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and involvement in more recent political measures on the issue of same-sex marriage suggests that this segment of the population is quite capable of shifting the direction of the public vote on a matter. Further, the apparent degree of connection between Mormon history and current collective attitudes suggests that socialization to a group can be as powerful an influence as actual personal experiences.

### A Place in the Religious Landscape

To the extent that the participants in this study mirror the larger Mormon population, the data points to a distinctive identity in the larger religious landscape of the United States. Although the group is most often discussed in terms of the political alliance with the conservative Christian right, the data collected in this study suggests that Mormons are far too supportive of Free Exercise rights for unusual non-Christian religions to fully align with the Christian right. In fact, the Mormon sample's strong support for Free Exercise rights and overall accommodationist stance place the group in Jelen and Wilcox's (1997) Religious Non-Preferentialist type of their Church-State Typology. The general make-up of the Religious Non-Preferentialist group in the original study tended toward the middle on educational attainment, was the youngest of the four types on average, was equally Catholic and Protestant (an overrepresentation of Catholics compared to the study sample), and was one of the less likely types to attend church services on a weekly basis. While most similar to this group in attitude, the



Mormon sample differs substantially in its level of educational attainment and frequency of church attendance. Thus, studies that characterize the placement of Mormons in the religious landscape based solely on political ties to conservative religions are missing a key dimension of the religion. Many of the Mormon Church's political allies fall within the Christian Preferentialist type, which is similar to the Religious Non-Preferentialists in terms of their accommodationist stance, but substantially less supportive of Free Exercise rights for non-Christian religions.

The Mormon sample proved particularly extreme on several items, presenting with a mean score that falls outside of the range of means provided by Jelen and Wilcox (1997) for the four types. On the Establishment clause issues, the Mormon sample mean scores were more accommodationist than any of the identified types on the items regarding the provision of Buddhist chaplains, the display of menorahs, and the teaching of creationism as an alternative to evolution in schools. The first two items reflect not only the strong commitment of Mormons to accommodating religion in the public sphere, but also the strong commitment to tolerating the public presence of other religions. On the Free Exercise items, the Mormon sample mean was more libertarian, or supportive of extensive Free Exercise protection, on items regarding the practice of strange religions, the wearing of religious headgear, the withholding of medical treatment by Christian Scientist parents, the picketing of suspected porn shops, and the practice of animal sacrifice. Again, these items reflect a strong commitment to the rights of other religious groups to fully practice their religion and an overall tolerance of religious practices quite different from those of the Mormons themselves as well as mainstream America. On the other hand, the recent history of political involvement by the Mormon Church suggests

that this level of tolerance does not extend to non-religious groups whose practices conflict with the Mormons' moral outlook on an "appropriate" lifestyle.

### Nuances in the Mormon Voice

While the opinions of the participants in this study were surprisingly similar overall, as reflected in the dendrogram set forth in Figure I, the data still reflects some level of variation. Within the individual survey variables, even for those items approaching complete consensus, every item included a group of respondents taking the opposite position. Most of the concrete items reflected a minority group of at least ten percent of participants expressing a contrary opinion. Those items with the lowest levels of consensus featured a minority voice of roughly 25 percent.

At least a minimal degree of variation is to be expected in any sample, and in the present study it is the level of consensus that is the most surprising. However, it does merit noting that, to the extent the collected demographic variables were significant, the Mormon sample followed the same patterns as the general sample from Jelen and Wilcox's (1995) earlier study. Thus, while the impact of religious denomination is apparent here, the influence of Mormonism does not completely overshadow the influence of such variables as education, age, and political party. This point may seem obvious, but it is a necessary one given the frequency with which all Mormons are grouped together (most often as "conservative Republicans") in the existing literature.

## The Role of Region

Somewhat surprisingly, the region of residence was not really a factor as a source of variation in attitude. While the sample size was only adequate to truly review three of Silk's (2007) eight identified regions, the style of pluralism described for these three regions is quite distinct: the Pacific Northwest with its lack of intense religious influences, the Southern Crossroads with its strong connection between the religious and civil spheres, and the Mountain West with its autonomous subregions. Silk (2007:77) defined the predominant style of pluralism in the Pacific Northwest as "bringing together those lacking formal religious ties with Catholics and mainline Protestants and much of the Jewish community. This is a region where the absence of strong religious institutions has taught people that they need to work across denominational lines to make anything happen." In contrast, Silk (2007:73-74, 76) described the Southern Crossroads as a "flashpoint region," the birthplace of "contemporary American religious politics, and inclusive of the religious but exclusive of the non-religious." Meanwhile, the Utah region, was characterized as "each spiritual community staking out its own turf" (Silk 2007:78). Given the very different general attitudes of these regions, it was anticipated that the attitudes of residents of the each region would at least partially reflect the distinct underlying subcultural differences.

The present study does not in any way purport to refute the importance or validity of Silk's (2007) study, particularly given the snowball sampling design and restriction to a single religious group. However, the lack of significance of residential region on attitudes is quite interesting. As with the weak predictive value of other demographic

variables, this serves to further emphasize the strong influence that the Mormon religion has on the attitudes of its practicing adherents. While Mormons themselves may feel there is a great deal of diversity within the group, when compared to the larger society those in-group differences seem very minor, at least in the area of attitudes toward the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

#### Avenues for Future Research

While this study produced some very interesting findings, its impact is limited by the underlying study design. Although the decision to use snowball sampling was a realistic one, given time and resource limitations (specifically including a lack of access to membership records necessary to facilitate random sampling), this decision also severely limits the usefulness of the statistical analysis conducted for the study. The most obvious next step is to confirm or nullify these exploratory findings through a more substantial study utilizing random sampling.

Simply increasing the sample size and demographic heterogeneity would contribute to the independent variables available for analysis. While the homogeneity of the current sample acted as a sort of natural control for several religious variables, it also resulted in a near total lack of diversity within some variables, specifically including race and religious activity. Further, several variables included enough participant diversity to be included in the analysis, but with the result of extremely small subcategories that render the results suspect. A larger sample, with resultantly larger subcategories of respondents, would decrease the statistical impact of outlier anomalies.

However, beyond merely increasing the size of the sample, this study has suggested the need for more detailed data in several areas. First and foremost, a bridge between studies looking at attitudes and studies looking at actions would contribute greatly to this area of research. This particular study began with Hunter's (1991) Culture War Theory, which suggests an active and ongoing battle between at least some segments of the population. To empirically test this theory, Jelen and Wilcox (1995) conducted a substantial study on public attitudes toward the interaction between church and state, ultimately concluding that the Culture War Theory understated the complexity of the matter. This study sought to explore both earlier works in the context of a single religion. However, without data to translate opinion into action, it is difficult to tie the two studies together. As Jelen and Wilcox (1995) found during focus groups and in-depth interviews, similar motivations can lead individuals to contrary attitudes, and contrary motivations can likewise lead similar conclusions. Further, the interaction of the two First Amendment clauses is incredibly complicated, and responses were influenced by whether the participant viewed the survey item as a Free Exercise or Establishment issue (Jelen and Wilcox 1995). However, how all of this translates into action when voting, and especially when taking a more substantial and public role in political campaigning, cannot be clearly deduced from the data.

Additionally, the focus of the current study was fairly narrow, collecting data only on participant attitudes toward freedom of religion and church-state entanglements. Absent a major assumption, this data provides no information about participant attitudes on the more tradition "moral" issues that form the basis of Hunter's (1991) Culture War Theory. It is quite possible, and given the findings of much of the extant literature, even

quite likely, that many people see a significant distinction between religiously-motivated behavior and other behavior. This is one of the most substantial complaints of the non-religious: that the First Amendment offers a protection for sincerely held religious beliefs that is not available for sincerely held non-religious beliefs. Thus, a willingness to accommodate an unusual religious practice cannot be assumed to indicate a similar willingness to accommodate abortion or same-sex marriage laws. While some of the survey items approach the issue of the religious and non-religious sharing the public space, they do so in the context of First Amendment privileges rather than political activism. Moral issues in the political sphere are rarely couched in Free Exercise or Establishment clause terms; rather, the First Amendment is invoked by religiously-motivated activists for its Freedom of Speech provision. A more extensive survey, including items over the appropriate role of religious organizations, both formally and informally, in issue politics, as well as items assessing a participant's attitudes on moral issues outside of the context of the First Amendment, would greatly add to the knowledge in this area. Further, questions aimed at the willingness of religious adherents to subvert their individual opinions on issues where their religious leaders have encouraged a particular position would contribute to a better understanding of the full impact of religious involvement in politics.

Similarly, increasing the detail of the demographic variables collected in future research will provide greater understanding how the socialization process influences attitudes. The findings suggest that region of residence is correlated with attitude on at least some issues. However, this study collected the most basic of residency information, the participant's current zip code. Gathering additional data on a participant's length of

residence and former places of residency would allow a more sophisticated analysis of the impact region has on shaping attitudes toward religious pluralism and Church-State issues. Likewise, while status as a lifelong member versus convert did not prove a significant predictor in the present study, it is an avenue for future research. The results here were not able to provide any clarity on the extent to which participation in the Mormon religion shapes opinions compared to the extent to which those already of a common mindset are drawn to the religion, either as converts or as continuing members. More nuanced data regarding participants' length of membership, level of participation, and association outside of religious meetings or events would aid in exploration of this issue.

The Culture War Theory, attitudes toward Church-State relationships, and opinions on the scope of Free Exercise rights all merit additional empirical research. The United States continues to grow in religious and cultural diversity. However, mere numerical diversity does not ensure a meaningful pluralism (Williams 2007; Beaman 2003a). As the data from this and other studies show, there is substantial support for the concept of the U.S. as a Judeo-Christian based nation that must hold to that heritage. Sociological theories on group processes suggest that, as challenges to the importance of this Judeo-Christian heritage increase—both by members of non-Judeo-Christian based religion and by those who object to any religious presence in the public sphere—conflict over the meaning of what it means to be “American” will concurrently increase, as interested groups seek to protect their share of the public space (Brewer 2001; Brown 1995; Tajfel 1982; Levine and Campbell 1972). A better understanding of the role group membership plays in shaping social attitudes may help in directing social processes

toward a constructive outcome, whether that group is defined by religious denomination, political alliance, region of residence, or any other group boundary that humans may invent.



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## APPENDICES

## SURVEY<sup>13</sup> QUESTIONS

Likert scale items—response options included:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

\*Items that were recoded for purposes of statistical analysis are designated by an asterisk.

1. People have the right to practice their religion as they see fit, even if their practices seem strange to most Americans.
2. The government should not provide help to religion.
3. Public school children should be permitted to wear religious headgear, such as skullcaps or turbans to school if they want to.
- \*4. In the interest of security, the FBI should infiltrate all Moslem groups in America.
- \*5. Public schools should set aside a moment of silence each day for students to pray if they want to.
- \*6. It should be against the law for unusual religious cults to try to convert teenagers.
- \*7. Public schools should allow student religious groups to hold voluntary meetings in school classrooms when classes are not in session.
- \*8. It's OK for a city government to put up a manger scene on government property at Christmas.
- \*9. It is important for people to obey the law, even if it means limiting their religious freedom.
10. In wartime, those whose religious beliefs forbid them from killing should be excused from military service.

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<sup>13</sup> Survey instrument developed by Ted G. Jelen and Clyde Wilcox. Demographic items were adapted to the target population. See Jelen, Ted G., and Clyde Wilcox. 1995. *Public Attitudes Toward Church and State*. M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, New York.

- \*11. It's good for sporting events at public high schools to begin with a public prayer.
- \*12. It's OK for the government to pay for some Buddhist chaplains for the military.
- 13. If their religious beliefs forbid seeing doctors, Christian Scientists should be allowed to withhold medical treatment from their children.
- \*14. America is a Christian nation, and those who move here from other countries should be encouraged to convert to Christianity.
- 15. Jews should be allowed to stay home from work on the High Holy days, such as the Jewish New Year, even though these are workdays for most people.
- 16. The American Indians should be allowed to continue taking peyote, an illegal drug made from cactus plants, in their religious ceremonies.
- \*17. It's OK for a city government to put up candles on government property for a Jewish religious ceremony.
- \*18. Public school children should be required to pledge allegiance to the American flag, even if this is against their religious beliefs.
- 19. We should maintain a high wall of separation between church and state.
- \*20. The government should require that Judeo-Christian values be emphasized in public schools.
- \*21. There should be laws against the practice of Satan worship.
- \*22. Fundamentalist preachers should not be allowed to preach on college campuses in an attempt to convert young people.
- \*23. The government should protect our Judeo-Christian heritage.
- \*24. It's OK for the government to pay for Christian chaplains for the military.
- 25. It is OK for religious leaders to picket and boycott stores that sell books and magazines that these leaders believe are pornographic.
- \*26. Public schools should teach creationism as an acceptable alternative to evolution.
- \*27. There should be laws to prevent groups like the Hare Krishna from asking people for money in airports.

28. People have the right to practice their religion in the way they see fit, even if this involves sacrificing animals to their gods.

Demographic items:

29. How frequently do you attend church services?

Never  
A few times a year  
A few times a month  
Weekly

30. Some Christians have had an experience which they call a born-again experience, and others have not. Have you had a born-again experience?

Yes  
No

31. Which comes closest to your views of the Bible?

The Bible is the inspired word of God, and is literally true, word for word.  
The Bible is the inspired word of God and has no errors, but some of it is meant to be taken figuratively.  
The Bible is inspired by God, but contains human errors.  
The Bible is not the word of God.

32. Do any of these terms describe your religious beliefs?

Liberal Christian  
Fundamentalist Christian  
Evangelical Christian  
Charismatic or Pentacostal Christian  
None

33. What is your religious preference, if any?

LDS (Mormon)  
Other

34. Were you born a member of the church, or did you convert? (If Mormon)

- Lifelong member
- Converted as a child/youth
- Converted as an adult

35. What is your age? (Open-ended response)

36. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

37. What is your highest level of education?

- Some High School
- High School Diploma
- Vocational Training
- Some College
- College Degree
- Professional Degree
- Masters Degree
- PhD

38. What is your race or ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other

39. What is your political affiliation?

- Democrat
- Independent
- Republican
- No Affiliation

40. What is your current zip code? (Open-ended response)

MAP OF MORMON HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER MAJOR SETTLEMENTS  
1830-PRESENT



1. Fayette, New York, 1830-1831
2. Kirtland, Ohio, 1831-1838
3. Jackson County, Missouri, 1831-1833
4. Clay County, Missouri, 1833-1834
5. Caldwell County, Missouri, 1834-1839
6. Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1846
7. Winter Quarters, Nebraska, 1846-1848
8. Salt Lake City, Utah, 1847-present



## Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, April 06, 2010  
IRB Application No AS1027  
Proposal Title: Of One Voice?: Mormon Attitudes on the First Amendment

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 4/5/2011**

Principal Investigator(s):

Wendy J. Brame	Jean Van Delinder
450 Murray Hall	412 Murray
Stillwater, OK 74078	Stillwater, OK 74078

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Wendy Jean Brame

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: OF ONE VOICE? MORMON ATTITUDES TOWARD THE RELIGION  
CLAUSES OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Major Field: Sociology

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2010.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Sociology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2006.

Completed the requirements for the Juris Doctorate at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, in 1998.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Social Work at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah in 1992.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Sociology, as a graduate teaching assistant, 2004-2010; employed by King, Taylor, and Ryan, P.C. as an attorney, 2002-2004; employed by The Williams Companies, Inc./Williams Communications as an attorney, 1999-2002; employed by the White Shield Center as a residential treatment counselor, 1994-1996.

Professional Memberships: American Sociological Association; Oklahoma Bar Association

Name: Wendy Jean Brame

Date of Degree: December, 2010

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: OF ONE VOICE? MORMON ATTITUDES TOWARD THE  
RELIGION CLAUSES OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Pages in Study: 138

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Sociology

Scope and Method of Study: The current study examines the attitudes of practicing Mormons toward the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses. Snowball sampling produced 123 usable surveys, consisting mainly of likert-scale items. Statistical methods employed include factor analysis, cluster analysis, comparison of proportions, and regression analysis.

Findings and Conclusions: The attitudes of the Mormon participants differed significantly from the findings of an earlier study conducted in Washington, D.C. Participants in the current study were more likely to favor protection of free exercise rights for minority religious groups and were somewhat more likely to favor the presence of religion in the public sphere. There was little variance of attitude within the sample, with respondents clustering quite substantially into a single group. The Mormon participants largely fell into the Religious Nonpreferentialist category of a Church-State Typology previously explored by Jelen and Wilcox (1997, 1995). While the results of this study cannot be generalized to the broad Mormon population due to the use of snowball sampling, these results do suggest that further studies into the homogeneity of Mormon attitudes are warranted.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Jean VanDelinder

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