



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Spain: A Cultural and Intercultural Approach.

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Glossary of Terms

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Latter-Day Saints Church, LDS Church. Interchangeable terminology to refer to the religion or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Mormon Church Generalized, incorrect term to refer to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Mormons Generalized/Incorrect term to refer to followers or members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Mormon Used to refer to the culture and religion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Latter-Day Saints
Saints
Members of the Church Interchangeable terminology to refer to the people who belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

I Introduction

Cultural studies are a fundamental part of the path to becoming a translator or interpreter. Traditional approaches to translation focused on language and linguistics are becoming outdated, and the act of translation is not about phraseological units alone, as, without a context, lexical groups can sometimes mean nothing at all to a reader even when they understand the language. Identification of context and purpose of a translation and understanding and knowledge of culture have become a necessary skill for translators. (Bell, 1952, p. 35-42) In the act of translation, both authors and readers, whatever their language is, belong to a different cultural group, and the perception through language of the author's culture is, in fact, bound by the culture of the reader or translator. (Katan, 2004, p. 118). It is important to take into account that there is not just one culture to match one existing language, but within a society, there can a range of different realities to be perceived, and therefore, different authors and different readers mean a vast range of different cultures even when working with only two languages.

It is here where the importance of the translator's figure as a cultural mediator must be highlighted. A translator must not only switch between languages but between cultures, being the mediator that brings the participants of the communicative act closer together, avoiding any possible conflict caused by misunderstanding.

In his publication *Translation and Translating*, Roger Bell defines Translation Competence as the knowledge a translator must possess to be able to translate. This knowledge would not only imply a vast linguistic ability and control of both the source language, the target language and both of their semantic, syntactic and pragmatic structures, but it would also entail a bicultural competence, that is, mastering both views of what he calls the 'real world' and the several cultural layers for both cultures and the specifics to the piece of work to translate (Bell, 1952, p. 36-42). Ronald Taft (1981, p.53 in Katan, 1993, p. 12) called it 'two skills in one skull': The translator must have achieved a high level of context evaluation and flexibility to switch between cultures to be able to properly mediate between cultures.

It is nearly impossible to fully know every aspect and nuance of each part of any culture, and Bell agrees that it is indeed difficult to achieve the perfect level of expertise and balance between these skills, but it is part of the task of any translator to commit to this job to learn and understand as about many aspects of it and learning about the cultural differences within the languages they work with, to deliver a faithful, non-biased, free of stereotype translation.

As part of the Translation and Interpreting studies curriculum, historical and cultural studies can be found, therefore it be would natural for one to have taken a certain interest in studying the multiple aspects and layers of the different cultures and realities which share a common language like the ones translation trainees specialize in. In fact, this passion for languages and cultures had a big part in why the author of this research has taken this path in life and not any other.

Behind this research lie two clear personal interests. Firstly, and due to personal circumstances, the culture United States of America, a culturally-rich country thanks to immigrants from all over the world settling there and calling it home from the beginning of its history. People of the United States might not have always been culturally aware or accepting of these cultures at every point in its history, as has happened in many other countries including Spain, and the reality is that some cultures and religions that have made their way into the Spanish society are still unknown to many.

Secondly, musical theater is another personal interest and has been for many years. At a first glance, it might not seem particularly related to the language and culture field, but in fact, it is much more connected to these areas than it might seem. Through music and theater, language skills can be improved and, additionally both can help pronunciation and English in general, as well as helping people learn about different realities in many time periods and countries. The musical is a genre that is particularly popular in the United States and provides an excellent means of establishing cultural contact with some of the issues of this country.

Through the many plays written or set in this country, such as ‘West Side Story’, it is possible to learn about the situation of Puerto Rican immigrants in the seventies, and the difficulties they faced when arriving in a new country, and with ‘South Pacific’, about America during

World War II and racial prejudice. These plays reflect a reality that, although still relevant, is not quite contemporary, and in the search for a more contemporary work to analyze and work on, the musical theater play 'The Book of Mormon', by Trey Parker, Matt Stone and Robert Lopez appeared to be an interesting topic for this research.

Originally, the idea of working on a translation arose - after an initial research that revealed this play is not available in Spanish - and thus arose many questions about the nature of this issue. Due to the nature and limitations in length of this research, the possibility to work on the musical play itself or propose a translation into Spanish would be impossible, but it is thanks to it, after having seen it and having analyzed its script, that I have taken an interest in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, previously known as the Mormon Church and therefore have chosen this topic to analyze and research, always with the aim of a possible future translation work on the subject. With an increasing migration flow, we can also imagine that diverse cultures and religions are increasing in number as well. People from Asia, Eastern Europe or the north of Africa are not unfamiliar to us anymore, but what do the inhabitants of this country know about smaller groups, such as the Mormons?

The Mormon culture and religion is uncommon in this country, and presumably unknown to many Spanish people that are not members of the church. Not only for those who might not be as culturally aware, but even to those who are, unless they had specifically taken interest in the subject before or had taken the time to speak to one of those couples of American young men that are on a mission to proselytize and spread their gospel. A common misbelief, then, could be that Mormons would have little to no presence in the Spanish society, and thus Spanish people who are non-members of this church had no knowledge or the culture and lifestyle that was built around it.

Starting this investigation about cultural and intercultural aspects and the depth of the levels of culture, it has become evident that to ever be able to properly translate a text like the aforementioned play, a translator must obtain as much knowledge on the subject, as well as know how to identify and understand cultural patterns, establish differences and similarities between cultures and be able to act as a mediator between them to produce the desired effect on the reader.

Therefore, and given that the Mormons have a long history of living in Spain but contact is limited, it will be interesting to further investigate how the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (which will also be addressed as Latter-Day Saints Church or Mormon Church throughout this work) has found its place within Spanish society and established their own culture and lifestyle. Is there a Spanish Mormon identity that is separate from the traditional Spanish identity?

In his essays on the interpretation of cultures, Clifford Geertz analyses religion as a cultural system, stating that religion functions “to synthesize a people's ethos—the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood —and their world view—the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are.” (Geertz, 1993, p. 89) Spain has been historically associated with the Catholic faith and this religion might still be part of their cultural ethos, although with more progressive times, other cultures and religions have established themselves as active parts of society and thus could have modified the world view of the citizens of Spain.

Given that the Mormons have a long history of living and working in Spain, but that contact with this group is still not very much understood by many people, this Final Year Dissertation aims to look more closely at the Spanish Mormon culture, identity, history and origins and explain their place within Spanish society as opposed to the traditional Spanish identity, digging deeper to learn and analyze the cultural and intercultural factors to be kept in mind in order to carry out a possible future translation of the aforementioned The Book of Mormon, the musical, or any similar translation work involving knowledge of the Latter-Day Saints . Limitations of time precluded a more formal questionnaire survey approach but a number of informal interviews and meetings with Mormon leaders and members in Madrid were conducted. These informal interviews and meetings have proven to be most helpful in gaining further insight into the Mormon culture and traditions. The data obtained during these interactions will be later analyzed by using the paradigms established through research into the concepts of culture and its levels, including the visible and invisible factors, which are part of the research into cultural diversity.

2. Origins and History of the Latter-Day Saints

Having read previous research on new religious movements in Spain it can be stated that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has been introduced to Spain through contact with, first, the United States and then, Latin America. The Americas were, according to the Latter-Day Saints teachings, visited by Jesus Christ after his resurrection). Religion can be considered an element of consistency and union between cultures in this particular case of study, and one of the connecting points that helped build a bridge between the Americas and Europe, specifically Spain. (Diego Cordero, 2016, p.69-102)

The history of the foundation of this religion and its core beliefs in its origins in the United States are essential to understand the sociocultural conditions in which this new religion had a chance to grow and spread around the globe, finding its place in society and finally becoming a recognised rooted religion in a country like Spain and becoming part of the cultural identity of some of its citizens.

Several publications gathering the history of the Church in its origins have been examined for a better understanding of its context. Some of the main sources of History of the Church are *The Pearl of Great Price* and the *Doctrine and Covenants (2013)*¹, two of the sacred books of this religion, in which Joseph Smith, prophet and founder of the Latter-Day Saints narrates his own life story and experiences to better explain how this Church was founded, and where the revelations from God to Smith are explained.

In 2018, the publication *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, as a new version in four chapters of the History of the Church, was released, which has been helpful to better understand the History and essays written by Joseph Smith. Being written at a different time, in which English language was different to the way it is today and addressing sacred topics can make a text challenging for a researcher.

¹ 2013 refers to year of the latest edition consulted throughout this research. The Doctrine and Covenants were originally published in 1835, and the Pearl of Great Price was published in 1851.

2.1 Origins and History in the United States

Born in Vermont in 1809 but having moved to New York in search of a more promising future, Joseph Smith, the son of a farmer, received a vision from God and Jesus Christ at the age of fourteen while he was in search of religious truth. Through this vision, he was told not to join any of the already established Christian faiths that others followed, such as the Methodist, Presbyterian or Baptist faiths, as they had misinterpreted God's purpose. Sharing this vision got young Joseph in trouble, but he did not give up looking for answers. (Saints, 2013)

At the age of seventeen, the angel Moroni, messenger of the Lord, appeared to him while he prayed. Moroni revealed to Joseph the location of the Golden Plates, which would become the basis of this branch of Catholicism. On these plates "was etched the record of an ancient people who once lived in the Americas. The record told of their origins and gave an account of Jesus Christ visiting them and teaching the fullness of His gospel." (Saints, 2018 ch.3) Along with these plates, Joseph would also find two seer stones and a breastplate, which would help him interpret the scriptures in the golden plates. Under no circumstances, unless instructed, was Joseph to reveal these plates to anyone, but he was to share the Gospel he himself translated, and help God restore his covenant. (Latter-Day Saints, 2018, and Joseph Smith, 1886)

In July 1829, Joseph had finished the translation of the Book of Mormon and was ready to publish it. A year after its publication, the Church was officially created and started baptising new members and organising its hierarchy, after the angels Peter, James, John and John the Baptist² had visited Joseph and Oliver and given them priesthood authority.

The establishment of this new religion was not easy. Despite the supposed freedom of cult in the United States, Smith and his followers in New York faced conflict with followers of more established faiths which prosecuted the Latter-Day Saints to make them leave their towns and cities. These conflicts and their expulsion from several places motivated the Saints³ to

² In Latter-Day Saints terminology, these are angels, which means they are messengers of the Lord and should not be confused with the Catholic definition of angels and Saints.

³ See glossary of terms.

start a pilgrimage towards Missouri where the Mormon Wars (a war between non-Mormons against Mormons to exterminate the latter) were fought, and it was during these that the Prophet Joseph Smith was murdered.

In the search for a new Church leader and after days of attempting to reach an agreement on who the new leader should be, Brigham Young, one of the twelve apostles of the Latter-Day Saints Church, was appointed as new head of the Church, and escaping religious discrimination, decided they had to head towards to a more isolated area. Great Salt Lake Valley was then a deserted place, but seemed to be perfect for this purpose, and in 1847, the Mormons finally established themselves in Salt Lake City, Utah, which is, to this day considered 'headquarters' to the Church.

The presence of this religion in the United States is, to this day, quite relevant all across the country. According to official figures (Church of Jesus Christ Newsroom, 2019) Six million six hundred eighty-one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one (6,681,821) citizens of the United States of America are members of the Latter-Day Saints Church. This figure only considers members that have been baptised, although there can be active followers that are not part of the statistics because they have not yet received a baptism.

Eighty-one temples have been built and four Universities have been founded only in the United States. On a final note there are a hundred and eighty-seven missions of the Latter-Day Saints currently active, providing humanitarian help and promoting development and education in countries all over the globe. (LDS Newsroom, n.d. Accessed on July, 1)

2.2 Origins and History in Latin America

Central and South America and Spain have been deeply connected since Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492. The Spanish Conquest of South America brought not only an expansion of the Kingdom of Spain and its economic assets, but also a cultural homogenization came with the language and culture of the conquistadors. Along with explorers, and due to the connection between the Kingdom of Spain and the Catholic Church, priests of different orders were sent on missions to educate and evangelize the peoples of the

new land, so old beliefs could be behind left behind to convert them to the True Faith. (Arias, M., 1928, p. 19-28)

Just as the Spanish had previously done at the time of the conquest of South America, and mostly due to the fact that the Church of Jesus Christ believed that people in the Americas had been chosen to be visited by Jesus Christ after his resurrection and his teachings were written in their sacred Plates, the Latter-Day Saints created missions to spread their Gospel across the continent. One of the first revelations of Joseph Smith stated that missionaries should go two by two, without any belongings or money to specific areas to spread their knowledge of the Gospel. (Saints, 2018)

According to Saints (2018), the first mention of a mission of this nature would be around 1830, when Oliver Cowdery, the first baptised Latter Day Saint, headed towards the western edge of the United States to preach the restored gospel to American Indians. ‘The Lord said that the city of Zion would be built near these people, echoing the Book of Mormon’s promise that God would establish the New Jerusalem on the American continent prior to the Second Coming of Christ.’. (Come life or come death, Ch. 9, Saints, 2018)

The first actual Spanish speaking mission on record would be the Arizona and Mexico Mission, that took place in 1875. A manuscript and reports on this mission was kept by the Latter-Day Saints, and it is available for public consultation at their Church History Catalog. Even after the insurrections against the Spanish Empire and the loss of territory in Latin America, the colonial influence was still strong, and the language and religion were still strongly attached. Seeing that, President Brigham Young, leader of the Latter-Day Saints Church at the time, recruited missionaries with some knowledge of the Spanish language for this mission and expressed his desire to have the Book of Mormon translated into Spanish. (Church History Catalog, 1874-1977)

It is on these records where a mention to a ‘Spanish gentleman’, Melitón G. Trejo, can be found for the first time. Further reading indicates that Trejo, born in 1844 originally from Extremadura, Spain, was the first official member of Spanish origin to convert to the Latter-Day Saints Church, and he helped create the translation of the Book, published under the

name 'Trozos Selectos del Libro del Mormón'. It is as a consequence of this translation that his mission in Mexico opened the doors to the Latter-Day Saints into the rest of Latin America and later on, Spain. Further history of the spreading of this religion in different countries in Latin America, such as Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Colombia has been recorded by the Church, and was examined for the sake of this research, but due to time and length limitations, this section cannot be extended longer. (Church of Jesus Christ Newsroom. Facts and Statistics) Nowadays, Mexico possesses one of the highest populations of Latter-Day Saints in the world, with a count of 1,455,774 members.

2.3 Origins and History in Spain

The Latter-Day Saints Church have not had a long history in the country of Spain, due to the sociopolitical moment of the country's history in which they first happened to arrive.

Before anything else, the most important factor to consider when analysing the context of the appearance of the Latter-Day Saints Church in Spain, is that the country was living in a certain isolation from the rest of the world while under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco's leadership as a result of the Spanish Civil War. This regime was in power from 1939 (the end of the Spanish Civil War 1936-39) until his death in 1975. This strict dictatorship had merged fascist and Catholic ideas (National-Catholicism and its establishment meant that no other church had a place in the Spanish Nation but the Roman Catholic Church, as the only true Church. (C. Hause, 2016, and López, 2018, p. 206)

Spain's economic situation through the dictatorship was not flourishing, so the United States decided to reach out and provide financial support for the country. An agreement was signed in 1952, in which Spain agreed to build a few US military bases, like those in Rota and Torrejón de Ardoz or Zaragoza and, in exchange for international support to help Spain regain part of its economic status. (Diego Cordero, 2016, p. 72). It was in these same military

bases, in the year 1956, where the first Latter-Day Saints arrived in Spain from the United States.

The fact that the still ongoing dictatorship did not allow any sort of proselytism and any other religion that was not Catholic would be prosecuted made the Church of Jesus Christ keep a low profile and, although they were still encouraged to share the Gospel with those who desired to hear about it, they were obliged to do it privately, so the first Spanish converts were people closely related to those Mormon military men.

It was in the mid-20th Century, years previous to Franco's death and without the Spanish Democracy not yet restored, when a Law of Religious Freedom was passed in Spain. As a result of this, new religious movements like the Mormons were able to freely enter the country and establish themselves as a new active part of the Spanish society. This year, 1968, establishes the most important milestone for, as the year the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was officially recognized by the Ministry of Justice. The following year, 1969, Spain was 'dedicated for the preaching of the Gospel' by Elder Marion G. Romney, part of the Quorum of the Twelve (a group that resembles the original Apostles of Jesus Christ). This meant Spain was officially recognised as accepting of the Latter-Day Saints and since then, missionaries were sent to the country to spread the word of God. (Diego Cordero, 2016, and Latter-Day Saints Official Website, n.d.)

The Church has continued growing from that point on. A sacred Temple was built in the city of Madrid, and different communities are established in several cities across the country, organised in 140 congregations and with 117 reunion centres.

According to the official Newsroom of the Latter-Day Saints church in Spain, there are currently 58,061 total baptized members of their community in Spain, which would be a total of 0.12% of the Spanish population, as opposed to the United States, where 6,681,829 citizens belong to the Church which constitutes 2.01% of the total population. These percentages are

only representative of the number of baptized members and do not reflect those who have not yet receive, or do not wish to receive baptism. (Church of Jesus Christ Newsroom, n. d.)

After comparing the number of members from its country of origin we can state that followers of the Latter-Day Saints Church in Spain represent a real minority within their society in the country, even if the number might be bigger than the one originally expected by those who are non-members of this church and its community.



Image 1: Image of the Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-Day Saints in Madrid (Spain), taken by the author Sara Páez (May, 2019)

3. Culture and Identity : The Iceberg Theory

Having looked at the Origins and History of the Latter-Day Saints, this section will be focus attention on gaining more insight into the what identity and culture really mean, in particular, in terms of translation.

For David Katan, an expert on cultural studies, translation and culture are inherent to each other. He reflects on the role of the translator as a cultural mediator and the approaches to culture. In his book *Translating Cultures: the translator as a cultural mediator* (1996) he states the need to reflect on how our own mind and culture is articulated before we can actually move on to study a foreign culture. Human beings know what the meaning of culture is in an instinctive way, just like they naturally know to which culture they belong. (Katan, 1999, p. 16)

Therefore, to be able analyze a culture as the one that has been chosen for this research paper, a system of cultural analysis that has already been established by Katan on the matter needs to be studied according to the data obtained through field research of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints. This will be helpful to analyze the similarities and differences of Mormons as compared to the author of this research, a non-member, but both pertaining to a Spanish society.

3.1 Katan and the Iceberg Theory: The Layers of Culture

In his book *Translating Cultures*, David Katan, an expert in cultural and cross-cultural studies in all of their variants, develops the idea of how the act of translating is intrinsic to the one of comparing cultures, taking into account many definitions of culture given by experts through history and their different approaches, such as the behaviorist, functionalist or cognitive, but he agrees that none of these are capable of analyzing all the complex aspects of culture, so a dynamic approach seems to be the most adequate.

He maintains that ‘the way languages convey meaning is related to the culture. Secondly, though languages can convey concepts from other cultures, people (including translators and interpreters) tend not to realize that their perception (through language) is, in fact, bound by their own culture’. (Katan, 1999, p. 118) In fact, we can extract the example of this from previous sections on the history of the church: the way the Latter-Day Saints Church have built a bridge between cultures (for example, between the United States and Mexico, which facilitated the connection years later with Spain) through language and translation. It would have been impossible otherwise as cross-cultural connection depends on a lingua franca to properly function (Council of Europe, 2013) but it also depends on the knowledge of the cultural context that the possible translator must possess.

When researching the definitions of culture and after comparing them, Katan uses the classification created by Gail Robinson (1988, p. 7-13 in Katan, 1999, p. 17) to classify all of the different aspects of a culture in two groups according to how obvious certain aspects they are at a first contact with another culture. This classification could be summarized in the two following groups:

- i) External: Such as behaviors, in which language, gestures and habits are included. This category also includes products, such as literature, art, music or objects.
- ii) Internal: such as ideas: beliefs, values and institutions.

(Source: Katan, 1999, p. 17)

The ideas that Katan analyses and explains in this book were previously addressed by Edward T. Hall, reputable anthropologist, in his book *Beyond Culture* (1976) and *Silent Language* (1952) in which he compares his own culture to others and analyses their different layers. Hall states that these are not innate but learnt, refuting the Sapir-Whorf theory of linguistic determinism, and believes culture is passed onto people through models (which can be parents, teachers, authority figures. etc.) that can change over time. A number of experts, like Edward T. Hall with his triad of culture (1982), Fons Trompenaars’ layers of culture (1993, pp. 22-23) and Geert Hofstede’s Cultural onion (1991, pp.7-9) have established systems to

analyze the different layers and depth of culture but for the purpose of this research, the Iceberg Theory of Edward T. Hall seems to be the most adequate.

It was these two experts, originally Edward Hall and later on David Katan, that originated and established what we call the Theory of the Iceberg on the different aspects of culture, which retakes the idea stated a few paragraphs previous that there are deeper layers of culture, those that constitute its core and foundations, that are invisible on a first contact with such culture. (Hall, 1952, in Katan, 1999, p. 29)

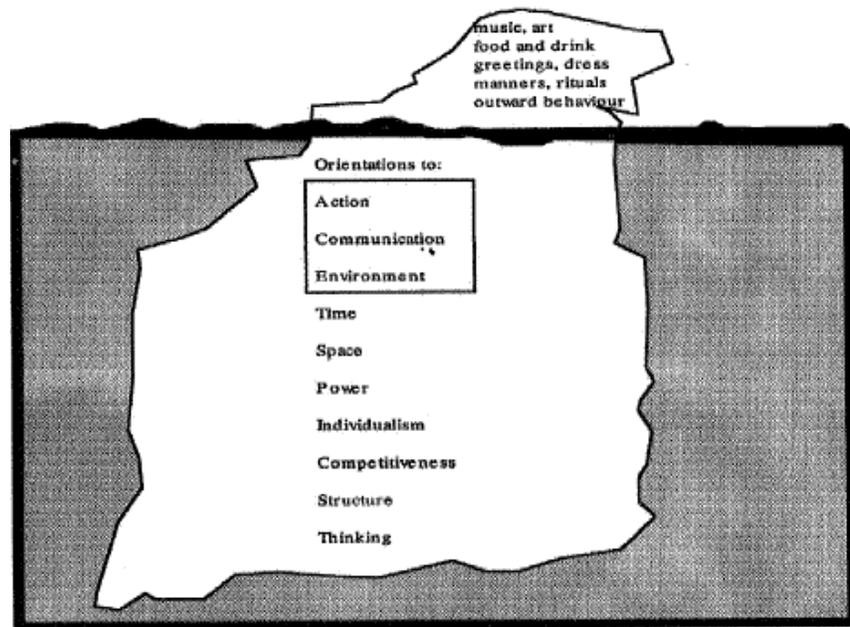


Figure 1: Representation of the Iceberg Theory on the levels of culture. (Katan, 1999, p.30)

As can be observed in Figure 1, any cultural system can be compared to a literal iceberg in the sense that there are two parts that compose it: one meets the eye and the other does not. This comes to explain that what we can first perceive on a first contact with a culture, which in this case would be the tip, are the more superficial and outward aspects of a culture, such as dress code, language, manners and behaviors, and products. These aspects can be taught, are easily identifiable and more obvious to the foreign eye. For an outsider, this portion can seem quite big, but the truth is that it constitutes only a small part of what a cultural system really is.

Secondly, a wider part can be found at the bottom. The base of the iceberg, which is underwater and cannot be easily seen. This deeper side of a culture is the one in which values, beliefs, rules and concepts of reality are held.

This part is observable, it is explicit, conscious, and can be taught, whereas the deeper part is subconscious and implicit, and is not learnt but acquired.

With an increase of migrant flow and the opening of frontiers, it is more than evident that people are more and more in contact with diverse cultures. We live in the era of globalization, and the effects of it can be seen not only in a political context, but also in a social and cultural sense, in which the population of the world becomes more homogeneous the more cultures mix with each other within a nation. The ‘host’ culture of a nation will start, little by little, to accommodate new and more diverse cultures that will conform new identities in the country.

The idea of a collective national identity has, therefore, changed: It depends on the several identities of minorities and majorities gathered within a nation. These identities may vary according to the ‘changing nature of personal identities, with the separate components shaped by increasing diversity in terms of faith, present locality, and ethnicity – as well as an apparently declining sense of nationality’ (Council of Europe, 2013, p. 74.)

4. Analysis

Many members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints have given freely of their time to answer the numerous questions about their religion, culture and identity that arose through the developing of this research, and this work would not have been possible without their kindness and help. They personally attended meetings to answer these questions, provided information and guidance and referred the author of this research to other members who they believed could help answer certain questions or solve certain doubts better than they could.

Initially, a questionnaire which contained questions on basic beliefs, rites, social norms and lifestyle had been created before any of the meetings that actually took place but was later discarded through lack of time in pursuing a more rigorous analysis and study of the answers

and this questionnaire was replaced by a more informal series of initial meetings, interviews and conversations with Spanish members of the Church who agreed to share their personal experiences on their changes in identity through their lives as part of the post-Francoist Spanish society but also the Church of Jesus Christ.

4.1 External aspects of the Mormon Culture:

Previous to the different visits to the Latter-Day Saints centers of reunion, churches, Temple and institutions, contact with members of the Church had never been established by the author of this research. The only previous knowledge of this religion had been learnt through the viewing of ‘*The Book of Mormon: The Musical*’, written by non-members of the church that used all of the stereotypes and misconceptions about this culture for a comic purpose, and therefore her knowledge was limited and biased, which caused a feeling of uncertainty. While these meetings and reunions were conducted, several external and internal aspects of the Church were discovered, although many still remain unknown.

Following the Iceberg model of cultural identity, the following external elements of culture have been chosen to analyze: language, products, dress and outward behavior.

4.1.1 Products

To start with the most visible and external layer aspects of a culture, products are one of the main categories, easy to access to members of other religions or cultures, and easily identifiable. For products, we understand books, music, films, art of any sort of object and Mormons are a group that is clearly interested in culture and education. To mention some examples of Latter-Day Saint products, there are music, bands and choirs, art, books, websites and phone apps among others. Products are a physical reflection of a culture, and make it easy to spread and understand, so, in this category, translation must be mentioned as the most important product of the Latter Day Saints

Church, as it was the one that opened the doors and helped this religion penetrate the frontiers of many countries.

4.1.2 Language

This leads us to the most obvious similarity when talking about external aspects: the language. The Church of Jesus Christ made a conscious decision to adapt their sacred books and texts to be comprehensible in other parts of the world without the need to learn a vehicular language, which in this case would have been English, and all of the rites, events and reunions are carried out in Spanish. Spanish must also be spoken by the foreign missionaries that arrive in the country.

4.1.3 Clothing and Attire

Regarding clothing and attire, the stereotype of a certain modest dress style that would give away their religious choices was always in mind when thinking of the Mormons. It was believed that some sort of uniform would be worn, such as the white shirt and black dress pants for men and long skirts for women. Out of respect and in an attempt to be culturally aware, the author of this research had to purposefully change her own garments before attending a meeting held in the Church at *Barrio 2* (Fuente del Berro District, Madrid) and decided to dress in a modest way. This misconception was proven wrong at the arrival to the church, where it was obvious to the eye that every single person had a very different style, more classic or modern, but more according to age and their position in Church rather than religion.

The Elders and Sisters, the missionaries of the Church, who come from other countries with proselytism purposes are an exception: There is indeed a required dress code and grooming rules that must be followed, as they are representatives of the Church, and their role is especially important. This code, which resembles the original stereotypical idea of

clothing and possibly created the stereotype that Mormons dress a certain way. (Latter-Day Saints Official Website: Dress and Grooming.)

4.1.4 Outward Behavior and Manners

Moving towards the aspect of outward behavior and attitude, enters a more personal perception of Latter-Day Saints. Had the members not been welcoming and happy to share their culture, this whole research it would have been impossible to perceive this aspect. Despite certain stereotype based on a lack of knowledge that describe the Mormons as a closed cult, personal experience has proven it wrong: From the very first contact the author of this research established with the Church of Jesus Christ, the community was kind, helpful and inviting to all sorts of events in their Church and even the homes of members, so a better insight and the full experience could be achieved.

At no point did the author of this research feel judged for her appearance, religion or personal choices, but was instead accepted and respected, treated very politely by the members. All these behavioral aspects might have to do with the following internal aspects of the culture, which are ingrained within the Mormon mindset and reflect on their interactions with other members and non-members.

4.2 Internal Aspects of Mormon Culture:

These are the most difficult to identify even when in contact with a culture, as are sometimes subconscious and acquired by those who belong to the culture as opposed to the external ones. Only a few aspects can be analyzed on this research, but it constitutes the beginning of what could be a deeper, more formal investigation of the internal aspects of this faith. Despite the efforts, the internal aspects of this religion still remain very much unknown for a non-member of this church.

Deeper aspects of culture chosen to be analyzed are religious beliefs, general beliefs and personal values, marriage and relationships and collectivist mindset.

4.2.1 Religious Beliefs

On the one hand, we have religious beliefs. The fundamental beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are gathered in one of their sacred publications: *The Pearl of Great Price*, which contains twelve articles that, under the title of *Articles of Faith*, describes the main religious ideas all members of the Church should follow.

To summarize the knowledge of the religious ideas, it can be said that Latter Day Saints identify as Christian, but believe that there has been a separation between the early Church and the current Church from other faiths.: The organization of the first church created by Jesus Christ in its early days, with apostles, prophets and priests is the one they believe in, and this hierarchical organization and power roles still remain nowadays.

Some interesting religious differences for further investigation could be rites such as the baptism through immersion, in which the new convert must be completely covered by water, or the sacrament of receiving the body and blood of Christ which does not need of an initiation rite.

4.2.2 General Beliefs and Personal Values

On the other hand, we find general beliefs, which reflect on the outward behavior mentioned in the previous section.

Faustino López, head of the Latter-Day Saints in Spain, mentions in his book *Los Mormones en España*, mentions one of the most important Articles of Faith of the Church. Article nº 12 affirms that “*We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law*”, (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2013)”. Therefore, a core belief of the Latter-Day Saints Church is that, before anything else, they belong to a nation as citizens and must follow the Government and laws and rules of the country and believe in following them as any other citizens of the country should. (López, 2018, p. 47)

Secondly, Article nº 13 reads the following statement ‘*We in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous and in doing good to all men. [...] If there is anything virtuous, lovely*

or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek these things.” (2013). This article and the moral values behind it are strongly ingrained in Mormon minds. As mentioned in a previous section on the outward behavior, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ should always try to behave in the correct way, not only when interacting with members of the Church.

Many members of the Church that took their time to solve any further questions for this research pointed out that respecting each person’s free will matters for the Latter-Day Saints: None of these norms will be imposed on any members of the Church. As humans are given free will by God., one must come to their own conclusions and make their own covenant with the Lord, then, by their own free will, people will follow the rules and norms they believe correct or acceptable, always taking into account that laws of the country must be followed as well, as mentioned previously.

4.2.3 Marriage and Relationships

Contrary to an extended stereotype, and to give an example of to which extent Mormons decide to be loyal to the laws of their country, this group rejects plural marriage. In 1890 the President of the Church of Jesus Christ at the time, Wilford Woodruff, released a Manifesto putting an end to this practice as it is illegal in many of the countries where Mormon populations reside, and it is prosecuted by the law. In its origins, members of the Church had practiced polygamy as it was part of God’s purpose, but through the Manifesto, it was stated that monogamy was his purpose for the current times. (Doctrine and Covenants, 2013, pp. 50-60)

Mormons believe that, through marriage a man and a woman establish an unbreakable union that will transcend the physical life, and death will not part them. For the Latter-Day Saints, a marriage is not broken after death, and families will be reunited in their afterlife or heaven, establishing a stronger bond than, for example, Catholic marriages. Although this is a strong belief within the community, whenever the marriage wishes to be dissolved and whenever law regards it, the Church of Jesus Christ accepts divorce with an option to remarry again to a different person.

On a final note, it is interesting to explore the views of the Latter-Day Saints Church on homosexuality which are also related to their concept of marriage: while the Church believes it is not a sin to have homosexual thoughts and some of their members are openly identified as part of the LGTBI + community, an individual should not act upon them and should not engage in any sort of physical relationship with a person of the same sex, just as they should not engage in any sort of physical relationship before marriage, which, as was mentioned in the previous paragraph.

4.2.4 Collectivism

Another aspect to consider would be the collectivist mindset of the Church. There is a wide number of rites and activities that could be analyzed which denote a collectivist sense and a high importance of the Church as a whole. Those individuals, members of the Latter-Day Saints that are in a difficult situation, are taken care of and supported by other members who enjoy a better one, so all can serve the purpose of the Lord and maintain the unity in their society.

Missions are a very important part of this, in which young men and women part from their countries of origin and devote a few years of their lives to spread the Gospel for the collective good. In the experience of the author of this research with the Elders and Sisters met at *Barrio 2* in Madrid, the call to serve the Lord and the community of the Latter-Day Saints as a messenger of God has priority over their own personal lives. Missionaries who engaged with the author had left family and friends, as well university degrees, on hold for a bigger purpose that would benefit the community.

Other practices discovered in the several meetings with the Latter-Day saints that show the sense of collectivism, revealed practices such as fasting one Sunday every month, to donate that money for those in need. A key organization within the Latter-Day Saints that supports the community and whose purpose is to strengthen the bond within the families and members of the Church is the Relief Society. This society is confirmed by all the female members of the Church, who provide help and guidance to those in need. Just as

family is the most important unit in the Church of Jesus Christ, the whole community must act as a family and support each other.

4.3 A Spanish National Identity v. a Mormon Identity

At the beginning of this research, an initial preconceived thought was that there was such a thing as two separate identities coexisting (amongst others) in the country of Spain. This idea came from a non-member mindset of the author of this research as a Spanish citizen, partly due to a lack of knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints but also, after some research, because of historical reasons, as this religion was born and appeared to apply more to North and South Americans, rather than European countries or any other, which had a longer religious history.

The United States as a country is usually contemplated as founded by immigrants, in which, from the very beginning, there has been a heterogeneous mix of cultures, faiths and races, conforming what is understood as the American collective identity, but countries like Spain, have not always enjoyed such freedom.

The idea of patriotic values, the exaltation of the Spanish race and an imposition of Catholicism as the obligatory religion in the era of Francoist Spain are important facts to consider, as historical events leave a print on the national identity of a country. Although Franco's national Catholic ideals are outdated, this event is a very important part of the national history that could not leave anyone unaffected. It is possible that a percentage of the Catholic majority remains to this day, even if only by tradition helping, in a way, to consider new religious movements as something foreign or non-Spanish.

In *Los Mormones en España* (2018, pp. 45-46), Faustino López Requena, head of the Church in Spain, and who very kindly accepted to meet the author of this research to know more about this project and answer as many questions as possible, analyses the change in identity that those Spanish citizens who converted to the Church of Jesus Christ. He gives it the name of 'transnational identity', which happens when the change in religion makes those who have converted feel foreign in their own country, even if no geographical barrier was actually

crossed. This transnational identity entails being part of two different societies, feeling torn between feeling part of the Spanish society (but not Catholic) and the Latter-Day Saints Church.

In a previous chapter, it was pointed out that experts on the matter of globalisation and multiculturalism, such as Martyn Barrett, have observed a change in the identity patterns. In the past, Spain was affected by what Barret calls “Identity politics”, ideas that: ‘whether on a narrow national, ethnic, faith or regional basis, often holds back the transition, rather than supporting and inspiring a new and interconnected world’. (Council of Europe, 2013, p.70) These ideas, imposed by a strict dictatorship, had closed the country’s borders and stopped it from connecting with other cultures, even standardizing the small different coexisting cultures that conform the country of Spain. Nowadays, the situation is different, and Democracy has been restored in the country. This has helped the development of a more open-minded view of the world and has opened the doors to new cultures, religions and races.

Los Mormones en España highlights the importance of immigration for the growth of this Church is highlighted: it is these immigrants, who, away from their native land, are more open to change and accept cultures that are not part of their original traditions.

Statistics collected in May 2018 state that 51% of members of the Latter-Day Saints Church in Spain are of Spanish origin, the remaining 49% of foreign members are mostly of Latin American origin, although the term foreign might not be accurate as many of them are either nationalized, therefore Spanish citizens, or actually born in Spain. López declares that the mix of ‘foreign’ and Spanish origins will cause a dissolution of what is considered foreign, creating an integrative society in which there is not only one identity, but many, blended together. (López, 2018, p. 46)

This is the clear example of how an initially unknown, unaccepted cultural system, can penetrate the frontiers of a society and can slowly blend in, embracing different peoples and cultures to take part in the current society, just like in the case of the Latter-Day Saints and Spain.

5. Conclusion

The conclusions extracted after reflecting on all the experiences and teachings of the Latter-Day Saints members interviewed during the field research and the time spent reading books on History and Culture for this paper are that there is actually no such thing as a Mormon Identity that is separate from the Spanish national identity, as there is not only one specific Spanish national identity anymore. Some of the similarities and differences are the following:

The similarities between the investigated cultures would be shared language (Spanish), shared rights and duties as citizens of Spain and being subjects to law and authority. Free will, freedom of speech and religious freedom, as stated in the Constitution and a similar sense of style: garments might vary according to age, position and personal choice.

On the other hand, the more invisible aspects and some of the differences investigated are the following: Strong ties within family and community (Collectivist culture), concept of marriage relationships (transcendent marriage, rejection of plural marriage), manners and behavior with specific importance of respect and education. Small gap between authority figures within Church and close relationship between man and God. Different products: sacred texts, books, art and music. Religious rules and sacraments (restoration of the original Church, articles of Faith, etc..).

As can be the case in many other countries in the world, Spain is increasingly becoming a globalized country, which means it is accepting of different cultures and races. The remains of the cultural close-mindedness of the past might still be present but are slowly decreasing with time and progress, and it is the task of translators on their role as cross-cultural mediators to reduce the gap between minorities that do not wish to be treated as different and foreign but as a part of the cultural richness of Spain.

This final year research has given some insight into many of the more obvious differences and similarities between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a new religious movement in the history of the country of Spain, and the author's own culture. Taking time to understand different realities that coexist in an environment has been an opportunity to reflect on how any culture is structured and how it fluctuates through time and history; being,

furthermore, a way to connect with other realities that would otherwise remain unknown and unexplored for someone belonging to a mainstream part of the culture in the country of Spain. Pushing the personal cultural boundaries and leaving the personal comfort zone in society is enriching and helps break barriers and eliminate barriers between groups, broadening the personal knowledge and taking new steps towards a perfect idea of a translator as a cultural mediator.

As mentioned at the very beginning of this research, the role of cultural understanding is a key part of the skills that a translator should have in order to be able to deliver the most perfect translation. Without the translation, culture would only spread within the limits of a language, and thus the importance of the role of translators as cultural mediators.

This project has opened many doors towards future investigation, with a possibility of establishing a rigorous questionnaire to obtain more detailed information about the visible and invisible aspects of cultural identity and thus have access to more significant data with which to analyze this culture and its internal aspects to ensure greater veracity in the work on translations with a culturally-charged context involving the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

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