

*A Sociology of Mormon Kinship. The Place of Family Within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (2016)*

**Kristyeen Lee Black**

The Edwin Mellen Press, New York.

Lee Black's book is possibly one of the most comprehensive that deeply analyzes the meaning of family in the Mormon faith. In my opinion, one of the aspects that stand out most in his work, is her model of the symbolic system of the family. *A Sociology of Mormon Kinship* is a work that relies on a solid theoretical framework of personal interviews as well as a hermeneutic study of the Mormons. So, her work projects the family beyond the mere Mormon environment, extending it to the analysis of community participation in society.

This monograph indicates a number of factors necessary to understand the sociology of religion in the Mormon community, that is, it uses the classics of the study of the sociology of religion, Durkheim, Weber, Berger, Bellah, with new perspectives in the study of religion, Putnam, Stack, May or McBaine, as well as with Mormon scholars of the past century as of the present moment. But also, by the structure and purpose of the work, he has to resort to structuralists, Parsons, Bourdieu, Radcliffe-Brown, Mauss, and thus to overlap the religious, social, and internal aspects of the Mormon community.

The book is well structured, begins with a preface where he explains to feather what she tries to reach and contribute the text. As the subject of Mormonism is, a brief introduction to the terms of this confession, in order to bring the reader closer to that language. To culminate with an explanation of the chapters, as well as the structure, and the relation between them.

The first part of the book consists of five chapters, which analyze and study the different aspects of Mormon life and the family in the community. The first chapter, as an introduction, outlines the most important aspects of the community, such as the outline of family ideology, the family as a focus of care, fundamental in Mormon religious questioning.

Among the most outstanding aspects of the research developed, in part, through a participatory observation analysis. The analysis of kinship networks, which form a significant part for the understanding of this faith. The connection between family, family as support and congregations. It is a reflection, because LDS congregations have succeeded in places where others have failed or conflicts have arisen. She tries to solve it, throughout the book, perhaps more identifiable than sociologically, but not less interesting.

The second chapter introduces the reader to the methodology used. To show the influence exerted by the anthropologist Geertz in the selection of her methodology. It begins with a broad description of the object of study, and thus, analyze from the community participation. For that, she has lived with people, attended events, dinners, parties, classes and participate as volunteers in different meetings. This has made her a direct participant, being able to understand the community and the relationship of the family, as well as other aspects of Mormon life. The interviews were selected among different members of the Mormon community, mainly in Utah and New Jersey.

The third chapter proposes a different approach than has hitherto been taken to study these subjects, and especially the Mormons. Because women have a prominent place in the Mormon community and there is feminist development within the community. With this work, she begins a new trend of analysis and a new debate. Although, this is the shortest subject, and in our opinion, She should have been expanded further, defending this thesis. This causes a decompensation between themes, and it can generate criticism of the text.

The fourth chapter, she makes an interesting and brief history of the Mormon community. As Joseph becomes a prophet of the Mormon faith. And why the family is very important in the Mormon community. It exposes Mormonism as a restoration of the gospel to be projected into the new society. The persecution of the community, harassment and so on. The importance of death, and what is the difference with other confessions fearful of death. Concluding with the Christian identity of the community. This is an interesting account of Mormon identity and confession. Especially for initiates in religious study.

In the fifth chapter analyzes the Mormon people, highlighting their characteristics as well as their strengths and, in a way, their weaknesses. She points out that this is an ethical subculture,

what are its codes of conduct, and are different from those of other religions. It analyzes polygamy, a form of behavior that was present in the origins but which is then no longer a norm, although it remains in some isolated groups. But it also delves into gender roles, which has previously dealt with in previous chapters, worship services and analyzes Sunday worship, which generally the first meeting is at 9am, but others do not begin until 1 pm.

The second part is structured in four chapters that analyze the meaning of the symbology of the family in the Mormon faith. She develops the triangular model he proposed in the introduction. What makes of the analysis very interesting, because, combining aspects such as religious values and modernization, the importance of marriage and gender values, knowing how to progress without implying a rupture of its founding principles, and not staying Anchored in the origins, but advancing in society.

The second part of the book is made up of four chapters that analyze what the symbolism of the family and what it implies in the Mormon faith. He develops the triangular model he proposed in the introduction. What makes the analysis of this part very interesting, so she bonds different aspects such as religious values and modernization, the importance of marriage and gender values, knowing how to progress without implying a rupture of its founding principles, and not remaining anchored in the origins, if not advancing in society.

The third part dissect the meaning of the idea of family, that is, the Ward family as an experience within the familiar symbolism of the community. It deals with relevant aspects in any society, but rather from a particular dimension.

In a section, it indicates those who are left out, she writes about of those peoples who do not acquire or do not have the capacity to carry out responsibilities within the community feet, will not be elevated to such positions, but will collaborate in the community in another way, like army of campaign. In a section, it indicates those who are left out, speaks of those who do not acquire or do not have the capacity to carry out responsibilities within the community feet, they will not be elevated to such positions, but They will collaborate in the community in another way, like army of campaign.

In the Chapter 11 Lee present her conclusions and manifest the importance of the ward family, because the ward families are responsible for the unity of the communities, with the function of the weaving the network until consolidating the structure of the community as a whole, led by the leader. Among the various contributions, one of them, which is important in the study of religious communities, that the Mormon faith is a way of life, where the members live and personify it, have an ethical behavior of care and service, and this is what sets them apart from other religious denominations.

It is a very interesting book, well worked and necessary to understand the Mormon faith. Lee Black goes into a little explored world, although there are very interesting seminal works on the Mormons, as she collects in the book and in the bibliography, but it can be said that almost none have compiled and treated it as this author does.

Jesús A. Valero-Matas  
University of Valladolid  
valeroma@soc.uva.es