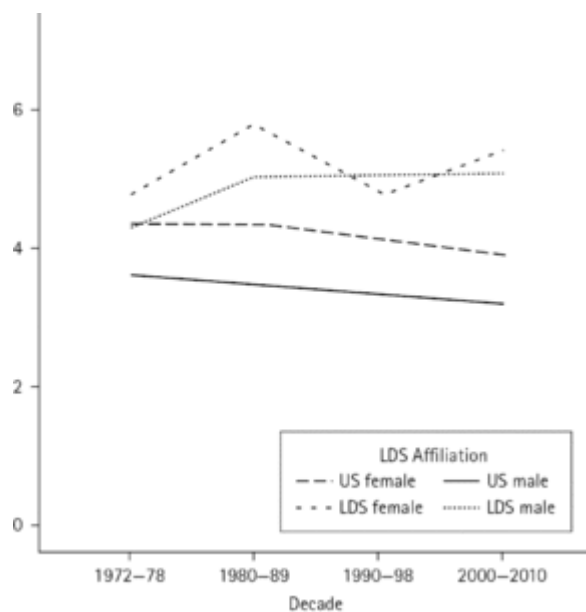
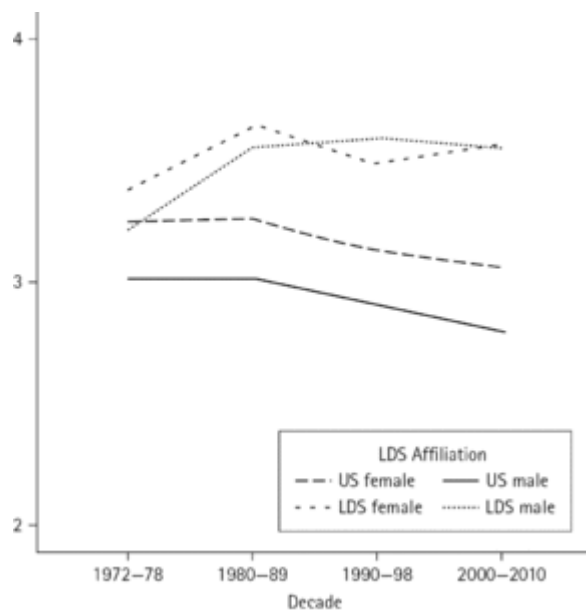


Religious Identification



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Figure 21.3 Frequency of attendance at religious services (scale is from 0 for never to 8 for more than once a week)

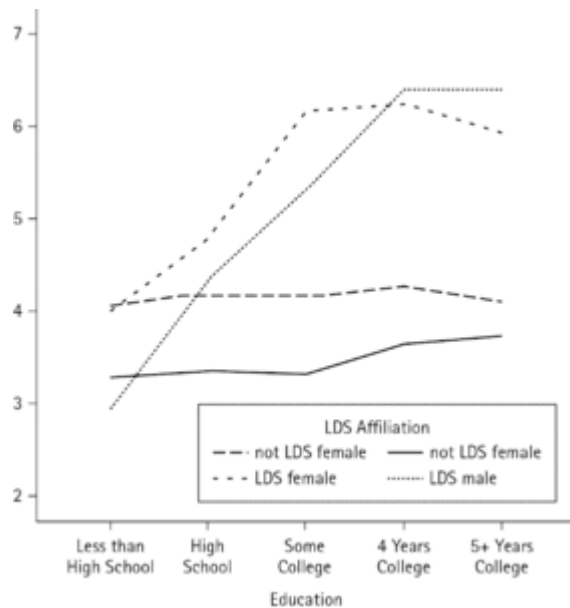


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Figure 21.4 Strength of religious identification by sex and by LDS and non-LDS affiliation

Mormons also report greater strength of religious identification (on a scale from 1 to 4) than other Americans, and the trend in strength of identification is positive for Mormons, but negative for the country as a whole (Figure 21.4). The Pew surveys found that 83 percent of the LDS said religion was “very important” to them. Nationally, only 56 percent said it was very important to them. Considering both frequency of attendance and identification with religion, religion in the United States appears to be declining. The LDS, on the other hand, appear to have slightly stronger religious attendance and identification over the past forty

years. The trend for the LDS from the 1970s to the 1980s increased, then remained strong. (p. 319)



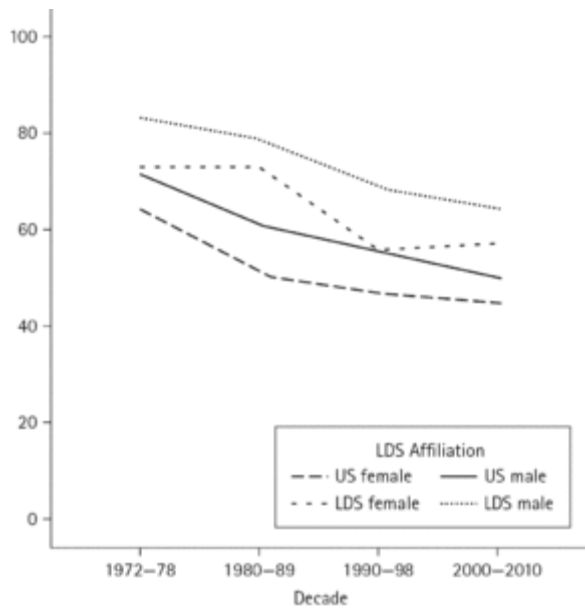
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Figure 21.5 Church attendance by education

(p. 320) Whereas church attendance is essentially unrelated to education for the United States as a whole, education is strongly and positively related to church attendance for Mormons (Figure 21.5). This is a strong relationship for Mormons and this relationship plays an important role.

4 Marriage, Family, and Gender

LDS doctrine and culture emphasize the importance of marriage and the marriage practices of the LDS reflect these beliefs and values. Figure 21.6 shows the proportion of adults currently married. Although marriage is declining in the United States and for LDS as well, men are more likely to be married than women, and Mormons are 1.77 times more likely to be married than other Americans. These comparisons occur even after adjusting for age, region, and time period. The Pew study shows similar results; it found that 71 percent of the LDS sample were married; only 9 percent were divorced or separated. Twelve percent had never married and 5 percent were widowed. The 71 percent was the second highest percentage of all the groups. Hindus were higher (78 percent) but that figure likely reflects the immigration of Hindu families together.

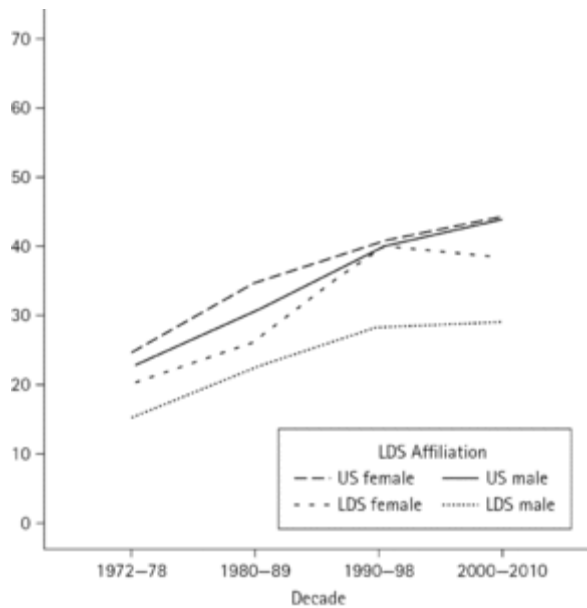


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Figure 21.6 Percentage of LDS and Americans married by decade

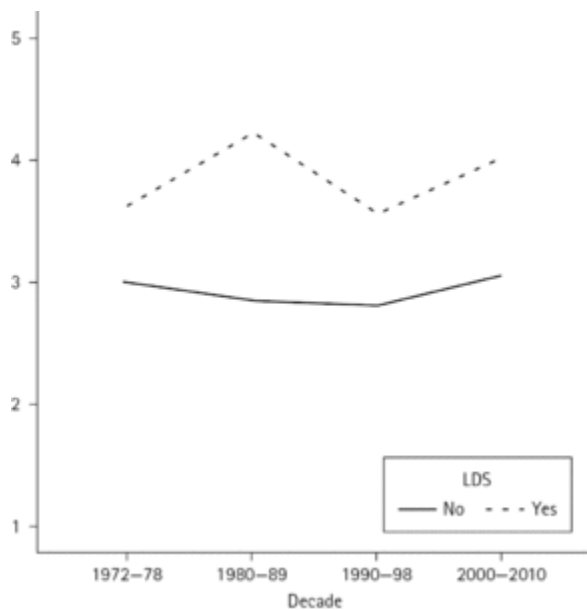
(p. 321) The Pew study also shows that LDS members are highly likely to be married to someone of the same faith (83 percent). The next highest endogamy rates are for Catholics (78 percent), Jews (69 percent), and Historically Black Churches (69 percent). The endogamy rates for other groups such as most Protestant groups are much lower. Members of those faiths are likely to be married to other Protestants, however. Marriage is particularly salient among more educated Mormons: the relationship between education and being married is positive in the United States, and even more positive among Mormons.

The proportions of the ever married population currently divorced, separated, or ever divorced are increasing (Figure 21.7). The proportions of both the nation and the LDS who have been divorced have increased quite dramatically over the four decades covered by the GSS. The proportion of the LDS who have ever been married and divorced has remained lower than the national average, particularly for LDS males. If there is good news here, it is that the rate of divorce appears to have leveled off for the LDS in the last decade. Divorce is less likely among the more educated and among frequent church attenders, and these two patterns are accentuated among Mormons. This figure does not distinguish between “active” LDS and those who do not attend. Other studies have shown large differences in divorce between active and inactive LDS.



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Figure 21.7 Proportion of those ever married who are currently divorced by decade

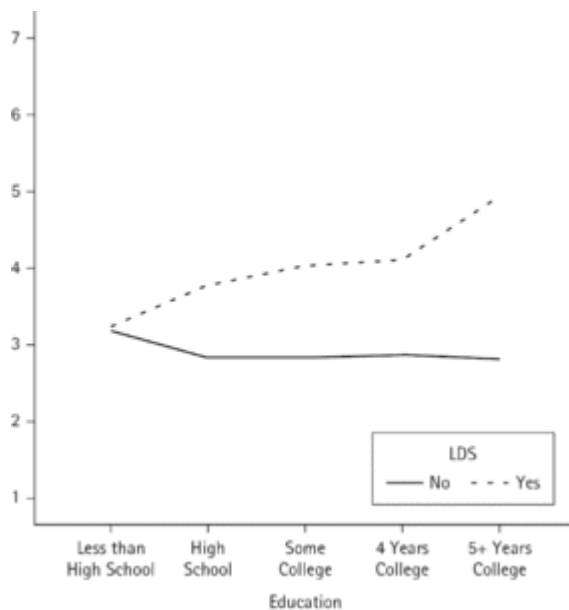


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Figure 21.8 Ideal family size of LDS and non-LDS in the United States by decade

The LDS cultural and religious emphasis on marriage and families is also reflected in reported ideal family size (Figure 21.8). Mormons report having a larger ideal family size (the number of children they would like to have) than the US average. The average (p. 322) (p. 323) difference is one child more for Mormons. The trend line is not statistically different for Mormons than for the national population, but the positive relationship between church attendance and ideal family size is larger for Mormons than for the national population. The general tendency in the United States is for more educated people to report having a somewhat smaller ideal family size. The reverse is the case for Mormons, however (Figure 21.9). For the LDS, the ideal family size increases with education. The Pew study also found that the LDS tend to have more children than the national sample. Twenty percent of the LDS families reported having three or more children compared to only 9 percent of the national

sample, and 9 percent report having four or more children. These percentages of the LDS subsample are the highest of any of the groups examined in the Pew data.



[Click to view larger](#)

Figure 21.9 Ideal family size of LDS and non-LDS in the United States by education

The family characteristics of the LDS in the four other countries are reported in Table 21.6. Members of the LDS faith are slightly more likely to have never married compared to national averages in these other countries. They are also less likely to be in consensual unions; the LDS Church emphasizes the importance of marriage and discourages living together. Lower rates of widowhood among the LDS are likely due to the smaller size of the elderly population among the LDS. LDS members are less likely than others to report having only a religious marriage (in Mexico and Brazil). Rates of separation and divorce are higher among LDS members in each country except the Philippines. It is not clear whether this is because the divorced and separated are (p. 324) more inclined to join or because conversion to the LDS faith may be disruptive in some households. The LDS women in these countries have noticeably fewer children (15 to 20 percent) in Mexico and Brazil. Their family sizes are comparable to the national average in Chile. The apparent low fertility of Mormons in Mexico, Brazil, and Chile occurs because these Mormons are more educated than the national averages and are more likely to be in mixed-faith marriages where fertility is lower.

Table 21.6 Family characteristics of LDS members (aged 18 and over)

	Mexico		Brazil		Chile		Philippines	
	LDS	Country	LDS	Country	LDS	Country	LDS	Country
Marital status (percent)								
Never married	25.1	22.6	32.7	27.7	31.6	30.0	27.7	27.1
Civil marriage	25.0	14.9	15.7	11.6	49.0	49.5	61.3	60.7
Religious marriage	.7	3.6	.4	3.0				
Civil and religious marriage	33.0	36.6	36.4	32.7				
Consensual union	5.6	12.7	5.6	15.0	8.2	9.4	4.4	5.3
Separated	4.0	3.0	2.2	2.3	6.1	5.1	1.4	1.4
Divorced	2.2	1.0	2.8	2.0	.7	.5		

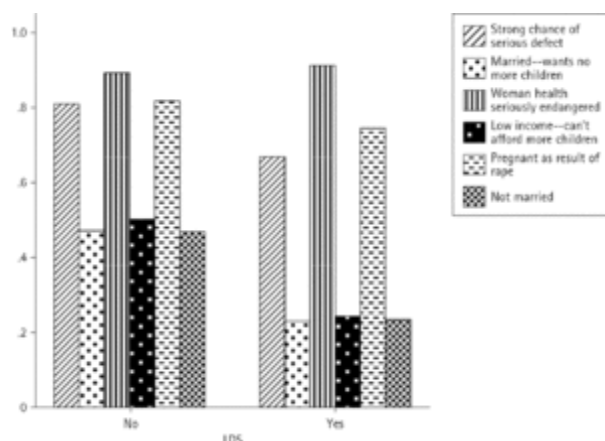
	Mexico		Brazil		Chile		Philippines	
	LDS	Country	LDS	Country	LDS	Country	LDS	Country
Widowed	4.4	5.7	4.2	5.6	4.5	5.6	5.2	5.5
Average number of children ever born (females)	2.39	2.78	2.17	2.75	2.43	2.38	—	—

In sum, the emphasis on family life is marked among Mormons in the United States, as evidenced by higher rates of marriage, lower rates of divorce, and larger ideal family sizes. These family characteristics are particularly salient for the most educated Mormons and those who attend church regularly. Emphasis on marriage is also seen in some other countries with large LDS populations, but it is less clear in the cases of divorce and family size. When education and marriage type are taken into account, Mormons have larger families, and the association between education and family size is less negative for Mormons than for the national populations.

5 Social and Political Attitudes

Attitudes about Abortion

In this section we examine the social and political attitudes of the LDS samples. We begin with attitudes about abortion, one of the most controversial topics both in the United States and in the LDS community. The Pew research study asks simply whether abortion should be legal in all cases, most cases, illegal in most cases, and illegal in all (p. 325) cases. Only 8 percent of the LDS in the Pew Survey say that abortion should be legal in all cases (compared to 18 percent of the national sample). Conversely, 70 percent of the LDS in the Pew survey say that abortion should be illegal in most or all cases (compared to 43 percent of the national sample and 61 percent of the Evangelicals).



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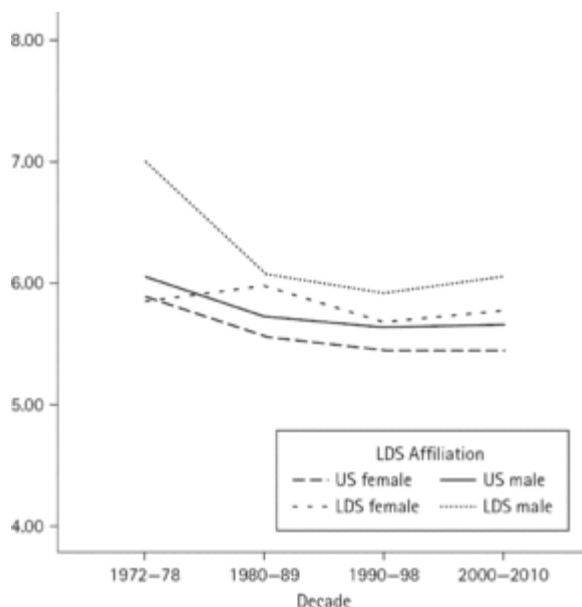
Figure 21.10 Attitudes of LDS and the Americans about abortion

The GSS also asks more specific questions about when abortion should be available. LDS attitudes toward abortion depend on motivations for the abortion, as is the case nationally. In the case of the mother's health being seriously endangered there is wide acceptance of abortion, and Mormons are similar to the national population (Figure 21.10). In cases of serious health defects for the baby or rape, somewhat fewer people think abortion is acceptable and Mormons have lower approval than the national population. In cases of

unwanted pregnancies, poverty, or single motherhood, there is even less acceptance of abortion, and Mormons are even less accepting than the nation at large. The trend has been a gradual decline in the acceptance of abortion and this can be observed among the LDS population as well, but the test for the difference in trends between Mormons and the nation is not statistically significant. Moreover, church attendance is negatively associated with acceptance of abortion, and this association is similar for Mormons and the national population. However, the relationship between education and acceptability of abortion is positive in the nation, but negative for Mormons and the difference is statistically significant.

(p. 326) Attitudes about Family Roles

Mormon men, compared to other men in the United States, express stronger preferences for mothers to be in the home with children. GSS respondents were asked three questions on this issue: whether children suffer if the mother works, whether preschoolers suffer if the mother works, and whether it's better for the man to work and the wife to take care of the home. Responses were combined and coded on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) with these statements to 4 (strongly agreed). The results are shown in Figure 21.11. Men are higher on this scale than women and Mormons are higher than the nation as a whole. Statistical analysis suggests that the trend is downward (less traditional) for all groups and that people who attend church more frequently are more likely to say mother's roles should be at home. Tests for interactions between religion and gender and religion and trend, are not statistically significant, however. In other words, Mormon men and women tend to favor more traditional familial roles for women, but they follow the national trend over time and their religious participation has a similar influence to that observed among other Americans. On the other hand, the relationship between education and favoring familial roles for women is negative in the national population, but nearly flat for Mormons.



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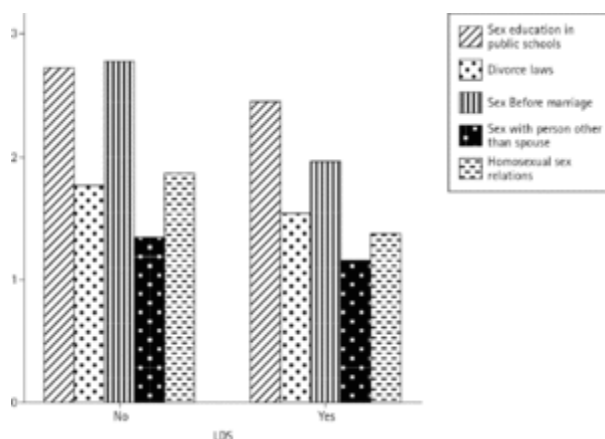
Figure 21.11 LDS and national attitudes about traditional family roles

Mormons also tend to be more conservative on other family-related issues. Specifically they are less likely to favor sex education in public schools, relaxing divorce (p. 327) laws, sex before marriage, extramarital sex, or homosexual relations (Figure 21.12). If these items are combined into a scale, there is an indication that the national trend is to become more

favorable toward these issues, but the LDS trend is to become less favorable. This is an area where the gap between LDS and national attitudes is increasing. Not surprisingly, people who attend church more frequently are more conservative on family values, and Mormons are no different in this regard. However, higher educational attainment is associated with more liberal family values in the nation, but the reverse is the case among Mormons.

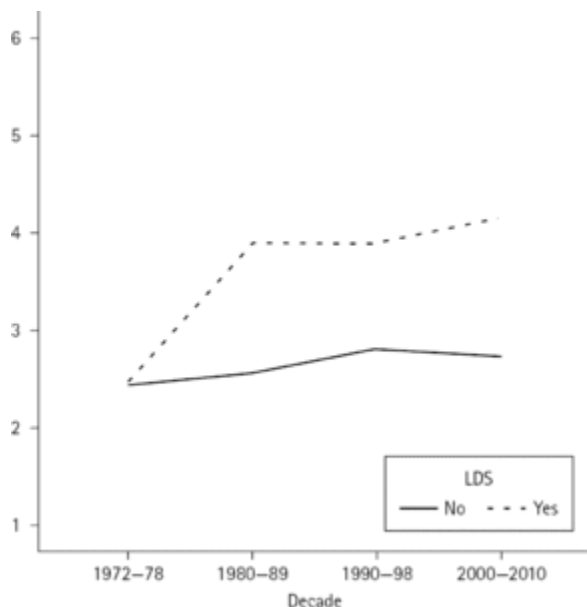
Analysis not reported here indicates that Mormons are not very different from the national population with regard to attitudes regarding race. The GSS also includes a few measures of wellbeing and Mormons have somewhat higher averages on these measures, but the differences are not great.

Political Identification



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Figure 21.12 LDS and national attitudes about sexual issues



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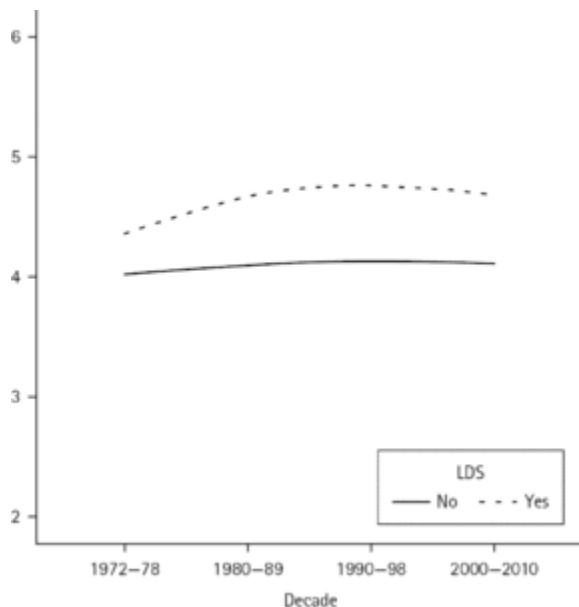
Figure 21.13 Political party identification (higher is Republican on scale 0–6)

Mormons tend to be Republican and conservative. On a seven-point scale ranging from 0 for strong Democrat to 6 for strong Republican, with independents scoring in the middle Mormons are 4.5 above the national average of about 4 (Figure 21.13). The results from the

Pew study are somewhat stronger; 65 percent of Mormons say they are (p. 328) Republicans. Only 22 percent identified themselves as Democrats. The LDS in the ARIS data also show a strong identification with the Republican Party. Only 14 percent say they are Democrats, 59 percent say they are Republicans, and 27 percent are independents. In Utah two-thirds (66 percent) of the LDS identify with the Republican Party, whereas 56 percent of those outside the state of Utah identify as Republicans. The differences are not as great when considering political orientation. When the LDS respondents in the GSS were asked to rate themselves on a scale ranging from 1 for extremely liberal to 7 for extremely conservative, Mormons are above 4 compared to a national average below 3. There was also a noticeable shift to the right among Mormons in the 1980s (Figure 21.14). This was the decade in which the LDS Church took a strong stance against the Equal Rights Amendment for women. Since that time the LDS Church has also been active on conservative issues such as the Defense of Marriage Act and Proposition 8 in California, which overturned the California Supreme Court’s ruling on same-sex marriage. The church has justified its positions on these issues saying that they are theological or moral issues.

In general, those who attend church tend more often to be more Republican and conservative, and this tendency is even greater for Mormons. Sixty percent of the LDS in the Pew survey identified themselves as conservative; only 10 percent said they were liberal.

Nationally, education tends to be associated with slightly more liberal political views. With the exception of postgraduate education, however, Mormons with higher education tend to be more conservative.



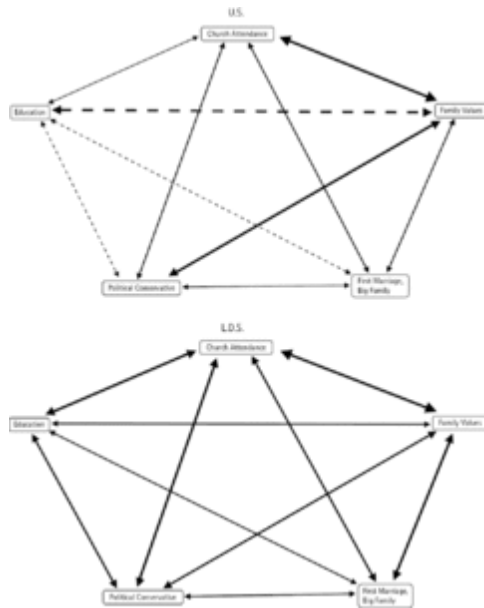
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Figure 21.14 Political identification conservative vs. liberal, LDS and the nation

(p. 329) The Pew surveys show that the LDS members generally have strong views about a variety of political issues. They are more likely than the population to say the government should do more to protect morality in society (54 percent compared to 40 percent), but less likely to say that “the government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt” (49 percent compared to 62 percent). The LDS also opt for smaller government with fewer services (56 percent compared to 43 percent for the national sample).

Mormons are somewhat more likely than the national population to support the military. When asked, “What is the best way to ensure peace?” the LDS are more likely than the national sample to say through military strength (37 percent compared to 28 percent). Conversely the national sample is more likely to say good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace (59 percent compared to 49 percent). At the same time, the LDS are more likely to want the country to be “active in world affairs” (51 percent compared to 36 percent).

Conclusion



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Figure 21.15 Relationships among social characteristics for the United States and Mormons

We present Figure 21.15 as a way to summarize the key results of numerous comparisons. It shows the factors that best distinguish Mormons from the national GSS samples. The important factors include educational attainment, frequency of church attendance, (p. 330) political orientation (liberal or conservative), being in a first marriage and having an ideal family size of three or more children, and taking a conservative position on family-related issues, including the role of mothers, opposition to abortion, and opposition to sex education, liberal divorce laws, and sex outside of heterosexual marriage. Mormons are higher on each of these characteristics than the population as a whole. In some areas the gaps between Mormons and the nation are increasing, (including church attendance and attitudes toward sexual behavior); none of the differences between the LDS (p. 331) and the nation appear to be converging. Arrows in the graph show the strength of the relationships—thicker lines show stronger relationships. Solid lines show positive relationships and dashed lines show negative relationships. Not surprisingly, the correlations among church attendance, family values, political conservatism, and being in a first marriage with a large ideal family size are positive for Mormons and the nation as a whole. The connection between church attendance and these other characteristics is somewhat more pronounced in the LDS population. The most striking difference in the two graphs is the role of education. In the nation, education has a negative or weak relationship with each of the other factors, and the negative relationship between education and conservative family values is particularly strong. By contrast, for Mormons, education has a positive relationship with each other factor, and the relationship between education and church attendance is quite strong. So the national pattern is for the more educated and the most religious (as measured by attendance) to tend to

disagree on family and political issues. Among Mormons, education and church attendance reinforce each other and promote political and familial conservatism. Education and regular religious participation increase a person's potential influence in the LDS Church. The LDS Church has a religiously active, educated core that tends to be conservative in both the political and family spheres.

The two other recent national surveys (ARIS and PEW) generally confirm the tendencies in the LDS membership to be religiously involved and to take a more conservative position on political and social issues. Once these data become available to researchers in analyzable form, we expect to see the correlations with education and church attendance replicated.

Data from four other countries show the LDS to have some socioeconomic advantage that is associated with urban residence and a greater tendency to be married. Unfortunately, these data do not include any information on other social and political attitudes. They do show surprisingly small family sizes, given the LDS emphasis on marriage and family. This may be a function of higher socioeconomic status, urban residence, and a high portion of mixed-faith marriages.

In 2012 the Republican candidate for the presidency of the United States was a devout Mormon with substantial education, who espouses conservative political and family values. In many ways, Mitt Romney is the prototypical Mormon according to our analysis. We end with the caveat that overgeneralization from average tendencies can be misleading, however. The majority leader of the Senate also happens to be a Mormon Democrat. In statistical terms, our standard deviations are large and correlations are closer to zero than to one. This means that despite the correlations we report, there is substantial diversity within the LDS samples; not all are prototypical LDS members.

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Notes:

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