OPPOSITES ATTRACT? AN EVALUATION OF FOREIGN POLICY IMPEDIMENTS IN SINO-VATICAN RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Holy See appears to be an uneasy association between opposites. With over 1 billion people, the PRC is "the world's most populous state," while the Holy See is housed in tiny Vatican City.² In addition to its status as a sovereign political entity,³ the Holy See is also the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, since the Revolution, the PRC has been a Communist state, led by a party that strives to "propagate atheism."⁴ Despite these differences, the PRC and Holy See also hold commonalities. The pope's spiritual command of the Catholic faithful expands the Holy See's constituency to over 1 billion, giving the country a similar scope of authority to that of the PRC.⁵ Additionally, both the leaders

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² Laura M. Luehrmann, "The Red Flag and the Ring: The Dances Surrounding Sino-Vatican Ties," *Asian Politics & Policy* 1, no. 3 (2009): 490, https://www.academia.edu/1096206/The_Red_Flag_and_the_Ring_The_Dances_Surrounding_Sino_Vatican_Ties (accessed April 23, 2017).

³ "U.S. Relations with the Holy See," U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3819.html> (accessed May 7, 2017).

⁴ People's Republic of China, Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period*, trans. Donald MacInnis, https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Document_no._19_1982.pdf (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁵ Mariano Barbato, "A State, a Diplomat, and a Transnational Church: The Multi-layered Actorness of the Holy See," *Perspectives* 21, no. 2 (2013): 27, <http://www.jstor.org/>

of the Holy See and PRC “wear multiple hats;” the pope is both a spiritual and political leader, while the President of the PRC is also the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).⁶ Moreover, while officially atheistic, the PRC is beginning to realize the value of religion as a force for morality and social cohesion.⁷ The Holy See is willing to look past differences with China to establish closer relations. Despite these diplomatic motivations, two impediments are preventing the Holy See and PRC from seeking greater cooperation. Firstly, the PRC’s refusal to allow the Holy See to consecrate Chinese bishops violates the Catholic Church’s doctrine of apostolic succession.⁸ Secondly, the Holy See does not recognize the PRC diplomatically.⁹ This paper will seek to investigate these impediments through a review of Sino-Vatican relations. This paper will first discuss the state of the Chinese Catholic Church, which has experienced regulation and persecution at the PRC’s hands. Using this context as a backdrop, this paper will examine Sino-Vatican relations over three periods: 1) the Maoist era, 2) the Reform Era, and 3) the modern era. Putnam’s theory of two-level games will be applied to discuss domestic and international tensions acting on the Holy See and PRC. This paper concludes that, while the Holy See and PRC have reason to establish closer ties, the two impediments at the center of their relations encourage stagnation. The Holy See and PRC use informal procedures to ensure each side gets some of what it wants without making significant concessions.

CONTEXTUALIZING SINO-VATICAN RELATIONS: THE FRACTURED CHINESE CHURCH

Since the 1950s, the PRC’s Catholic Church has been persecuted and fractured. In 1951, the Maoist regime began a campaign of anti-Catholic persecution that saw the expulsion of a Vatican diplomat and the shuttering of Catholic seminaries.¹⁰ To bring the Church under closer control, the government established the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) in 1957. This organization

stable/24624544?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁶ Luehrmann, “Red Flag and the Ring,” 491.

⁷ Yue Pan, “Marxist View of Religion Must Keep Up with the Times,” n.p., <https://ctbi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Marxist-View-of-Religion.pdf> (accessed May 7, 2017).

⁸ Jonathan David Bradley, *The Regime Legitimacy of One-China: How the Vatican Can Make China Whole Again*, Masters diss., UNLV (Ann Arbor: ProQuest LLC, 2012), 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, iii.

¹⁰ John Tong, “The Church from 1949 to 1990,” in *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1993), 10.

publicly split from the Vatican and began “ordaining bishops independently of Rome.”¹¹ Such practices violate the doctrine of apostolic succession, which holds that the pope has the exclusive power to consecrate bishops,¹² as bishops are the successors of Christ’s apostles and the pope is the successor of Saint Peter, the chief apostle and first pope.¹³ The Holy See has condemned the CPA; Pius XII’s 1952 “apostolic letter *Cupimus Imprimis*” implied the creation of sectarian national organizations such as the CPA sowed disunity within the Church.¹⁴ Benedict XVI’s 2007 Easter letter claimed that the CPA forces Catholics to “undertake commitments... contrary to the dictates of their conscience.”¹⁵ The CPA has created a division within the Church. 5 million Chinese citizens are members of the official church led by the CPA; 7 million are members of the illegal “underground church,” which maintains loyalty to the pope.¹⁶ Internationally, these two factions are viewed as oppositional, with debates focused on their relative “legitimacy.”¹⁷ Some scholars argue that the Chinese Church is more “wounded” than split, and that all Chinese Catholics are in communion with the Holy See.¹⁸ Such theological debates, however, miss the main point: that the existence of official and underground churches symbolize both the PRC’s enduring hostility toward religion and limitations on the Holy See’s spiritual authority.

¹¹ Ibid., 13.

¹² Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 29.

¹³ Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), paragraph 1594.

¹⁴ Tong, “The Church from 1949,” 11.

¹⁵ “Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China,” Letter from Benedict XVI, May 27, 2007.

¹⁶ David Feith, “The Vatican’s Illusions About Chinese Communism,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2016, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-vaticans-illusions-about-chinese-communism-1478215875> (accessed April 23, 2017).

¹⁷ Richard Madsen, *China’s Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 19.

¹⁸ Jean-Paul Wiest, “Catholics in China: The Bumpy Road Toward Reconciliation,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27, no. 1 (2003): 2, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/23969393030302700101> (accessed April 23, 2017).

HISTORY OF SINO-VATICAN RELATIONS

Maoist Era (Pontificate of Pius XII)

Political entities can seek their goals in foreign relations in one of two ways. They may use “hard power” strategies, which use force or coercion to produce outcomes, or “soft power” strategies, which seek to “set the agenda and attract others” to one’s own goals.¹⁹ In its relations with the PRC, the Holy See utilized “hard power” rhetoric early on, engaging in provocation against communist rule. Defiance of the PRC flourished under the anti-communist Pius XII. In 1949, the pontiff “excommunicated [separated from the Church] all Catholics collaborating with Communist organizations.”²⁰ Pius XII also excommunicated bishops consecrated outside the authority of the Holy See (i.e. CPA bishops).²¹ Excommunication is one of the primary hard-power tools at the Holy See’s disposal. Because excommunication from the Church implies loss of salvation, the Holy See may use it as a coercive measure to prevent Catholics from engaging in activity contrary to the Church’s objectives. Pius XII’s excommunication of communist collaborators indicated his disinterest in attraction or co-optation of the PRC.

Without any significant military or economic power, Pius XII projected the Holy See’s “hard power” through a bitter war of words with the PRC. The 1958 encyclical *Ad Apostolorum principis* alleged the PRC had brought “restraint and suffering” on Chinese Catholics.²² While future popes would urge Chinese Catholics to be upstanding citizens, Pius XII focused on Catholics’ obligation to resist laws conflicting with God’s law: “every Christian should... repeat the words with which Peter and the other Apostles answered the first persecutors of the Church: ‘We must obey God rather than men.’”²³ Some modern commentators have questioned the logic of this confrontational position. Tong argues that *Ad Sinarum gentem*, an encyclical from Pius XII defending the universal Church and encouraging resistance of the PRC, only provoked increased persecution of Chinese Catholics.²⁴ Madsen

¹⁹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (Cambridge: PublicAffairs, 2004), 5.

²⁰ Donald R. McClarey, “Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker and Victims of Communism Day,” *The American Catholic*, May 1, 2013, <http://the-american-catholic.com/tag/decreed-against-communism-1949/> (accessed April 23, 2017).

²¹ Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Ad Apostolorum principis*, 8.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴ Tong, “The Church from 1949,” 11.

contends that “[t]he Vatican’s aggressive and uncompromising anti-Communist stance... put an enormous burden on Chinese Catholics,” who made up (and continue to make up) a small fraction of China’s population.²⁵ These criticisms are certainly warranted. It is unclear what Pius XII wished to accomplish with his campaign of defiance; China’s tiny minority of Catholics never had a chance to alter the Maoist regime’s religious policies. However, the resistance campaign had great symbolic value. Even “lax Catholics” in China have admiration for Catholics persecuted under Mao.²⁶ Moreover, persecution did not stop Catholicism from growing in the PRC after the collapse of Maoism.²⁷ Despite the shortcomings of Pius XII’s provocative stance, it preserved the Catholic faith in the PRC through a difficult and dangerous period.

Reform Era (Pontificate of John Paul II)

After Mao’s death, the PRC underwent radical political and economic changes under the pragmatic Deng Xiaoping. These changes were paralleled by advancements in Sino-Vatican relations, made possible by the PRC’s shifting attitude toward religion. A 1982 CCP document acknowledged that religion would not die out in the PRC for the foreseeable future. Thus, the CCP changed its attitude toward religious believers from one of persecution and coercion to one of co-optation through the country’s “Patriotic Religious Organizations,” including the CPA.²⁸ Such organizations would now attract believers to “raise their patriotic and socialist consciousness.”²⁹ This change in attitude was coupled with changes in policy. The CPA gave over authority regarding doctrinal questions to the Chinese Catholic Bishops Conference, allowing Chinese Catholic spiritual leaders a degree of autonomy from the CCP.³⁰ Chinese Catholics were also permitted to express religious fidelity to the

²⁵ Madsen, *China’s Catholics*, 35-6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁸ PRC, CCP Central Committee, *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question*, trans. MacInnis.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 35.

pope,³¹ “and Beijing relaxed the requirement that all Catholics join the CPA.”³²

The Holy See reciprocated these gestures. Under John Paul II, the Holy See began granting apostolic legitimacy to CPA bishops. This ex post facto system of recognition has created a class of clergy acceptable both to the Holy See and PRC.³³ John Paul II gave three speeches about the state of the Chinese Church from 1981-90; all three treated the Church as united, with no distinctions between the official CPA church and the underground church.³⁴ Such radical acknowledgment of the CPA church would have been unthinkable in the days of Pius XII.

However, John Paul II was anything but passive in the face of Chinese intrusion upon papal authority. In 2000, the consecration of six CPA bishops unapproved by the Vatican led John Paul II to cancel a visit to the Temple of Heaven.³⁵ John Paul II's papacy saw continued support for “underground” Catholics. In 1991, the Pope promoted Archbishop Gong Pinmei, an underground clergyman imprisoned for thirty-three years, to cardinal.³⁶ Such underground support exemplifies a peculiarity of the Holy See's diplomacy. Though the Holy See has increasingly sought dialogue with the PRC, it is not willing to forsake the underground church, which the PRC seems to view as a tolerable annoyance at best and as a subversive element at worst. It is for this reason that John Paul II's “papacy witnessed many highs and lows with regard to China ties:”³⁷ the Holy See was, and is, unwilling to relinquish its responsibility for all Chinese Catholics, both official and underground.

Modern Era (Pontificates of Benedict XVI, Francis)

The most recent period of Sino-Vatican relations has witnessed some relaxation of tensions but primarily stagnation. The process of after-the-fact episcopal recognition initiated under John Paul II continued into Benedict XVI's papacy; Joseph Zen, a prominent Chinese cardinal, estimated in 2006 that 85 percent of CPA bishops have received the Holy See's blessing.³⁸ However, this

³¹ Ibid.

³² Luehrmann, “Red Flag and the Ring,” 494.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Tong, “The Church from 1949,” 26.

³⁵ Luehrmann, “Red Flag and the Ring,” 494-5.

³⁶ Madsen, *China's Catholics*, 42.

³⁷ Luehrmann, “Red Flag and the Ring,” 494.

³⁸ Ibid., 495.

impressive figure has not come with significant diplomatic progress. Benedict XVI affirmed the Holy See's longtime view that the CPA is an illegitimate organization and that the Vatican has sole authority over consecration of bishops.³⁹ This uncompromising stance leaves in place a diplomatic obstacle. Catholic teaching forces the Holy See to hold fast in rejection of the CPA. Meanwhile, the PRC, remembering the Holy See's role in dismantling Eastern European communism, is loath to give the Church more influence within its own borders by allowing it to consecrate bishops.⁴⁰ Benedict XVI attempted to mediate this difference of opinion with rhetoric amenable to the PRC. In his 2007 Easter letter, he encouraged Catholics to be model citizens in an attempt to assure the PRC that the defiant anti-communism of Pius XII was in the past.⁴¹ Such assurances paid short-term dividends. In 2008, the Holy See and PRC discussed the possibility of a papal visit, seeming to signal that the countries would implement official relations.⁴² However, the visit never materialized, and relations since 2008 have stagnated.⁴³ This diplomatic failure demonstrated the shortcomings of Benedict XVI's policy toward the PRC. Friendly rhetoric only got the Holy See so far; Benedict XVI failed to take concrete steps toward an official compromise on the CPA issue. Instead, the issue has stagnated with the use of "ex post facto" recognition of CPA bishops. This system of recognition is not sustainable, as it does not address the Holy See and PRC's innate difference of opinion with regard to the CPA. Despite the inadequacy of the ex post facto system, John Paul II and Benedict XVI never developed a workable compromise to replace it.

The new pontificate of Francis has upped the ante with regard to Sino-Vatican relations. Under Francis, the Holy See has bolstered its reputation as a soft-power icon. The plain-dressing, straight-talking pontiff has earned worldwide admiration and the fourth spot on Forbes' 2013 list of the world's most influential persons.⁴⁴ Recognition of the PRC by the Holy See, especially under such a visible pope, would be a major win for the PRC's world standing. Indeed, Francis' papacy has already broken the stagnation characteristic of his

³⁹ Feith, "The Vatican's Illusions."

⁴⁰ Luehrmann, "Red Flag and the Ring," 498.

⁴¹ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 35.

⁴² "Vatican-China talks could cement diplomatic relations with papal visit," Catholic News Agency, February 19, 2008, http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/vaticanchina_talks_could_cement_diplomatic_relations_with_papal_visit/ (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁴³ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 36.

⁴⁴ Barbato, "Multi-layered Actorness of the Holy See," 28.

predecessor's reign. As one observer puts it, "since the accession of Pope Francis, Beijing and Rome have worked out an ad hoc process of mutual approvals," whereby the official Chinese church nominates episcopal candidates, who are consecrated if Francis approves.⁴⁵ While this agreement looks promising on paper, it seems that Francis' policy suffers from the same issues as those of his predecessors. The agreement is "informal," allowing "confusion" and "disunity" to mar Sino-Vatican relations.⁴⁶ Per Gaetan, the compromise is "a future-oriented solution not intended to resolve other persistent disagreements."⁴⁷ This is a polite way of saying that, while Francis' arrangement is a victory for papal authority, it still does not address the disagreement between the Holy See and the PRC regarding the legitimacy of the CPA. The resolution of this issue will require a major compromise that both sides still appear unwilling to reach.

DIPLOMATIC OBJECTIVES AND NEGOTIATION POSITIONS OF THE HOLY SEE AND PRC

Despite the erratic nature of Sino-Vatican relations, both states have ample motivation to establish closer relations. In the diplomatic realm, the Holy See holds a simple set of motives and strategies. By far the most important diplomatic objective of the Holy See is Catholics' spiritual security. In fact, the Holy See is best understood as a religious entity rather than as a political one. In other words, "the Catholic Church is the most important layer of actorness of the Holy See;" the Holy See acts as an arbiter of "the spiritual dimension of God's will" rather than as a traditional state.⁴⁸ The pope enjoys influence and visibility as a result of his representation of divine providence.⁴⁹ The Holy See's status as a religious entity keeps the Church out of political squabbles and allows it better to safeguard the souls under its care. However, the Holy See's lack of political clout comes with disadvantages as well. As Bradley points out,

⁴⁵ Victor Gaetan, "The Vatican and China Reach a Promising Accord," *Foreign Affairs*, March 27, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2017-03-27/vatican-and-china-reach-promising-accord> (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Barbato, "Multi-layered Actorness of the Holy See," 37.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 35.

the Holy See's religious objectives take priority over political considerations.⁵⁰ This fact limits the number of diplomatic strategies at the Holy See's disposal with regard to the PRC. The Holy See can only pursue strategies that secure well being for as many Chinese Catholics as possible. This position rules out some interesting strategies. For instance, if the Holy See publicly withdrew recognition of all CPA bishops, it would instantly put pressure on the PRC to reform its religious policy. However, the Holy See would not pursue such a strategy, as it would undermine the religious security of millions of faithful under these bishops' care. In addition, the Holy See's religiosity has solidified disagreements with the PRC, a political actor, with regard to the CPA debate. In 2011, the People's Daily cast the pope as a political figure and argued that turning over consecratory authority to the Vatican would give undue influence to a foreign leader.⁵¹ As Bradley puts it, "the Vatican is just another state" in the eyes of the PRC; the PRC, as a political identity, does not understand the Holy See's religious concerns.⁵²

Surprisingly, the (officially) atheist PRC has much to gain from relations with the Holy See. Primarily, the PRC is seeking to "isolat[e] Taiwan" internationally by earning recognition from the Holy See.⁵³ Another motivation for the PRC to collaborate with religious entities is the creation of a domestic value system, which has been lacking in the post-Mao era. Since economic liberalization, the PRC has lacked a consistent code of public morality.⁵⁴ Pan argues that only religion can preserve morality "[a]t a time when idealism [presumably Maoist idealism] has generally been lost."⁵⁵ It is this line of thinking that makes the Holy See such an attractive diplomatic prize for the PRC, especially as Catholicism is a prominent Western religion. The PRC's greater openness toward and acceptance of Christian denominations such as Catholicism may improve its image beyond its direct Eastern sphere of influence. However, even in its modern, liberalized state, the PRC's attitude toward religion is a roadblock to relations with the Holy See. The PRC only acknowledges as legitimate those religions that can "adapt to the socialist

⁵⁰ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁴ Beatrice Leung, "Catholic Bridging Efforts with China," *Religion State and Society* 28, no. 2 (2000): 187, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/08923970600815048> (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁵⁵ Pan, "Marxist View of Religion."

regime” and conform to the standards of Chinese society.⁵⁶ However, the Catholic Church has a long history of rejecting socialist regimes. Moreover, the Church identifies itself as a worldwide organization; as such, it can never adapt fully to Chinese society. “No one in the Church is a foreigner,” Benedict XVI asserted in his 2007 Easter letter.⁵⁷ Catholicism’s claims of universality and its history of opposition to socialism mean that the PRC cannot “regulate” the religion without offending the Holy See. In short, while the PRC’s evolving attitude toward religion is promising, it remains unwilling to cede all regulatory authority over Chinese Catholics, ensuring that conflicts with the Holy See will continue.

TWO-LEVEL GAME ANALYSIS

This paper will now analyze two challenges facing Sino-Vatican relations, using Putnam’s theory of two-level games to determine the likelihood of their resolution. Two-level game theory holds that international accords are subject both to international and domestic influences.⁵⁸ Putnam conceives of diplomatic negotiation as a multi-level “game,” where Level I is “[international] bargaining between the negotiators” and Level II is “separate discussions within each group of [domestic] constituents about whether to ratify the agreement.”⁵⁹ At each level, Putnam identifies “win-sets,” or the range of diplomatic solutions acceptable to negotiators and their constituencies. As Putnam puts it, “[a]greement is possible only if those win-sets overlap;” in other words, any agreement acceptable at Level I must also be acceptable at Level II, and vice-versa.⁶⁰ The two foreign policy impediments to be analyzed are 1) the Holy See’s continued diplomatic recognition of Taiwan rather than the PRC and 2) the countries’ conflicts over the CPA and apostolic authority regarding the consecration of Chinese bishops. These issues, addressed throughout the paper, will be briefly recapitulated. This section will conclude with an analysis of the diplomatic “win-sets” created by the intersection of the two impediments.

⁵⁶ Leung, “Catholic Bridging Efforts,” 187.

⁵⁷ Benedict XVI, “Letter of the Holy Father.”

⁵⁸ Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 434, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706785?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 436.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 438.

The Holy See has made clear that it will only accept agreements that preserve final papal authority over Chinese bishops—Pius XII excommunicated Chinese bishops appointed without his approval;⁶¹ John Paul II canceled a visit to the PRC over unapproved appointments;⁶² even Francis’ “ad hoc” agreement maintains a papal “right of veto” for all CPA appointments.⁶³ It is unclear if the PRC would accept such an agreement; it has not backed down from appointments unacceptable to the Holy See, including those of three bishops who engaged in misconduct.⁶⁴ To reach an official agreement with the Holy See, the PRC would need to dismiss unacceptable bishops. This is unlikely, as the PRC views its bishops as government officials and rejects the idea of a foreign government influencing their appointment.⁶⁵ The Holy See is concerned that the current unofficial recognition arrangement with the PRC, discussed above, has left Chinese Catholics in the dark about the status of their spiritual leaders. Per Benedict XVI, “in most cases, priests and the faithful have not been... informed that their Bishop is legitimized.”⁶⁶ Francis’ “ad hoc” arrangement with the PRC has not remedied this problem.⁶⁷ Concern for Chinese Catholics could motivate the Holy See to accept a wider range of compromises. In all, the Holy See and PRC have different and supposedly intractable views as to who should have final authority over Chinese bishops. However, the Holy See’s concern for Chinese Catholics and the PRC’s concern for its international reputation widens both countries’ win-sets.

The second impediment facing Sino-Vatican relations is the fact that they are unofficial; the Holy See does not recognize the PRC. This impediment is particularly useful for analysis, as it has a small number of discrete solutions. Diplomatic recognition is all-or-nothing; the Holy See cannot “partially” recognize the PRC. In fact, it seems only three outcomes exist: the Holy See can recognize the PRC, continue informal relations, or cut contact completely. The Holy See’s ultimate win-set depends on the PRC’s actions; the Holy See is perfectly willing to switch recognition from Taiwan to the PRC, but only if the PRC cooperates with regard to the appointment of its bishops.⁶⁸ As discussed above, the PRC is wary

⁶¹ Pius XII, *Ad Apostolorum principis*, 8.

⁶² Luehrmann, “Red Flag and the Ring,” 495.

⁶³ Gaetan, “The Vatican and China.”

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 30.

⁶⁶ Benedict XVI, “Letter of the Holy Father.”

⁶⁷ Gaetan, “The Vatican and China.”

⁶⁸ “Religious Freedom the Key to Beijing-Holy See Ties,” *Union of Catholic Asian News*,

of the Holy See's influence on its religious officials. However, the PRC may be willing to come to an agreement on the CPA question if recognition from the Holy See would help "further isolate Taiwan" on the world stage.⁶⁹ It is unclear to what extent recognition from the Holy See would help to isolate Taiwan. On the one hand, "the Vatican has influence" in the "predominantly Catholic countries of Central America," almost all of which recognize Taiwan.⁷⁰ If the Holy See switches recognition to the PRC, it is possible that Central America could follow. However, the PRC has worked to establish its own influence in the area. From 2005-12, Chinese loans in Latin America amounted to \$75 billion.⁷¹ The PRC could use its economic clout to purchase influence in Central America.⁷² Over time, the PRC may buy recognition from Central America without having to resort to the Holy See, allowing the state to reunify with Taiwan and to retain religious control. However, the PRC's "wallet diplomacy"⁷³ has been ineffective. In 2012, 23 states recognized Taiwan.⁷⁴ Today, that number is 21: only Gambia and São Tomé and Príncipe, both of which are located in Africa, have switched to the PRC.⁷⁵ The PRC's motivation to secure official recognition from the Holy See, and thus to seek a compromise on the CPA question, will increase the longer Central American countries take to switch recognition.

The win-sets of the PRC and Holy See will now be analyzed in light of these two issues, beginning at the international Level I. The win-sets depend heavily on the linkage between the two issues, as the apostolic authority of the Holy See over Chinese bishops is the major remaining stumbling block to official recognition (see above). Translating this statement into Putnam's framework, we may see that

July 22, 2004, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090529001541/http://www.ucanews.com/2004/07/22/religious-freedom-the-key-to-beijingholy-see-ties/> (accessed May 7, 2017).

⁶⁹ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 98.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁷¹ "Chinese banks have lent \$75 billion to Latin America since 2005," Catholic Online, February 16, 2012, <http://www.catholic.org/news/international/americas/story.php?id=44804> (accessed April 23, 2017).

⁷² Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 78.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, iii.

⁷⁵ Zheping Huang and Isabella Steger, "And then there were 21: Taiwan says goodbye to tiny São Tomé and Príncipe," Quartz, December 21, 2016, <https://qz.com/868794/taiwan-loses-another-diplomatic-ally-as-tiny-sao-tome-and-principe-switches-allegiance-to-beijing/> (accessed May 7, 2017).

a Level I win-set for the Holy See includes only agreements that would maintain the pope's final authority over all Chinese apostolic appointments. This final authority can be provided both with and without official diplomatic recognition, as Francis' "ad-hoc" model does technically retain a papal right of veto. In all, the Holy See's win-set is therefore very narrow; with or without diplomatic recognition, papal authority over Chinese bishops is a non-negotiable position. Even though past pontiffs have expressed concern for the well-being of the Chinese faithful under "unofficial" systems of recognition (discussed above), this concern is trumped by the Catholic belief in the pope's exclusive providence over apostolic appointments.

The PRC's Level I win-set is correspondingly narrow. The country's suspicion of foreign influence, particularly of a religious nature, renders the type of complete apostolic authority sought by the Holy See highly unlikely. However, additional circumstances may act to render the PRC more amenable to compromise. The PRC's entry into international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, has put pressure on the country to increase its religious toleration.⁷⁶ Compromise with the Holy See would signal to the global community that PRC's religious policy is evolving. However, motivations to increase the PRC's soft-power have thus far been trumped by the PRC's insistence that bishops are, first and foremost, servants of the state. The PRC's Level I win-set is thus a mirror image of that of the Holy See. The PRC is willing to accept Vatican recognition or nonrecognition, so long as it maintains control of the CPA.

This review indicates that win-sets for the Holy See and PRC do not overlap. While the countries have some reasons to achieve compromise, these reasons are overshadowed by a fundamental difference of opinion with regard to Chinese bishops. The Holy See insists that Chinese bishops are Catholic officials and insists on papal authority over their appointment. The PRC views these bishops as agents of the state and thus is reluctant to grant any foreign body influence over their appointment. Thus, Francis' informal agreement is likely to remain in place, as it partially fulfills both sides' wishes. The arrangement gives the Holy See some authority, but it also retains Chinese control over initial appointments. This plan is not ideal for either party, but it appears that stagnation is much more attractive to both countries than a move to give total apostolic authority to one side or the other.

The two-level analysis may end here, as agreement is not possible without a Level I overlap. Rather than engage in a largely fruitless Level II analysis, it

⁷⁶ Bradley, *Regime Legitimacy of One-China*, 61.

would be more useful to discuss the implications of the Holy See and PRC's vanishingly small Level I win-sets for Putnam's two-level game theory as a whole. Putnam contends that "ratification procedures" shrink the size of Level I win-sets for many democratic nations, as even "worthy agreements" may not meet be acceptable enough to domestic constituencies to gain legal force.⁷⁷ However, the PRC and Holy See, two obviously undemocratic countries, both have notably small win-sets for the issues discussed here, despite the fact that any potential agreement between the two would not be subject to any serious "domestic" pressures or ratification procedures. If domestic ratification procedures cannot explain the size of the countries' win-sets, what can? It is possible that Putnam's theory requires some expansion. The current study reveals at least two pressures that act to narrow Level I win-sets for countries that do not have to worry about domestic pressures or ratification procedures.

Firstly, the example of Sino-Vatican relations demonstrates that win-sets narrow in cases of nations with notably divergent political priorities. Much of the struggle between the PRC and Holy See is due to the fact that the countries fundamentally want different things. The Holy See is focused almost exclusively on the preservation of Catholic doctrine and the spiritual authority of the pope, whereas the PRC is a secular entity with little to no concern for religious matters. Therefore, the PRC is unable fully to understand the Holy See's purely spiritual concerns.

Additionally, it may be noted that the Holy See and PRC suffer from a dearth of issue linkage. Besides the issue of apostolic appointments in the PRC, the two countries have almost nothing in common. The countries are not tied through trade, military priorities, or other factors. Thus, the Holy See and PRC have very few "bargaining chips" to be used for compromise with regard to the CPA issue.

CONCLUSION

Despite their differences, the Holy See and PRC have ample reason to establish closer relations. The Holy See wishes for a closer spiritual connection with its Chinese flock, while the PRC longs for the Holy See's official recognition (and the boost in international reputation that would come with such recognition). However, two issues stand in the countries' way: the PRC's appointment of Chinese bishops through the CPA and the Holy See's non-

⁷⁷ Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics," 448.

recognition of the PRC. These issues are linked; the Holy See will not recognize the PRC unless the latter agrees to a compromise on the CPA issue, presumably one that preserves final papal authority over all Chinese episcopal appointments. The PRC, however, fears the Holy See's foreign influence. Although the PRC desires the Holy See's recognition, it may not need it to isolate Taiwan on the world stage. The PRC's campaign of "wallet diplomacy" may switch recognition among holdout countries in the future. It is most likely that relations will stagnate, as each side currently gets some of what it wants through informal relationships. Popes since John Paul II have recognized most CPA bishops after the fact; under Francis, the Holy See can (theoretically) veto CPA appointments. Meanwhile, the PRC retains control of state religions through its Patriotic Associations, and its wallet diplomacy ventures may eventually isolate Taiwan without the Holy See's help. In all, the story of Sino-Vatican relations does not look to have a happy ending in the near future. Closer relations would require compromises that both sides seem unwilling to make. This study would seem to indicate that Level I win-sets can be subject to narrowing pressures even in non-democratic nations. An absence of domestic pressure on international agreements does not necessarily render such agreements easier to forge, particularly when countries act on divergent priorities and have little in the way of issue linkage to facilitate compromise.

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