

From the Tabernacle to the Bloggernacle: Institutional Isomorphism, Ordain Women, and the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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Abstract

Ordain Women is a feminist organization that seeks to “call attention to the need for the ordination of Mormon women to the priesthood” (Ordain Women, 2013). The priesthood mentioned here is the authority to act on behalf of God and its direct use is restricted to only men of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon or LDS) Church (Oaks, 2014). Because Ordain Women is inherently tied to the LDS Church, it mirrors significant characteristics of the LDS Church. In short, Ordain Women is isomorphic of the LDS Church. Utilizing content analysis for research design, this thesis will explore how the Ordain Women Blog can be selectively isomorphic to the other blogs in the Mormon blogging sphere, colloquially known as the “Bloggernacle.” I hypothesize that the Ordain Women Blog will be isomorphic in specific ways according to subjects outlined in the coding dictionary. The results are mixed in terms of support for individual hypotheses, but, the overarching hypothesis of selective isomorphism is supported.

Table of Contents

Motivation	4
Introduction	5
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	8
Ordain Women	11
Neo-Institutional Theory and Isomorphism	13
Ordain Women and Isomorphism to the LDS Church	15
Research Design: Content Analysis of the Bloggernacle	17
Methodology	17
Coding Dictionary	17
Hypotheses	19
Results	22
Hypotheses	23
Discussion	32
Isomorphism	32
Beyond Isomorphism	34
Limitations	37
Conclusion	38
References	40
Appendix A - Content Coding Dictionary	44
Appendix B - Descriptive Statistics	46
Appendix C – Blog Listing	48
Acknowledgements	49

Motivation

I first heard from one of my professors, Dr. Donna Nagata, that research is “mesearch.” She explained that in order for someone to truly throw themselves into research, it must hold some personal importance. It simply does not make sense for someone to spend so much time on subject areas that do not carry any personal meaning. My motivation for writing a thesis is not necessarily rooted in my academic or professional interests, but rather, a personal one. My motivation for writing a thesis on the isomorphism of Ordain Women to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter the LDS Church) is rooted in my identity as someone who has practiced the faith and still has intimate ties with the LDS Church through close friendships and familial relations with active members.

I was baptized into the LDS Church when I moved to be closer to my extended relatives in Utah at the age of 13. Having visited my LDS family members throughout my childhood, I was very well-acquainted with the beliefs of the LDS Church and was personally moved to join the faith. The priesthood referenced throughout this thesis is something I carried, exercised, and, at one point, even planned on exercising as a missionary. Although I have stopped practicing, I am grateful for the experiences I have had in growing up in the community of the LDS Church and find the religion to be a fascinating organization. The LDS Church stands as a unique religion in many ways, but especially as a young American-based faith that has rose to prominence. Leo Tolstoy actually referred to the religion as “America’s religion” for this reason (McCloud, 2014). The scope of this thesis is narrow, but I hope to increase the study of the LDS Church while satisfying my personal curiosity.

Introduction

The LDS Church is known to many as a young religion because its formal organization dates back to the 19th century in Upstate New York by Joseph Smith. However, the members of the LDS Church believe that the timeline of their faith begins much earlier. Members of the LDS Church fundamentally believe that the origins of its beliefs and structure directly stems from the earthly ministry and leadership of Jesus Christ. They hold this view because when Joseph Smith was divinely instructed to organize a religious organization, he was told to restore the gospel (LDS Church, Who Founded, n.d.). Essentially, the LDS Church is believed to be a contemporary and restored religious organization.

This fact is apparent in many ways; one example is in the leadership structure of the LDS Church. Jesus is known to have had many followers but maintained a closer circle of 12 disciples during his ministry. Similar to this close circle of fellowship, the prophet (leader) of the LDS Church has a quorum of 12 apostles to support him. This mirrored structuring is not just acknowledged, but proclaimed as the sixth Article of Faith states a belief in “the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth” (Article of Faith 1:6). Even the name of the LDS Church declares its intentional imitation of the original church of Christ.

Sociologists have a word for this organizational behavior of mirroring similar organizations; they call this *isomorphism* and label organizations that engage in this behavior as *isomorphic* (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The LDS Church is an isomorphic organization because it attempts to replicate the same structure and systems of what it believes to be the original church that Jesus Christ established.

The subject of isomorphism in the context of the LDS Church does not end with its similarity to the Christian church in the New Testament. Isomorphism is a salient phenomenon to organization, such as Ordain Women, that function in the similar environment with the LDS Church. This thesis will specifically explore the isomorphic tendencies of Ordain Women and the LDS Church in the contemporary push for female ordainment. As an organization, Ordain Women is dedicated to voicing issues of gender inequity in the LDS Church, and therefore has to navigate the institutional tenets of the beliefs of the LDS Church as well as its structure. The LDS Church has a notably rigid, patriarchal system in which female members cannot participate to the extent of their male counterparts (Basquiat, 2001).

The priesthood, which is the ability to exercise the authority of God, is available to all men and boys age 12 and older in the LDS Church who live according to the teachings of the faith. Sacred ordinances have to be administered through the priesthood, so while women might be able to participate in some of these holy sacraments, a man or men must preside over the act. For example, every congregation reserves an hour time unit to meet as a complete group to hear spiritual messages from their local leaders and updates on general happenings in the community, but most important of all, partake of the sacrament: consuming bread and water in remembrance of Christ's atonement. Members of the local congregation, regardless of their gender, can participate in this sacred ritual, but, it is primarily young men and teenage boys who oversee the sacrament from its preparation, blessing, and administration to the members of the congregation.

In addition to its rigid priesthood practices, the LDS Church is a highly institutionalized religious organization. The faith has a clear hierarchy and leadership structure with specific assignments on both the centralized and local spheres. At its headquarters in Salt Lake City, the religious organization not only has its spiritually significant sites, but also shares this space with

its corporate operations and educational system. This institutionalism interacts with and results in a very robust system of beliefs, policies, and even cultural norms that extend from its principles. Overall, this creates a complex environment for Ordain Women to operate, as the group must address its larger environment and host organization: the LDS Church. In order to be seriously acknowledged in the organizational context of the LDS Church and fulfill its mission of female ordainment, this thesis argues that Ordain Women mirrors certain traits and emphasizes others within the LDS Church. In short, Ordain Women is selectively isomorphic of the LDS Church.

The selective isomorphism of Ordain Women can be seen in many forms but this thesis will analyze this organizational process in the LDS blogging literature, colloquially known as the Bloggernacle. Blogs make up an information platform that contain personal and intentional language of individuals who concern themselves with a topic. In this case, I extracted articles that are centered on Ordain Women from different leanings on the issue of female ordainment. Through comparing the instances of language that reference various LDS Church tenets, insight into the areas of isomorphism can be found in blogs, most namely the blog of Ordain Women.

First, I will introduce the main players of this thesis by giving brief descriptions of the LDS Church and Ordain Women. Second, I will explain Neo-Institutional Theory and its relevance to this thesis through its concept of isomorphism. Third, I will explain how Ordain Women is isomorphic to the LDS Church. Fourth, I will describe my research design of content analysis of relevant articles from the Bloggernacle and my rationale for this methodology. Fifth, I will analyze and report the results from the Bloggernacle and discuss how these results support or negate my hypotheses on institutional isomorphism. Finally, I will conclude this thesis on the implications of my research, primarily to the main subjects of the LDS Church and Ordain Women.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was formally “organized in Fayette, New York, on 6 April 1830, under the leadership of Joseph Smith” (LDS Church, Who Founded, n.d.). This original congregation in upstate New York was made up of a handful of followers and met in the home of Peter Whitmer, a follower of the young church (Carmack, 1989). The LDS Church grew as Joseph Smith led the young religion through establishing organizational structure through appointing 12 apostles as well as core beliefs and policies such as the Word of Wisdom (a health code). Despite its successful growth, Smith and other members of the LDS Church migrated to different areas of the Mid-West including Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois to avoid persecution (LDS Church, Church History, n.d.). Smith continued to lead the LDS Church until his martyrdom in 1844, after which he was succeeded by the general counsel of the 12 apostles with Brigham Young at its head (LDS Church, Church History, n.d.). Young subsequently became the next Prophet of the LDS Church and led its members of a massive westbound exodus across the Great Plains and into the Salt Lake Valley, which still remains as the headquarters of the Church.

Now, the LDS Church reports a membership of over 15 million spread out around 30,000 congregations, and since 1996, more than half of those members live outside the United States (LDS Church, Facts, n.d.; Todd, 1996). The LDS Church has not just survived and existed as a religious institution that started during the Second Great Awakening – it has thrived and still continues to flourish as one of the fastest growing religions (LDS Church, Church Growth, n.d.).

The members of the LDS Church identify themselves as part of the Christian umbrella (Robinson, 1998). However, this categorization only serves as a rudimentary foundation to describe the LDS tradition, as the Church has many unique doctrinal tenets that make it distinct

from other branches of Christianity. For example, the LDS Church accepts all traditional Christian scripture of the Old and New Testament, but adds a new corpus of revelatory text to the canon through the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

There are many other distinguishing beliefs of the LDS Church, but the primary tenets that I will discuss in this section of the thesis are the practice of the *priesthood* and the core principle of *continuing revelation*, as they are most relevant to the interaction between Ordain Women and the LDS Church.

The LDS Church shares its belief of the priesthood as the authority to act on behalf of God or in its male-exclusive access with other Christian faiths. But, the LDS Church is unique in how it operationalizes its priesthood. Any male member above the age of 12 who is determined to live his life in accordance to the principles of the LDS Church is deemed to be “worthy,” and therefore eligible to be ordained into and practice the priesthood. This lay access to the priesthood is very different to other faiths such as the Catholic interpretation of the priesthood which restricts the exercise of the priesthood to the clergy.

Similar to the priesthood, continuing revelation is integral to the framework of the LDS Church. In fact, the founding of the LDS Church as a religion can be traced back to a single revelation. Joseph Smith is believed to have been spiritually guided by divine visitations from God, Jesus Christ, and even apostles of Christ’s earthly ministry from the New Testament. The first of these visions came to Smith in Palmyra, New York on 1820 when he was a teenage boy praying in a grove and inquired which congregation he should join. According to LDS belief, God and Jesus Christ appeared before Joseph Smith as “celestial bodies” and answered the sincere prayer by informing Smith that the current churches were not the true gospel of Christ (Joseph Smith History 1:20). Then, in other sets of visions, Smith was instructed to translate a set

of gold plates into the Book of Mormon and organize a church after the order of the original Church of Christ (LDS Church, Founder, n.d.).

Revelations during the Joseph Smith era were formative moments for the LDS Church but their impact and occurrences did not end there. Based on the precedent and belief structure of the LDS Church on these revelations, modern leaders have accepted policy and belief changes that have been ascribed to divine spiritual experiences. Two key examples of revelation outside forming of the LDS Church are the Official Declarations. The Official Declarations are recorded statements and announcements by the President (Prophet) of the LDS Church on the subject of changing a belief. Wilford Woodruff announced the First Official Declaration in October 6, 1860 that although the early members of the LDS Church practiced plural marriage under God's direction, the LDS Church has not sanctioned plural marriage during the past year and does not encourage its practice (Doctrine & Covenants Official Declaration: 1). As the Prophet of God, it is believed that President Woodruff acted under the guidance of prophecy and spiritual authority from his office. Similar to Woodruff, President Spencer W. Kimball made the Second Official Declaration in September 30, 1978 based on revelation. In the case of the Second Official Declaration, Kimball's revelation was to extend the priesthood across "all worthy males" and to specifically include the previously excluded members who were denied access to the priesthood because of their African ancestry (Doctrine & Covenants Official Declaration: 2).

Continuing revelation's presence is clear when looking at both the early and modern history of the LDS Church, but it is even more deeply rooted into the belief system as it is cited in LDS Articles of Faith, a declaration of 13 core beliefs of the LDS Church. The 9th Article of Faith states: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe

that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Article of Faith 1:9).

The salience of continuing revelation in the LDS Church has interesting implications for the religion, as this provides a gateway for institutional change supported by the most legitimate form of authority: the divine. Many LDS members colloquially describe this institutional phenomenon by calling the gospel of the LDS Church as “a living church” (Packer, 1971, para. 13). The LDS Church can theoretically make significant changes to its doctrine, as it has in its past, as long as it couches these changes in revelation. Ordain Women realized this possibility and is pushing the LDS Church to exercise this ability to extend the priesthood beyond the boundaries of the male gender.

Ordain Women

Ordain Women is an organization that “aspires to create a space for Mormons to articulate issues of gender inequality they may be hesitant to raise alone” (Ordain Women, 2013, para. 3). As their name suggests, the members of Ordain Women are primarily concerned with the “ordination of Mormon women to the priesthood” (Ordain Women, 2013, para. 2).

The organization and its website was founded under the direction of its leader, Kate Kelly, on March 17, 2013 and had its formal launch event on April 6 of the same year. Kelly has been a life-long member of the LDS Church who attended Brigham Young University, has served an evangelical mission for the LDS Church in Barcelona, Spain, and works as a human rights lawyer (Kelly, 2013/2016, pp. 265). She stated during her speech at the launch event of Ordain Women that creating an organization to “make the Church a more inclusive place” was “an act of faith” (Kelly, 2013). This act of faith grew to a website that “received over 150,000 page views in just a few short weeks” (Kelly, 2013).

Ordain Women's website is very comprehensive; it outlines a thorough explanation of the organization's mission and their rationale, which is not to directly overturn the LDS Church's doctrine on the male-exclusive priesthood but to ask the leaders of the LDS Church "to take this matter to the Lord in prayer" (Ordain Women, 2013, para. 3). The website also contains resources on exploring the cause for opening access to the priesthood for women. A little over a year after its foundation, Ordain Women launched a series of six discussions as a set of informative material on Ordain Women's cause and as a toolkit to engage in conversations regarding Ordain Women's cause. Another integral part of the Ordain Women website is the profile page. These profiles are testimonials of individuals who align themselves with Ordain Women in advocating the ordainment of women to the priesthood in the LDS Church.

Similar to the profiles, the website has always had a central blog component that provides a platform for the messages and thoughts from Ordain Women's leaders as well as personal stories from members and others who believe in the cause. As was stated in the introduction section, this thesis will analyze the language of this blog along with the other blogs that make up the Bloggernacle, to support the conclusion that Ordain Women engages behavior that is isomorphic of the LDS Church.

In addition to the group's website, an essential piece to Ordain Women's strategy is to draw attention to its cause through public actions. One of the first and most memorable actions of Ordain Women occurred at the October 5th Priesthood Session of the 2013 Semi-annual General Conference. Every October and April the LDS Church has a series of large-scale meetings called General Conference that take place in their headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah but is broadcasted globally in several languages. This event is an opportunity for all of the members in the LDS Church to hear spiritual messages from their principal leaders. However,

the live Priesthood Session of General Conference is restricted to members who hold the priesthood, and is therefore, only available to men. About 200 members of Ordain Women individually requested to enter the priesthood session at the doors of the Conference Center only to be politely denied by ushers. Although their request to gain entry into the live Priesthood Session was denied, Ordain Women was successful in bringing attention to its cause and followed up with another action in the April 5th, 2014 General Conference (Moulton, 2014). Following these two events, the LDS Church has introduced its first Women's Session of General Conference but remained firm in its stance that the priesthood practices are of God and that the actions of Ordain Women take away from the spirituality of individuals who follow the teachings of the LDS Church (Walch, 2014).

Despite public push-back from the LDS Church and more severe disciplinary measures – most notably the excommunication of Kate Kelly in the summer of 2014 – the Ordain Women movement still presses on to place themselves “in the public eye and call attention to the need for the ordination of Mormon women to the priesthood” (Ordain Women, 2013, para. 3). The faithful agitation of this group continues through other actions that show the importance of women in the history of the LDS Church and petitioning of LDS leaders to ask in prayer on women's priesthood access as well as its active presence on the Bloggernacle.

Neo-Institutional Theory and Isomorphism

Neo-Institutional Theory will be the primary theoretical framework used in this thesis to analyze the connection between Ordain Women and the LDS Church. This theoretical placement is warranted on two levels. The first comes from how the theory explains the process of institutional change. According to Neo-Institutional Theory, many organizations will take on or adopt significant additions ceremoniously (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The reason for the pairing of

change with ceremony arises from the need of the organization to maintain its legitimacy. An organization that makes significant changes to its structures, policies, or programs without a procedure can be in danger of losing support from its members and other interested parties. This theoretical underpinning is highly relevant to this thesis for the LDS Church falls in line with the theory's perspective on organizational change. The LDS Church has paired key changes in belief and policy with the ceremony of continuing revelation.

The second and most important reason for the utilization of Neo-Institutional Theory is the school's take on isomorphism. Neo-Institutional Theory addresses a few mechanisms by which isomorphism takes place but the process most relevant to this thesis is called coercive isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism refers to isomorphism that is caused by "pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, pp. 150). This specific form of isomorphism is relevant as Ordain Women is dependent on the LDS Church in that the large religion is the host organization that provides the cultural expectations and environment for feminist group.

Isomorphism can be clearly applied to the main actors in this thesis, but it is an organizational concept that is versatile as it can be placed in a variety of contexts. The field of academia is one that has been studied under the lens of Neo-Institutional Theory with isomorphism in mind. Richard M. Levinson examined how academic institutions have become more isomorphic over time due to a pressure adopt a form that is perceived to be professional (1989, Levinson). Another field in which isomorphism has been applied is in the professional space. In researching different forms of professional organizations, Peter Frumkin and Joseph Galaskiewicz found evidence to support their belief that organizations in different sectors

(nonprofit, for-profit, and governmental) have different isomorphic tendencies based on their organizational identification (Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004). For example, it is concluded from their paper that nonprofits are more vulnerable to pressures of isomorphism because of their dependence on other entities for financial support (Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004).

No matter the field of the organizational actors, the extent to which an organization experiences isomorphism is modulated by some general factors. One such relevant factor is that level of dependence on the host organization is positively related with the level of isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, pp. 154). Another factor is that the level centralization of resources (namely legitimacy) to the host organization is positively related with the level of isomorphism that the isomorphic organization will engage in (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In the context of this thesis, Ordain Women is highly dependent on the LDS Church and its leadership for institutional change in regards to its gendered priesthood policy; therefore, Ordain Women will be highly isomorphic to the LDS Church in order to be perceived as a legitimate organization by the LDS Church.

Ordain Women and Isomorphism to the LDS Church

Ordain Women is highly isomorphic of the LDS Church. As an organization that is made up of members of the larger organization and environment, the LDS Church, Ordain Women cannot help but be isomorphic. Beyond these inherent similarities, Ordain Women is very intentional in its isomorphism. Kate Kelly shares that the organization has purposefully aligned its key dates with those of the LDS Church. The founding date of the feminist organization aligns with the founding of the Relief Society (a women's organization within the LDS Church), the official launch event was on the same day as the formal organization of the LDS Church, the

launch of the first discussion was on the same day as the restoration of the priesthood to Joseph Smith through a spiritual visitation by John the Baptist (Kelly, 2014).

Another important case of intentional isomorphism by Ordain Women lies in the organization's educational resources of the discussion packets. This series of reflective and informative material is made up of six discussions which appear to be very similar to the previous missionary teaching plan where missionaries were instructed to memorize discussions and then teach them by memory to prospective converts. Kate Kelly confirmed this parallel design in the launch of the first Ordain Women discussion titled: "See the Symptoms" (Kelly, 2014). In this broadcast, Kelly cites her experience in using the traditional discussion during her time as a missionary in Barcelona, Spain as the inspiration behind the format and design of Ordain Women's discussion packet. In short, Ordain Women is isomorphic in utilizing the same teaching format as the LDS Church used in its evangelical missions.

The final case of intentional isomorphism is also reflected in the website. Ordain Women's profile page features the testimonials of several of its members and supporters, much along the same lines as the members of the LDS Church have done in the contemporary "I am a Mormon" ad campaign and member profiles on the LDS Church website (LDS Church, I'm a Mormon, n.d.). In each of these media platforms, the member will share their personal story and background and then close their profile by testifying or sharing their beliefs.

As was previously stated in the Neo-Institutional section, these isomorphic instances assist Ordain Women in legitimizing themselves as an organization that exists in the same sphere as the LDS Church. Not only does Ordain Women need to legitimize themselves in the same sphere as the LDS Church, but the organization feels additional pressure to be isomorphic since

it is dependent on the LDS Church. Now that we have established the isomorphic tendencies of Ordain Women to the LDS Church, we will explore this behavior in the Bloggernacle as will be outlined in the Research Design section.

Research Design: Content Analysis of the Bloggernacle

Methodology

This thesis analyzes the isomorphism of Ordain Women to the LDS Church in the blogging sphere. In order to achieve this goal, I collected blog articles and posts that are centered on the topic of Ordain Women as an organization and cause. I identified 169 relevant entries from 9 different sites published from March 17th 2013 to December 7th 2015 through a blog listing registry: Mormonblogs.org. I searched through the blog listing on the registry for posts on Ordain Women and then included the relevant blogs. The following blogs were found on this registry and used for this thesis: Ordain Women, The Exponent, Zelophehad's Daughters, Reese Dixon, Progressive Mormon Mom, A Fear of Flying, A Well-Behaved Mormon Woman, and Wheats & Tares. This list of blogs is also outlined in Appendix C.

After the collection of these posts and articles, I then categorized them based on their leaning and affiliation. The categories of the blog entries are as follows: Ordain Women, Supportive of Ordain Women, Objective Blogs and Conservative Blogs, Personal Blogs (the aggregate of Objective and Conservative blogs). Finally, I read all the entries and coded for recurring themes according to the dictionary outlined in Appendix A.

Coding Dictionary

I constructed a coding dictionary to act as a guideline for my coding criteria through the relevant literature in the Bloggernacle (see Appendix A). The noteworthy codes fall under the following categories: Leadership, Feminist and Social Justice Vernacular, LDS Church

Traditions and Beliefs, Early Church Traditions, Ordain Women Actions, and the Response to Ordain Women Actions.

The Leadership section encompasses specific leaders such as the Prophet of the LDS Church and Kate Kelly, the founder of Ordain Women. This section also highlights the leadership structure of the LDS Church at the local lay and centralized levels. The inclusion of this section is based on the relevance of authority figures in this context as they play a major role in continuing revelation, a core part of Ordain Women's goal to push LDS Church leaders to exercise this power. Feminist and Social Justice Vernacular is a categorization of key words that are used as jargon in describing progressive organizations such as Ordain Women. This section is included because Ordain Women is an organization that not only exists as group affiliated with the LDS Church, but one that is rooted in a social justice cause of gender equity. It is important to see how their use of social justice key words may be isomorphic to other blog types or not. The section on LDS Church Traditions and Beliefs is made up of core beliefs, spiritual practices, and cultural tenets of the LDS Church. This section is essential to researching the isomorphism of Ordain Women to the LDS Church. By studying to which principles the Ordain Women Blog is isomorphic to, we can gain insight to how they establish legitimacy. Early Church History is a section made up of historical references to social and institutional change in the LDS Church. This section was included into the dictionary for references of previous instances of change in the LDS Church could be a point in which Ordain Women draw credibility to their cause of facilitating changes in the religion. Ordain Women Actions is a section dedicated to the public actions that the organization took to bring attention to their cause. This section was included as the public actions are core to Ordain Women gaining notoriety and hoping to incite change. The Response to Ordain Women Actions is a section that refers to the reactions of LDS Church

leaders and members to the supporters of Ordain Women. This section was included to test to see how the two organizations may be similar or different in how often they refer to the punishment of Ordain Women's members.

Hypotheses

In analyzing the blogging language of Ordain Women and other relevant sites in the "Bloggernacle," I am expecting to find further evidence that Ordain Women is selectively isomorphic to the LDS Church in order to legitimize its position as an organization that is aligned with the LDS Church.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference in references to the major traditions and beliefs of the LDS Church (including references to the prophet) between the Ordain Women Blog and other blogs.

It is advantageous for Ordain Women to be isomorphic and exhibit a similar level of phrasing to LDS Church traditions and beliefs. This isomorphism grants Ordain Women legitimacy in the LDS Church context and by gaining legitimacy, tradition and belief based isomorphism can potentially assist Ordain Women in seeking their goal of seeing women directly access the priesthood (DiMaggio & Powell 1983).

Hypothesis 2: The Ordain Women Blog will proportionally use social justice centered phrases more than other blogs.

It would be advantageous for Ordain Women to establish themselves not only as group within the context of the LDS Church, but also in the context of social progress and justice. This is because Ordain Women is an organization that can be categorized as a social justice group for it pushes for social progress in the area of gender equity. Therefore, I am led to believe that the

Ordain Women blog will use the keywords outlined under the Feminist and Social Justice Vernacular section of the coding dictionary.

Hypothesis 3: The Ordain Women Blog will proportionally refer to revelation (institutional and personal) more than other blogs.

Revelation is a core principle of the LDS Church as it is to the Ordain Women movement. Many members of Ordain Women cite it as a reason for their belief in this cause. Also, for any type of change to be delivered, it must be paired with ceremony according to New Institutional Theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). For example, access to the priesthood was expanded to black members with the Second Official Declaration in 1978. I believe that the Ordain Women blog will refer to revelation significantly more than any other blog, because in order for any change to occur in the organizational structure or policy of the LDS Church, a revelation needs to occur to legitimize the change. The change of the priesthood is no exception, any change on access to the priesthood needs to be grounded with institutional revelation. Therefore, I believe that the Ordain Women Blog will emphasize this doctrine more than all other blog types.

Hypothesis 4: The Ordain Women Blog will proportionally make more historical references (ones listed in the coding dictionary) in comparison to other blogs.

The reason the Ordain Women Blog will make more historical references than other blogs is due to Ordain Women wanting to point out instances of institutional revelation and subsequent change. By doing this, Ordain Women is connecting its current push for change with other instances of change such as the retraction of polygamy or the expansion of the priesthood

to members with African heritage with the Second Official Declaration. This could serve to the credibility of institutional change that Ordain Women is hoping to incite.

Hypothesis 5: The Ordain Women will proportionally refer to the act of questioning or pondering more than other blogs.

Questioning and pondering are key cultural and spiritual tenets of the LDS Church. The foundation of the LDS Church is built on the first vision of Joseph Smith which occurred because Smith was questioning which faith to follow. Because questioning and pondering are precursors to receiving spiritual revelation in the LDS context, I believe that Ordain Women's blog will mention these concepts more since revelation is inherently tied to the organization's goal.

Hypothesis 6: The Ordain Women blog will make more mentions of Heavenly Parents and Heavenly Mother compared to other blog types.

A unique LDS Church belief is that people are the spiritual children of a heavenly family. God is referred to as Heavenly Father and is married to a Heavenly Mother. Heavenly Mother is not mentioned nearly as much in formal Church proceedings as Heavenly Father but is referenced as a celestial individual or at least acknowledged in the phrasing of Heavenly Parents. I believe that Ordain Women will refer to Heavenly Mother or the Heavenly Parents proportionally more than any other type of blog, as this will highlight the divine presence of women.

Hypothesis 7: There will be no difference in mentions of LDS Church discipline between Ordain Women and other blogs.

It is to the advantage of Ordain Women blog not to highlight the disciplinary actions by the LDS Church. The more the Ordain Women movement shares the disciplinary actions by LDS Church leaders, both local and central, the more dissonant the Ordain Women group may seem to the other members of the LDS Church. Similar to other hypotheses on direct isomorphism, Ordain Women could be further legitimized if they exhibit a level of isomorphism in regards to the disciplinary actions taken by the LDS Church.

Results

The results from the Bloggernacle methodology were mixed; some hypotheses were supported while others were not. However, the overarching hypothesis that Ordain Women would be selectively isomorphic was largely supported through the results of the means comparison tests. This section will show the results of the individual hypotheses outlined in the research design section and the corresponding statistical tables. The results will then be expanded upon in the Discussion section. Descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix B.

The statistical tables that correspond with each hypothesis show the results behind each hypothesis and specific statistical test per chosen keyword or variable. The bolded title above each set of values is the variable whose proportion of references are being compared across blog categories to the Ordain Women Blog. All of the values underneath these titles pertain to the bolded title above. The first column (from the left) of the tables denotes the blog that is being compared to the Ordain Women Blog. Next, the second column refers to the difference between the proportions of entries of the blog category that is being compared to the Ordain Women Blog and the proportion of entries from the Ordain Women Blog. As listed below in the table, the proportion from the comparison blog is subtracted by the Ordain Women Blog, which indicates that the mean difference will be positive if the comparison blog has a larger proportion than the

Ordain Women Blog. On the other hand, if the difference between the two blogs is negative, the Ordain Women Blog had proportionally more references than the comparison blog. Finally, the last two columns show the statistical significance of the mean difference found in the tables.

Keywords that are not statistically significantly different between the Ordain Women Blog and another blog category support isomorphism, while statistically significant results show that the Ordain Women Blog does not support isomorphism but can lead to the thought that the Ordain Women Blog shares more or less on a specific subject than is common to the LDS Church.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference in references to the major traditions, beliefs, and leadership of the LDS Church between the Ordain Women Blog and other blogs.

This hypothesis had mixed results but was largely supported by the results of the mean comparison tests. As expected, many keywords including scripture, godhead, prayer, worthiness, and sacrament did not come back as statistically significant, and therefore supported the hypothesis and the general argument for isomorphism. This is evident in Table 1, as each of these sections of the table do not have any statistically significant results.

What was unexpected and caused this hypothesis to have mixed results was that there were significant results. First, the Ordain Women Blog made significantly more references to family than all other blog categories. This is the clearest and most unambiguous result. Next, in looking at the prophet section of the table, one can see that supportive, personal, and conservative blogs all made significantly more references to the prophet than the Ordain Women Blog. Finally, callings were significantly referenced more by the Ordain Women Blog than by objective and personal blogs. These significant differences were the most notable differences

between the Ordain Women Blog and other blog types in this hypothesis and will be discussed in the next section.

Table 1

Mean Comparison of LDS Church Traditions, Beliefs, and Leadership Across Blog Types

Scripture			
Blog Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.098	0.673	0.245
Objective	-0.114	-0.784	0.217
Personal	0.053	0.492	0.312
Conservative	0.220	1.501	0.068
Family			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.374	-2.746	0.003*
Objective	-0.348	-2.462	0.008*
Personal	-0.307	-2.931	0.002*
Conservative	-0.266	-1.866	0.032*
Godhead			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.111	0.875	0.192
Objective	-0.151	-1.119	0.133
Personal	0.015	0.154	0.439
Conservative	0.182	1.392	0.083
Callings			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistics	P-Value
Supportive	-0.057	-0.434	0.333
Objective	-0.288	-2.187	0.015*
Personal	-0.163	-1.672	0.048*
Conservative	-0.038	-0.277	0.391
Prophet			

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.387	3.542	<0.001*
Objective	-0.068	-0.637	0.263
Personal	0.223	2.629	0.005*
Conservative	0.515	4.595	<0.001*

Testimony

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.113	0.807	0.211
Objective	-0.182	-1.278	0.101
Personal	-0.182	-1.762	0.040*
Conservative	-0.182	1.392	0.101

Prayer

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.112	0.851	0.198
Objective	-0.189	-1.438	0.076
Personal	-0.064	-0.656	0.256
Conservative	0.061	0.446	0.328

Worthiness

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.098	-1.184	0.119
Objective	-0.015	-0.169	0.433
Personal	-0.015	-0.230	0.409
Conservative	-0.015	-0.169	0.433

Sacrament

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.114	-1.282	0.101
Objective	-0.030	-0.318	0.376
Personal	-0.072	-1.067	0.144
Conservative	-0.114	-1.232	0.110

Note. *p<0.05

Hypothesis 2: The Ordain Women Blog will proportionally use social justice centered phrases more than other blogs.

This hypothesis was not supported because the Ordain Women Blog did not make more mentions of any social justice centered phrases. Instead, there were instances in which other blog types referenced a keyword proportionally more than the Ordain Women Blog. This is evident from viewing Table 2 which shows that the only significant results are of other blogs making proportionally more references to social justice keywords than the Ordain Women Blog. One such result is that supportive blogs made significantly more references to gender roles than the Ordain Women Blog. Another result is seen in the discrimination subheading in which objective blogs refer to the subject of discrimination significantly more than the Ordain Women Blog. Reasoning behind these results is not clear, but it could be rooted in these blog categories offering commentary in the case of Ordain Women in a way that incorporates these social justice keywords.

Outside the two aforementioned results, the most notable unanticipated result from this hypothesis test is that conservative and personal blogs made significantly more mentions of the keywords feminist and feminism than the Ordain Women Blog. The rationale behind these blogs, particularly the conservative, in using language on feminism more than the Ordain Women Blog can be found in the next section.

Table 2

Mean Comparison of Social Justice Vernacular Across Blog Types

Social Justice Vernacular			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.113	-0.807	0.211

Objective	0.098	0.686	0.247
Personal	0.057	0.538	0.296
Conservative	0.015	-0.105	0.458

Feminist

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.111	0.937	0.175
Objective	0.136	1.111	0.134
Personal	0.178	1.934	0.028*
Conservative	0.220	1.780	0.039*

Equality and Equity

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.182	-1.297	0.098
Objective	-0.144	-0.986	0.163
Personal	-0.102	-0.950	0.172
Conservative	-0.061	-0.416	0.339

Gender Roles

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.232	2.753	0.003*
Objective	0.091	1.088	0.139
Personal	0.008	0.127	0.449
Conservative	-0.076	-0.985	0.163

Discrimination

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.080	0.743	0.230
Objective	0.265	2.350	0.010*
Personal	0.098	1.189	0.118
Conservative	-0.068	-0.637	0.263

Inclusion

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.136	-1.423	0.079

Objective	-0.136	-1.367	0.087
Personal	-0.053	-0.711	0.239
Conservative	0.030	0.289	0.387

Note. *p<0.05

Hypothesis 3: The Ordain Women Blog will proportionally refer to revelation (institutional and personal) more than other blogs.

This hypothesis was not supported, because the Ordain Women Blog did not refer to revelation or any type of revelation proportionally more than any other type of blog. As can be seen in Table 3, there are not any significant results that point to the Ordain Women Blog as referring to revelation more than other blog types. The only significant result from this set comes from supportive blogs referring to revelation more than the Ordain Women Blog. This does not seem to cover enough ground to show that Ordain Women is linking its cause with previous changes in the LDS Church as there are not any other significant results on revelation, even in both the institutional and personal contexts.

Table 3

Mean Comparison of Revelation Across Blog Types

Revelation			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.244	1.726	0.043*
Objective	-0.121	-0.833	0.203
Personal	-0.038	-0.352	0.363
Conservative	0.045	0.309	0.379
Institutional			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.212	1.645	0.051

Objective	-0.083	-0.641	0.261
Personal	0.042	0.428	0.335
Conservative	0.167	1.252	0.106
Personal			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.128	-1.109	0.135
Objective	-0.121	-1.012	0.157
Personal	-0.080	-0.906	0.183
Conservative	-0.038	-0.311	0.378

Note. *p<0.05

Hypothesis 4: The Ordain Women Blog will proportionally make more historical references (ones listed in the coding dictionary) in comparison to other blogs.

This hypothesis was not supported because the Ordain Women Blog did not refer to historical events of change more than any other type of blog. Table 4 shows how there are not any significant results that point to the Ordain Women Blog as referring to historical references more than other blog types. The only significant result from this set comes from objective blogs referring to polygamy more than the Ordain Women Blog which could result from commentary in connecting Ordain Women to previous changes. However, this is not thoroughly supported as Ordain Women itself did not reference previous changes in the LDS Church significantly more than other blogs.

Table 4

Mean Comparison of Historical References Across Blog Types

Historical References			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.034	-0.267	0.395
Objective	0.151	1.119	0.133

Personal	-0.015	-0.154	0.439
Conservative	-0.181	-1.392	0.083

Historical Reference to Second Official Declaration

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.121	-1.330	0.093
Objective	0.045	0.453	0.326
Personal	-0.038	-0.531	0.298
Conservative	-0.121	-1.278	0.102

Historical Reference to Polygamy

Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.045	-0.781	0.218
Objective	0.121	1.762	0.040*
Personal	0.379	0.770	0.221
Conservative	-0.045	-0.751	0.227

Note. *p<0.05

Hypothesis 5: The Ordain Women will proportionally refer to the act of questioning or pondering more than other blogs.

This hypothesis was not supported for the Ordain Women Blog did not proportionally did not refer to acts of questioning or pondering more than other blogs. This results is clearly shown in Table 5 where questioning or pondering were not mentioned significantly different from the Ordain Women Blog to other types of blogs.

Table 5

Mean Comparison of Questioning Across Blog Types

Questioning			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.229	1.607	0.055
Objective	0.030	0.205	0.419

Personal	0.030	0.278	0.390
Conservative	0.030	0.205	0.419

Hypothesis 6: The Ordain Women blog will make more mentions of Heavenly Parents and Heavenly Mother compared to other blog types.

This hypothesis was partially supported for although the Ordain Women Blog did not make made significantly more mentions of Heavenly Parents and Heavenly Mother than all other blogs, it did more so than conservative blogs. This is shown in Table 6 where it is denoted that conservative blogs hold the only statistically significant result in making less references to Heavenly Mother than the Ordain Women Blog. The concept of Heavenly Mother is an interestingly unique belief to the LDS Church and its meaning in the context of organizations similar to Ordain Women along with this result will be further explored in the discussion section.

Table 6

Mean Comparison of Heavenly Mother/Heavenly Parents Across Blog Types

Heavenly Mother/Heavenly Parents			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	-0.128	-1.109	0.135
Objective	-0.038	-0.311	0.378
Personal	-0.121	-1.404	0.081
Conservative	-0.205	-1.744	0.042*

Note. *p<0.05

Hypothesis 7: There will be no difference in mentions of LDS Church discipline between Ordain Women and all other blogs.

This hypothesis was supported because there was no significant difference between the Ordain Women Blog and any other blog types in their mentions of the LDS Church’s

disciplinary actions to Ordain Women members. This is clearly shown in Table 7 where disciplinary actions by the LDS Church were not mentioned significantly different from the Ordain Women Blog to other types of blogs.

Table 7

Mean Comparison of Disciplinary Actions by LDS Church Across Blog Types

LDS Church Discipline			
Blog Being Compared to Ordain Women	Mean Difference (Comparison Blog – Ordain Women)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Supportive	0.072	0.660	0.255
Objective	-0.076	-0.695	0.244
Personal	-0.034	-0.423	0.336
Conservative	0.008	0.068	0.527

Discussion

This section will expand on the results that were previously stated. The discussion of the results on isomorphism can be broken up into two subheadings. Results that show no difference of references between the Ordain Women Blog and other blog types will be expanded on under the isomorphism subheading. Results that show the Ordain Women Blog have more or less instances of a topic will be expanded on in the beyond isomorphism subheading.

Isomorphism

As was stated in the Results section, the Ordain Women Blog is isomorphic in its language to the other types of blogs in the Bloggernacle. Most of the keywords from the largest section of the coding dictionary, LDS Church Beliefs and Traditions, had similar proportions of mentions between the Ordain Women Blog and other blog categories (see results from hypotheses 1, 3, and 5). This result falls in line with the rationale under my first hypothesis that Ordain Women would be isomorphic in fundamental beliefs and traditions of the LDS Church as

it is in their best interest to be perceived as similar to the LDS Church in order to gain legitimacy and further their mission. The first hypothesis on isomorphism is further supported by the results of the third and fifth hypothesis in which I expected the Ordain Women Blog to reference revelation and questioning more than other blog types. These hypotheses were not supported but, in turn, support the general isomorphism of Ordain Women to the LDS Church.

The seventh isomorphism hypothesis was supported as well. In this hypothesis I predicted that the Ordain Women Blog would have comparable proportions of mentions regarding disciplinary actions taken by the LDS Church as the other blog categories. Ordain Women was isomorphic in this area, not necessarily to be perceived as similar to the LDS Church as in the first hypothesis, but in order to not be seen as a group of highly-disorderly members of the LDS Church. As is stated in their mission statement, Ordain Women wants to attract attention and pressure leaders by putting themselves “in the public eye” (Ordain Women, 2013, para. 3). However, something Ordain Women does not want is to over-highlight is the disciplinary measures and perpetuate a spiritual and social taboo toward members of their organization.

Not all results under this subheading were expected. I hypothesized that the Ordain Women Blog would refer to historical changes in the belief and structure of the LDS Church more than any other blog category, because Ordain Women is essentially attempting to facilitate change in the LDS Church. This hypothesis was not supported, for the Ordain Women Blog did not make mention of historical changes significantly more than other blogs, in fact, supportive blogs proportionally had significantly more counts in this area.

Another unanticipated result was the proportional instances of social justice keywords by blog categories. I hypothesized that the Ordain Women Blog would make more mentions of the selected social justice keywords because they are an organization that is pushing for social progress, especially in regards to gender. This hypothesis was not supported, meaning that the Ordain Women Blog was largely isomorphic to other blog types in regards to referencing social justice keywords. A possible explanation could be due to how the pressures of isomorphism are so strong for Ordain Women that social justice vernacular could be deemed too controversial or polarizing to use more than is typical by members of the LDS Church, even for a feminist organization. In line with this polarization argument, conservative blogs made proportionally more mentions of the keyword “feminist” than the Ordain Women Blog and could be labeling the feminist organization very intentionally. Initially, it may sound counter-intuitive for a conservative label an organization as feminist more than the organization itself. But, this could be attributed to the conservative bloggers as seeing being a feminist and a member in good standing as mutually exclusive. The conservative bloggers may be separating the members of Ordain Women from the well-to-do members of the LDS Church and are using the word feminist as the separating device.

Beyond Isomorphism

The first hypothesis was largely supported by the proportion of similar mentions of traditions and beliefs of the LDS Church across blog categories. There were primarily three notable results in which the Ordain Women Blog was not proportionally parallel to other blog types in the mentioning of LDS Church traditions and beliefs. The first is the greater instances of family by the Ordain Women Blog compared to all other blog categories. This can be attributed to the same reason why Ordain Women mirrored the LDS Church: legitimacy. Family is a very

important principle to the LDS Church. The spiritual and social unit in the LDS Church is family (Perry, 2003). Families are sealed together by holy ordinance as a prerequisite for collective eternal salvation (Perry, 2003). According to LDS belief, everyone is believed to be connected by way of being part of a large spiritual family as spiritual children of Heavenly Parents (Heeren, Lindsey & Mason, 1984). By being more vocal about family, Ordain Women is establishing itself as an organization made up of people who are seen as agreeable by the LDS Church. This technique is used by Kate Kelly in speeches as she often begins her addresses by introducing herself in the context of family. She cites her identity as a sister, a mother, and a woman who was married in the temple (Kelly, 2013/2016, pp. 266). These familial statements can potentially place Kelly into a deeper position of legitimacy.

The second result from the first hypothesis that showed how the Ordain Women Blog was distinct in its references of LDS Church tradition was in callings. In LDS Church congregations and communities, members are often assigned to lay positions to help administer services to the rest of the local members. These positions are referred to as callings and it is seen as spiritually and socially proper to be magnifying or fulfilling one's calling (Hinckley, 1989). In terms of callings, the Ordain Women Blog made proportionally more references than objective and personal blogs. I believe that this can be attributed to the same reason as why Ordain Women may be utilizing language around family often; the organization wants to be perceived as a group made up of pleasant and righteous LDS Church members.

The third result in which the Ordain Women Blog was not proportionally parallel to other blog types was in regards to how the Ordain Women Blog made fewer references to the prophet of the LDS Church. A possible reason for this could be attributed to Ordain Women not wanting to perpetuate the male dominated priesthood narrative by referencing the highest position in the

LDS Church. Instead of directly referring to the prophet, Ordain Women may use more general language to the centralized priesthood offices of the LDS Church.

Another particularly notable finding from the results of this thesis is that the Ordain Women Blog made significantly more references to Heavenly Mother and a set of Heavenly Parents compared to conservative blogs. Heavenly Mother was used by prior feminist movements in the LDS Church as a rallying symbol (Heeren, Lindsey & Mason, 1984). The image of a female deity is a powerful one for female members striving to gain more spiritual power in the LDS Church, but, it is spiritually very difficult to maneuver. This is because the LDS Church's concept of Heavenly Mother is rooted in a patriarchal dynamic. What is known about Heavenly Mother is very limited but her understood role has been traditional; nurturing a spiritual family. Because Heavenly Mother is "idealized as the ultimate standard of womanhood," her role perpetuates conservative gender roles in the LDS Church (Oaks, 1995).

Ordain Women has not officially donned Heavenly Mother as a rallying symbol since their foundation as a group and their public actions, the LDS Church has released an essay on information behind "Mother in Heaven." The essay shares the essential nature of doctrine behind Heavenly Mother is as it explains how everyone is a member of the spiritual family that is made up of a "Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother" and it is the ultimate spiritual goal to be model these divine parents (LDS Church, Mother in Heaven, n.d.). As the essay shares the importance of Heavenly Mother, it does also state that the present knowledge of Heavenly Mother is very limited. It will be interesting to observe whether or not more knowledge on Heavenly Mother will be revealed to the leaders of the LDS Church, and also, how Heavenly Mother may be brought into the argument for priesthood equity though she is not the symbol of Ordain Women.

Limitations

The research design of this thesis is aligned with testing isomorphic behavior of Ordain Women from the LDS Church, but, there are factors to be aware of that could have affected the results. The first limitation of this thesis comes from the sample of the Bloggernacle. I utilized a registry with a listing of several bloggers from the LDS Church and found a greater number of blogs and posts that were sympathetic with Ordain Women than were against the feminist organization. Because it seems that bloggers who challenge the status quo of the LDS Church hold a wider presence on the Bloggernacle, there wasn't as wide of a representation of conservative bloggers which affected the sample size of this category. It is also important to note that blogs are completely representative of the opinions of people. It is generally the most outspoken who will post their opinions online.

The second limitation of the research design of this thesis comes from the conclusions drawn from the Ordain Women Blog. Although some hypotheses on Ordain Women engaging in linguistic isomorphic behavior were supported on the blog level, these hypotheses could have different results if studied in a different context. For example, a content analysis of Ordain Women's Six Discussions could yield different results compared to the Ordain Women Blog. We must be aware as to understand the generalizability of these results and not extrapolate the results of the blogging isomorphism beyond reason.

The final limitation of this thesis can be rooted in the methodology. The coding dictionary and criteria for article inclusion could have altered the coding of the blog posts and the blog extraction. Although the methodology can influence the results of any research, the coding dictionary was framed around salient subjects in the LDS Church community and article

extraction criteria was fundamentally built around the topic of Ordain Women, so the level of variation from the results caused by the methodology should be minimal.

Despite these limitations, there are sufficient grounds to know that Ordain Women is isomorphic of the LDS Church. With this understanding and the limitations outlined above, we can see how Ordain Women is isomorphic of the LDS Church, and this is supported on the blog level.

Conclusion

As an organization, Ordain Women is highly isomorphic of the LDS Church. This argument is further supported by the isomorphism that takes place on the blogging level. In both expected and unexpected ways, Ordain Women is selectively isomorphic of the LDS Church in the Bloggernacle. This tendency exists because the Ordain Women Blog makes a similar proportion of references to certain topics as other blog types, but it also makes a significantly different proportion of references to other topics than other blog categories. The collection of this behavior serves the purpose of furthering the legitimacy of Ordain Women in its tie to the LDS Church.

The LDS Church has responded to the public actions and agenda of Ordain Women including issuing statements and disciplining members. The most severe of these responses was the excommunication of Ordain Women's founder and leader, Kate Kelly. Now, despite this setback, the organization still strives to place itself into public attention through continued actions. Ordain Women still maintains an internet presence as it adds more personal profiles of supporters and continues its blog.

In terms of the future for Ordain Women and its mission, it is unsure whether or not the LDS Church will allow for women to hold the priesthood; however, the salience of continuing revelation as a LDS Church belief allows for one to imagine the inclusion of women into the order of the priesthood. As is posited in Neo-Institutional Theory, an organization must couch its institutional changes in ceremony. We know through the basis of this tenet of Neo-Institutional Theory and historical examples of change in the LDS Church that if the doctrine of priesthood access were to change to include women, the process of continuing revelation must be cited as the source of the change.

There is room for future research specifically in the subject of isomorphism of the LDS Church by Ordain Women. This thesis has established the isomorphic nature of Ordain Women on a fundamental level and is supported through language in the Bloggernacle. As far as instances of isomorphism based on language, a potentially complementary path for new research could be in more official documents of both organizations such as a content analysis of Ordain Women's discussion materials compared to lesson manuals or speeches by centralized authority figures in the LDS Church. Furthermore, additional research can be done outside the context of female ordainment to other organizations that have a mission linked to the LDS Church. It would be interesting to see the level of isomorphism of another group made up of LDS Church members, especially ones that do not seek to change the religion's policies or beliefs like Ordain Women.

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Appendix A - Content Coding Dictionary

- 1) Leaders and Notable People: Inside Ordain Women and the LDS Church
 - a) Kate Kelly: The founder of Ordain Women
 - b) The Prophet: The position or Thomas S. Monson
 - c) Apostles
 - d) Lay Leaders
 - e) Lay Priesthood Leaders
 - f) Relief Society Leaders
 - g) Leaders Outside of the LDS Church
 - h) LDS Church professionals

- 2) Feminist and Social Justice Vernacular
 - a) Feminist
 - b) Equality/Equity
 - c) Gender Roles
 - d) Inclusion
 - e) Discrimination

- 3) LDS Church Traditions and Beliefs
 - a) Revelation
 - i) Personal
 - ii) Institutional
 - b) References to LDS Canon of Scripture
 - i) Old Testament
 - ii) New Testament
 - iii) Book of Mormon
 - iv) Doctrine and Covenants; The Pearl of Great Price
 - c) Historical References to Modern LDS Church
 - i) Pre-modern (Era of Joseph Smith and Restoration)
 - ii) Post-modern (After Joseph Smith's Era)
 - d) Testimony
 - e) Questioning/Pondering/Seeking Answers
 - f) Prayer
 - g) Apostasy
 - h) Worthiness
 - i) Sacrament
 - j) Family
 - k) Godhead

- i) Heavenly Father/God/The Lord
 - ii) Jesus Christ
 - iii) Holy Ghost
- l) Heavenly Mother or Heavenly Parents
- m) Mission
- n) Sacrament
- o) Baptism
- p) Atonement
- q) Ancestry
- r) Zion

- 4) Early Church History
 - a) Black Members and the Priesthood
 - b) Polygamy

- 5) Specific actions and events put on by Ordain Women
 - a) Pants to Church
 - b) Priesthood Session Actions
 - i) October 2013 Session
 - ii) April 2014 Session
 - iii) October 2014 Session

- 6) Response to Ordain Women
 - a) Disciplinary Measures
 - b) Excommunication
 - c) Congregational Exclusion

Appendix B - Descriptive Statistics

Table 8

Descriptive Percentages of Codes in Content Analysis

Category	Percentage
Ordain Women	78.11%
Supportive of Ordain Women	7.69%
Personal	14.20%
Objective (Neutral)	7.10%
Conservative	7.10%
Leadership	Percentage
Kate Kelly	26.04%
Prophet	21.30%
Apostles	21.89%
Lay Leaders	45.56%
Lay Priesthood Leaders	37.87%
Relief Society	24.85%
Church Professionals	11.83%
Leaders outside the Church	13.61%
Social Justice Vernacular	Percentage
Any Mention	65.09%
Feminist	23.08%
Equity or Equality	61.54%
Inclusion	11.83%
Discrimination	17.16%
Tradition and Beliefs	Percentage
Revelation	38.46%
Institutional Revelation	27.21%
Personal Revelation	18.34%
Scripture	37.87%
Old Testament	7.10%
New Testament	15.38%
Book of Mormon	9.47%
Doctrine & Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price	8.89%
Modern Church	28.52%
Pre-Modern Era (Joseph Smith)	20.12%
Post-Modern Era (After Joseph Smith)	14.20%
Testimony	33.14%
Questioning and Pondering	40.83%
Blessing	29.59%
Worthiness	8.88%
Family	60.95%
Prayer	27.22%

Apostasy	6.51%
God Head	74.57%
Heavenly Father	68.64%
Jesus Christ	41.42%
Holy Ghost	16.57%
Callings	26.04%
Heavenly Mother and/or Parents	17.75%
Mission	10.65%
Sacrament	9.47%
Baptism	8.28%
Atonement	5.92%
Ancestors	6.51%
Zion	5.92%
Historical References	Percentages
Mention of Historical Event	26.04%
Black Members and Priesthood	10.65%
Polygamy	4.73%
Women Exercising Priesthood	7.69%
Ordain Women Action	Percentages
Mention of Action	41.42%
Pants to Church	4.73%
Priesthood Session	31.95%
Priesthood Session: October 2013	13.61%
Priesthood Session: April 2014	15.38%
Priesthood Session: October 2014	4.73%
Response to Ordain Women	Percentages
Disciplinary Measure	15.98%
Excommunication	13.61%
Ostracize	23.08%

Note. The shaded rows signify a larger category and the white rows signify a category that belongs to the closest shaded row above.

Appendix C – Blog Listing

Table 9

Listing of Blogs Used in Research Design

Blogs	Main URL
Ordain Women	http://ordainwomen.org/ow_blog/
The Exponent	http://www.the-exponent.com/
Zelophehad's Daughters	http://zelophehadsdaughters.com/
Reese Dixon	http://www.reesedixon.com/
Progressive Mormon Mom	http://progressivemormonmom.com/
A Fear of Flying	http://nosurf.blogspot.com/
A Well-Behaved Mormon Woman	http://wellbehavedmormonwoman.blogspot.com/
Wheats & Tares	http://www.wheatandtares.org/

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