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Ideational Learning and the Paradox of Chinese Catholic Reconciliation

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Abstract: During the 1980s, Chinese policy elites underwent a process of complex learning in economic policy that resulted in a shift from a revolutionary to a techno-economic paradigm that greatly reduced the control of the Chinese Communist Party over the economy. Spillover from the sectoral paradigm shift affected other policy sectors, which forced policy elites to experiment with religious policies that would complement the new economic paradigm. This experimentation fostered the growth of a civil society that could assume the social responsibilities cast off by the reforming state-owned enterprises. However, the experimentation also empowered distributional coalitions such as the Falungong, which threatened the party's control. Policy elites thus implemented adaptations of religious policies formulated under the revolutionary paradigm. The study concludes that the current conflict between the Vatican and Beijing resembles an iterated prisoner's dilemma and that the conflict will continue until Chinese policy elites realize that the failure of religious policy adaptations threaten the long-term goals of the techno-economic paradigm.

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Introduction

Since the 1949 Chinese Revolution and the expulsion of Papal Ambassador Archbishop Antonio Riberi and 5,500 Catholic missionaries, the Vatican has overtly and covertly attempted to reconcile with the mainland Chinese Catholic Church. In recent years, Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have offered to recognize the PRC's temporal authority over the Chinese state by dropping its diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Pope Benedict further proposed to strengthen ties between the CCP-dominated "open Church" and the "underground Church", the latter only recognizing the Vatican's authority. However, the Vatican has consistently refused to cede to its spiritual authority, which is the core principle guiding the Vatican's stewardship of the universal church (Manuel, Reardon, and Wilcox 2006).

PRC elites thus have regarded the Vatican as a foreign power wilfully interfering in China's internal affairs. The PRC's official position toward reconciliation has demanded 1) the termination of the Vatican's diplomatic relations with Taiwan and 2) non-interference by the Vatican in the PRC's internal affairs. By continuing to appoint Church leaders and priests not approved by the Vatican, Chinese elites are asserting their temporal control over the Chinese Catholic Church. By rejecting such appointments, the Vatican is protecting its spiritual authority. The resulting conflict has resembled an iterated prisoner's dilemma (PD) game, in which both sides have adopted a tit-for-tat strategy that is a mixture of cooperation and defection. Unfortunately, this conflict has also deepened the divisions among the 12 million members of the Chinese Catholic Church, which undoubtedly has affected the Church's ability to gain new adherents.

The PRC's policies toward the Vatican pose a curious paradox. While maintaining that the Vatican should not interfere in its internal affairs, Chinese policy elites have allowed foreign individuals and institutions to "interfere" in China's economic affairs. Following the Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress in 1978, Chinese elites gradually learned that international entrepreneurs could become dynamic engines for domestic development, not just insidious agents of colonial exploitation. They subsequently welcomed the establishment of 100 per cent foreign-owned ventures within China, opened their financial books to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and agreed to abide by the rules and norms of the World Trade Organization. Thus for dec-

ades, Chinese policy elites have allowed foreign individuals and institutions to "interfere" with China's internal affairs. But not the Vatican.

To understand this paradox, this study argues that during the 1980s Chinese policy elites underwent a process of complex learning in economic policy that resulted in a shift from a revolutionary to a techno-economic paradigm. This sectoral paradigm shift subsequently spilled over into the political and social policy sectors, including religious policy. However, policy elites learned that such spillover fostered the growth of civil society and empowered distributional coalitions, which threatened the CCP's control of non-economic state sectors. Policy elites thus implemented religious policies adapted from previous initiatives dating back to the revolutionary social paradigm established in the 1950s. The study concludes that these adaptations have fuelled the current tit-for-tat strategy and are the greatest obstacle to Chinese Catholic reconciliation.

Ideational Learning, Adaptation, and Paradigm Shift

One explanation for this paradox at the international level of analysis comes from neofunctionalism. As China integrates into the global economy, social actors pressure the state to merge domestic institutions and norms with global ones (Rosamond 2005). The paradox occurs when domestic elites discover the negative spillover from the merger, which reduces state sovereignty and threatens the CCP's legitimacy (Niemann, 2008: 564-565). At the state level, modernization theory would argue that as the economy developed, the state would become more democratic and accepting of reconciliation. Yet the elites in a non-democratic state like China would regard the costs of democracy and greater freedom of religion as too high, as the spread of those ideas would hinder their control of domestic religious movements (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005).

Incorporating ideas from both of these approaches, this study focuses on the individual level of analysis and on how elites and their ideas impact policy formulation – the core idea of the ideational learning model. As the actors that enjoy the most privileged positions of leadership, elites form a relatively well-defined group that can overcome the objections of other groups or individuals (Dahl 1958: 466). While other groups can exist within a state, including revolutionary and technological elites (Dosi 1982), this study focuses on the Chinese policy elites, who number between 25 to 35 top decision-makers within the CCP and who

control the political, economic and social sectors of the state (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988: 35-62). According to rational choice institutionalism, these policy elites consciously pursue long-term goals at the lowest possible cost, and they aim to build a secure and prosperous state that would ensure the CCP's continued rule.

Policy elites "arrive at their theories by inductive processes, as they look to the past for information, understanding and inspiration" (Adler 1992: 17). Their choice of strategies is influenced by certain endogenous and exogenous variables, among other things: their Weltanschauung, based on previous interactions with the international and domestic sectors; interactions with other actors pursuing their long-term goals; access to production inputs such as capital, land and labour; access to the international marketplace. Opinion groups form around a collective consensus over the strategies to achieve long-term goals; over a period of time, each opinion group gains longitudinal learning, which they utilize in adapting strategies to make them more effective (Moltz 1993: 24f). This is the core idea of the ideational learning model.

The new institutionalist literature provides various useful concepts and measures, especially as many theories focus on the role of ideas in bringing about institutional order and change (Hall and Taylor 1995). Peter A. Hall incorporates learning process dynamics in his work on paradigms shift from Keynesian to monetarist regimes in Great Britain (Hall 1993). Interestingly, Mark Blyth observes that such approaches primarily focus on institutional change, while economic ideas play a secondary role (Blyth 2002). This study adopts Blyth's emphasis on ideas while incorporating concepts and measures from the new institutionalist literature.

Elites' views are not static, but change whenever elites undergo simple and complex learning. To determine the best strategies, elites employ a simple learning process, which

> uses new information merely to adapt the means, without altering any deeper goals in the ends-mean chain. The actor simply uses a different instrument to attain the same goal (Nye 1987: 380).

Simple learning occurs when elites review the effectiveness of existing policies either as a routine matter or as a result of implementation problems or crisis; simple learning also takes place when elites experiment with new policy strategies (Heilmann 2008: 3-5). It can result in relatively minor or routine adaptations of policy (first order changes), or large-

scale policy adaptations, which do not "radically alter […] the hierarchy of goals behind policy" (second order changes) (Hall 1993: 281-282).

Thus ideational learning involves simple learning that results in a series of policy adaptations. Under rare evolutionary or revolutionary circumstances, these strategy adaptations can fail over time, resulting in "anomalies" and paradigm shifts (Kuhn 1962). Strategy adaptations are unable to overcome basic flaws or contradictions in the state's long-term goals; crisis created by such failures can act as a catalyst for complex thinking. Elites who have gained expertise over time in a particular policy field (longitudinal learning) and "new thinkers" who enjoy "highly complex cognitive schemata [and] are more sensitive to new information" recognize these anomalies as a paradigm failure and question the long-term goals of the state (Stein 1994: 165). These elites can undergo a complex learning process, which "involves recognition of conflicts among means and goals in causally complicated situations, and leads to new priorities and trade-offs" (Nye 1987: 380). Complex learning can result in a paradigm shift, which radically alters long-term goals and the strategies to achieve those goals (third order change) (Hall 1993: 283-287).

Paradigm shifts can be either comprehensive or sectoral. A comprehensive paradigm shift occurs when revolutionary elites undergo complex learning initiated by the complete rejection of the policy adaptations adopted by the country's ruling elites. Just as the Soviet communist revolutionaries did when they assumed political leadership in 1917, the Chinese communists became the new policy elites in 1949 and completely transformed the state's political, economic and social structures. A sectoral paradigm shift occurs when policy elites learn that adaptations of policy strategies in a particular sector have failed over time. Policy elites replace the existing sector's structure with one consistent with the state's long-term goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Sectoral paradigm shifts include many of the anti-authoritarian "colour" revolutions since 2000 (political), China's transition from a revolutionary to techno-economic paradigm (economic), and the United States' adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (social).

Sectoral Paradigm Spillover and Authoritarian States

Elites who are engaged in a critical learning process are required to spend a large amount of their time dealing with sectoral policy experimentation.

This is especially true for macro-economic policies, which involve all aspects of the state, and have a critical impact on the state's long-term goals of security and prosperity. It is perhaps inevitable that the experimentation in a critical sector would influence the elite's formulation of policies in other policy sectors (Hall 1993: 291). Such spillovers are consistent with the elites' original ideas for sectoral experimentation, and could act as catalysts for simple or complex learning in other sectors. However, spillover could have unintended consequences.

Spillover can also be influenced by the specific form of government. To maintain power, it is far easier and more efficient for non-democratic regimes such as those of Burma, China and Cuba to repress democratic demands and prevent the rise of a strong civil society (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005: 28, 166). Assuming a high degree of autonomy, policy elites in authoritarian societies can formulate first, second and third order policy changes without undue interference from distributional coalitions. Once elites approve these changes, lower-level party and state officials transmit these new concepts to the entire society. Distributional coalitions, such as bureaucracies at the national, regional and local levels, or social organizations, including religious groups, can utilize the spillover effect from sectoral paradigm shifts to pursue their own self-interest. However, policy elites can suppress such behaviour when it threatens their control of the state.

Ideational learning in an authoritarian regime is not necessarily a continuous process, but it can be incremental. Having differing Weltanschauungen, policy elite opinion groups learn different lessons from similar events; they thus hold different opinions concerning strategy adaptations, but can only implement lessons they have learned when they hold power (Moltz 1993: 305). The perception of crisis acts as a catalyst to delegitimize the ruling opinion group and its preferred strategies to achieve long-term goals. After readjusting the previous strategy, the newly empowered policy elite opinion group introduces second order changes either based on the results of strategy implementation in the past (simple learning/ adaptation) or by experimenting with new strategies. If problems that occur during the implementation phase cannot be corrected by strategy adaptations, the policy cycle is reinitiated (Reardon 2002: 37-46). Policy-cycling results in incremental learning. In relatively rare circumstances, this incremental learning process can create the conditions for complex learning, which brings about third order changes – or in Kuhnian terms, a paradigm shift.

To test the ideational learning model, this study will first analyse how Chinese elites discovered by the 1970s that their economic policy was no longer effective. They subsequently underwent a complex learning process in the 1980s that resulted in a shift from a revolutionary economic paradigm to a techno-economic paradigm.

Complex Learning and Sectoral Paradigm Shifts: Chinese Economic Policy

Upon assuming control of the state after the 1949 revolution, Chinese policy elites sought to establish a strong independent China by pursuing three interrelated long-term goals in all policy sectors: to establish a militarily strong country, to develop into an economically prosperous society, and finally to establish a strong party dictatorship that promoted Marxism-Leninism and eventually Mao Zedong Thought as the sole doctrinal basis of society. This was the revolutionary paradigm. In the economic sector, policy elites established a strong command economy reliant on collective production units controlled by the party rather than the individual. They also adopted an inwardly oriented economic development regime, which limited all interactions with the outside environment (Balassa 1981: 18-22).

Two competing strategies were devised by the mid-1950s to achieve the state's long-term goals. Mao Zedong and the Nativist opinion group argued for a semi-autarchic economic development strategy; China had already imported sufficient technology from the Soviet Union during the First Five-Year Plan (FFYP). Zhou Enlai and many of the internationalists had studied and worked in Western Europe or Shanghai during the 1920s (Reardon 2002: 29-31). They supported the continuation of the import substitution industrialization (ISI) and a greater role for "Economic man" (Lowenthal 1970). The ensuing debate between these two opinion groups resulted in a cycling of development strategies from the 1950s to 1970s, which alternated between semi-autarchic and ISI development. However, both opinion groups agreed on the long-term goals of security, prosperity and strong party control.

Upon assuming control of the state by the late 1970s, the post-Great Leap Forward (GLF) coalition, which included Deng Xiaoping and the surviving members of the internationalist opinion group, initiated a fundamental reassessment of one of the three long-term goals of the state: party control. Having accumulated 30 years of experience,

these elites learned of both the necessity to decentralize control and the limitations of the ISI economic development strategy (Reardon 2002: 184-185). Based on their longitudinal learning (Mishler and Rose 2001, 2007), these elites began a fundamental revision of their Weltan-schauung, which initiated the complex learning process.

There are altogether five measurable phases in the complex learning process: crisis; readjustment; adaptation and experimentation; review; and consensus. These phases often overlap and spill over into other policy areas. The catalyst that initiates the learning process is the percep-tion of crisis (Brooks and Kurtz 2007). Although they initially supported Premier Hua Guofeng's acceleration of the large-scale ISI program in 1978 (the Ten-Year Plan), Deng Xiaoping and the other members of the post-GLF coalition used the threat of financial chaos resulting from the ambitious new "Great Leap" to replace Hua Guofeng. They initiated the second phase of the complex learning process by readjusting the entire Ten-Year Plan and agreed to implement a three-year period of "read-justment, reform, reorganization, and improving standards" that in-cluded the reduction or elimination of many of Hua Guofeng's large-scale ISI projects.

The third phase is the core phase of the complex learning process, in which policy elites adapt previous policy initiatives and possibly ex-periment with completely new policy measures to search for a new con-sensus on strategy adaptation preferences. One of the first and most important experiments with the revolutionary economic paradigm was the post-GLF coalition's approval on 15 July 1979 of Central Committee document 79.50, which reduced policy elites' control by giving greater decision-making rights to provincial authorities over provincial domestic and foreign economic activities, including the "trial operation" of the first special economic zones in Shenzhen and Zhuhai (Reardon 1994a: 19-44). The outside world was no longer considered an enemy, but a partner in development, a sentiment encapsulated in Deng Xiaoping's guiding mantra, "opening to the outside world and invigorating the do-mestic economy".

During the fourth phase, elites continuously review the implementa-tion of the initial experiments; through this process, elites learn which policies work well. They thus convene central and regional meetings and conferences, conduct on-site inspections, discuss policy implementation with the relevant bureaucracies and leaders, etc. When faced with major implementation problems, elites initiate in-depth policy reviews and

order mid-course readjustments. Such mid-course readjustments can be radical, moderate or minimal and can result in experiment moratoriums or full-scale implementation of the experiment nationwide. Disagreements over the experimentation can lead to elite coalition fragmentation, the severity of which is dependent on the ability of the preeminent leader's ability to maintain the coalition. Perceived success of such experiments can result in the promulgation of the success nationwide, and it can give legitimacy to new long-term goals of the state.

After 1981, the cohesiveness of the post-GLF elite coalition deteriorated, resulting in the formation of two elite opinion groups: The moderate internationalists believed that the party should continue to play a major role in economic development, while the radical internationalists argued for a reduction of the party's role and a greater role for the domestic and international marketplace. In the mid-1980s, Deng sided with the radicals and allowed the establishment of the 14 open coastal cities, the economic and technical development zones, and the coastal development zones (Reardon 1994b: 49-66). Based on the perceived success of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and the coastal development strategy, policy elites reached a consensus on a new long-term goal for the state by 1988. They adopted an outwardly oriented economic development strategy, which promoted the establishment of 100 per cent foreign-owned enterprises, admission to the key international financial institutions, as well as the accession process to the GATT/ World Trade Organization. In essence, they replaced the revolutionary economic paradigm of three interrelated long-term goals (security, prosperity and strong party control) with a techno-economic paradigm that promoted security, prosperity and a significantly lower degree of communist party control over key aspects of the economy (Reardon 2010).

Learning and Paradigm Spillover: Religious Policy

The loosening of party control of the economy spilled over to China's political and social policy in the 1980s. Focusing on religious policy and the Catholic Church, this section analyses the origins of China's policies toward the Vatican and the Chinese Catholic Church. As with economic policy up to the late 1970s, there was a cycling of religious policies influenced by the moderate opinion group represented by Zhou Enlai (the internationalists, who believed in a lesser role for the party and "Economic man") and the more conservative opinion group represented by

Mao Zedong (the nativists, who believed in a greater role for the party and "Communist man"). Whenever the nativist and internationalist coalitions assumed power, they adapted economic, political and social policies according to their longitudinal learning. After the internationalists assumed power in the late 1970s, they underwent a complex learning process in economic policy, which spilled over into other sectoral areas and created conditions for complex learning in social and political sectors in the 1990s. This spillover thus resulted in the establishment of a nascent civil society and the empowerment of various distributional coalitions, including the underground Church and other religious groups. When elites learned that the distributional coalitions threatened their control of the state, policy elites repressed these groups and strengthened party control based on the revolutionary social paradigm of the 1950s.

From 1949 to 1957, Chinese policy elites followed a comparatively moderate strategy of church indigenization in order to achieve the long-term goals of security, prosperity, and strong party control – the revolutionary social paradigm (Liu and Leung 2002). To achieve strong party control over the 3.5 million adherents of the Chinese Catholic Church, in the early 1950s the party expelled all foreign missionaries and Papal Ambassador Archbishop Riberi and severed all diplomatic relations with Vatican City. They arrested pro-Vatican elements within the Chinese Catholic community, such as Bishop Gong Pinmei, the first Chinese bishop of Shanghai, and other pro-Vatican bishops and Catholic communicants. Policy elites subsequently promoted the Three-Self Movement, which called upon all Christian churches to sever foreign connections, establish their own administration and financial resources and develop their own doctrine, thus eliminating foreign temporal and spiritual authority. Along with all foreign-invested firms established during the pre-1949 "semi-colonial" period, the state nationalized religious schools, hospitals and educational institutions.

Elites initially adopted a moderate form of indigenization, as they quietly continued to acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Vatican, which appointed 18 Chinese bishops between 1949 and 1955 (Chang, 1999: 6). Premier Zhou Enlai, who also held the foreign ministry portfolio, had strongly supported the ouster of foreign clergy. However,

> as long as there was no opposition to the political power of the Chinese people and no support within the Church for American imperialism, relations with the Vatican could be maintained (Mi 1996: 7).

Zhou felt the Chinese Church should be tolerated as long as the state maintained ultimate control over the belief systems (Lam 1994: 33).

Coinciding with Mao Zedong's call to establish a more autarchic economic development in the mid-1950s that relied on "Communist man", Chinese elites adopted a more conservative religious policy that replaced the Vatican with a home-grown religious authority in 1957: the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA). The CCPA ensured a much higher degree of party control over the Chinese Catholic Church, which maintained only "purely religious relations with the Vatican" and would "resolutely oppose its use of religious pretexts and other under-handed activities to disrupt [the] just cause of opposing imperialism and promoting patriotism" (Lam 1994: 35).

To assert greater party ideological control, Mao Zedong stated in 1957 that there was a crisis of ideological impurity and authorized the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. During the readjustment phase of the policy cycle, the campaign imprisoned those who represented the last vestiges of opposition to Mao's policies among the lower ranks of the party and the people, including those Chinese Catholics and prelates who supported the Vatican (Leung 1998: 96). During the third adaptation/experimentation phase, Mao's call for the GLF in 1958 affected all policy sectors, including the CCPA bishops and priests. Of the 145 dioceses at this time, only 25 were led by bishops (Liu and Leung 2002: 128). Beginning in December 1957, the dioceses in Sichuan, Hebei and Hubei Provinces consecrated bishops without the Vatican's consent. From April 1958 until April 1963, the CCPA reasserted the control of the party over religion by consecrating 51 bishops, all of whom were required to reject the Vatican, including all "reactionary" commands and encyclicals (Paul 1999: 27).

The GLF's failure temporarily delayed Mao and his ideologically driven colleagues. Having regained control of policy by the early 1960s, Zhou Enlai and the post-GLF coalition revived the economy, reinstituted the ISI development strategy, and reduced the party's role in the economic sector. More research must be undertaken to see if there was a similarly moderate policy in religious affairs from 1959 to 1964. Yet after 1964, Mao reasserted his control to implement the Cultural Revolution. The ideologues sought to eliminate all feudal and Western cultural influences, including religion and the Catholic Church. Those members of the United Front Work Department and the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) who had pursued the more moderate policies were

purged; the CCPA was disbanded (Leung 1998: 99-102). All churches, temples and mosques were closed, and many were converted for use by local enterprises. Priests, ministers and imams were sent to prison or forced labour camps, or into exile in the countryside.

During the third adaptation/ experimentation phase, Mao Zedong approved of the PLA's national distribution in May 1964 of the *Quotations of Chairman Mao*, which was the ultimate tool to indigenize Chinese religions as it became China's new Bible. Replacing crosses with sacred Mao buttons, the Chinese people attended daily worship meetings to discuss Mao's philosophy and to sing and dance in praise of the Chairman. Millions of Chinese made pilgrimages to Mao's birthplace, glimpsed his glorious image in Tiananmen Square, and proclaimed the miracles attributed to his beneficence. While foreigners attended mass at Beijing's Nantang Catholic Cathedral beginning in Christmas 1970 (Lam 1994: 51), the Chinese people were worshiping China's new "temporal god".

By the late 1970s, the post-GLF coalition composed of Deng Xiaoping and the remaining internationalist coalition assumed control. Their shared, long-term goal was to accelerate domestic economic growth, which required a greater involvement with the global capitalist economy and a reduced role for the party. While continuing to oppose feudal and foreign corrupt influences, these moderate leaders appeared "indifferent to the question of religion and did not see Christianity as a threat" (Mi and Maheu 1999: 25). Thus, as Chinese policy elites were engaged in the complex learning process in economic policy, the spillover effect resulted in the party's reduced control over religion. After 13 years of regarding Mao as their "temporal god", the Chinese dug up their kitchen gods, reconstructed their ancestral halls, and participated in religious services and festivals (Ticozzi 1995: 26). During the second policy readjustment phase, Beijing released from prison many bishops, priests and nuns – some having been jailed as far back as the 1950s – and began the process of returning Church property by either "giving back the land, buying it, or parcelling out another piece in a different area" (Lam 2000: 29-30). Major Catholic cathedrals and smaller churches once again welcomed Catholic worshipers, while seminaries in Shanghai and Beijing reopened.

To control China's resurgent religious community, the leadership revived the United Front, the RAB, and the various patriotic associations, including the CCPA. The party also approved the establishment of

the Chinese Bishops' Conference, which gained greater administrative control of the open Chinese Church during the 1980s and early 1990s. While the bishops acknowledged the pope's spiritual supremacy, they ignored the Vatican's spiritual authority to appoint Catholic bishops, and thus refused to allow Deng Yiming to return to China after Pope John Paul II appointed him archbishop of Guangzhou in 1981 (Lam 1994: Chapter 7). As a thoroughly indigenized church, Chinese policy elites insisted that only they had the right to appoint Chinese Church leaders, beginning with the appointment of Fu Tieshan as bishop of Beijing in 1979.

Reacting to the relaxed party controls over religion, Pope John Paul II carried out a dual-track reconciliation strategy with the Chinese Catholic Church. The pope called for a renewed dialogue with the political authorities controlling the open Church during his 1981 visit to Manila (John Paul II 1997: 35). Concurrently, the pope strengthened the underground Church, which was a strategy first adopted in 1957 when the pope granted special powers to Vatican-approved priests to lead the dioceses in the absence of a Vatican-approved bishop (Lam 1994: 22-23). In the early 1980s, John Paul authorized the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) to support formerly imprisoned priests and bishops, who took advantage of the less restrictive political climate to revive the underground Church. These included the right of Vatican-approved bishops to appoint bishops for the underground Church along with the "Eight-Point Directive on Dealings with China" issued by the CEP in 1988, which prohibited underground Church members from receiving Holy Communion from CCPA-approved bishops and priests (Madsen 1998: 41-42; Lam 1994: 176). This dual-track reconciliation strategy allowed the Vatican to initiate a dialogue with the open Church while strengthening its control over the underground Church by training priests and consecrating bishops with the pope's blessing.

With the Vatican's direct spiritual and financial support and the relaxed domestic political control resulting from spillover from the economic sector experimentation (Liu 1995: 12), the Chinese underground Church evolved into an effective distributional coalition. Beginning in the 1980s, the underground Church directly challenged the open, state-controlled patriotic Church and competed for the hearts and minds of all 12 million Chinese Catholics, whose loyalties were divided between the state and the pope. Sources in Hong Kong estimate that over one-third

of Chinese bishops (42 unofficial; 58 official), priests (1,260 unofficial; 1,850 official), nuns (1,250 unofficial; 3,500 official), and seminarians (350 unofficial; 1,160 official) belong to the underground Church (Ticozzi 2009). The resulting conflicts within the mainland Catholic movement slowed reconciliation attempts and inhibited the growth of Catholicism, especially compared to the explosive growth of its Protestant counterparts (Madsen 1998: 7-10, 2003; Cioppa 1993: 15).

During the third policy adaptation/ experimentation phase, two key documents were issued in 1982 to guide the party and the government's religious policies. Article 36 of the new Chinese Constitution reaffirmed the freedom of religious belief, which protected all "normal" religious activities. More importantly, the Central Committee issued document 82.19, which encouraged atheists and religious believers to concentrate on the country's foremost goal: economic modernization (MacInnis 1989: 8-26). The Ministry of Education knowingly hired Protestant missionaries as foreign teachers of English, who quietly conducted Bible study and promoted Christian fellowship activities. In coastal China, Christianity became synonymous with modernization, contributing to a "Christianity craze" (Fieldwork 1984-1988; Mi and Maheu 1999: 27; Liu 1995: 12). As the government lacked funds to rebuild the churches and finance operations, Christian and non-Christian denominations established social organizations and small for-profit enterprises and sought foreign financing (Charbonnier 1994; Saich 2000).

Within the Catholic community, this new openness translated to a greater exchange with the universal Church. Starting in 1980, China invited Cardinals Etchegaray and Koenig to visit the mainland, while CCPA delegations visited the Philippines, Belgium and the United States of America. Beginning in 1982, prayers for the pope were included in the Catholic missal and during mass. By 1987, the Vatican reached an accommodation with the CCPA, one of the eight officially recognized religious organizations directly answering to the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) (Lam 1994: 277; *Tripod* 2000: 34). Somewhat similar to the forced retirement of members of the ROC's Legislative Yuan elected in the late 1940s, the pope asked foreign bishops who had left the mainland after 1949 to resign. Cardinal Sin of the Philippines and the archbishop of Tokyo engaged the CCPA in dialogue, and even said mass in a CCPA-approved church. In April 1989, the Bishops' Conference upheld "the primacy and authority of Pope John Paul II" as the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church (Lam 1994: 66, 76).

While the cohesiveness of the post-GLF elite coalition deteriorated after 1981 in the economic sector, the division of the post-GLF coalition into radical and moderate internationalist coalitions did not noticeably impact religious policy. However, by the late 1980s the moderate internationalist coalition had argued that the spillover that had occurred with the adoption of the new techno-economic paradigm endangered the party's control of the state. As communism was disintegrating in Eastern Europe, Chinese students, intellectuals and workers were massacred during the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989. With the blessing of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, moderate internationalists used the Tiananmen Square Incident to claim the CCP's survival was at stake and to assume power. During the second phase, they readjusted the radical internationalists' political and social experiments by halting the experiments in the 1980s in social and political sectors. They curtailed foreign religious influences and re-implemented strict controls over religion (Liu 1995: 5; Zheng 1999). The enemy's goal was to achieve the "peaceful evolution" of China – that is, China's transformation into a democratic state. Christianity, the Vatican, and Pope John Paul II were seen as the major protagonists in the downfall of European communism (Fu 2003a: 7; Byrne 2006). The most senior moderate internationalist, Chen Yun, argued in 1990 that

> [u]sing religion to win over the masses – especially young people – has always been a favourite trick of both our domestic and foreign class-enemies. This is the bitter lesson of several of the communist-led countries that recently lost power (Lambert 2001: 123; Leung 1998: 135).

Moderate internationalists vigorously enforced Central Committee/ State Council-issued document 89.2, "Circular on Stepping Up Control over the Catholic Church to Meet the New Situation", which had been issued early in February 1989. To maintain its power and legitimacy, the party reasserted political control over the underground Church, which was "running wild […] deceiv[ing] people and incit[ing] them to resist the government" (Lam 1994: 287-297). The Central Committee thus strengthened the CCPA and the Bishops' Conference, arrested underground bishops, attacked Catholic enclaves, and issued local regulations that restricted non-authorized religious activities (Mi and Maheu 1999: 12; Lam 1994: 165). Underground Catholics were forced to repent and to promise to participate in the open Church (Mi and Maheu 1999: 19).

During the third policy adaptation/ experimentation phase, the Central Committee issued document 91.6, "Some Problems Concerning Further Improving Work on Religion" in 1991 (Lam 1994: 298-308). While reaffirming the policies put forth in Central Committee document 82.19 and the problem of "peaceful evolution", the communist party advocated the open codification of religious behaviour to promote local government enforcement of unlawful religious activities. The CCP identified nine avenues of foreign religious penetration, including student and teacher academic exchanges, foreign teachers, church-owned industries, and tourism (Mi and Maheu 1999: 14). Subsequently, laws and regulations were issued to prevent religious activities in Chinese educational institutions and to prevent Chinese students from studying at foreign religious institutions (Lam 1994: 255-257; Fu 2003d: 81). "Abnormal" religious practices not protected by the constitution were defined as consisting of "any meeting, preaching or evangelism outside [officially designated] places" (Liu 1995: 9).

Because of the threat to the techno-economic paradigm, Deng Xiaoping broke with the moderate internationalists following his trip to southern China in February 1992. Jiang Zemin, who had been appointed party leader in 1989, gained control of the party and the state; after Deng's death in 1997, Jiang also gained control of the military. This effectively made him the preeminent leader, although he was not as powerful as Mao or Deng. Jiang and his radical internationalist elite coalition members retained Deng's strategy of accelerated economic development. They further integrated China into the global economy by joining the World Trade Organization in 2002 and allowed capitalists to join the party under the "Three Represents" concept (Dickson 2003: 161-162).

From 1992 to 2000, Jiang Zemin and other policy elites re-engaged the complex learning process in political and social policy of the 1980s, as they became less fearful of "peaceful evolution" and more interested in ways to transfer the political and social responsibilities of the command economy to localities and social organizations (Liu 2009; Saich 2000: 127-131). During the policy readjustment phase, party elites returned to the more relaxed religious policy of the late 1980s, while continuing to adhere to Central Committee document 91.6. This was apparent at the Fifth National Congress of Catholic Representatives of September 1992, which adopted a constitution, imbuing the organization with greater legitimacy and decision-making authority over personnel appointments and policy implementation at the lower levels. Also, great-

er emphasis was placed on vocations for priests and nuns. Catholic seminaries and convents were allowed to hire foreign teachers and send seminarians and sisters abroad for training in Europe, the United States of America and Hong Kong (Leung and Wittberg 2004: 77-79; Cioppa 1993: 11-13).

During the experimental phase, Jiang Zemin issued the "Three Phrase Directive" at a November 1993 United Front conference that "point[ed] to a new understanding that religious work will take" (Ye 2000: 28). Jiang directed all cadre to:

> (1) completely and correctly implement the party's policy of religious freedom; (2) strengthen supervision over religious affairs in accordance with the law; and (3) positively guide religion to adapt to socialist society (Fu 2003a: 4).

Six years later, Jiang clarified his position by stating that the party didn't require the churches "to adapt to socialist society; religious believers only need to be law-abiding" (Barry 1999: 24-25; Jiang 1999: 26). Jiang appears to have questioned the long-term goal of party control of the state and religion. Jiang was arguing that the party would not eliminate religion, as originally set forth in 1949, but rather continue a coexistence with religious believers, who could publish their Bibles and hold prayer meetings as long as such activities were considered within the "norm". Nongovernmental organizations, including religious groups, would assume responsibility for various social policies, allowing for the dramatic reforms of state-owned enterprises (Saich 2000: 127-129). This complies fully with the spirit of Jiang's "Three Represents" approach formally announced in 2001, which was the same strategy that allowed capitalists to join the "communist" party. It also allowed for the gradual assimilation of Hong Kong into Chinese society after 1997.

In light of Jiang's "Three Represents" philosophy, the party and the open Church adopted two strategies in the 1990s to coexist with and co-opt the underground Church. Instead of arresting underground bishops, the CCPA and the Bishops' Conference actively courted underground bishops and priests – such as two underground bishops from Gansu and Henan – to join the open Church (Fu 2003b: 53; Holy Spirit Study Centre 2000: 64). With the January 1996 visit of Archbishop Claudio Celli to Beijing, the PRC reopened diplomatic talks with Vatican City, which had broken down following the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident. Nearly two months after the return of Hong Kong to mainland authority in 1997, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen laid out Beijing's position:

Once political relations were resolved, religious issues could be discussed (Mi and Maheu 1999: 21). Thus the CCP had significantly changed its previous negotiating position by allowing a discussion of the Vatican relationship with the open Church, but this would come about only after Vatican City had severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Chang 1999: 20; *Tripod* 1996: 51). By February 1999, the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano stated that the Vatican was prepared to drop its diplomatic relations with Taiwan and that Chinese bishops would be appointed from a Vatican-approved list of candidates – the so-called "Vietnam solution" (Madsen 2003: 475). Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin subsequently agreed to the normalization conditions following his 1999 visit to Europe, where leaders urged the reconciliation (Heyndrickx 2001: 67).

Jiang Zemin and his radical internationalist coalition's acceptance of the Vatican's role in the Chinese Church's internal affairs and their willingness to cooperate with the underground Church is evidence of a larger complex learning process undertaken in overall social policy in the 1990s. The policy elites were considering a drastic reduction of the party's role in society, including in religious affairs, just as they had undergone a complex learning process in the economic sector, which had drastically reduced the party's role in the economy and led to the adoption of the techno-economic paradigm. While the underground Church had been declared an unpatriotic group a decade beforehand, the radical internationalists were considering coexistence and cooperation within a nascent civil society. Reconciliation of the Chinese Catholic Church was at hand.

However, the adaptation/ experimental phase of the complex learning process concerning religious policy was brought to a complete halt on 25 April 1999. Fifteen thousand members of the Falungong movement held a peaceful demonstration for 16 hours in front of the Zhongnanhai leadership compound near Beijing's Imperial Palace. Inside the compound, members of the Central Committee were astonished at the protestors' audacity, as well as concerned about the threat they posed to the CCP's control of the state (Leung 2002: 772-774; Saich 2000: 135-136). Jiang Zemin and the party leadership regarded the Falungong as a dangerous cult whose members had infiltrated the party and the state.

Subsequently, after "discovering" other dangerous religious movements and cults such as the Unification Church within China, the state banned the movements, arrested tens of thousands of practitioners, and

initiated a series of campaigns to root out the "infestation" (Chang 1999: 3-5). Cults and unregistered religious groups were now considered a national security threat (Fu 2003a: 10). The National Peoples' Congress outlawed all "heretic cults" on 30 October 1999, followed in early 2000 by joint Central Committee/ State Council document 2000.5, entitled "Opinion on Relevant Issues Concerning Dealing with Some Socially Harmful Qigong Organizations". The Ministry of Public Security was charged with the missions of specifying which organizations constituted cults and re-educating the "misled" (Fu 2003c).

Complex Learning Succumbs to Prisoner's Dilemma

In the decade following the initial repression of the Falungong movement, Chinese policy elites engaged in a simple learning process, which adapted religious policies to suit the needs of the new techno-economic paradigm. However, in regards to the Chinese Catholic Church, Chinese policy elites have engaged the Vatican in a series of conflicts concerning control of the Chinese Catholic Church, aspects of which resemble an iterated prisoner's dilemma (Axelrod 1980: 4).

In this case, cooperation has entailed the sharing of authority over the Chinese Catholic Church, somewhat in the same way that joint ventures operate within China. Cooperative behaviour has included the "Vietnam solution", in which both sides consult on the appointment of Church leaders and the integration of the open and underground Catholic Church. Defection has entailed the unilateral control of the Chinese Catholic Church – which could involve the unilateral appointment of bishops and priests – and increased divisions between the open and underground Church. As this is an ongoing bilateral relationship, neither side can afford a long-term defection. Thus over the past decade, both sides have adopted a "tit-for-tat" strategy, in which each side mirrors the cooperative/ defection behaviour of the other side. However over the past decade, there have been times when the Chinese policy elites or the Vatican have "cooperate[d] 90 per cent rather than 100 per cent of the time after the other side has just cooperated" (Axelrod 1980: 4). Such behaviour could be intentional, or cooperative intentions could be misperceived as defection. Whichever the case, both situations result in a lessened degree of cooperation.

This transition from the experimental phase in the complex learning process to the prisoner's dilemma was initiated by Jiang Zemin's re-evaluation of the 1990s initiative, following the 1999 Falungong incident and the escape to India of the seventeenth Karmapa Lama, one of the most senior Tibetan spiritual leaders (*South China Morning Post* 2004). Between August 1999 and January 2000, Chinese policy elites changed their position on establishing diplomatic relations with Vatican City. In January 2000, the open Church ordained five bishops without the pope's approval. During an expanded meeting of the Party Central Committee and the State Council in December 2001, Jiang Zemin readjusted his policies of the 1990s by stating that under

> the present domestic and international circumstances, the party and government can only strengthen their leadership over religious work and their supervision over religious affairs. They cannot allow their control of religion to weaken. […They must] protect the legal; wipe out the illegal; resist infiltration; and attack crime (Fu 2003a: 3).

In essence, the leadership agreed to return to the spirit of Central Committee document 91.6, but to use new legal codes and undercover operations to control all illegal religious activities, including the underground Church.

Instead of a low-key diplomatic response, the Vatican canonized 120 Chinese martyrs killed during the 1900 Boxer Rebellion. Not only was the Vatican sanctifying Chinese who the PRC had considered to be traitors to the Chinese people for their close association with foreigners, but they also held the event on China's National Day, 1 October 2000 (Madsen 2003: 485). The Chinese state subsequently tightened its managerial control of the open Church, increased arrests of underground bishops and priests, and destroyed illegal underground churches (*The Washington Post* 2004). Most importantly, Chinese policy elites issued three documents in March 2003 that effectively emasculated the Bishops' Conference. The party, through the CCPA, once again fully controlled the open Church (Bishops' Conference and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association 2003: 5-36).

New policy elites entered the game when Hu Jintao replaced Jiang Zemin in 2002 as general secretary of the party. Hu Jintao promoted his concept of "harmonious society" in place of Jiang's "Three Represents" and praised the role of religion in promoting national unity; he also supported a new party constitution that mentioned the role of religion in society. In March 2005, the State Council approved the "Regulations on

Religious Affairs" (RRA), which adapted the religious policies of the 1950s by decreasing SARA's role in managing internal administration, personnel, publications, locations of worship, and social organizations (SARA 2005). Most significantly, "the state no longer requires religious communities to accept the leadership of the CCP or to voice support for prevailing state and party ideology" (Tong 2010: 883-884). Policy elites continued to assert the party's control over religion and the Chinese Catholic Church. Following the promulgation of the RRA, in 2006 the CCPA unilaterally ordained several Chinese bishops, who were subsequently excommunicated by the Vatican (*Catholic News Agency* 2006).

As both a close confidant of John Paul II and his appointed successor, Pope Benedict XVI continued to promote a "Vietnam solution" to the appointment of bishops and granted an audience with a CCPA religious delegation in the Vatican. Following the CCPA's unilateral actions in 2006, Benedict undertook a reassessment of John Paul's dual-track approach to reconciliation in January 2007, which resulted in the issuance of a 28-page letter on 27 May 2007 (Benedict XVI 2007). While maintaining the Vatican's position as primary leader of the mainland Catholic Church and the appointment of its bishops, Benedict revoked the papal directives of the 1980s that promoted support of the underground Church, which had contributed to a growing schism within the mainland Church (Section 18). Both open and underground bishops, priests and communicants were urged to recognize both the PRC and Vatican authorities and to form a reconciled Church community, where the CCPA would be consulted about religious matters but would acknowledge the ultimate authority of the Vatican. Reminiscent of Matthew 22:21 ("Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's"), Benedict acknowledged the temporal authority of the Chinese state but steadfastly defended the Vatican's spiritual authority.

Chinese policy elites responded to the Vatican's attempts to cooperate in December 2010 with a mixture of cooperation and defection. Without consulting the Vatican, the Eighth National Congress of Catholic Representatives elected Bishop Fang Xingyao of Shandong, who is directly supported by the Vatican, as head of the CCPA, which oversees the open Church. Yet, Bishop Ma Yinglin from Kunming was elected to lead the Bishops' Conference and appointed vice-chair of the CCPA (*Asia Times* 2010). The appointment of Ma was especially provocative. The Vatican had excommunicated Ma in 2006 after the state had appointed him a bishop. In 2010, an excommunicated priest was now lead-

ing the state-approved Catholic institution that had become a bridge between the open and underground Church.

Pope Benedict ended his 2010 Christmas message to the world, *Urbi et Orbi*, by responding to the ongoing conflict with the CCP:

> May the birth of the Saviour strengthen the spirit of faith, patience and courage of the faithful of the Church in mainland China that they may not lose heart through the limitations imposed on their freedom of religion and conscience but, persevering in fidelity to Christ and his Church, may keep alive the flame of hope. May the love of "God-with-us" grant perseverance to all those Christian communities enduring discrimination and persecution, and inspire political and religious leaders to be committed to full respect for the religious freedom of all.

Future cooperation between the two remains problematic.

Implications and Prospects

China's policy elites are aware of the dangers of an energized civil society, which contributed to the fall of the communist regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe and to the unrest in China in 1989. Yet, the Chinese leadership's rejection of the revolutionary economic paradigm and their embracing of the techno-economic paradigm forced policy elites to experiment with political and social policies that would complement the new economic paradigm. In the 1990s, Jiang Zemin and the radical internationalists engaged in a complex learning process in the political and social sectors, which resulted in democratic village elections (Liu 2009) and the establishment of a variety of social organizations (Saich 2000), and which permitted a more independent Catholic Church to enjoy greater connections with the Vatican. Policy elites were very close to accepting the spiritual authority of the Vatican, just as similar sovereignty had been surrendered to international financial institutions and businesses. Yet the Falungong's threat to the party's legitimacy forced policy elites to adapt policies from the earlier revolutionary social paradigm to deal with the Catholic Church, which has resulted in the iterated PD game.

Learning can take place in iterated PD games, as both sides learn that their cooperation in one game can lead to cooperation in future moves. Yet by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, interaction appears more tit-for-tat, where players switch between coop-

erating and defecting. Policy elites continue to adapt their specific short-term strategies, such as the 2005 promulgation of the RRA, which has guaranteed the open Church far greater autonomy from the state but maintains political structures of control, especially over underground/unregistered churches. Policy elites remain unwilling to change their long-term goals of security, prosperity and strong party control over religious policy.

Thus, reconciliation of the Greater Chinese Church will not take place until the party rejects the revolutionary social paradigm by accepting a lesser role in religious affairs and the greater role therein of foreign religious institutions. China's policy elites would need to realize that adaptations of the revolutionary social paradigm threatened the long-term goals of the techno-economic paradigm; only then would policy elites promote a sectoral paradigm shift. Until such time, policy elites will continue to adapt the religious policies first implemented in the 1950s and to repress challenges to party legitimacy. The Chinese Catholic Church will continue to be divided internally, estranged from the Chinese Catholic communities in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, and separated from the universal church.

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