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The Role of Latter-day Saint Resentment in Utah's Culture War

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THE ROLE OF LATTER-DAY SAINT RESENTMENT IN UTAH'S CULTURE WAR

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ABSTRACT

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Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who have continually held majority status in Utah soon after arriving in 1847, dominate the state in terms of culture and politics. In the last few decades, the dominance of the Church and its members has led to contentious disputes regarding issues ranging from property sales to medical marijuana and conversion therapy, but the conflict has existed since the 19th century. The conflict, which is often referred to as Utah's culture war, has fueled resentful feelings on both sides of the battle and is in turn fueled by the negative sentiments. As the minority group in the cultural conflict, non-Latter-day Saints are often on the losing side of political and social clashes, and many become resentful towards the Church and Latter-day Saints. Though some research has focused on the religious conflict in Utah generally, no research has attempted to systematically measure resentment towards the Church and Latter-day Saints. I introduce a new measure called Latter-day Saint Resentment (LDSR) to accurately capture and quantify religious resentment levels in Utah and determine to what extent LDSR affects political behavior. Motivated by the contact hypothesis, social geography theory and social identity theory, I find that Latter-day Saint population

density is negatively and significantly correlated with LDSR in some instances, but in more fully specified models, religious affiliation and political ideology are more predictive of LDSR. LDSR can also be used to predict political attitudes and behavior. I find that LDSR is significantly correlated with vote choice in the 2019 Salt Lake City mayoral election, but the relationship falls away once I account for the religious affiliation of the voters.

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Introduction

Main Street Plaza is a pedestrian area in downtown Salt Lake City known for its immaculate gardens and pristine reflecting pool. The quiet plaza is a haven in the middle of the bustling city meant to inspire tranquility and calm, so it is difficult to believe that it was once the center of what may accurately be described as the most divisive dispute along religious lines in Utah's recent history.

In 1999, the Salt Lake City Council voted 5-2 along religious lines to approve a proposal put forward by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter "the Church")[1] to buy a block of Main Street and convert it into a pedestrian plaza. At the time, the block of Main Street separated two city blocks owned by the Church. One block houses the Church's Administration Building, the other block houses Temple Square, Utah's largest tourist attraction and a site of great religious importance to Latter-day Saints. In the proposal, the Church had included behavioral restrictions that it intended to implement in the plaza if the city council approved the plan. After some debate, the city ultimately approved the sale, but they chose to maintain the easement to the property, making it a public space even though the Church owned the land. Confusion resulted over whether or not the plaza was a traditional public park because the city maintained the easement. If the plaza was a public park, then the Church's behavioral restrictions would be unconstitutional as they would restrict public access.

The restrictions were meant to ensure that behavior in the plaza met the standards of the Church. Actions that might commonly occur in other public parks or

[1] Some refer to the Church as the Mormon Church and members of the Church as Mormons, but the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint recently requested that the use of "Mormon" be discontinued and only the official name of the Church be used with specific terms preferred shortened references (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2018).

spaces, such as sunbathing or smoking, would not be permitted. More specifically, the Church wanted to guarantee that anti-Latter-day Saint protesting, and the distribution of anti-Latter-day Saint literature would not occur in the plaza. Members of the public and the local chapter of the ACLU took issue with these restrictions claiming that they would limit free speech and expression. Soon after the sale of Main Street to the Church, the ACLU sued Salt Lake City in federal court questioning the constitutionality of the sale. The Church's restrictions were upheld in 2001 in the U.S. District Court, but the victory was short lived as the decision was quickly overturned a year later by the 10th Circuit Court. The reversal meant that the Church's restrictions were unconstitutional unless they were replaced with "time, place, and manner" restrictions, or the city extinguished the easement. The reversal created a standoff between Church officials who wanted the easement extinguished, and Salt Lake City leaders who insisted on "time, place, and manner" restrictions.

Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson, who had been elected after the initial sale was finalized, strongly opposed giving up the easement. His opposition, and the Church's insistence that the city extinguish the easement, led to months of debate and an increase in tension across the state. The tensions among Church and state leader also enflamed the public and led to protests and conflict on both sides. By late 2002, the conflict had taken a toll on Mayor Anderson's standing in public opinion polls and an agreement was reached for the city to relinquish the easement in exchange for two and a half acres of land owned by the Church and five million dollars to be used for constructing a community center. The seemingly endless conflict likely served to bolster support for the agreement and by the time it was finalized in July 2003, 61 percent of voters agreed with the settlement (Monson and Norman 2007).

The plaza dispute on its face seems to center on free speech rights; however, a deeper analysis of Utah's history and the parties involved in the conflict suggests that the controversy has much more to do with religion. In fact, most of the division in opinion regarding the issue can be explained by the religious affiliation of the key players in the controversy. The five members of the city council who approved the sale of Main Street to the Church are Latter-day Saints, the two members who opposed it are not. Judge Ted Stewart, who upheld the Church's restrictions, is a member of the Church. Mayor Anderson, who initially opposed the settlement, was raised in a Latter-day Saint family but no longer affiliated with the Church by the time he was elected mayor. Religious affiliation also predicted public opinion on the matter: 69 percent of very active Latter-day Saint voters strongly agreed with the plaza settlement compared to just 17 percent of voters very active in non-Latter-day Saint religions (Monson and Norman 2007).

Disputes like the Main Street Plaza controversy are not anomalies in Utah, but rather the product of cultural conflict resulting from the religious demographics of the state. Utah is unique as the only U.S. state with a majority of the population belonging to a single religious group. The 2.1 million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah form majorities in twenty-four of twenty-nine counties (Canham 2018; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2021).[2] This single group dominance plays a major role in the tension between Latter-day Saints and non-Latter-day Saints in Utah that spans nearly two centuries (Brown 2018; Decker 2019). As illustrated by the Main Street Plaza controversy, conflict tends to arise when the

[2] Latter-day Saints are not a majority in Carbon, Grand, San Juan, Salt Lake, and Summit counties. Carbon County has a long history with the mining industry, including a large number of (non-Latter-day Saint) immigrants to supply labor for the mines. Grand County is the home of Moab and Arches National Park and Summit County is the home of Park City (also historically a mining town, but not a ski resort town). Both areas have attracted a large number of non-Latter-day Saint residents because of the tourism industry. San Juan County is home of a large Native American reservation and population.

Church's involvement in certain matters affects non-Latter-day Saints. This is especially true in Salt Lake City where Latter-day Saints make up only 29 percent of the voter population compared to 60 percent statewide (Y2 Analytics 2019a). Religious conflicts across Utah, and the cultural and political tension these conflicts foster, can lead to negative feelings about and perceptions of Latter-day Saints. These negative feelings and the distinctive demographic composition of Utah allow for a case study of minority group resentment of the majority group, and, more specifically, which conditions correlate with resentment toward the Church.

The purpose of this thesis is to establish a general theory of religious resentment and determine what role religious resentment plays in Utah's culture war. To do so, I address several questions. A foundational question I address first is whether Latter-day Saint Resentment (LDSR) can be measured. Because LDSR is a new measure, I take additional steps to examine its validity including a factor analysis (see Table 1) and a list experiment which I discuss later. Using this validated measure of LDSR, I examine whether the majority status of Latter-day Saints in a precinct along with the density of the Latter-day Saint population predict LDSR. I also examine whether LDSR is better predicted by social identity factors such as religious affiliation and political ideology. Finally, I assess whether LDSR is an important predictor of political attitudes and behavior. My analyses reveal that LDSR is correlated with Latter-day Saint population density, but the strength of the correlation varies depending on the respondents' religious affiliation. Religious affiliation is correlated with LDSR and voters unaffiliated with any faith demonstrate the highest levels of LDSR, followed closely by religious non-Latter-day Saint and less active Latter-day Saints respectively. Religious affiliation and Latter-day Saint Population density also interact, correlating with increased LDSR levels among religious non-

Latter-day Saints though the relationship is not statistically significant. I find that political ideology is also correlated with LDSR and once accounted for, the relationship between LDSR and Latter-day Saint population density is no longer statistically significant. LDSR is also a significant predictor of vote choice in the 2019 Salt Lake City mayoral election, but the relationship is statistically insignificant once I control for voters' religious affiliation.

Though much prior research has reviewed and discussed the religious and cultural conflict in Utah, no research has ever attempted to systematically measure the broad concept of religious resentment in the narrow context of Utah and Latter-day Saint resentment. Since LDSR likely shapes voters' attitudes, it is necessary to quantify and measure this variable. This thesis is unique as it contributes a new measure of resentment towards the Church and its members that will permit a better understanding of the cultural and religious conflict in Utah. Resentment of any kind must be understood before it can be combatted, so understanding which factors contribute to LDSR is a necessary first step to decreasing religious conflict in Utah.

A richer understanding of LDSR will also serve as a model for future research aimed at understanding religious conflict and resentment in the United States more broadly. The strong ties between religious affiliation and political ideology in the U.S., and the increased use of religious rhetoric by political candidates and elected officials signals the growing importance of religion in politics (Calfano and Djupe 2009; McLaughlin and Wise 2014). Thus, a strong understanding of religious resentment is vital as religion and religious affiliation become increasingly important factors in politics and political behavior.

Building a Theory of Religious Resentment

The study of religious resentment is a relatively new phenomenon, but it is not without theoretical roots. Resentment among religious groups mirrors resentful behavior between racial and other social groups. Using theories of racial resentment, intergroup relations, and social identity, I establish a theory of religious resentment grounded in existing research on intergroup relations. After establishing a theory of religious resentment, I address it in the specific context of Utah and Latter-day Saints. Utah serves as an ideal setting because of the long history of conflict between Latter-day Saints and other Utah residents, and the social and political homogeneity of Latter-day Saints.

Theories of racial resentment have received much attention in political science. Much of the early racial resentment research focuses on racial threat as a catalyst for increased resentment; fear of a larger and more influential minority race leads the majority race to become more politically and socially active against the minority (Blumer 1958; Carsey 1995; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Key 1949; Zingher and Steen Thomas 2014). This theory of racial threat, developed from Blalock's (1967) group threat theory, explains that racial in-group political behavior is "a function of the size and proximity of the out-group population" (Enos 2015, 1). For example, during the 1940s in the U.S. South, whites who felt threatened by African Americans were more politically active depending on their proximity to areas densely populated by African Americans (Key 1949). Enos (2015) supports the theory further by demonstrating that changes to the demographic context in which white voters live affects their political behavior. After the demolition of twelve public housing projects in Chicago, roughly 25,000 people—the majority of them Black—were removed from their neighborhoods. Following the demolition, overall voter turnout dropped 13.4

percentage points for white voters living nearest to the demolished public housing. The change in turnout for white residents varied depending on the size of the population that had been removed from their vicinity, but voter turnout for Black residents remained unchanged. Similarly, in the 1950s and 1960s, the migration of African Americans from the South to northern and western cities resulted in a distinct political reaction from whites. White voters in Chicago who lived in areas adjacent to the expanding Black ghetto favored segregationist George Wallace over racially liberal Paul Douglas (Edsall and Edsall 1992), highlighting the effect that racial resentment can have on political behaviors like voting.

Racial resentment can also be affected by the demographic organization of geographic areas. Enos (2017) has evaluated the effects of "social geography," or the space between groups, on the interactions of groups in various cities. He argues that it is not simply the size of the groups or intergroup contact that seems to matter, but the organization of the in-groups and out-groups in residential areas. Enos's theory states that geographic space between groups affects the groups' perceptions of one another, which in turn affects their political behavior. The less contact these groups have, the more negative the intergroup perceptions will be. So, regardless of the size of the in-group and out-group populations, segregated communities will exhibit some levels of resentment. Through several experiments, Enos demonstrates that people tend to accept those nearest to them as similar to themselves and those who do not inhabit their community as dissimilar. This perceived dissimilarity can lead to prejudiced perceptions and behavior if the segregated groups are brought together.

One experiment involved sending pairs of native Spanish speakers into primarily white Boston neighborhoods to ride assigned train routes, thus simulating

demographic change in the neighborhoods.[3] The effects of the experiment reveal that despite white residents' initially unbiased attitudes towards Latinos, exposure to what they perceived as an increase in the minority population lead to a significant increase in group-based bias against Latinos. Despite the limited exposure white residents would have had with the Latinos on the train platforms, this minor alteration in the social geography—the proximity and size of an out-group— changed their perception of an entire group. Enos states that the experiment highlights a paradox: "the psychological space between us increases when the geographic space between us decreases" (Enos 2017, 114). Regardless of initial biases, bringing once geographically distant racial groups closer together can increase biases in the resident group. However, Enos ultimately concludes that increasing the frequency, and not just the depth, of contact between groups can curb resentment fostered by geographic separation and exacerbated by its removal. So, more heterogenous communities where meaningful intergroup interaction is likely to occur more frequently are more likely to have lower levels of racial resentment than segregated homogenous communities (Oliver 2010).

A large portion of racial resentment research is dedicated to the actual measurement of racial resentment. While early research focused on measuring explicit acts of racism, theories of modern racism target symbolic racial attitudes (Henry and Sears 2002; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Kinder and Sears 1981). According to Carney and Enos (2015, 1), symbolic racist attitudes are rooted in anti-Black hostility and the

[3] Before the experiment, white commuters at nine separate Boston train stations were given a website's URL and asked to anonymously complete a survey on their views of immigration and to share their email for a follow-up. After this initial survey, the pairs of native Spanish speakers, who were unaware of the purpose of the experiment, were sent to the nine stations to board inbound trains to Boston with the local morning commuters over the course of two weeks. As planned by Enos, the Spanish speakers spent most of the train rides conversing in Spanish to increase the social-geographic impact of the experiment. Survey participants were then emailed the same survey after the treatment.

belief that Blacks violate traditional social values. To properly measure this resentment, new scales were created to capture both the racial affect and social value judgements—the belief that a group violates tradition values—contained in symbolic racial attitudes. Though these measures have long focused on anti-Black attitudes, Carney and Enos's study of modern racism scales reveals that they are applicable to other out-groups. By using the racial resentment measures for target groups other than Blacks, they demonstrate that modern racism scales can be used to "measure attitudes toward any group rather than African Americans alone" since they are designed to measure a social value dimension and thus capture inherent biases against any out-group that violates the in-group's social values. Similar measures can therefore be applied in a religious context and used to capture resentment among religious groups like latter-day Saints.

Carney and Enos (2015) underscore the importance of measuring intergroup resentment. The original model of out-group resentment, created by Gordon Allport (1954), emphasizes the importance of contact between ethnic and racial groups in decreasing intolerance. Allport claims that for contact to reduce prejudice, four conditions must be met: equal status, common goals, cooperation, and institutional support. If one group is treated as subordinate in interactions, the groups have differing objectives, the groups never work collaboratively, or group leaders never promote contact, it is unlikely that contact will cause either group to become more tolerant. Contact allows for the formation of cross-cutting interests. These interests often provide occasions for groups to work together and interact more closely. In-depth interactions seem to matter most to meaningful reductions in intolerance since "only the type of contact that leads people to *do* things together is likely to result in changed attitudes" (Allport 1954, 276). Blau (1977) theorizes that group interactions

will be most positive when both in-group and out-group members share personal associations. He argues that meaningful connections are made where social integration is the greatest, which happens when populations are most heterogenous. While heterogeneity promotes intergroup relations, homogeneity hampers it. So, the greater the population disparity between the in-group and the out-group, the less likely it is that meaningful intergroup contact will be made.

Many studies have substantiated the contact hypothesis, finding that contact between in-groups and out-groups promotes greater tolerance, while separation fosters resentment (K. T. Brown et al. 2003; R. Brown and Hewstone 2005; Sigelman and Welch 1993; Tropp and Pettigrew 2005; Tsukashima and Montero 1976). Massey, Hodson, and Sekulic's (1999, 669) study of ethnic resentment levels in the former Yugoslavia, for example, demonstrates that "minority group members living in enclaves are more intolerant than when living dispersed among majority populations," and that ethnic separation breeds future conflict. Pettigrew and Tropp (2005, 768) substantiate the contact hypothesis further in their meta-analytic test of intergroup contact which "conclusively show[ed] that contact can promote reductions in intergroup prejudice." Reviewing the results of 713 independent samples from 515 previous studies, Pettigrew and Tropp find that the reductions in intergroup prejudice are not due to self-selection as contact reduces prejudices regardless of whether the contact is voluntary. The study also demonstrates that while Allport's four optimal conditions facilitate the reduction of prejudice, they are not necessary to reduce prejudice. Most importantly, the meta-analysis exhibits that the contact hypothesis, originally conceived for racial and ethnic interactions, can be expanded to other groups.

An example of the contact hypothesis's application in a non-racial or ethnic setting is Mousa's (2020) experiment conducted in post-ISIS Iraq in which players were randomly assigned to either all-Christian or mixed Christian-Muslim soccer teams. After six months, Christian players were more likely to vote for a Muslim player from another team to receive a sportsmanship award, register for a mixed team the following season, and train with Muslims six months after the experiment. Similarly, Scacco and Warren's (2018) field experiment in Nigeria analyzed the interactions of Christian and Muslim young men in religious riot-prone Kaduna, Nigeria in 2000. The men were randomly assigned to computer sciences classes, some of them a heterogeneous mix of Muslim and Christian, and others homogenous classes of Muslims or Christians. To measure prejudice and discriminatory behavior, each class was broken down further into partnerships and each partnership participated in a series of games to determine how they would treat and interact with one another. As group contact was limited to the short periods the subjects spent together in class over six weeks, the results showed that measured prejudice did not decrease significantly. However, subjects in more heterogeneous classes exhibited lower levels of discriminatory behavior towards their out-group peers compared to the subjects in more homogenous classes, demonstrating the intergroup contact can positively impact behavior. Therefore, greater heterogeneity in groups provides more opportunity for contact between in-groups and out-groups and thus increases the likelihood of deeper intergroup interaction occurring. This contact may improve face-to-face interactions between social groups but changing overall social attitudes in communities proves more difficult if intergroup contact is limited to a short period of time. Therefore, religious resentment levels against Latter-day Saints in Utah are likely affected by the density of the Latter-day Saint population in each region. In Salt

Lake City specifically, the limited interactions between Latter-day Saints and non-Latter-day Saints may lower LDSR levels but are not likely to result in the lasting change that extended contact can promote.

The contact hypothesis conflicts with Blalock's (1967) group threat theory which holds that as the out-group increases in size, in-group resentment levels will increase. Blalock emphasizes that competition for resources and power will increase as the size of the out-group increases, leading to greater in-group resentment. If the in-group is dominant in terms of resources and power, the out-group is also likely to exhibit resentment. So, communities where obvious disparities in group status or resources exist are likely to experience greater intolerance or resentment than communities where group status and resource control are more balanced. Perhaps in more religiously heterogeneous states, group threat theory better predicts how groups might react to demographic change; however, in Utah, where Latter-day Saints are the overwhelming state majority, non-Latter-day Saints likely see themselves as consistent religious minorities regardless of the religious makeup of their neighborhoods. Therefore, an increase in the Latter-day Saint population density is unlikely to promote feelings of threat when non-Latter-day Saints cannot truly hold majority status. Simply put, they are always outnumbered even if they are a majority in their neighborhoods. It is much more likely that an increase in Latter-day Saints in an area will promote contact above that which already occurs in the Latter-day Saint-dense populous, promoting more congenial relations rather than more resentment.

Contact's effects on resentment may be limited by the influence of individuals' group membership. Belonging to a group impacts an individuals' self-perceptions as well as their perceptions of others. Social identities are "self-perceptions based on cognitive links between self-identity and the identities of groups

or organizations" (Elsbach and Bhattacharya 2001, 393). The topic has been the subject of a substantial amount of research, much of which has focused on the effects on social identity on intergroup relations (Hogg and Williams 2000; Tajfel 1974; Tajfel and Turner 1979; John C. Turner and Reynolds 2012). Tajfel (1978) introduced social identity theory as a way to explain self-identification in regards to social groups. The theory holds that individuals define their own identities based on the social groups to which they belong and that these identifications strengthen self-identity. Self-identification with an in-group necessarily creates an out-group and results in the inclination to view one's own groups with a positive bias compared to the out-group (Islam 2014). Therefore, self-identifying with certain social groups can lead to exaggerated perceived differences between one's identity in-groups and other out-groups (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic 1998; Hogg and Williams 2000; J.C. Turner et al. 1987).

Egan (2019) demonstrates that political affiliation has distinct effects on social identities as well. He finds that small but significant shares of Americans engage in "identity switching," making changes regarding ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and class that are predicted by their partisanship and ideology. The efforts of group members to conform their identities to the group "prototype" identity places them in better standing within the group. As social identities become entangled, so do social groups. As individuals begin to connect facets of their identities, they will also likely connect the social groups to which they belong. Similarly, they will begin to associate the social identity factors they do not have with the groups to which they do not belong. Sorting in-groups and out-groups based on multiple social identity characteristics could lead to much deeper divisions between them (Campbell et al. 2018). For example, Bolce and De Maio (1999b) find that non-fundamentalists often

use Christian fundamentalists as a reference group in political decision making. They find that antifundamentalists associate Christian fundamentalists with the Republican party, to its detriment, demonstrating that resentment towards Christian fundamentalists is a significant explanatory variable of vote choice in presidential elections. As non-fundamentalists fuse their religious identity with their political identity, their religious opinions begin to affect their political activity and decisions. Therefore, social identities like religious affiliation and political ideology could predict individuals' resentment towards Latter-day Saints as well as their political behavior when Latter-day Saints are involved.

Groups with which individuals *do not* associate are just as important to their social identities as groups with which they *do* associate. Individuals can use self-categorization—self-definition based on the groups to which they belong—to cognitively dissociate from groups with which they do not identify (Steele and Aronson 1995). This phenomenon, termed disidentification by Tajfel (1978), leads to social identities shaped by individuals' desires not to be perceived as associated with certain groups (Maliepaard and Verkuyten 2018; Spears et al. 1997). Elsbach and Battacharya (2001) explain that disidentification can lead individuals to take action against groups from which they dissociate, especially by voting, voicing their opinions, or completing volunteer work. This phenomenon leads to the assumption that those who do not wish to be associated with the Church will be proactive in voting against Latter-day Saint candidates, or policies they see as Church sponsored.

Religious identification is unique among social identities as it "offers a distinctive sacred worldview and eternal group membership, unmatched by identification with other social groups" (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010, 67). While other identity groups simply offer greater sense of self or heightened group-

based self-esteem, religiosity can be driven by more profound needs such as influence in an unpredictable world, purpose and meaning, or desire for personal growth and development (Kay et al. 2008; Park 2007; Sedikides and Gebauer 2010). The substantial importance of religion in individuals' lives often leads to their religious identities being the focal point of all their social identities including their non-religious identities, leading many to associate with non-religious groups based on their religious affiliation (Kinnvall 2004). Thus, many Utah voters may feel compelled to base their political affiliations and opinions on their religious affiliation and beliefs. Furthermore, voters' may be more inclined to vote for candidates based on the candidates' religious affiliation.

Some research analyzes religion through the lens of ethno-religious theory. This model of religion views religious groups as ethnic groups because of the links between the groups' ethnic and religious traditions (Lynn and Moberg 1996; Varshney 2009). The theory supports the idea that deeply unified religious groups often act like quasi-ethnic groups. In other words, religious belonging fosters ethnic-group-like behavior. Campbell, Green, and Monson (2014, 25) explain that "the [Latter-day Saint] subculture has the high-level group solidarity typically associated with ethnicity, nationality, or race." Thus, it is appropriate to relate ethnic minority-group relations to the peculiar religious enclaves in Utah even though belonging to the Church is not, strictly speaking, the same as belonging to an ethnicity.

Like theories of ethnic intolerance, there are many studies of general religious intolerance (Bolce and De Maio 1999b, 1999a, 2006, 2008; D. E. Campbell, Green, and Monson 2012; Wilcox and Kim 2015; Woodberry 1998), several of which focus on the effects of population density on resentment (Alper and Olson 2011; Enos 2017; Enos and Gidron 2016). Bolce and De Maio (2008) argue that the density of a

religious population can affect public opinion of that religious group. They demonstrate that living in densely populated Christian counties reduces the likelihood of developing anti-Christian fundamentalist views. Furthermore, those living in counties with lower levels of Christian fundamentalists will likely display greater levels of prejudice due in part to anti-Christian influences from external media sources (Kerr 2003).

Although there are no studies specifically on Latter-day Saint resentment, there are a number of works that examine attitudes of Americans generally toward Latter-day Saints (Benson, Merolla, and Geer 2011; D. E. Campbell, Green, and Monson 2012; Karpowitz, Monson, and Patterson 2016; Monson and Riding 2008; Penning 2009). Yet, none of these works attempt to measure the kind of resentment that could be especially present in the context of Utah where Latter-day Saints predominate. There are, however, studies of Muslim American resentment and anti-Semitism which serve as models for measuring LDSR (Alper and Olson 2011; Kalkan, Layman, and Uslaner 2009; Lajevardi 2020). To quantify anti-Muslim American sentiment in the United States, Lajevardi and Abrajano (2019) developed a measure of Muslim American resentment that accurately predicts vote intentions in the 2016 presidential election, demonstrating the importance of religious resentment in political activity. Alper and Olsen (2011) implement a similar measure to determine if Jews feel like outsiders in their communities because of their religion, and to measure anti-Semitism levels in Jewish communities throughout the United States.

Accurate measurements of religious intolerance are key as religious differences seem to be just as salient as racial or ethnic differences in group relations. Campbell (2006), for example, posits a theory of religious threat that says religious

people become more politically active as the secular population in their communities increase. Testing this theory among evangelical Christians, Campbell finds that as the number of secularists in their communities increased, evangelical Christians' political activity increases, and they display greater preference for Republican presidential candidates. Following Campbell's theory, in areas where Latter-day Saints are minorities, one would expect resentment towards the Church to increase as the number of Latter-day Saints in their communities increases.

Just as the theory of racial threat translates into religious terms, so does social-geography theory. Enos and Gidron (2016) extend the social geography theory to religious groups by demonstrating the effects of geographic segregation on ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews in Jerusalem, thus, the effects of social geography can be applied to religious populations as well as ethnic or racial populations. Greater segregation between differing Jewish population resulted in greater in-group bias. The greater the proportion of the out-group to the in-group, the more in-group bias decreased. So, in Utah, resentment levels could be affected by the density and the location of Latter-day Saint populations. More homogeneous neighborhoods lead to more in-group bias, so in areas with few Latter-day Saints there is likely to be higher levels of LDSR.

As illustrated by the Main Street Plaza controversy, Utah provides an ideal context for applying religious resentment theory. The long-standing religious divide in the state, paired with the resentful feelings resulting from this divide create an ideal environment for analyzing out-group perceptions. Latter-day Saints, unlike Jews, are very socially and politically homogeneous, spreading their majority status across many social groups (Campbell, Green, and Monson 2014). However, Utah has enough religious variation to provide areas of very high and very low Latter-day Saint

density which allows me to push the boundaries of religious resentment theory in a case that provides for adequate testing of the ratio of believers to non-believers. If religious resentment is undetectable in Utah, it is unlikely to be found elsewhere.

In a state where a single religious group constitutes a clear majority, non-Latter-day Saints understandably can feel that their interests are not being served. The early conflicts and Utah's Church-centric culture created a foundation for Utah's modern religious and cultural conflicts which center around social issues and the majority status of the Church (Campbell, Green, and Monson 2014; Decker 2019). It is nearly impossible to ignore the presence and influence of the Church in Utah. The state is dotted with Latter-day Saint religious and historical sites. The Church plays a major role in the state's culture and economy and operates a statewide newspaper (the Deseret News) and major television and radio station (KSL). A state holiday commemorates the arrival of Latter-day Saint pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley and many businesses close on Sundays to accommodate the sabbath. When religion is discussed, individuals are referred to as members or non-members of the Church rather than as members of distinctive faiths.

Utah was settled by Latter-day Saints in the mid-19th century and has been home to a constant Latter-day Saint majority ever since. Well before Utah became the 45th state in 1896, religious conflict centred around the power and political influence of the Church erupted in the Utah Territory (Jonas 1961). Many Latter-day Saint officials served in major political positions, including Brigham Young who was simultaneously the president of the Church and the Utah Territory's first appointed governor. Church leaders often weighed in on political matters, encouraging other Latter-day Saints to vote for their preferred candidates who received 96 percent of 96,107 votes cast from 1852 to 1870 (Decker 2019). Nineteenth century Latter-day

Saints even organized the People's Party in response to religious minorities organizing the Liberal Party to represent non-Latter-day Saint interests (Brown 2018). Utah's media is also divided along religious lines. *The Salt Lake Tribune* was created to directly oppose the Church owned *Deseret News* and to serve as a spokesman for the small non-Latter-day Saint minority in Utah. While *Deseret News* lays claim to being Utah's first newspaper, *The Tribune's* claims it has been "Utah's Independent Voice Since 1871" (Malmquist 1971).

Allport's (1954) model of out-group resentment is illustrated perfectly in modern-day Utah. The perceived influence of the Church and Latter-day Saints—the in-group—alienates non-Latter-day Saints—the out-group. Just as it was in Utah's early days, the in-group dominance is still felt through the large Latter-day Saint majority that has led to overrepresentation of Latter-day Saints in elected offices. In fact, 89 of the 103 lawmakers in the Utah Legislature are Latter-day Saints (Davidson 2021). This political dominance leads many non-Latter-day Saints to feel that, regardless of the Church's actual involvement in state politics, the Church's preferred policies will eventually be implemented by the Latter-day Saint dominated legislature. Their fears are not entirely unfounded as Church positions often mirror the policies that are implemented in Utah while the policies that the Church disfavors are rarely successful.[4] Despite the fact the Church now maintains a politically neutral stance, it still addresses issues that it believes might have significant community or moral consequences or that directly affect its interests (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2019). The Church issues rare statements expressing its positions on certain issues. Though these statements have no binding effect on members of the

[4] In 2015 a bill to allow the use of medical marijuana in Utah was put forward and passed in the Utah Senate, but after the Church made its opposition to the bill known, it lost traction with voters and failed in the Utah House of Representatives. A similar bill, which the Church approved, passed in 2018.

Church, they still have significant impact on members' opinions (Campbell, Green, and Monson 2014; Gordon and Gillespie 2012).[5] Consequently, many non-Latter-day Saints see the statements as signals to Latter-day Saint legislators on how they should vote regarding certain legislation.

This in-group dominance in politics is also exacerbated by the fact Latter-day Saints are overwhelmingly conservative Republicans (Campbell, Green, and Monson 2014). The connection between Church members and the Republican party, which dominates Utah politics, can further isolate non-members of the Church who are overwhelmingly not conservative Republicans—specifically non-religious people who tend to be liberal Democrats. Only five Democratic presidential candidates have ever won Utah's electoral votes[6] and Utah's elected officials at both the state and county levels are consistently and overwhelmingly Republican. While several other states are similarly dominated by the Republican party, no state other than Utah has a super majority of elected officials who are both Republican and members of a single religion. This one-party dominance not only gives strength to the perception that the Church has a powerful influence over state politics, but it also aggravates policy conflicts in Utah. As previously discussed, the Church occasionally releases statements on its position in national and local policy debates. Conflict arises because the Church's positions almost always reflect the Republican position, and in Utah it is almost always the Republican position that wins. Due to the high correlation between being a Latter-day Saint and being a Republican, many Utahns conflate the success of

[5]Although nearly 45 percent of Utah legislators and 64 percent of Utahns supported the ERA in 1975, after the Church's official statements against the proposed amendment, Latter-day Saints mobilized against the ERA and the legislature strongly rejected the ratification proposal.
[6] Democrats William Jennings Bryan (1896), Woodrow Wilson (1916), Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1932, 1936, 1940, 1944), Harry S. Truman (1948), and Lyndon B. Johnson (1964) won Utah's electoral votes in their respective campaigns for the presidency.

Republican supported legislation in Utah with the success of Church supported legislation.

The Church's influence is felt outside the sphere of legislation as well. For instance, in 2019, after a bill intended to ban conversion therapy for minors failed in the Utah Legislature, then Governor Gary Herbert introduced a regulatory rule banning licensed therapists from practicing conversion therapy. However, the Church quickly voiced its opposition to Governor Herbert's proposed rule change, citing problems both of ambiguity and overreach. In response, Governor Herbert amended the proposed rule to include a provision clarifying the extent of the rule's effect, thus satisfying the Church. When the new rule change was proposed, it quickly garnered the Church's endorsement (McCombs 2019). Church approval was not necessary for the regulatory rule to pass, but because the Church has such a massive influence on state affairs, the decision was adapted to satisfy the Church's wishes.

The dominance of Church members culturally and politically can lead many non-members to feel that they are constantly getting the short end of the proverbial stick. Despite their best efforts to represent their own interests, they cannot seem to overcome the social and political goliath that is the Church. Frustration at the long list of apparent victories of Church interests over their own can lead non-Latter-day Saints in Utah to harbor resentful attitudes towards the Church and its members which may be expressed through their political behavior.

Hypotheses

This review of the literature leads to several hypotheses about religious resentment that can be tested in the context of Latter-day Saint Resentment. Group threat theory and the contact hypothesis predict two different outcomes of increased

contact between Latter-day Saints and non-Latter-day Saints. Group threat theory predicts that as contact increases between the two groups, resentment will increase, whereas the contact hypothesis predicts that resentment will decrease. Since Latter-day Saints make up such a large portion of the population, it is unlikely that non-Latter-day Saints live in complete isolation from Church members. Even in Salt Lake City where the Latter-day Saint population is smaller, there is still a pervasive Church influence. This influence leads to familiarity with and continual awareness of the Church among non-Latter-day Saints even in the absence of contact. This familiarity is likely conducive to more congenial relations as the Latter-day Saint population and contact increase. Therefore, I hypothesize that Latter-day Saint population density will negatively correlate with LDSR. Frequent, in-depth contact should lead to decreased resentment as predicted by the contact hypothesis. So, where Latter-day Saints are the smallest minority, LDSR levels will be highest, but as Latter-day Saints population density increases, LDSR levels will decrease.

I also anticipate that independent of geographic proximity respondents' religious affiliation and other related social identities—such as political ideology — will correlate with LDSR. As religious affiliation is a strong social identity, voters will use their religious identities to orient their opinions of other social groups, including Latter-day Saints. Consequently, Latter-day Saints will likely have the lowest levels of LDSR, followed by religious non-Latter-day Saints and non-religious people. Those with political ideologies more common among Utah Latter-day saints will exhibit lower levels of LDSR. Thus, strong liberals will likely have the highest levels of LDSR while strong conservatives will have the lowest levels.

Finally, since social identities can have a significant influence on individuals' out-group perception (Islam 2014) as well as their political opinions (Egan 2019), I

predict that LDSR will correlate to vote choice when used as an independent variable in the 2019 Salt Lake mayoral election. I anticipate LDSR will be especially correlated with vote choice as this election was a non-partisan local election where both candidates shared party affiliation and political ideology but differed in religious affiliation.

> **H_1**: Latter-day Saint population density will negatively correlate with LDSR in Utah. Where Latter-day Saints are the smallest minority, LDSR levels will be highest, but LDSR will decrease as Latter-day Saint population density increases.
>
> **H_2**: Social identities—such as religious affiliation and political ideology—will correlate with LDSR. Those with identity factors more common among Utah Latter-day Saints—strong conservatives—will exhibit lower levels of LDSR, while strong liberals will score higher on the LDSR scale.
>
> **H_3**: When used as an independent variable in the non-partisan 2019 mayoral election, LDSR will correlate with vote choice.

Data and Methodology

My analysis of LDSR draws from two 2019 Utah surveys—one conducted in Salt Lake City and the other statewide—conducted by Y2 Analytics.[7] As previously discussed, Utah is unique as a state dominated by a single religious group, but Salt Lake City is an enclave where Latter-day Saints are the minority. Due to this disparity, using two surveys at the state and city levels offers a clearer picture of LDSR in Utah. The statewide survey allows me to analyze areas with mid to high

[7] I received IRB approval from Brigham Young University to conduct my analyses on the data. IRB number: IRB2021-257.

Latter-day Saint population densities but including a survey of Salt Lake City also allows a greater number of Latter-day Saint population density precincts than could be obtained in a statewide sample. For ease of analysis and interpretation, the two survey data sets were merged, effectively creating a Salt Lake City oversample within the statewide data. In descriptive analysis, the two surveys are analyzed with appropriate weights applied. In multivariate analysis, the two surveys are analyzed unweighted (but with control variables that account for the weighting) and a dummy variable for the Salt Lake City Survey.

In the state-wide survey, voters were chosen randomly from Utah's file of registered voters and were invited to participate in an initial online survey that recruited them to an ongoing panel. Of the 2,608 respondents who participated in the initial survey in July 2019, 911 completed a follow-up online panel survey in December 2019. The participants of the Salt Lake survey were selected as a single cross section survey, but using the same sampling methodology of likely voters, with 751 respondents completing a pre-election survey in October 2019. To correct for non-response and minimize the likelihood of coverage error, responses in both surveys were weighted according to turnout probability, registered party, gender, age, and location—City Council district in the Salt Lake City survey and county in the Utah survey. A statewide weight for gender was also applied in the Utah survey to ensure the accurate reflection of the statewide registered voter population. Weights were trimmed at the first and ninety-ninth percentiles.

In the analysis that follows, I use a measure of Latter-day Saint population density data that is an average of the individual-level predictions of Latter-day Saint identity within each of the state's approximately 2,100 vote precincts. The individual-level predictions for the entire state voter file were computed using a model that

incorporated two different estimates of Latter-day Saint density. The first used aggregate percentage of Latter-day Saints in each of the 75 Utah house legislative districts.

The second density measure is constructed by converting the street address of each registered voter in the state to a latitude and longitude and then assigning every voter to a group based on the location of the closest Latter-day Saint "stake." A stake is a religious grouping of Latter-day Saints that is analogous to a Roman Catholic diocese. It is especially useful because Latter-day Saint stakes in Utah have a relatively small variance in size—that is, when a stake has too many congregations and members, it will be divided. Conversely, if the number of congregations and members falls below a certain level, then boundaries will be consolidated. Stakes in Utah generally have between six and ten congregations, and congregations (or "wards" in the Latter-day saint vernacular) are maintained with a relatively small size variance. Because stakes are assigned to a church building within the geographic boundaries of a stake, the street address of the church building can be converted to a latitude and longitude. Thus, every voter, regardless of religious preference or non-preference, can be grouped with the nearest stake building. Using the assumption that stakes are roughly the same size, this grouping means that a higher number of assigned voters corresponds to a lower density of Latter-day Saints. Once the individual level estimates are aggregated at the precinct-level, they show that the model accurately predicts that the areas with the highest Latter-day Saint populations are where they are known to be high (Utah County, Davis County and most rural counties), and that the precincts with the lowest Latter-day Saint populations are located in Salt Lake County, Summit County (Park City), and Grand County (Moab). At the state level, the model also accurately predicts that the Latter-day Saint

population of the state is approximately 60 percent, indicating strong ecological validity.

These two density measures are in turn incorporated into a full model predicting Latter-day Saint identity in combination with two sets of consumer variables: some traditionally associated with Latter-day Saints—such as larger household size, minivan ownership, etc.—and some not traditionally associated with Latter-day Saints—such as interest in cigars and wine.[8]

The density data offered an average aggregate probability of being Latter-day Saint at the precinct level. Since I hypothesize that LDSR correlates with the religious demographics of neighborhoods, I used the density data gathered at the precinct level as it is the closest to a neighborhood level measure.

Religious identity was self-reported by respondents on both surveys. I organized the responses into four subgroups using two different survey questions—religious affiliation (or religious "belonging") and level of self-identified religious activity (religiosity or religious "behaving")."Very Active Latter-day Saints" include those who self-reported as "very active" religiously and also identified as Latter-day Saints. Group two consists of Latter-day Saints who reported they were "somewhat," "not very," or "not active." Non-Latter-day Saints who identify with a religious faith were combined into an "Other Religion" group. Respondents unaffiliated with any religion belong to a "No Affiliation" group. Additionally, the Salt Lake City survey included a sizeable fifth subgroup of former Latter-day Saints that reassigns "Other Religion" and "No Affiliation" respondents if, in a separate question, they indicated

[8] The model scores were calculated and generously provided by Y2 Analytics. Y2 Analytics used their proprietary statewide survey data that included a religious identification question to train the model, and the model estimates were used to score the entire voter file. Y2 Analytics did extensive model validation on individual-level data that was not shared and is not shown.

that they were raised as a Latter-day Saint as a child. I predict that the strength of the relationship between LDSR and Latter-day Saint population density depends, in part, on the religious identity of the respondent.

Respondents self-reported their political ideology by indicating where they fell on a five-point scale ranging from strongly liberal to strongly conservative.[9] As the divisions created by the dominance of the Church in Utah are both religious and political, I expect that LDSR levels will vary depending on the political ideology of the respondent. Accounting for social identity theory and the fact that Latter-day Saints are generally conservative, it is likely that liberals will associate Latter-day Saints with conservatism broadly and therefore project any resentment they harbor for the political ideology onto the religious group (Islam 2014).

To measure LDSR, I created an index similar to those employed in studies of Muslim American Resentment and anti-Semitism (Alper and Olson 2011; Kalkan, Layman, and Uslaner 2009; Lajevardi 2020). The LDSR measure consists of the four following statements employed in both surveys:

(1) "I am proud that Salt Lake City is the home of the LDS Church."

(2) "The LDS Church has too much influence in the state of Utah."

(3) "Overall, the LDS Church has a negative impact on state politics."

(4) "Mormons and non-Mormons have more in common than they have differences."

[9] Respondents also reported party affiliation, but I chose to use only political ideology as party affiliation was not a relevant factor in the 2019 mayoral election. So, for consistency's sake, party affiliation is not included in any regression models.

Respondents were asked to rate each statement on a scale with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree." Statements 1 and 4 were reverse coded so that increasing values indicate greater resentment, and the subsequent scale was rescaled between 0 and 1 for ease of interpretation.

Table 1 presents factor analysis and reliability analysis for the LDSR index in both surveys as well as the merged data. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the Utah survey, 0.84 for the Salt Lake City survey, and 0.87 for the merged data set indicate that the questions in the index reliably measure the same concept. A factor analysis of the LDSR measures for both surveys and the merged data set suggests the measure is unidimensional with the factor loadings ranging from 0.61 to 0.89 in the Utah survey, 0.47 to 0.90 in the Salt Lake City survey, and 0.55 to 0.91 in the merged data. The Eigenvalues for the first factor were 2.5, 2.4, and 2.5 for the Utah, Salt Lake City, and merged surveys respectively. The other Eigenvalues were all well below 1, so I can safely conclude that each question is loading on only one independent factor.

Table 1 – Percent Agree and Factor Loadings of Resentment Questions

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Variable	% Agree Utah	Factor 1 Utah	Uniqueness Utah	% Agree SLC	Factor 1 SLC	Uniqueness SLC	% Agree Merged	Factor 1 Merged	Uniqueness Merged
I am proud that Salt Lake City is the home of the LDS Church.	54	-0.78	0.37	31	-0.76	0.40	45	-0.79	0.36
The LDS Church has too much influence in the State of Utah	46	0.85	0.25	76	0.87	0.23	60	0.87	0.22
Overall, the LDS Church has a negative impact on state politics.	34	0.89	0.19	65	0.90	0.18	49	0.91	0.17
Mormons and non-Mormons have more in common than they have differences.	67	-0.61	0.58	67	-0.47	0.72	67	-0.55	0.65
Eigenvalue		2.50			2.40			2.50	
Cronbach's Alpha		0.87			0.84			0.87	

I analyze the Salt Lake City survey to further validate that the LDSR questions can be measured directly without significant social desirability bias. Measuring resentment of any kind can be difficult because of social desirability bias, but list experiments provide a well-accepted method to overcome this problem (Holbrook and Krosnick 2010; Kuklinski et al. 1997; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997). Rather than directly answer a question about their resentment toward Latter-day Saints, respondents were given a list of items that may make them "angry or upset" and were asked to simply indicate how many of the items, and not which ones, make them angry. One group of respondents was randomly assigned a control list of four items while another group was randomly assigned the control list with an additional item focused on Latter-day Saints allowing me to compare the average number of items that respondents say make them angry between the control and treatment groups. This difference reflects the effect of the additional item in the treatment group about Latter-day Saints without having to ask it directly.[10]

The level of LDSR in the list experiment closely matched the level of anger about the Church in the direct questions. The mean of the four-item list is 2.34, while the mean of the five-item list is 3.01. The difference between the two means suggests that 63 percent of Salt Lake City voters agree that "the influence of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City" makes them angry or upset. This 63 percent is roughly the same as the percent that agrees with the components of the LDSR index in the Salt Lake City sample (see Table 1). The 63 percent that are angry about the Church and politics in Salt Lake City is nearly the same as the 76 percent that agree that the Church has too

[10] The control list included the first four items, and the test list included all five items on the following list: 1. Treatment of the homeless in Salt Lake City 2. Road conditions in Salt Lake City. 3. The funding of the arts in Salt Lake City. 4. Air quality in Salt Lake City. 5. The influence of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City.

much influence statewide, and close to the 65 percent that say the Church has a "negative influence on state politics," as well as the 70 percent that *do not* agree that they are "proud that Salt Lake City is the home of the LDS Church."

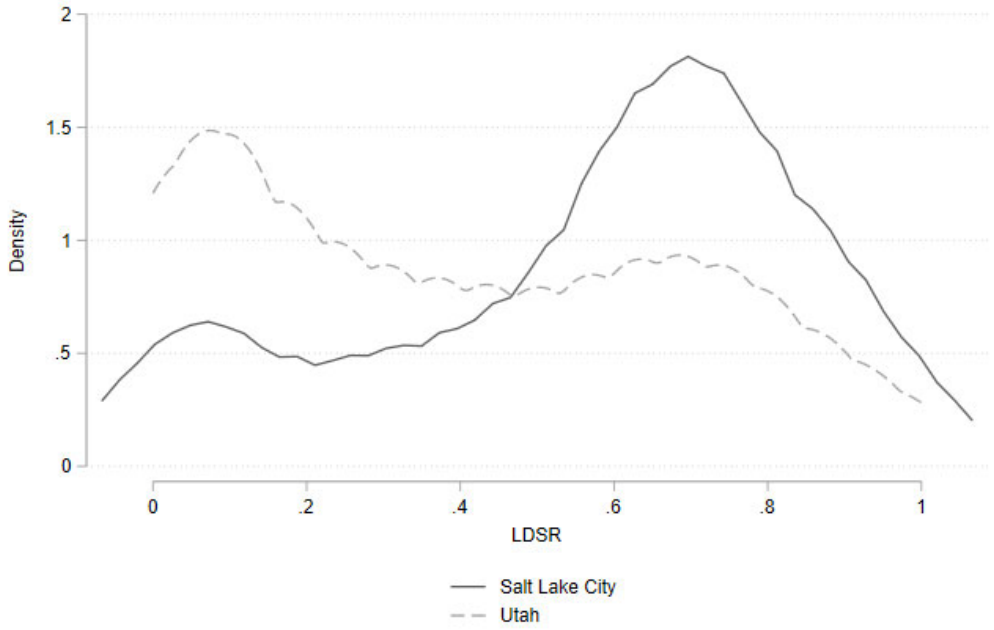
Because the list experiment produces an estimate of anger about the Church and politics that is nearly the same as the direct questions in the LDSR index, this suggests that LDSR is not subject to large social desirability bias and can be measured directly. Thus, it was not repeated in the statewide survey.

Results and Analysis

Figure 1 is a kernel density plot displaying the distribution of LDSR levels in Utah and Salt Lake City.[11] The figure shows that voters in Salt Lake City exhibit significantly higher levels of LDSR than voters statewide. In fact, resentment levels in Utah are practically the mirror image of resentment levels in Salt Lake City. Most voters in Utah score between 0 and 0.2 in Utah, while voters' scores in Salt Lake City are concentrated between 0.6 and 0.8. Considering the demographic differences between Salt Lake City and Utah overall, the vast difference in LDSR levels is not entirely surprising.

[11] Kernel density plots are closely related to histograms and are a non-parametric estimate of the density function of the population distribution.

Figure 1 – Distribution of LDSR in Salt Lake City and Utah



One of the most significant differences between the state and its capital is the density of the Latter-day Saint population. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the Latter-day Saint population in precincts in the combined data set that includes both the statewide and Salt Lake City surveys. Though this figure is not an accurate representation of the Latter-day Saint population in Utah, it demonstrates how the inclusion of the Salt Lake City Survey increases the number of precincts with low Latter-day Saint population densities in the sample. Figure 3 compares the Latter-day Saint population density in the precincts of Salt Lake City and Utah. While Salt Lake City precincts' Latter-day Saint population density never surpasses 45 percent, Latter-day Saint population density reaches as high as 89 percent in some Utah precincts.

Figure 2 – Distribution of Latter-day Saint Population Density

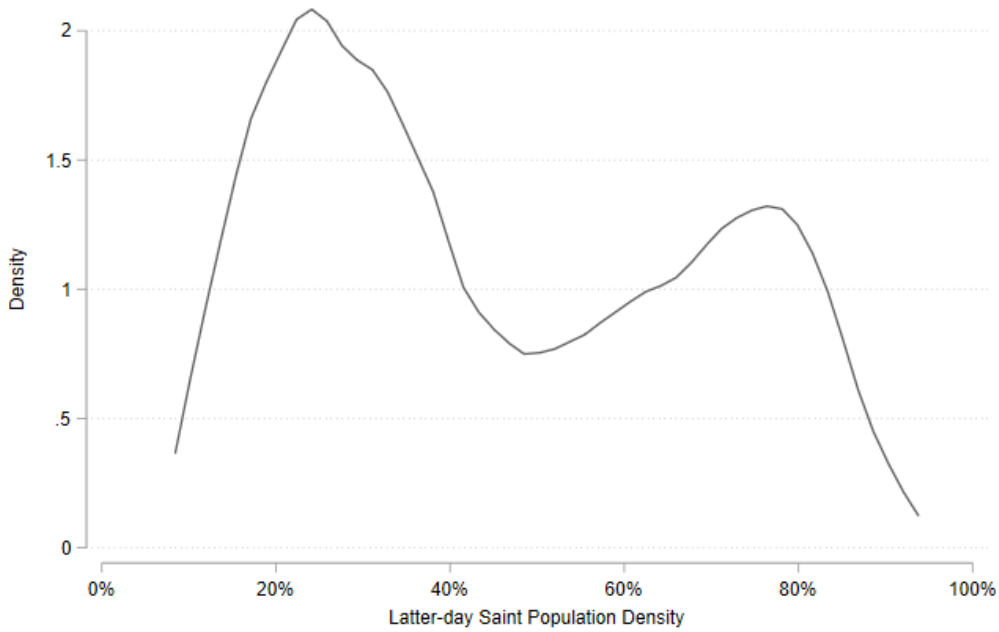


Figure 3 – Distribution of Latter-day Saint Population Density in Salt Lake City and Utah

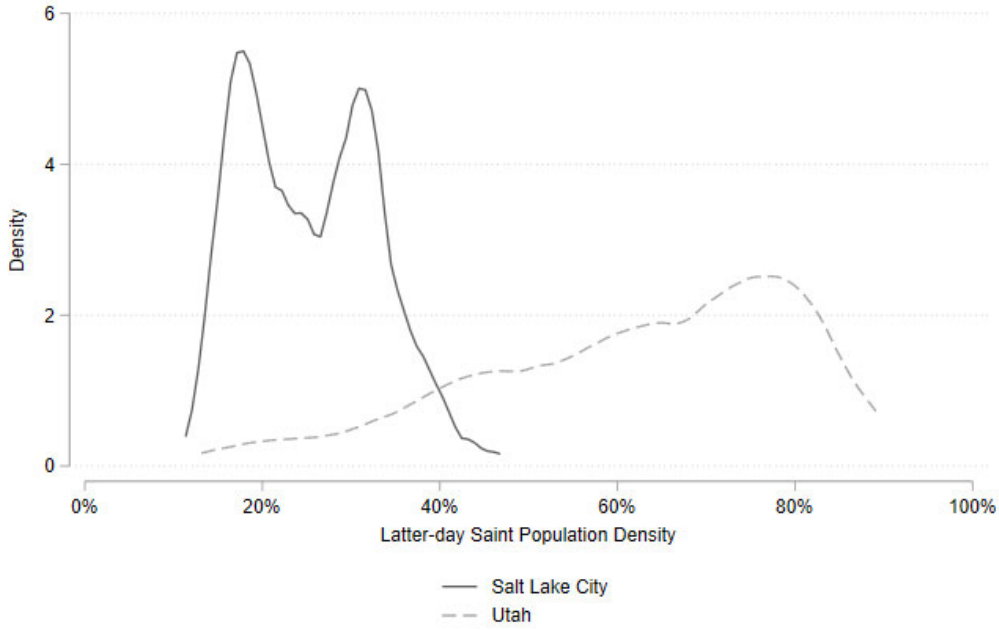
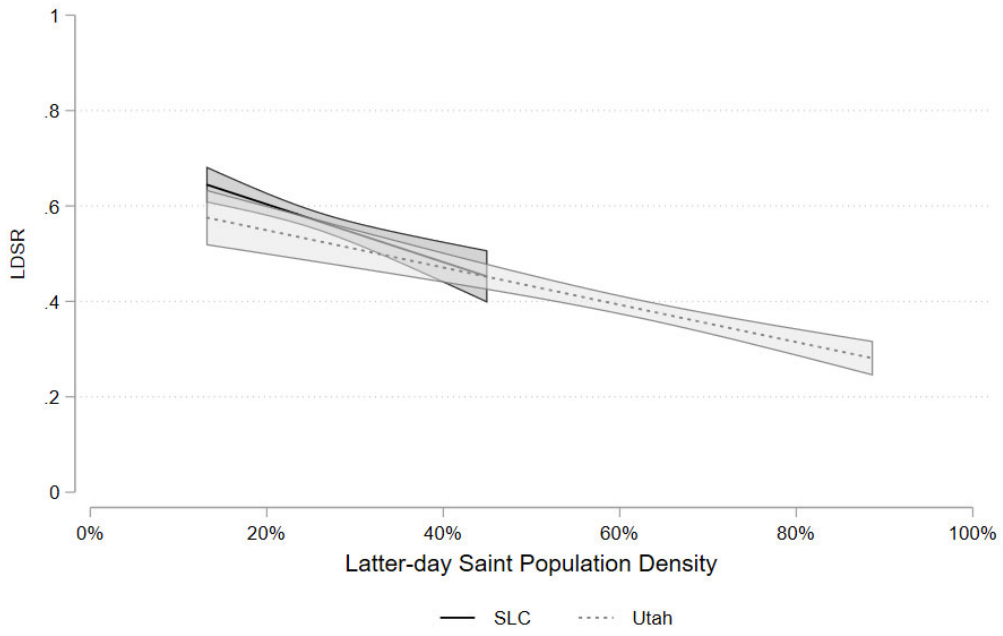


Figure 4 presents estimates of LDSR by the continuous measure of Latter-day Saint density for the entire state and Salt Lake City. As I hypothesized, LDSR appears to decrease as the Latter-day Saint population density increases. The negative slope in both figures illustrates that the decrease is more drastic state-wide than in Salt Lake City. This could be due in part to the lack of precincts with large Latter-day Saint populations in Salt Lake City. Latter-day Saints are the minority in each Salt Lake City precinct, whereas they are the majority in most precincts state-wide. Non-Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City likely have far less contact with members of the Church than residents in other areas of the state as heterogeneous precincts are rare in the state capital.[12] Though there are minor differences, the two lines are similar. With overlapping confidence intervals, the difference between the two slopes is not statistically significant.

[12] I include a model of LDSR using a measure of Latter-day Saint population density broken into three equally proportioned bins, excluding the second most heterogeneous bin to measure the role of group heterogeneity more accurately. As the results are only marginally significant for the other Latter-day Saint group, it is included only in the appendix as Table A4. It is noteworthy, however, that LDSR increases in both bins for the other Latter-day Saint group. This means that, compared to the heterogeneous group, regardless of the size of the Latter-day Saint population, being a less-active Latter-day Saint is marginally correlated with being more resentful.

Figure 4 – LDSR by Latter-day Saint Population Density in Utah and Salt Lake City



Regardless of location, non-Latter-day Saints exhibit higher LDSR levels than Latter-day Saints. Figure 5a compares the distribution of LDSR levels of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City and Utah, Figure 5b compares LDSR levels of non-Latter-day Saints. Though these distributions only separate the populations into two religious groups rather than specifying each religious subgroup's LDSR levels, they demonstrate that Latter-day Saints generally exhibit LDSR levels significantly lower (concentrated between 0 and 0.2) than their non-Latter-day Saint counterparts (between 0.55 and 0.8). Considering there are far fewer Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, this could contribute to Salt Lake's higher LDSR levels.[13]

[13] There is a large population of former Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. They exhibit LDSR at practically the same levels as religious non-Latter-day Saint and those who are non-religious. Figure A1 is a kernel density plot illustrating the similar LDSR scores of these two groups. Considering the "No Affiliation" group is the most resentful against Latter-day Saints, it is fascinating that former Latter-day Saints exhibit LDSR levels at nearly the same rate. The similarities provide insight into how former Latter-day Saints view their former faith. However, being a former Latter-day Saint is only statistically significant in the regression model for vote choice (Table A3b, and Table A6).

It is worthy of note that while the majority of Latter-day Saints score low on the LDSR index, some do still exhibit high levels of LDSR both in Salt Lake City and Statewide. Religious resentment is not a phenomenon limited to the out-group; in-group members can also display resentful attitudes towards their own faith.

Figure 5a – LDSR Levels of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City and Utah

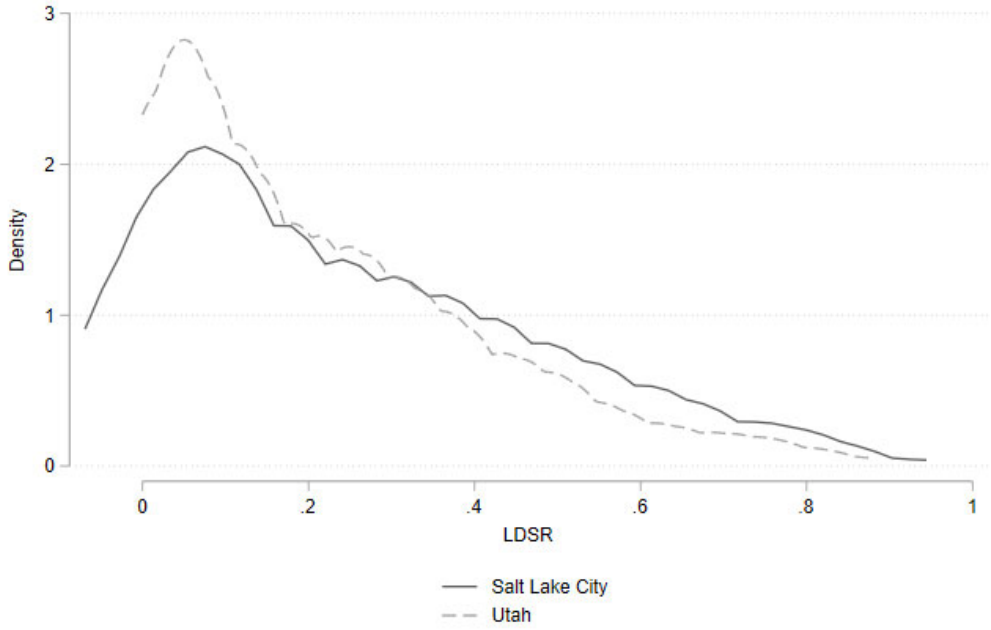
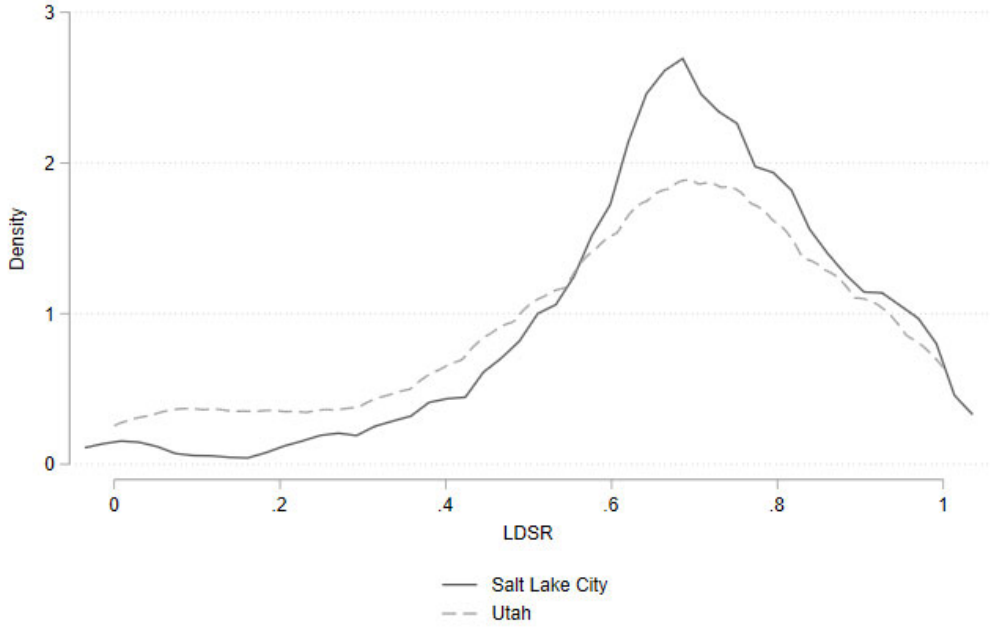
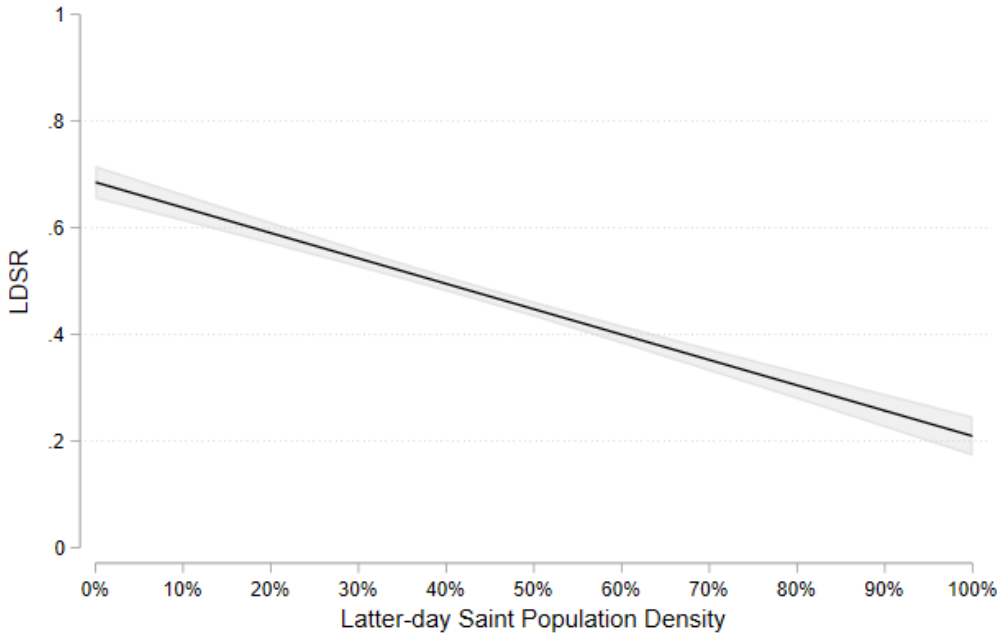


Figure 5b – LDSR Levels of Non-Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City and Utah



I ran an OLS regression to analyze more precisely the relationship between LDSR and Latter-day Saint density. I found that, absent any other controls, Latter-day Saint population density is negatively correlated with LDSR with a p-value of 0.000 (see Table A1, model 1). This relationship is illustrated in predicted values shown in Figure 6. For every percentage point increase in the population density of Latter-day Saints, LDSR levels decrease by about half a percentage point (or 0.476 on the LDSR 0-1 scale). This is a considerable change and supports Hypothesis 1, that Latter-day Saint population density would negatively correlate with LDSR. Predicted LDSR scores decline drastically as the density of Latter-day Saints in the population increases, falling from 0.69 at 0 percent density, to 0.21 at 100 percent density.

Figure 6—Predicted LDSR by Latter-day Saint Population Density (95% Confidence Intervals)

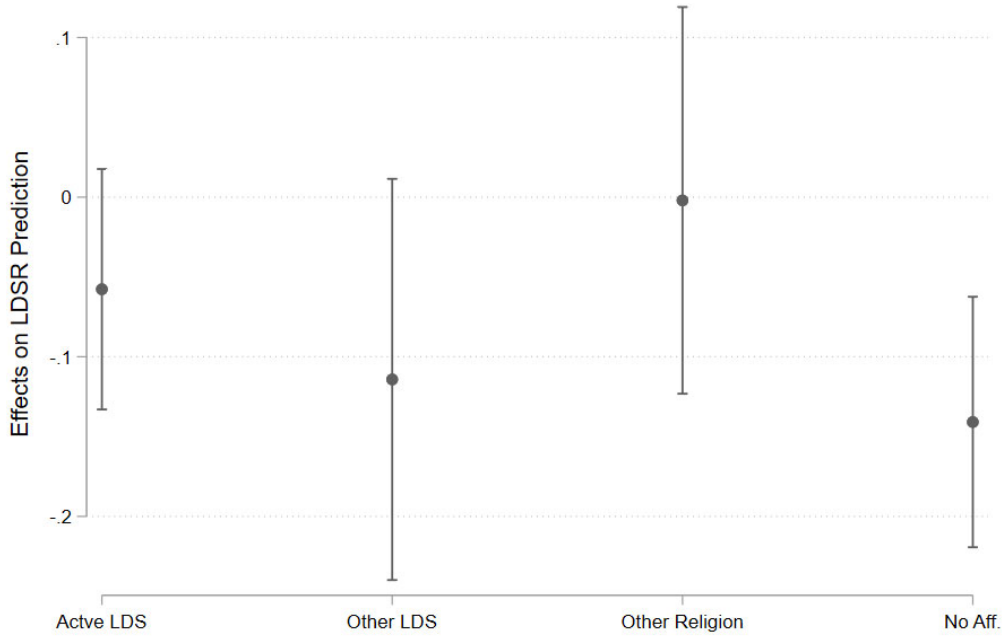


In a separate model (see Table A1, model 2), I include a control for respondents' religious affiliation and find that, compared to Latter-day Saints, the "Other LDS," "Other Religion," and "No Affiliation" groups all score higher on the LDSR index. Not very or not active Latter-day Saints' LDSR score is 0.223 higher

than active Latter-day Saints, while religious non- Latter-day Saints score 0.47 higher, and non-religious voters score 0.49 higher ($p>0.01$ for all). This supports Hypothesis 2, that those with social identities dissimilar from Latter-day Saints would exhibit higher levels of LDSR. Latter-day Saint population density also remains statistically significant ($p<0.01$), but the effect size declines from -0.476 to -0.122 with the inclusion of a control for religious affiliation.

Given the difference in LDSR levels across the religious groups, I include an interaction variable between Latter-day Saint population density and respondents' religious affiliation in a separate model (see Table A2). When measuring the discrete change in LDSR levels across the religious groups and accounting for Latter-day Saint population density, every percentage point increase in the Latter-day Saint population leads to a decrease in LDSR levels among the religion groups. LDSR levels decrease by 0.06, 0.11, 0.002, and 0.14 for the LDS, Other LDS, Other Religion, and No Affiliation groups respectively (see figure 7). Notably the decrease in LDSR levels among the Other Religion group is nearly zero. Though the difference in the predicted effect of density on LDSR levels is only statistically significant for non-religious voters ($p< 0.000$), these results do suggest that a larger Latter-day Saint population may correlate with higher LDSR level among religious non-Latter-day Saints than their non-religious counterparts for whom increased density had the largest and most positive effect.

Figure 7— Average Marginal Effects of Latter-day Saint Population Density on LDSR by Religious Groups (95% Confidence Intervals)



In an additional model, I include political ideology as a control variable in addition to Latter-day Saint population density and religious affiliation (see Table A1, model 3). With the inclusion of ideology, the statistical significance of Latter-day Saint population density falls away. The relationship between religious affiliation and LDSR remains significant at the ninety-ninth percent confidence level for each religious group compared to active Latter-day Saints.

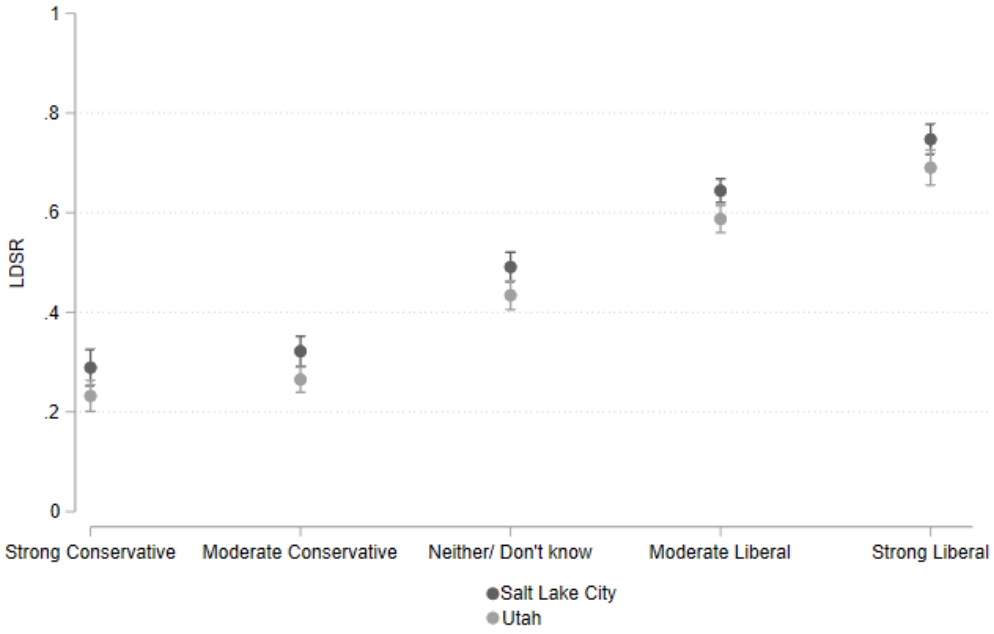
Strong conservatives score 0.09 points lower on the LDSR scale than independents, and moderate conservatives score 0.07 points lower. Strong liberals score 0.08 points higher than independent voters, whereas moderate liberals only score 0.17 points higher. The relationship between LDSR and political ideology is significant for all groups at the ninety-ninth percent confidence level. Though the substantive significance of the difference between these LDSR scores is small, these results support Hypothesis 2 that voters with social identities similar to Latter-day

Saints would exhibit lower levels of LDSR while those with dissimilar from Latter-day Saints would exhibit higher levels of LDSR.

Considering the correlation between being a Latter-day Saint and being conservative, as well as the high concentration of non-Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, I conduct the same regression, but controlling for the Salt Lake City survey (see Table A1, model 4). As with the statewide survey, the density of the Latter-day Saint population is no longer significant. Religious affiliation remains significant at the ninety-ninth percentile with the "Other LDS," "Other Religion," and "No Affiliation" groups all exhibiting higher LDSR levels than active Latter-day Saints.

Additionally, from the regression results, I find that each political ideology group in Salt Lake City scores higher on the LDSR scale than their statewide counterparts compared to independents. Strong conservatives in SLC scored 0.13 points lower than independents on the LDSR scale, and moderate conservatives scored 0.12 points lower. Strong liberals scored 0.13 points higher than independents while moderate liberals scored 0.07 points higher on the LDSR scale. As with the results in for the statewide model, the relationship between each Salt Lake ideological group and LDSR is significant at the ninety-ninth percentile. The predicted margins for all five ideology groups for the statewide and Salt Lake City surveys are shown in Figure 8.

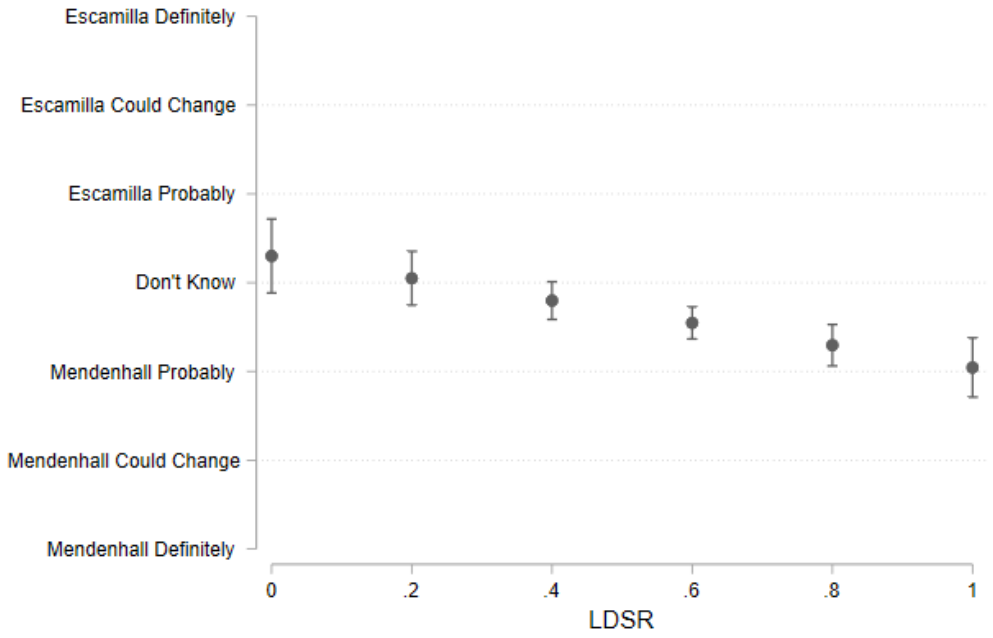
Figure 8—Predicted LDSR by Political Ideology in Utah and Salt Lake City (95% Confidence Intervals)



Having established that LDSR can be measured and used as a dependent variable, I focus on testing whether LDSR can be used as an independent variable. I test whether LDSR can predict vote choice in the 2019 Salt Lake City mayoral election. This specific election presented an ideal case to test the relationship between vote choice and LDSR. The election was non-partisan, both candidates were Democrats with similar policy stances, and both were women with previous political leadership experience. The major difference between the two candidates was their religious affiliation: Luz Escamilla was an active Latter-day Saint, and Erin Mendenhall was not. Voters in the Salt Lake City survey reported how they anticipated they would vote in the election and how sure they were that their vote would not change. The responses were then combined on a seven-point scale ("Mendenhall Definitely" being 1 and "Escamilla Definitely" being 7). The specific wording of the vote choice questions can be found in the Appendix.

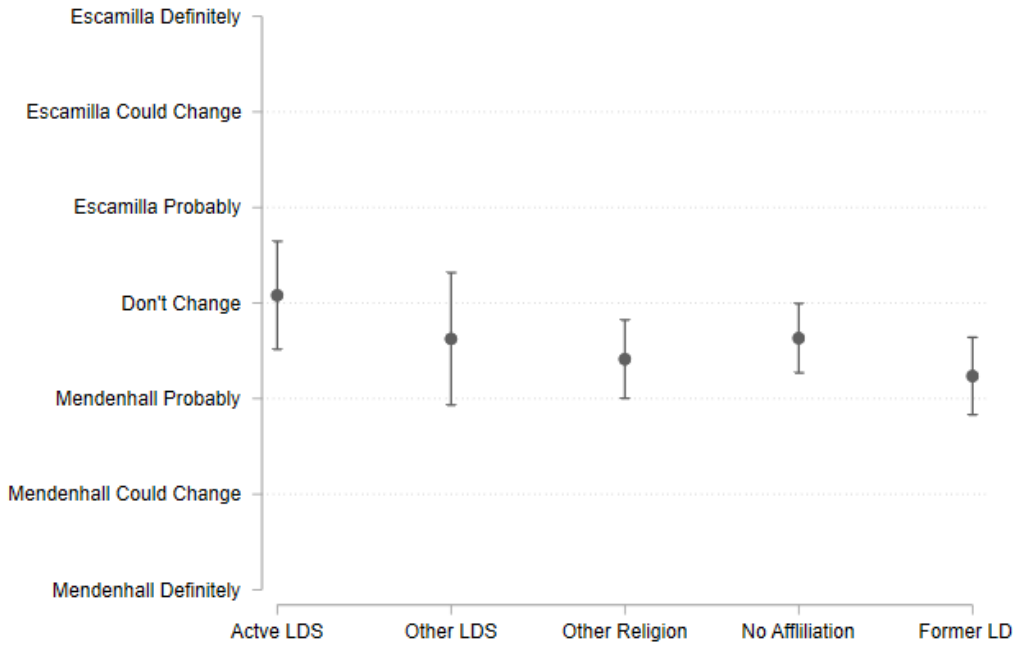
Using an OLS regression, I find that LDSR is significantly correlated with vote choice even when controlling for the ideology, age, and education level of each voter, as well as the amount of time voters have lived in Utah (see Table A4, model 1). Partisanship and political ideology were insignificant in the election as both candidates were Democrats who voters viewed as equally ideologically liberal. The more resentment voters feel towards Latter-day Saints, the more likely they were to vote for Erin Mendenhall, the non-Latter-day Saint candidate. Every point increase in LDSR is correlated with a 1.21 unit decrease in vote choice in favor of Mendenhall. This relationship can be seen in Figure 8. The density of the Latter-day Saint population is also marginally significant in favor of Escamilla, the Latter-day Saint candidate. This would mean that voters in an area of Salt Lake more densely populated with members of the Church are more likely to vote for the mayoral candidate who is a member, but this result is only marginally significant with a p-value of 0.056.

Figure 9 – Predicted Vote Choice by LDSR in the 2019 Salt Lake City Mayoral Election



Once I control for the religious affiliation of voters, LDSR is no longer a statistically significant predictor of vote choice (see Table A4, model 2). However, religious affiliation is only significantly correlated with vote choice for former Latter-day Saints who were more likely to vote for Mendenhall compared to active members of the Church as is shown in Figure 10. For each point increase in LDSR, former Latter-day Saints were 0.84 times more likely than Latter-day Saints to vote for Mendenhall. The relationship was also marginally significant for religious non-Latter-day Saints with a p-value of 0.077. This finding is particularly interesting as it demonstrates that former members of the Church and members of other faiths could use the Church and its members as a negative reference group to orient their political decision making when political ideology is not significant (Bolce and De Maio 2006; Egan 2019). Former members of the Church likely do not want an active member of their former faith in a position of authority, and those active in non-Latter-day Saint religions likely prefer leaders unaffiliated with the already dominant religion of the state.

Figure 10 – Predicted Vote Choice by Religious Affiliation in the 2019 Salt Lake City Mayoral Election



Interestingly, the time a voter has lived in Utah is significantly correlated with vote choice in both regression models. For every additional year that Salt Lake City voters live in Utah, the more likely they were to vote for Erin Mendenhall. Voters with longer residencies in the state are likely more aware of the culture war and are more familiar with the dominance of the Church. Perhaps this familiarity leads Salt Lake voters to prefer non-Latter-day Saint candidates as they are the citizenry most often embroiled in the culture war conflicts and hope to avoid further Church dominance.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have outlined the existing theories on racial resentment intergroup relations, and social identity. Using these theories, I create a theory of religious resentment and establish religious resentment as a measurable concept in the specific context of Utah and Latter-day Saints. This broader theory of religious

resentment can be applied and tested outside of the narrow framework of Utah. Employing the new LDSR measure, I address contributing factors in the Utah culture war.

I find marginal support for my first and third hypotheses, and substantial support for my second hypothesis. I find that Latter-day saint population density is negatively and significantly correlated to LDSR and that Latter-day Saint population density also interacts with religious affiliation, affecting each religious group's LDSR levels differently. Though I find that the negative correlation between the LDSR and population density variables remains significant when I account for respondents' religious affiliation, the relationship becomes statistically insignificant once political ideology is included as a control. Overall, religious affiliation and political ideology are ultimately stronger predictors of LDSR levels. This is likely because individuals' in-group memberships shape their views of out-groups to which they do not belong, regardless of the size of the out-group or density of the out-group population in their area. My findings regarding religious and political identities support my second hypothesis as I predicted that voters who have similar social identities as Latter-day Saint will likely exhibit lower levels of LDSR.

As predicted in Hypothesis 3, LDSR, as an independent variable, is significantly correlated with vote choice in the 2019 Salt Lake mayoral election even when controlling for the Latter-day Saint population density and the political ideology, age, education level, and length of Utah residency of voters. For each point increase in LDSR, there is a 1.21 decrease in the 7-point vote choice scale in favor of Mendenhall. It is only when religious affiliation is included in the model that LDSR is no longer a significant predictor of vote choice; however, religious affiliation is only a significant predictor of vote choice for former Latter-day Saints compared to active

Latter-day Saints. It is also marginally significant for religious non-Latter-day Saints. Both groups are statistically significantly more likely to vote for Mendenhall than Escamilla.

The major limitation of this study also generates the possibility of future research. Though my results offer superficial support for my first and third hypotheses and strong support for my second hypothesis, all my findings are correlative, so I cannot claim causality. To determine if Latter-day Saint population density, religious affiliation, and political ideology have a causal effect on—and are not just correlated with—LDSR levels, a controlled case study is necessary. Such a study would allow for a comparison of the effects of Latter-day Saint population density and social identity factors on LDSR, but the appropriate methodology of such a study could prove difficult to achieve. It would require finding individuals of the same political and religious affiliations who are new to Utah and reside in areas with Latter-day Saint populations of differing sizes. If LDSR levels among these individuals could be measured over time, then I could determine if an increase in Latter-day populations and social identities cause changes in LDSR levels. Further study outside of Utah would also allow for the confirmation that LDSR is a valid measure outside of the unique demographic context of Utah.

Though I was able to test LDSR as an independent variable in the 2019 Salt Lake City mayoral election, there was not a comparable state-wide non-partisan election to test LDSR as a predictor of vote choice on a larger level. Future research could focus on testing LDSR as an independent variable in state-wide elections. Perhaps in an election with a larger sample size, LDSR will remain a significant predictor of vote choice even when accounting for the religious affiliation of voters.

Most importantly, this thesis expands the limited research on religious resentment and provides possible explanations as to why religious resentment exists in the context of Latter-day Saints, as well as a measure to quantify it. This deeper understanding of Latter-day Saint resentment illustrates one possible way that religious resentment can be combatted: deep and frequent intergroup interaction. As populations become more heterogenous, in-groups become less resentful against out-groups. While there were limitations to my study, these limitations provide substantial reason to pursue further research of Latter-day Saint resentment and religious resentment generally.

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Appendix

Vote Choice Questions and Response Percentages

If the November election for the Mayor of Salt Lake City were being held today, and you had to choose, would you vote for [Candidate 1] or [Candidate 2]? Candidate names were rotated.

- Erin Mendenhall – 46%
- Luz Escamilla – 33%
- I do not know – 20%
- I am not going to vote for Mayor – 1%

Would you say you are definitely voting for [selected candidate] or could you still change your mind?

- [Selected candidate], definitely – 65%
- [Selected candidate], but I could change my mind – 35%

Suppose the election were today and you had to choose. Would you lean toward voting for [Candidate 1] or [Candidate 2]? Candidate names were rotated.

- Lean toward Erin Mendenhall – 44%
- Lean toward Luz Escamilla – 56%

Total Percentage

- Erin Mendenhall – 53%
- Luz Escamilla – 43%

Figure A1 – LDSR Levels of Former Latter-day Saint and Non-Members of the Church

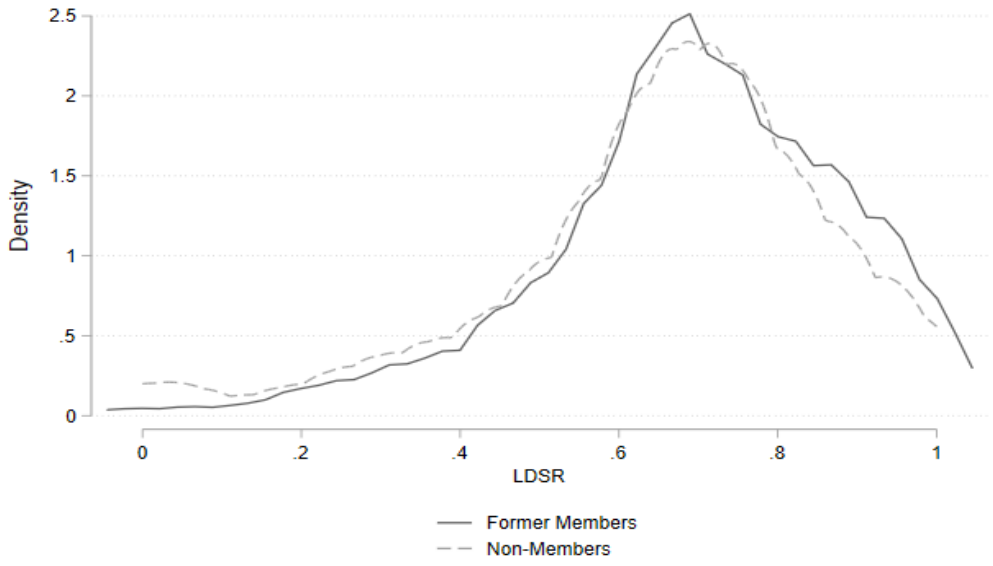

Table A1 – LDSR by Latter-day Saint Population Density OLS Model

VARIABLES	(1) LDSR	(2) LDSR	(3) LDSR Utah	(4) LDSR SLC
LDS Population Density	-0.476***	-0.122***	-0.0149	0.0663
	(0.0315)	(0.0240)	(0.0384)	(0.0876)
Other LDS		0.223***	0.189***	0.196***
		(0.0179)	(0.0200)	(0.0279)
Other Religion		0.470***	0.456***	0.398***
		(0.0151)	(0.0202)	(0.0202)
No Affiliation		0.485***	0.396***	0.412***
		(0.0129)	(0.0184)	(0.0197)
Strong Conservative			-0.0978***	-0.135***
			(0.0203)	(0.0314)
Moderate Conservative			-0.0678***	-0.127***
			(0.0191)	(0.0228)
Moderate Liberal			0.0797***	0.0689***
			(0.0214)	(0.0184)
Strong Liberal			0.179***	0.132***
			(0.0302)	(0.0206)
Constant	0.685***	0.227***	0.214***	0.206***
	(0.0158)	(0.0159)	(0.0304)	(0.0308)
Observations	1,580	1,580	870	710
R-squared	0.126	0.569	0.633	0.617

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: Model 1: Population density. Model 2: Religious affiliation added. Model 3: Political ideology added in Utah survey. Model 4: Political ideology added in Salt Lake City survey.

Table A2 – LDSR on Religion Interacted with Latter-day Saint Population Density in Salt Lake City and Utah OLS Model

VARIABLES	LDSR
Other LDS	0.259***
	(0.0438)
Other Religion	0.466***
	(0.0337)
No Affiliation	0.548***
	(0.0281)
LDS Population Density	-0.0577
	(0.0384)
Other LDS x LDS Population Density	-0.0565
	(0.0747)
Other Religion x LDS Population Density	0.0557
	(0.0726)
No Affiliation x Population Density	-0.0832
	(0.0553)
Gender	-0.0186**
	(0.00993)
Age	-0.0146***
	(0.00371)
Constant	0.269***
	(0.0295)
Observations	1492
R-squared	0.618

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A3 – LDSR on Latter-day Saint Population Density in Bins OLS Models

VARIABLES	(1) LDSR Active LDS	(2) LDSR Other LDS	(3) LDSR Other Religion	(4) LDSR No Affiliation
LDS Density 0-33%	0.0105	0.151*	0.0388	0.0655*
	(0.0295)	(0.0794)	(0.0423)	(0.0390)
LDS Density 66-100%	-0.00753	0.0791	-0.00439	-0.0195
	(0.0198)	(0.0490)	(0.0374)	(0.0342)
Utah Survey	-0.0136	0.0232	0.0390	-0.0357
	(0.0286)	(0.0764)	(0.0386)	(0.0316)
Constant	0.170***	0.278***	0.612***	0.640***
	(0.0308)	(0.0824)	(0.0435)	(0.0403)
Observations	501	168	317	594
R-squared	0.007	0.041	0.004	0.051

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: Each model is comparing the high and low density bins to the bin with the greatest heterogeneity, and controlling for the Utah survey.

Table A4 – Vote Choice by LDSR

VARIABLES	(1) Vote Choice	(2) Vote Choice
LDSR	-1.219***	-0.590
	(0.414)	(0.542)
LDS Population Density	2.456*	2.345*
	(1.285)	(1.289)
Strong Conservative	0.234	0.260
	(0.478)	(0.480)
Moderate Conservative	-0.0954	-0.106
	(0.339)	(0.339)
Moderate Liberal	-0.0883	-0.0491
	(0.271)	(0.272)
Strong Liberal	-0.0283	-0.0515
	(0.302)	(0.310)
Other LDS		-0.455
		(0.423)
Other Religion		-0.668*
		(0.377)
No Affiliation		-0.448
		(0.380)
Former LDS		-0.845**
		(0.387)
Gender	-0.368**	-0.331*
	(0.185)	(0.188)
Age	0.0903	0.0978
	(0.0782)	(0.0795)
Education	0.141	0.120
	(0.107)	(0.109)
Time Lived in Utah	-0.0146**	-0.0144**
	(0.00682)	(0.00686)
Constant	3.756***	3.920***
	(0.726)	(0.731)
Observations	710	710
R-squared	0.041	0.049

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Note: Religious affiliation added in model 2.