

BELIEF IN AUTHORITARIANISM:
RELIGIOUS REVIVALS AND THE LOCAL STATE IN RUSSIA AND CHINA

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Karrie J. Koesel

August 2009

© 2009 Karrie J. Koesel

BELIEF IN AUTHORITARIANISM:
RELIGIOUS REVIVALS AND THE LOCAL STATE IN RUSSIA AND CHINA

Karrie J. Koesel, Ph. D.

Cornell University 2009

What are the political consequences of growing religiosity in Russia and China—two countries that share a communist past and thus a long history of atheism, but have followed very different paths of political and economic liberalization since the 1980s? In this dissertation, which is based upon nearly two years of fieldwork in multiple sites within these two countries, I carry out a systematic comparison of the relations between religious communities, on the one hand, and the Chinese and Russian states, on the other. This comparison leads to five conclusions. First, there is compelling evidence that the emergence of a robust religious associational life is neither a force for democratization nor a sign of impending regime crisis in Russia and China. Instead, religious communities are reproducing elements of the political contexts in which they are embedded and reinforcing authoritarian structures of political rule. Second, religious groups are playing an increasingly important role in the political economy of both states. Third, while Moscow and Beijing have set the parameters on religious expression, it is at the local level where the interactions between religion and politics actually take place and where, as a consequence, the relationship between the two sets of players is defined. Fourth, in direct contrast to what the literature on civil society within authoritarian states suggests, church and local-state relations in both Russia and China are cooperative, not conflictual. Just as religious groups court those in power, local governments likewise rely on these groups to take on some of the

responsibilities of governance. Finally, collaboration is not based on faith; rather, it is based on convergent interests, with bargaining between religious leaders and local state officials focusing on the distribution of money, power and prestige. Indeed, material, not spiritual concerns drive most the interactions.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Karrie J. Koesel was born in Utah and raised in Colorado, Texas and Iowa. She holds a B.A. from Drake University where she studied International Relations and Russian Studies. After graduation, she taught English in the northeast of China for two years. Her graduate training includes an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University. In 2009 she joined the faculty of the Department of Political Science at the University of Oregon.

For my family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge those who have contributed to this project. I wish to thank my mentors, Valerie J. Bunce, Elizabeth J. Perry, Sidney Tarrow and Kenneth Roberts. I have always considered it a privilege to study in the company of such extraordinary scholars and have greatly benefited from their wisdom, criticism and guidance. Those familiar with their scholarship will likely notice their influence throughout this study. I am especially grateful to Val Bunce for her invaluable feedback on countless drafts, enthusiastic support, encouragement to think comparatively, and for her friendship.

I am also indebted to many colleagues who have raised crucial questions and offered helpful insights at various stages of this project. I especially want to thank Ameya Balsekar, Allen Carlson, Chou Chia-Chen, Matt Evangelista, Felix Giron, Dev Gupta, Toby Lincoln, Dave Luesink, Ron Herring, Denise Ho, Brooks Jessup, Andy Mertha, David Patel, Tsveta Petrova, Maria Repnikova, Andres Rodriguez, Cole Roskam, Rachel Stern, Tariq Thachil, Wang Jianping, Zhang Xin and the participants of the Government department Dissertation Colloquium and the “China Hands” Working Group at Cornell University.

During my field research in Russia and China, I was also the beneficiary of many institutions and individuals. I was graciously hosted and assisted by the Moscow Carnegie Center, the Linguistic University of Nizhny Novgorod, and Kazan State University in Russia. In China, the foreign affairs departments at the Shanghai Academy of Social Science (SASS) and Jilin University also helped me gain my footing and facilitate my research. Additionally, I owe an enormous debt to many

individuals who helped me navigate local landscapes and were unfailing generous with their time and expertise. In particular, Rafic Abdrakhmanov, Cai Rong, Ilya Gerasimov, Zukhra Khusnutdinova, Larissa Levanova, Li Yihai, Ma Lei, Peter MacInnis, Marina Mogilner, Rafik Mukhametshin, Rosa Musina, Aigul Sabirova, Alexander Sergounin, Olga Senjutkina, Wang Caibo, Wang Jianhui, Xiao Ke, Xiao Yu, Xia Yu, Xi Tianyang, Yang He, Zhou Shu, and Zhou Yi. Additionally, I am indebted to the numerous unnamed individuals who took great risks to share their stories so that we may better understand the comparative politics of religion.

Field research for this project was generously supported by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), Individual Advanced Research Opportunities Program, the Fulbright-IIE Program in China, and the Institute of European Studies and East Asia Program at Cornell University. Financial support for writing was provided by a Mellon Foundation Dissertation Completion Grant and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Eurasia Program.

And finally, I want to express my gratitude to my family. My parents, Fred and Judy Koesel, have both worked incredibly hard to give me the best education possible. I also remain impossibly indebted to Patrick W. Deegan, for his unwavering support and intellect that has enriched this project, and to Sasha for her happiness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Biographical Sketch</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>xi</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 CHURCH AND STATE GAMES	28
3 REGULATING THE RELIGIOUS MARKETPLACE	51
4 THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL	103
5 THE POLITICS OF FAITH, POWER AND PRESTIGE	177
6 CONCLUSIONS: COLLABORATION & CONFLICT IN COMPARISON	234
<i>Appendix: Propositions</i>	<i>284</i>
<i>References</i>	<i>285</i>

LIST OF FIGURES

- 2.1 The Logic of Religious and Local-State Cooperation
- 3.1 A Hierarchy of Religious Associations in Russia
- 3.2 Sub-hierarchy of Religious Organizations in Russia
- 3.3 A Hierarchy of Religions in Russia

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 4.1 Yarmarka Mosque
- 4.2 The Bell-tower of Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord
- 4.3 Sanguan temple gate
- 4.4 Demolition of adjacent apartment complex
- 4.5 Buddhist temple
- 4.6 Attached commercial development to Buddhist temple
- 4.7 Temple fair in Shanghai during Lunar New Year 2007
- 4.8 Thanksgiving Church, Shanghai
- 4.9 A typical wooden house on *Il'inskaja sloboda*
- 4.10 The Church of the Nativity of John the Baptist under construction
- 4.11 Kul-Sharif Mosque and Kazan Kremlin Wall
- 4.12 The exterior of the Songjiang mosque
- 4.13 The adjoining shops to the Songjiang mosque
- 4.14 The Basilica of Our Lady of She Shan
- 4.15 The chair lift for the Holiday Resort
- 5.1 Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and local government officials beginning the procession to honor Kuzma Minin
- 5.2 Campaign literature for Nikolai Pyrkov for the March 2006 elections
- 5.3 Campaign literature for Valerie Antipov for the March 2006 elections
- 5.4 Propaganda banners at a Shanghai Taoist temple
- 5.5 Propaganda banners at a Shanghai Taoist temple
- 5.6 Rainbow bridge in Jinze
- 5.7 A Song Dynasty stone bridge and folk alters

LIST OF TABLES

- 4.1 The Material Resources of Local States
- 4.2 The Material Resources of Religious Communities
- 4.3 A Summary of the Amity Foundation's Projects
- 5.1 Non-material Resources of Local States and Religious Groups

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBA	Chinese Buddhist Association (中国佛教协会)
CCBC	Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference (中国天主教主教团)
CCC	Chinese Christian Council (中国基督教协会)
CCRAC	Chinese Catholic Religious Affairs Committee (中国天主教教务委员会)
CIA	Chinese Islamic Association (中国伊斯兰教协会)
CPCA	Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (中国天主教爱国会)
CTA	Chinese Taoist Association (中国道教协会)
DUMNO	Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, Духовное управление мусульман Нижегородской области (ДУМНО)
DUMRT	Religious Board of Muslims for the Republic of Tatarstan, Духовное Управление Мусульман Республики Татарстан (ДУМРТ)
FLG	Falun gong (法轮功)
FSB	Federal Security Bureau (Russia)
GULAG	Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies, Главное Управление Исправительно-Трудовых Лагерьей и колоний (ГУЛАГ)
JRL	Johnson's Russia List
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSB	Public Security Bureau (China)
RAB	Religious Affairs Bureau (宗教局)
RAO	Religious Affairs Office
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
ROOC	Russian Orthodox "Old Believers" Church, Русская Православная Старообрядческая Церковь (РПСЦ)
RPA	Religious Patriotic Associations
SASS	Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
SARA	State Administration for Religious Affairs (国家宗教事务局)
TSPM	Three-Self Patriotic Movement (中国基督教“三自”爱国运动委员会)
UFWD	United Front Work Department

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

“Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

The collapse of the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc, together with the economic opening and reform of China, stand as two of the most influential political events of the final quarter of the twentieth century. While these developments have certainly called into question communism as a viable path of political development, they have also demonstrated that there are multiple pathways out of authoritarian rule, and that democracy is not necessarily the endpoint. Across the post-communist region, regimes have embraced greater economic and political freedoms while simultaneously keeping power centralized, tolerating limited opposition, controlling elections, constraining civil society, rolling back democratic reforms, and curtailing freedoms of expression and association. To be sure, political change has taken place, but liberalizing authoritarian regimes have also proven to be remarkably resilient.¹

Liberalizing authoritarian regimes are generally understood as autocratic states that have increased space for political pluralism, but are not in an ineluctable transition to democracy. They are countries that have entered a “political gray zone”² between outright dictatorship and consolidated democracy, and have “have some attributes of democratic political life, including at least limited political space for opposition parties and independent civil society, as well as regular elections and democratic constitutions. Yet they suffer from serious democratic deficits, often including poor representation

¹ On the staying power of liberalized autocracies, see Brumberg (2002).

² Thomas Carothers argues that of the one hundred countries considered to be in “transition” in recent years, less than 20 percent are en route to democracy. In fact, the vast majority of countries are neither democratic nor entirely authoritarian, but have entered a “political gray zone” (2002: 9). Others have labeled these hybrid polities as “competitive authoritarian regimes;” see, for example, Levitsky and Way (2002).

of citizens' interests, low level of political participation beyond voting, frequent abuse of the law by government officials, elections of uncertain legitimacy, very low levels of public confidence in state institutions, and persistently poor institutional performance by the state."³ However, rather than relying on strategies of coercion to remain in control, liberalizing autocrats adopt a variety of democratic "window dressings" to enhance legitimacy. The regime may tolerate popular protest, permit and promote the development of political opposition, and even encourage the emergence of democratic institutions, such as elections, empowered judiciaries, and bureaucratic agencies to channel citizens' complaints.⁴ Yet, in spite of these attributes of democratic life, the regimes remain committed to authoritarian structures of political rule.

This thesis explores the role of civil society in liberalizing authoritarian settings. For instance, is the emergence of civil society an indicator of weakness or a sign of impending crisis for a liberalizing autocratic polity? Does civil society function as a constraint on or partner to authoritarian power holders? Under what conditions do civil society groups contribute to greater regime liberalization or instead reinforce autocratic tendencies of political rule? How do divergent pathways from authoritarian rule, such as selective liberalization and de-democratization, affect the development of associational life?

This project seeks to answer these questions through a comparative study of the politics of religion in contemporary Russia and China. A Russia-China comparison and focus on religious associational life is instructive for several reasons.⁵

³ Carothers (2002: 9-10).

⁴ On the creation of political parties and an independent judiciary as autocratic survival strategies, see Geddes (2008); Maglaoni (2008); Rosberg (1995). On the toleration of selective protests by the central government to monitor local officials in China, see O'Brien and Li (2006); Lorentzen (2008). On bureaucratic agencies in China and Eastern Europe to channel citizens' dissent, see Dimitrov (2009).

⁵ It is worth mentioning that some scholars of civil society, such as Robert Putman, have been hesitant to include religious associations into the ranks of civil society. This is because organized religions tend

First, since the 1980s both countries have embarked on paths of greater economic and political liberalization, while at the same time creating space for greater religious expression. The process of liberalization began in the mid-eighties with Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, and in China in 1982 with Deng Xiaoping's "Opening and Reform" policies (改革开放). The divergent pathways of liberalization—Russia's initial transition toward liberal democracy and capitalism followed by de-democratization, and China's privileging of marketization alongside maintenance of one-party rule—provide important variation for understanding the process of autocratic political change. Although both countries have embraced economic and political reforms, and Russia has certainly gone further toward a democratic endpoint than China, neither country can be considered a liberal democracy.⁶ In Russia, economic and political power have been re-consolidated in the executive branch, the United Russia party (Единая Россия) has a monopoly on political institutions, opposition is rarely tolerated, civil society groups are kept on a short leash, and elected officials continue to take their cues from the Kremlin. In short, Russia's political system often shares more in common with China than many of its European neighbors.

to be hierarchical in nature and are organized in non-democratic ways. As a result, religious groups do not engender the same norms as secular associations. However, in *American Grace: How Religion is Reshaping our Civic and Political Lives*, Robert Putnam and David Campbell argue that religious Americans are three to four times more likely to be involved in their community than non-believers. In fact, adherents are also more likely to volunteer for community projects, attend public meetings, vote in local elections, participate in protest demonstrations and political rallies, and donate time and money to secular and religious causes. According to Putnam and Campbell, religious doctrines have very little to do with encouraging civic participation; rather, it is the relationships developed between believers within religious institutions that encourage civic activism. The authors maintain that it is much more difficult for an individual to decline an invitation to volunteer from a member of her "moral community" than from a member of her bowling league. For preliminary findings of Putnam and Campbell's forthcoming book, see the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Religious People Make Better Citizens," available at: <http://pewforum.org/news/rss.php?NewsID=18088> [last accessed June 29, 2009].

⁶ Freedom House ranks Russia as "partially free" from 1991-2004 and "not free" from 2005-08. During this period, China is consistently rated as "not free." Freedom House scores are available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>, [last accessed July 17, 2008.]

Second, during the process of liberalization both countries have also experienced a tremendous religious revival. This religious revival is as diverse as it is impressive, including resurgences of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, and even folk religions.⁷ To put this revival into perspective, over 80 percent of the Russian population now identifies with a religious confession—a higher rate of belief than in Germany and the Netherlands.⁸ In China, a recent government-sponsored survey estimated over 300 million “believers”—which means religious believers now outnumber Communist Party members four to one.⁹ This would suggest that religion did not die out as Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideology predicted, but rather that religious associational life has flourished in a time when other civil society organizations still struggle to establish roots.¹⁰

Third, the resurgence of religiosity has also not gone unnoticed by the Russian and Chinese regimes. In the past two decades, both countries have established legal frameworks outlining acceptable confessions and setting parameters on religious activities. Religious policies have been written and revised to allow for greater religious expression, while at the same time limiting the expansion and independence of religious groups. Thus, both regimes have allowed for pockets of religious liberalization while at the same time keeping a close watch on religious associational

⁷ Several recent studies have remarked on the revival of religious practices in Asia and Eastern Europe. For example, Ashiwa and Wank (2009); Chau (2008); Malashenko (2005); Yang (2004); Fan (2003); Potter (2003); Filatov (2002); Leung (2002); Kipnis (2001); Lambert (2001); Lai (2001); Chao (1999); Liu, Luo and Yan (1999); Ownby (1999); Tu (1999); Ying (1999); Jing (1996); Shahar and Weller (1996); Chan and Hunter (1994); Seymour and Wehrli (1994); Dean (1993), Harrell (1988); and Anagnost (1987).

⁸ Kaariainen (1998).

⁹ Wu, Jiao. “Religious believers thrice the estimate.” *RenminRibao* [People’s Daily], February 07, 2007, available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-02/07/content_802994.htm [accessed February 07, 2007]. This survey concluded that 31.4 percent of Chinese citizens ages 16 and over are religious believers. This figure marks a sharp increase in government reporting of religious believers from April 2005. For example, previous state documents estimated the number around 100 million religious adherents (in 1997) and 200 million religious adherents (in 2002). On the challenges of estimating religious believers in China, see Dean (1997); Kindopp (2004).

¹⁰ Howard (2003).

life as a potential threat to regime stability.

To summarize: Russia and China's distinct trajectories from communism alongside shared resurgences of religious associational life make this study an ideal window into the politics of liberalizing authoritarian regimes. The goal of this comparative project is to not only shed light on the role of civil society in periods of political and economic flux, but also to explain how authoritarian states attempt to manage religious organizations, and just as importantly, how religious communities attempt to engage the state to achieve their own spiritual goals. For example, under what conditions do political elites support, tolerate, or suppress—politicize or depoliticize—religious groups within their locales; and, conversely, how do religious communities attempt to protect and promote their interests and values?

One key concern of this study is to identify the various points of contact between religious groups and the state, or what Jose Casanova calls the “deprivatization” of religion, where religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public sphere.¹¹ In other words, what does the relationship between religion and the state suggest about the changing boundaries between public and private, and cultural and political arenas of cooperation and contestation across liberalizing Russia and China?

A second focus of inquiry for this project is how regime change affects the relationship between religious and state actors. For instance, how do different trajectories of liberalization shape and constrain authorities' attitudes and behavior toward competing religious confessions? How and why do political elites attempt to exercise authority over some religious groups while supporting others? Under what conditions do religious groups prop up the existing regime or mobilize in support of political change?

¹¹ Casanova (1994: 65-6).

Expectations

In exploring the political consequences of growing religiosity in Russia and China there are many reasons we might expect conflictual relations to develop between religious and state actors. As readers familiar with the extensive literature on civil society, some of the key functions of associational groups are to balance against state power, help articulate shared interests, stimulate civic participation, and socialize democratic norms.¹² Within non-democratic regimes, however, the ability of civil society groups to fulfill these responsibilities can be limited. In authoritarian and semi-authoritarian contexts, regime incumbents are generally assumed to control if not dominate all aspects of associational life. State actors introduce various mechanisms of control, including inducements, co-optation, and strategies of divide-and-rule to manage associational groups. For instance, Amaney Jamal suggests that in autocratic settings “states extend their monopoly on power to the associational terrain. Governments can provide services, rewards, and other carrots to associations that endorse the vision and programs of the state.... States can also co-opt associational leaders, urging them to adopt more sympathetic and government-supporting stances.”¹³ Thus, civil society groups are often understood as extensions of the state, because they are used to control citizens as well as to help socialize potentially disruptive elements of society.¹⁴

Within authoritarian contexts, associational groups are also often assumed to be illegitimate or unauthentic, because they do not function as mechanisms for collective empowerment like their democratic counterparts. Quintan Wiktorowicz writes of civil society organizations in Jordan as “embedded in a web of bureaucratic practices and legal codes which allow those in power to monitor and regulate

¹² Putnam (1993); Diamond (1994: 117).

¹³ Jamal (2007: 24).

¹⁴ Frolic (1997: 56).

collective activities.... Under such circumstances, civil society institutions are more an instrument of state social control than a mechanism for collective empowerment.”¹⁵ Thus, one of the dominant assumptions is that civic groups in non-democratic regimes do not function as a buffer between state and society, but rather as an extension of the state itself.

In non-democratic contexts where civil society groups are able to distance themselves from those in power, the relationship with the state is generally understood to be antagonistic. Scholars maintain that one of the overarching goals of civil society is to resist and oppose the regime, and as a result authoritarian incumbents view associational groups as potential challengers to the political status quo.¹⁶ Adam Przeworski writes that leading up to regime change “what normally happens is... a melting of the iceberg of civil society which overflows the dams of the authoritarian regime.”¹⁷ In practice, the struggle between the state and civil society has taken several forms. During the “Third Wave” of democratization (1970-80s), Catholic Church leaders in Latin, Central America, and Asia used their moral authority to condemn authoritarian governments and promote political change.¹⁸ The Catholic Church in the Philippines “became the principal institution denouncing repression, defending human rights, and pushing for the transition to democracy.”¹⁹ Similarly Argentinean “grassroots Catholic communities kept pressure on dictators by exposing human rights abuses, calling attention to the needs of the poor and sheltering political

¹⁵ Wiktorowicz (2000: 43).

¹⁶ See, for example, Havel’s (1985) discussion of the “power of the powerless” and Scott’s (1997) “weapons of the weak.”

¹⁷ Przeworski (1992: 109).

¹⁸ On religion and the Third Wave, see Huntington (1995 [1991]). National Catholic Churches in several countries denounced dictatorship and pushed for democratic rule, including Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Panama Paraguay, the Philippines, and South Korea. On the role of the Catholic Church in Latin America, see also Mainwaring (1986); Keogh (1990); Cavendish (1995).

¹⁹ Huntington (1995 [1991]: 76).

dissidents.”²⁰ At the same time in Eastern Europe, civil society groups were also adopting diverse strategies to challenge communism. Hungarian civil society groups (including religious institutions) participated in the system, but subverted the state in subtle ways by influencing policy reforms.²¹ In Czechoslovakia, civil society groups rejected any form of collaboration while creating islands of alternative associational life. By contrast, Polish civil society also rejected collaboration, but applied more confrontational methods—such as using protests and developing competing institutions, such as unions, universities and the Catholic Church, to build alliances in opposition to the state.

Second, religious and state conflict is also expected because even though gods and governments have historically been tightly interwoven, the relationship between the two has often been plagued by sharp tensions and prolonged power struggles.²² In modern times these same tensions persist, because religions and states are competing centers of authority. Modern states tend to base their political authority on secular principles, such as promises of order, stability, and economic development. Religions, in contrast, claim authority that transcends secular powers and promise answers and meaning to all aspects of existence. Competition between faith and power often mean that the two sides struggle to control (if not dominate) the other. Marcela Cristi writes that religion and state competition tends to result in two outcomes, “either the state has succeeded in making the church an engine to further national policy or the church has gotten the upper hand by utilizing the state to further religious interests.”²³ In both outcomes the relationship is best understood as a struggle for power.

Third, if we consider the treatment of religion during the communist periods,

²⁰ Gill (2002: 195).

²¹ Wittenberg (2006).

²² See, for example, Bellah and Hammond (1980); Moen and Gustafson (1992); Gill (1998).

²³ Cristi (2001: 98).

both the Soviets and Chinese have a long history of religious repression and despotic rule over religious communities. Religion was something to be eradicated, and decade-long campaigns were launched promoting state atheism and denouncing religious activities.²⁴ During these campaigns religious leaders were imprisoned, sent to mental institutions, and at the extremes killed. Religious adherents were heavily persecuted, sent to the labor camps for thought reform, fired from their jobs, and had their property confiscated by the state. The state assault on religion also extended to places of worship: mosques, temples and churches were destroyed, confiscated or converted to other uses, including storage facilities, barns, schools, and even swimming pools.

Fourth, in Russia and China the resurgence of a robust religious associational life has been a cause of concern (if not alarm) among both nations' political elites. This is because religion is frequently associated with minority groups located in border regions that have pushed for greater autonomy from the center. Recall the disturbing precedent from the late 1980s and early 1990s when a tide of nationalism swept across Russia and movements pressed for greater rights or outright

²⁴ State-sponsored campaigns to eliminate religion in the Soviet Union and China are numerous. The 1920s and 30s represented the most severe attacks on religious institutions and believers, where atheism became mandatory for members of the ruling Russian Communist Party. To eliminate the perverse influence of religion in society, religious dissenters were sent to the GULAG labor camps for reeducation or killed. In 1925 the League of Militant and Godless was formed under the motto "the Struggle Against Religion is the Struggle for Socialism" with the goal of suppressing the Russian Orthodox Church and other organized religions (Knox 2005: 45). Campaigns against the Russian Orthodox Church were relaxed in 1939 to the mid-1940s for the sake of national defense, when Stalin allowed for the opening of several Orthodox churches in an attempted to enhance patriotism among the population. The Khrushchev administration, however, reversed the liberal religious policies and launched a six-year violent campaign against all forms of religion (1959-64). In China, state-sponsored campaigns are equally as pervasive. For instance, the "Four Cleans" Movement (1965), which was designed, in part, to persuade religious practitioners to renounce their religious beliefs and hand over their religious items to the state. Other mass campaigns during the Cultural Revolution (1966-77) treated religious practitioners as "class enemies" and in the name of "making a clean sweep of monsters and demons" religious properties and cultural relics were destroyed (Luo 1991). Attempts to suppress religion, however, are not confined to the Communist period; during the Republican era political elites argued that the eradication of "superstition" was crucial to making modern citizens (Poon 2004).

independence for minority communities.²⁵ Moreover, both countries are currently facing on-going struggles for self-determination with strong religious overtones; for instance, separatist movements that align with Islam in Chechnya, Dagestan and Xinjiang, and demands for increased autonomy among Tibetan Buddhists.²⁶

This leads to one final reason to expect conflictual relations between the state and religious communities: namely, historical memory. The revival of religion plays into the larger historical narrative in China of religious groups harboring desires to challenge the regime.²⁷ Chinese textbooks and official rhetoric both perpetuate a dominant narrative of the Chinese victimization suffered during the late nineteenth century when Christian missionaries provided refuge to Western imperialists during the Opium Wars.²⁸ In addition to anti-Western sentiments, Chinese history is also rich with examples of homegrown quasi-religious movements, such as the Taiping Rebellion that challenged the mandate of heaven. The history lesson for Chinese political decision-makers is clear: religion should be feared, controlled and suppressed.

Taken together, these arguments indicate that conflict between a growing religious society and the state is usually unavoidable. Yet, this thesis suggests that in liberalizing authoritarian settings the relationship between religion and state is not necessarily one of a predatory state, penetrating and dominating religious communities. Although the Russian and Chinese states are powerful and are never very far from

²⁵ See, for example, Beissinger (2002); Kahn (2000); Treisman (1997).

²⁶ On the warning of separatist activities in the name of religion, see Li (1997). On April 17, 2009 the Kremlin declared the counterterrorist operations in Chechnya officially over which brings an end to the second Russian-Chechen war. See, "War is Over! Abolition of the Counter-terrorism Operation Regime in Chechnya: What Next?" *Vedomosti*, April 17, 2009.

²⁷ Chinese history is filled with examples of rebellions with strong religious overtones, including the White Lotus Rebellion (1796-1805), the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64), the Muslim Rebellion (1862-1878), and the Boxer uprising (1899-1900). On the role of religion fostering rebellion; see Terr Haar (1990); Perry and Harrell (1982); Perry (1982); Seiwert (2003); Shek (1990); Overmyer (1999); Spence (1996).

²⁸ On the narrative of the "Century of Humiliation" (百年国耻) in contemporary Chinese politics, see Gries (2007).

religious communities, they do not entirely dominate religious associational life. This project also suggests that religious-state relations are not intrinsically antagonistic, with religious groups struggling against state domination and mobilizing their followers to encourage systemic change. Although tensions certainly exist on both sides, religious communities in this study do not necessarily function as catalysts for citizen resistance.

Instead, this thesis builds on a growing body of scholarship that challenges the argument that the expansion of democratic actors and institutions in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian political contexts translates necessarily into growing constraints on authoritarian leaders and their allies.²⁹ This thesis assumes that the nature of relations between associational groups and the state is defined by the political contexts in which they are embedded.³⁰ In democratic regimes civil society groups are understood as enhancing the quality of democracy by stimulating civic participation and socializing democratic norms. In authoritarian contexts, civil society groups are assumed to be largely demobilized, “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” or struggling to undermine the authority of the regime. In contrast, in liberalizing authoritarian settings—autocratic political systems that allow some space for democratic actors and institutions—civil society groups do not align these general assumptions. There is strong empirical evidence that civil society groups are neither a force for democratization, completely dominated by those in power, nor mobilizing against authoritarian incumbents. Rather, in the course of liberalization, a dynamic process of exchange is unfolding where activist state officials and ambitious religious leaders are negotiating the rules that govern the religious revival. While conflict can certainly emerge from such

²⁹ On the role of elections in supporting authoritarian rule, see Geddes (1999); Ghandi and Przeworski (2006); Lust-Oskar (2006); Ghandi (2008); Ghandi and Lust-Okar (2009). On political opposition and civil society groups reinforcing authoritarian tendencies, see Zartman (1998); Albrecht (2005); Jamal (2007).

³⁰ This argument has also been made by Berman (1997); Bermeo and Nord (2002); Jamal (2007).

interaction, there is also ample room for cooperation.

The central empirical task of this thesis is to explain the function and role of civil society within liberalizing authoritarian contexts. With a focus on Russia and China and the emergence of religious associational life, this project seeks to shed light on the nature of interaction between religious and state actors and the likelihood of conflict and cooperation. More specifically, I ask when and how do political elites and religious groups cooperate? When and why does cooperation break down? Finally, which religious actors are most successful at establishing close relations with those in power, and which religions are being left behind?

Parameters & Propositions

In this thesis I narrow the parameters of inquiry to the local level.³¹ A local-level analysis is illuminating for two reasons. First, although Moscow and Beijing have introduced the legal framework of religious activity, it is at the local level where the political management of religion largely takes place, and as a consequence, where the relationship between the state and religion is defined. In both countries enterprising local elites have interpreted central policies in diverse ways. In some instances, Chinese local elites have renamed places of worship as museums, facilitating their religious function under the aegis of commerce and tourism.³² This latitude is further illustrated in Russia where local government officials have ignored the constitution, which protects all religious groups equally. For example, Orthodox

³¹ In this project I use the term “local state” to describe the local governments officials and bureaucrats at the municipal or citywide level. More specifically, the local state refers to the municipal governments in Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, and Changchun. However, considering the size of Shanghai municipality and its administrative equivalence to a province in China I use the term to refer to district level governments within Shanghai. There is considerable literature suggesting the importance of local politics for elites and publics in both Russia and China. See, for example, Jia and Lin (1994); Goodman (1995); Stoner-Weiss (1997, 1999); Gladney (1998); Shue (1988); Petro (1999); Treisman (1997, 1999); Li and Tang (2000); Oakes (2000); Ruble et al (2001).

³² See, Chau (2005); Huang (2005); Yang (2004); Wu (2000).

priests were permitted to protest the religious activities of Buddhists in Nizhny Novgorod by claiming that the practitioners of a visiting Tibetan Buddhist group were part of a “totalitarian cult” and a threat to local morality.³³ The local level is secondly important because this is where the strength of associational life resides.³⁴ It is at the municipal level where religious associational life is most embedded in the community, where the distance to those in power is reduced, and where religious actors have an increased possibility of becoming important political players. Thus, it is at the local level where public officials and religious communities interact with each other and define in the process what each wants, what they can get from the other, and whether cooperation or conflict best meet these concerns.

In order to understand how local governments attempt to manage religious associational life, and just as importantly, how religious communities attempt to engage state actors to achieve their own spiritual goals, this project explores several dimensions of contact between the state and associational actors, including political accountability, religious competitions, economic resources and cultural capital.

One of the distinctive characteristics of liberalizing authoritarian regimes is that state actors are increasingly accountable to citizens living within their locale. Although elections may not always be in place, local-state officials nevertheless have powerful incentives to reach out to a diverse body of constituents in order to expand coalitions of support.³⁵ Therefore, following the logic of political competition we

³³ Interview with Father Andre, spokesperson for the Orthodox Annunciation Seminary and organizer of the protest against Lama Ole Nedal, January 26, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod. Lama Ole Nedal is a Danish citizen who calls himself a “master of Buddhist meditation.” Lama Ole gave a lecture entitled “Buddhism, A free mind” on April 4, 2006 in the largest auditorium in the city, the Kremlin Concert Hall. Several Orthodox priests and students from the seminary protested Lama Ole’s visit, claiming that the Kremlin is the most “holy” place in the city and that he is not an “authentic” Buddhist. The posters advertising Lama Ole’s lecture were covered with signs reading, “Danger, Totalitarian SECT” (Осторожно, тоталитарная СЕКТА) and Orthodox priests stood outside the entrance of the auditorium warning passersby that they would “go to hell” for attending.

³⁴ Brook and Frolic (1997: 11).

³⁵ See, especially, Horowitz (1991); Wilkinson (2004).

would expect that the religious complexion of a region shapes and constrains religious-state interaction. In other words, when one religious community controls a monopoly of belief in the region, local elites will turn to that majority religious group for political support.³⁶ As the religious complexion in a region shifts from homogeneous to plural, the incentives for local elites to build coalitions among religious communities dissipate. In short, I predict that support for religious communities and the willingness of local political elites to reach out to diverse religious groups depends on both the degree of religious plurality in a region and size of religious groups.

Proposition 1—Alliances for support. Local elites have strong incentives to reach out to a diverse body of constituents in order to expand coalitions of support. Political elites are more likely to interact with and support religious groups that exercise a religious monopoly in a region than religious groups that represent a minority.

At first blush, it may seem counterintuitive to suggest that religious groups would also seek to establish close ties with or court the local state, because they answer to a higher calling and the state has a history of repression. However, within the past two decades of liberalization where religious freedoms remain in flux, religious groups act like any other kind of interest groups, and seek to align themselves with the politically powerful and resourceful. While in the extreme, this can mean that religious groups try to capture the state; however, the more common dynamic is to pursue alliances with those in power in order to achieve strategic goals. I expect that the second point of contact between religious groups and the local government to be shaped by the degree of political accountability.

Proposition 2—Alliances for survival. Religious groups will seek to align

³⁶ A religious monopoly exists when one religious confession, such as Orthodoxy or Buddhism, dominates the local religious market and exercises control over other religious communities. On religious monopolies, see, for example, Stark and Bainbridge (1996).

themselves with the state when the government is less politically accountable to citizens. As regimes liberalize and become more politically accountable, through elections or other measures, religious groups will seek independence from the state.

Religious competition is also important. In both Russia and China, liberalizing religious reforms have encouraged religious groups to vie for influence with the local government. The hierarchy of religions created by Beijing encourages religious groups to compete among themselves for a place in the local pecking order. In order to legally register, religious groups must demonstrate to local bureaucrats that they are one of the five major religions in China, have a fixed place of worship, a professional clergy, and a legal source of funding.³⁷ Similarly, a Russian federal law creates a hierarchy among religious confessions.³⁸ Orthodoxy enjoys a privileged status at the top as a religious organization, followed by a second-tier of other “traditional religious organizations” with historical roots in Russia (such as Islam and Judaism), followed by third-tier termed “historically new religious groups” (such as Catholicism and Protestantism).³⁹ These distinctions are significant, because confessions on the lower-tiers have restricted rights, including limited access to schools, orphanages, and prisons, as well as to tax-exempt status. Thus, concurrently in both countries, religious groups struggle to align themselves with the local government to ensure their own survival, while also competing with one another for followers. There is, in short, a competitive “religious market” in operation in both countries.⁴⁰ These reflections allow us to generate a third proposition.

Proposition 3—Religious competition. In areas of diverse religiosity, religious groups court the local government to secure certain advantages, such

³⁷ There are five legal religions in China: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism.

³⁸ The 1997 Russian federal law On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association [135-FZ *O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh*].

³⁹ According to the law, “historically new” means that a religious group has not existed in Russia for the past 15 years. Local government officials determine which religious groups are historically new.

⁴⁰ See Starke and Finke (2000) on the religious marketplace.

as a facilitated registration process, the ability to shut out the “religious competition” or establish a “spiritual monopoly,” and in return they may mobilize support for a candidate or support for a government and its policy.

Economic resources also play a role. The past two decades of liberalization in Russia and China have created more autonomous local governments, but at the cost of greater financial responsibility for the provision of local public goods and services. However, given the limited capacity for taxation by the local government, low levels of bureaucratic development, and high levels of corruption, the local government is often severely constrained in its ability to provide these services.⁴¹ Where religious groups are willing and able to fill in the gap (for example, by repairing roads, supporting charities, or providing tourist revenue), they are tolerated and even courted by local officials. In one such mutually beneficial relationship in Shanghai, the district government gave an interest-free loan to a Buddhist monastery with the understanding that temple admission fees would go directly to local government coffers and the temple would serve a second function as a tourist site.⁴² In Nizhny Novgorod, the municipal government is sponsoring the reconstruction of several Orthodox churches along an historic boulevard (*Il'inskaja sloboda*), with the intention of boosting tourism to the Volga region.⁴³ Thus, for the local state, religion—and religious buildings—can become lucrative financial investments.

Proposition 4—Economic resources. Religious groups are supported, tolerated or even cooperate with the local state when they provide public goods for the community and extra revenue for those in power.

Finally, the interactions between religious groups and the local state are shaped by the cultural influence of religious groups. There is some evidence that post-Soviet

⁴¹ There are many systematic discussions on the abuses of power, corruption, and the weakening of legitimacy in China. See, for example, Walder (1994); Perry and Selden (2003).

⁴² Interview with Abbot Y at Buddhist monastery, March 13, 2007, Shanghai.

⁴³ Interview with advisor and historian for the *Il'inskaja sloboda* fund, February 03, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

Russia and post-Mao China, like their predecessors, are drawing on religious and cultural capital to strengthen national identity and encourage nationalistic sentiments. There is an increasing trend among China's leaders to speak of religious values as helping build a "harmonious society," the new party mantra. In Russia this translates into calls for the revival of "Holy Rus," or the creation of Moscow as the "Third Rome" to encourage national solidarity. This turn to culture is not surprising in a context where Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideology has lost support and the current regime is seeking alternative ways to build legitimacy. Religion, unlike other repositories of cultural meaning, has become an instrument states use to maximize regime support and minimize political challenges.⁴⁴ In this project I analyze how these dynamics play out on the local level.

Proposition 5—Cultural capital. The local state is more supportive and willing to cooperate with religious organizations that are considered "culturally authentic" or "native religions" rather than "foreign religions."

Anticipating the Argument

In this project I assume that religious leaders and local government officials and bureaucrats are rational actors seeking to maximize their interests and minimize constraints. My central argument is that within liberalizing authoritarian regimes, religious and local-state actors have needs that converge in many ways, making interaction between the two sides largely collaborative and mutually empowering, rather than conflictual. Although the needs, interests, and payoffs for both sets of actors differ, the nature of their interaction is mutually reinforcing, because each side has resources at its disposal that can be offered the other in order to meet strategic needs. Local government officials attempt to establish cooperative relations with

⁴⁴ Seul (1999: 558); Schirmer (2004).

religious communities as a means of maximizing economic interests, governing more efficiently, and minimizing local conflicts. At the same time, religious leaders are also forging alliances with those in power to secure resources that allow them to pursue their own cultural agenda. Indeed, what has evolved is an ongoing process of bargaining that seems to benefit both local officials and religious communities.

Data, Methodology and Chapter Outline

No single research strategy can sort out the many factors shaping the politics of religion and the bargaining that takes place between liberalizing autocrats and religious leaders. As a result, this project draws on several methods, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and archival research. Data collected for this project include over 150 interviews with local government officials, religious leaders and adherents, representatives of faith-based NGOs, and religious studies experts. In both countries I interviewed local government officials and bureaucrats responsible for registering and monitoring religious groups. In Nizhny Novgorod this includes municipal-level bureaucrats from the Ministry of Justice (Министерство юстиции РФ), in Kazan bureaucrats from the Council of Religious Matters for the Cabinet of the Republic of Tatarstan (Совет по делам религий при кабинете министров республики татарстан), and in China district-level bureaucrats from the Religious Affairs Bureau (宗教局).⁴⁵ Given the plurality of the Russian and Chinese religious landscapes, I interviewed a representative sample of all legal religious communities found in each case study, including Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic,

⁴⁵ The central level organization that oversees all religious affairs in China has gone by several names. From 1951 to 1954 this bureaucratic organization was called the Religious Affairs Office (RAO); the name changed to the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) from 1954-1998. In 1998 RAB was again renamed as the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA). The municipal and district-level extensions of SARA continue to use the name Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB). In this project the term “Religious Affairs Bureau” (RAB) refers to religious affairs offices at the local level, unless otherwise indicated.

Protestant, Russian Orthodox, and popular religious communities. Besides a horizontal sampling of confessions, I also took great effort to interview vertically within a given religion. For instance, in Protestant churches, I met with not only the ministers, but also the deacons, preachers, and volunteers. To ensure standardization across interviews and cases I asked a sequence of “standardized, open-ended” questions.⁴⁶

In each of the case studies I compiled data on a comprehensive sample of religious communities from several sources, such as public government records, phone books, and religious groups internal directories. For example, in Kazan, the sample included 101 religious organizations. In large municipalities like Shanghai, where the sample included over 350 religious organizations, I disaggregated it by district and religious community. Working from this sample I then contacted each religious organization listed and requested an interview. The acceptance rate for interviews was approximately 80 percent in Russia, and 50 percent in China.

In addition to the legal or state-approved religious communities, whenever possible I also met with “un-registered” religious communities, including Old Believers in Russia and members of the Protestant house church movement and the underground Catholic Church in China. Interviews with underground religious communities, however, were much less systematic for understandable reasons and therefore less amenable to drawing generalizations. Underground religious groups meet in secret, often changing their location on a weekly basis, and observation of their religious activities is through invitation only.

In this project I also made use of participant observation in religious services and rituals, philanthropic projects, and religious classes. After attending religious services—from a reading of the *Koran* in Tatar to Buddhist chanting—I held focused

⁴⁶ See Patton (1990) on the “standardized, open-ended” approach to interviewing.

discussions with religious practitioners to explore how members perceive their religion in society, and to what extent their religious values might influence local government decisions. Whenever possible, I also met with the legal representatives and accountants of religious groups.

Researching religion and politics, particularly in China, is a highly sensitive topic and access to government officials and bureaucrats, as a result, was very limited. Moreover, responses rarely strayed from official rhetoric. Therefore, interviews were supplemented with additional open sources, including local newspapers,⁴⁷ historical gazetteers, archival documents, government speeches, legal documents, and religious organizations' printed media. In light of the political sensitivity of this topic, the names and specific dates of many interviewed for this project have been omitted to protect their identity.

Methodology

This study is explicitly comparative in nature. I adopt a strategy of paired comparison⁴⁸ to explain the interaction of religion and politics on three levels, including a country-level comparison of Russia and China; a within-country comparison of Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Shanghai and Changchun; and an inter-religious comparison of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Taoism, and new religious movements. Although this research design is labor intensive, a troika of comparison has several advantages. First, a paired comparison method provides

⁴⁷ Articles were collected from the following newspapers: Russian – *Islamskie Vesti, Izvestija Tatarstana, Kazanskue Vedomosti, Molodezh' Tatarstana, Moskovskij Komsomolec v Nizhnem Novgorode, Nizhegorodskie eparhial'nye vedomost', Nihegorodskaja Pravda, Nizhegorodskij Raboij, Pravoslavnoe slovo, Sovetskaja Tatarija, Zemlja Nizhegorodskaja*. Chinese – *Dagong bao, Dangdai shenghuo bao, Jinwanbao, Nanfang ribao, Renmin Ribao, Renmin tielu bao, Renmin zhengxie bao, Wenhui bao, Zhongguo daojiao, Zhongguo shehui xinwen, Zhongguo xinwen she, Zhongguo jingji ribao*.

⁴⁸ On a strategy of paired-comparison, see Tarrow (forthcoming); Tarrow (2004); Brady and Collier (2004).

greater confidence in testing propositions and building theory than single case study analysis. Second, it permits greater analytical leverage in explaining patterns and outcomes than gained from a single case study. As Sidney Tarrow writes, “a productive use of paired comparison is as an intermediate step between a single case study which suggest a general relations and a multi-case analysis that tests or refines a theory.”⁴⁹ Third, the method also allows for, and in fact requires a richer understanding of the cases, something that is lost in large-N comparisons.⁵⁰ Finally, on a more practical level, not all research tools are available to the study of religion and politics in authoritarian settings. In other words, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for foreign researchers to gain government permission to conduct surveys on religious practitioners and organizations that would lend itself to large-N analysis.

Setting the research constraints aside, Russia and China also share a number of important similarities and differences, which makes this approach particularly enlightening. Both countries share a communist past, a long history of official atheism, and repression of religious groups. Since the 1980s, Russia and China have also embarked on paths of greater political liberalization and economic reform, yet neither has made the transition to democracy. In terms of religion, since the 1980s both countries have also experienced a resurgence of religiosity—churches, mosques, and temples are being rebuilt and record numbers are embracing religious beliefs—while other types of associational groups have been slow to develop. Central policies managing religion have also been introduced in both countries; yet, these policies are often ambiguous, giving local officials and bureaucrats considerable autonomy in mapping out church-state affairs. As a consequence, the management of religion in both Russia and China is largely a local game. Finally, Russia and China stand as two

⁴⁹ Tarrow (forthcoming: 26).

⁵⁰ Tarrow (forthcoming: 23).

of the most influential countries in contemporary international politics, and their pathways of selective liberalization and de-liberalization are closely watched as models of political development by other liberalizing autocrats.⁵¹ Thus, the combination of similarities and differences maximizes many research design concerns and makes the multi-level comparison a desirable research strategy.

Case Selection

Data for this comparative project was gathered during twenty-two months of field research, divided between Nizhny Novgorod and Kazan, Russia, and Shanghai and Changchun, China. These four cases were selected because they vary on several dimensions, including economic resources, local government autonomy, degree of political openness, and diversity of religious landscapes.

Nizhny Novgorod, formerly known as Gorky, is located approximately 250 miles east of Moscow on the Volga River, and is the capital city of the Volga Federal District. Because of its defense industries, Nizhny Novgorod was a “closed” city for both foreigners and citizens until the early nineties. The city, however, remains an important industrial center of the Russian Federation, with a focus on metallurgy, chemical production, and automobile manufacturing. The municipal government is elected, but is largely dominated by the United Russia political party (Единая Россия) and maintains strong ties to the Kremlin. The religious landscape is diverse, including Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, Old Believers, Buddhism, Catholicism and a variety of Protestant denominations. The religious marketplace is dominated largely by the Russian Orthodox Church, which represents an estimated 60 percent of the local population. The second largest religious community is the Tatar-Muslims, who make up less than 20 percent of the population.

⁵¹ On influential cases, see Gerring (2007).

Kazan, the capital city of the autonomous Republic of Tatarstan, and the homeland for the Tartar minority, offers a second point of comparison in Russia. In contrast with Nizhny, Tatarstan has had a much more contentious relationship with Moscow. In the 1990s a Tatar nationalist movement called for independence and secession. To maintain the integrity of the Russian Federation, President Yeltsin brokered a power-sharing arrangement with leaders of the nationalist movement and Mintimer Shaimiev, the president of Tatarstan. The agreement quieted calls for secession, but also granted the republic exceptional privileges, such as lower tax remittances to Moscow, greater protection of property, autonomy over Tatarstan's oil resources, and exemptions from military service for Tatar men.⁵² The religious profile is more equally balanced between Tatar Muslims, who make up over 52 percent of the population, and Russian Orthodox Christians, who represent 40 percent. In addition to large Muslim and Orthodox populations, Kazan is also home to numerous Protestant denominations, Catholics, Old Believers, Ba'hai, and Jews.

In China, the diversity of Shanghai makes it an ideal case for exploring religious and local state relations. Religious practices draw from all five major religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism), and there are also flourishing cultural and folk traditions. Shanghai has also been at the leading edge of local religious reforms in China; in 1996 the municipality implemented additional liberalizing regulations for the management of growing religiosity and protection of religious activities.⁵³ Shanghai has also been at the forefront of

⁵² On February 15, 1994 President Yeltsin signed the "Treaty of the Demarcation of Objects of Jurisdiction and the Mutual Delegation of Powers between the Bodies of State Power of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan" granting the republic the independent right to exploit all of its natural resources, including gas and oil, the creation of a Tatar national bank, greater autonomy in foreign trade, and exemption of Tatar men from service in the Russian army, which excluded them from fighting in Chechnya (Solnick 1996).

⁵³ See, for example, "Regulations of Shanghai Municipality on Religious Affairs," adopted at the 23rd Session of the Standing Committee of the 10th Shanghai Municipal People's Congress November 30, 1995 and amended on April 21, 2005.

economic reforms and political liberalization in China; this openness has translated into the influx of foreign investment and tourism growth, making the city arguably the most cosmopolitan in the country. Administratively, the Shanghai municipality consists of eighteen administrative districts and one county. Considering the tremendous population of the city (well over 20 million), my project disaggregates the municipality into districts, and examines the relationship between religious communities and local government officials at the district level. Of the eighteen districts, I selected the twelve most plural religious profiles to explore the politics of religion.

Changchun, located in Jilin province in the northeast corner of China, offers a final important comparison. The religious landscape consists of four of the five official religions— Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism—and the religious revival has been considerably more muted than in Shanghai. What makes Changchun an unusual site of religious variation, however, is the significant presence of underground and illegal religious groups. Falun Gong, a spiritual movement that blends traditional Chinese meditation with Buddhism and Taoism, originated in Jilin province and in spite of extensive suppression of the community maintains a presence. Additionally, the underground Protestant house churches, which meets in rented spaces and private apartments, have also been extremely successful in building a dense religious network. Changchun also provides an important economic and political contrast with Shanghai, with a largely industrial and agricultural economy, Changchun has taken a more gradual approach to economic development, and political elites are much more dependent on Beijing for support. In summary, the political, economic and religious variation of these four cases make them excellent testing grounds for a within-country comparison of how local government officials manage religious groups and, just as importantly, how these communities are becoming important political and

economic actors.

Chapter Outline

The plan of this dissertation and summary of arguments are as follows. Chapter 2, “Church and State Games,” presents a theory of local-state and society relations to explain the bargaining games that develop around the distribution of money, power, and prestige. I argue that cooperative relations have evolved, wherein local officials and religious communities negotiate the rules that govern the religious revival with the guiding goal on both sides of maximizing economic interests and minimizing costs. This relationship is fluid and may at times become parasitic; however, there is ample room for mutually beneficial collaboration. Local government officials use strategies of patronage to ensure compliance and rely on religious communities to meet the financial goals of the state. And for the most part, religious communities welcome these forms of patronage and develop complementary strategies to help negotiate their own niche with the local state. The result is an active and functional bargaining relationship that is beneficial for both sets of actors.

Chapter 3, “Regulating the Religious Marketplace,” addresses the question: Why is the politics of religion a local game? This chapter traces the central laws and policies pertaining to religion and religious freedom since the mid-eighties. I demonstrate that while central policies regulating religion have certainly created more space for religious freedom, they are intentionally ambiguous. As a result, they give Moscow and Beijing the flexibility to adapt and amend them as needed, but also empower local governments to manage religious groups according to different standards. Without clear and transparent religious policies, religious groups and the local state bureaucrats bargain with each other in order to determine the rules of the religious marketplace, making the management of religion a local game.

The next two empirical chapters flesh out the key factors that shape local authorities' attitudes and behavior toward competing religious groups, along with the strategies both sides adopt to pursue their interests. In order to test the propositions presented in this chapter, chapters 4 and 5 present a series of bargaining games that illustrate varying degrees of cooperation, compliance, and control between religious groups and the local state. The result is usually cooperation, but conflict occurs as well. Chapter 4 "The Political Economy of Religious Revival," expands on the bargaining games that revolve around money. These games converge around a cash-nexus that is mutually beneficial for both sets of actors, including increasing local revenue, attracting tourism, improving property values, and relying on religious groups to provide public goods and services.

Chapter 5, "The Politics of Faith, Power and Prestige," considers the bargaining games over non-material resources of power and prestige. Local government officials are invoking religious symbols and participating in rituals to enhance legitimacy and expand their base of support. Religious communities also embracing state symbols and rhetoric to ensure their survival, demonstrate their loyalty, and enhance power over religious competition. This chapter suggests that non-material cooperation is more selective than its material counterpart, because it introduces additional risks for both sets of actors. Local officials that empower religious communities, may also be nourishing the burgeoning of civil society. Religious leaders may further risk alienating their followers by developing "unholy alliances" with the state. Finally, once non-material cooperation is initiated it is comparatively more difficult for both sides to reel-in and control.

Chapter 6, "Conclusions: Collaboration and Conflict in Comparison," revisits the propositions, empirical findings of the previous chapters, and presents a systematic and comparative analysis between the two countries and among the four case studies:

Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Shanghai, and Changchun. I compare what factors shape local authorities' attitudes and behavior toward different religious communities, and I evaluate the strategies employed when bargaining takes on the distribution of money, power, and prestige. I address why some religions are more effective at forging alliances with the local state; for instance, why have Buddhists become effective collaborators with the state in Shanghai; remain marginalized in Changchun; but are considered a "cult" in Nizhny Novgorod? I also return to the to larger issues of this study, including whether the emergence of a robust religious associational life is an indicator of regime weakness or a sign of impending crisis for Russia and China. I conclude the chapter by summarizing the theoretical arguments and critical findings of the dissertation, and identifying the contributions of this study to key areas of research in comparative and international politics.

CHAPTER 2

CHURCH AND STATE GAMES

The interaction between religion and politics at the local level is quite complex, given the strong desires of political elites and religious leaders to ensure their survival, expand their influence amidst the institutional fluidity and ambiguity—indeed, the sheer messiness—that characterizes the contemporary politics of both Russia and China. This chapter imposes some order on local politics and religion in liberalizing authoritarian regimes by laying out a theoretical framework to explain local state and religious dynamics. This framework places mutual cooperation, if not interdependence, at the center of church and local-state relations. Indeed, what has evolved is a strategic process of exchange, where activist local officials and ambitious religious leaders barter resources and negotiate the rules that govern the religious revival.

In this chapter I present a theory of religious and local-state relations to explain the cooperative bargaining games that develop between the two sides. The first section introduces the underlying incentives for both sets of actors to seek cooperative relations. I argue that what seems to drive this exchange are three factors: uncertainty, needs, and resources. In the second section, I introduce the different forms collaborative arrangements take, suggesting that issues of faith do not necessarily (or indeed usually) drive bargaining between the state and religious communities. Instead, as with most bargaining processes, each side seeks money, power, and prestige, and each side discovers that such goals are best met through collaboration, not conflict. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the varieties of religious and local-state cooperation and conflict.

The Liberalization of Church and Local-state

In liberalizing authoritarian regimes, the nature of church and state relations is flexible and dynamic.¹ In spite of an institutional commitment to secularism, the boundary between the public (state) and private (religious) spheres is porous. In the past two decades there has been an intertwining of the sacred and the secular, as religion has become “deprivatized,” abandoning its assigned place in the private sphere and entering the undifferentiated public sphere.² As a result, religious communities and local government officials are in a unique position to define what each wants and can get from the other, whether cooperation or conflict is the optimal form of interaction for meeting each sides concerns, and, then, the purpose and the processes of interaction. What often develops from this process of exchange is an active collaborative relationship.

Cooperation between religious groups and the local state can take numerous forms, but it is essentially a strategic process of exchange.³ Both local state and religious actors act rationally and seek to maximize interests and minimize costs. While there is little doubt that political elites are instrumental actors interested in maximizing their utility and minimizing costs, there is some dispute whether religious communities’ decision-making follows a similar economic calculus.⁴ For instance, religion has been defined in many ways but often is conceptualized as being based on faith and ethics, concerned with supernatural forces, good and evil, and answering questions regarding the meaning of life and what lies beyond. Many of the concerns

¹ I use the term “church and state” out of convenience to convey the division between religious groups and the state. I recognize that terminology is clumsy and implies a Western Christian bias, as not all religions worship in “churches,” but may worship in mosques, temples or other spiritual landmarks, such as mountains, trees and bridges.

² Casanova (1994: 65-6).

³ On cooperation as strategic exchange, see Parsons (1951); Milner (1997).

⁴ Many have raised concerns about treating religious groups as rational actors and a rational choice approach to religion; see, for example, Olson (1965); Mainwaring (1986); Chaves (1995).

of religious communities, in other words, center on the “irrational” and the unexplainable. Nevertheless, the focus of this project is not about the content of religious beliefs themselves, but rather about the interests and political behavior of religious actors. Therefore, I assume that religious leaders like their secular peers are goal-oriented and instrumental.⁵ Both religious and local political actors behave rationally, they weigh the costs and benefits of potential action, and choose strategies that will maximize their benefits.⁶

Treating religious communities as rational actors has also gained currency in the study of religion and politics.⁷ For instance, Anthony Gill suggests that although religious groups have “distinct sets of ideas about the world, they also exist in a world of scarcity and must necessarily make choices that optimize a limited set of resources, including time, money, and energy. To the extent that religious individuals—be they parishioners or priests—have a fixed set of objectives and are interested in improving their life situation, much of their behavior can be explained by rational choice theory.”⁸ It would seem reasonable to suggest that inasmuch as religious communities function in the social order of things (in spite of any supernatural predilections), they are similarly constrained by worldly concerns. A rational choice framework is further instructive because religious communities are generally highly disciplined organizations united by shared values and interests. Religious groups also generally have a clearly identified and respected leadership that members defer to and that speaks on behalf of group interests. As a result, the assumption of a single actor is

⁵ Tsebelis (1990: 6); Arrow (1951: 3); Iannaccone (1997: 40).

⁶ Becker (1976).

⁷ Rational choice theory is presently one of the dominant approaches in the sociology of religion literature, see for example, Young (1997); Iannaccone (1995; 1997). Political Scientists have also found a rational-choice framework instructive in explaining the behavior of other “irrational” groups, such as ethnic group mobilization and violence, see, for example Hardin (1995). On the use of a rational choice framework to explain religious political parties, see Kalyvas (1996); Warner (2000); and on as treating religious organizations as rational interest groups, Gill (2008).

⁸ Gill (1998: 201).

appropriate.

While religious groups and local political elites have different interests and objectives, the nature of their relations is largely cooperative because each side can provide resources needed by the other, and each can maximize its own interests through cooperative activities. For example, cooperation can mean that local state officials have access to the economic resources of religious groups for local development, and in exchange religious leaders have access to shaping some of the rules that manage growing religiosity. Although the outcomes of religious and local state bargaining is not necessarily equal—the local state is often gaining more and religious communities must ultimately play by the state’s rules—cooperation remains an optimal strategy because both sides need one another to achieve strategic goals.

Before discussing the underlying incentives behind religious and local-state cooperation, it is worthwhile to note that this argument—that mutual empowerment is derived from cooperation—is familiar to many student of politics. For instance, scholars of American politics may find patterns of religious and local-state cooperation similar to logrolling in democratic legislatures.⁹ Logrolling is a coordination game where legislative members trade in “votes” on separate issues for individual gain. It is reciprocal back scratching that allows for stability in political outcomes. In practice, elected officials are unable to directly “purchase” voter support with money, but they are able to exchange “votes” with other legislators on separate issues to secure votes, e.g. two senators agree to vote for the other’s bills to ensure that both are passed. Church-state bargaining in Russia and China mirrors the quid pro quo logic of logrolling. It requires cooperation and reciprocity of both players; it uses strategic resources, instead of votes, as the currency of exchange.

Those more familiar with interest groups politics and state corporatism may

⁹ On logrolling, see Buchanan and Tullock (1974).

also identify striking similarities.¹⁰ For instance, corporatist arrangements and religious-state cooperation are both asymmetrical relationships, with the state as the dominant player exercising some degree of authority over organizational groups. In both cases, the state does not necessarily dominate either religion or organized labor, but instead, prefers to use strategies of patronage, such as offering inducements, to achieve desired outcomes.¹¹ Corporatist arrangements and religious and local-state cooperation also both grant privileged access to state power and resources to select groups. This arrangement allows the state to reward loyalty and punish those who are disloyal. Moreover, when tensions arise between the two sides and corporatist arrangements or cooperation break down, the state tends to opt for more quiet form of repression, such as excluding groups from state subsidies. As a result, excluded organizations—whether they be labor unions or religious groups—are marginalized and subsequently weakened because of reduced access to state resources. The groups in turn can learn from these experiences and apply the lessons to future negotiations.

Finally, the bargaining games presented may seem consistent with traditional patterns of clientelism—where interaction between patrons (state actors) and clients (religious groups) are seen as durable, hierarchical, and unequal.¹² Similar to patron-client relations, religious and local state actors are engaged in a process of reciprocal exchange of goods and services; however, religious and local-state bargaining differs

¹⁰ The literature on corporatism is extensive but can be generally defined as “patterns of interest groups politics that is monopolistic, hierarchically ordered, and structured by the state” Collier (1995: 135). On corporatist arrangements in the Soviet Union, see Bunce (1983). For discussions of corporatism and labor in Latin America, see Collier and Collier (1979); Schmitter (1978); Collier (1995). On “democratic corporatism,” see Katzenstein (1985). For a policy-centered approach, see Pontusson (1991); Schmitter (1990). On the development of corporatism in China and the bargaining between local state and non-state actors see, Oi (1992); Chan (1993); Walder (1994). For the corporatist framework to explain Church and state relations in Mexico, see Schmitt (1984).

¹¹ Collier and Collier (1979).

¹² There is a large and diverse literature on clientelism as a pattern of social interaction embedded in “traditional” societies. See for example, Scott (1972); Lemarchand (1972); Putnam (1993). Recent scholarship has also extended clientelistic frameworks to democratic politics; see, for example, Kitschelt (2000); Piattoni (2001); Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2006).

from traditional clientelistic exchanges in that the underlying incentives for interaction are largely collaborative and mutually empowering, rather than exploitative. James C. Scott, for instance, writes of traditional patron-client relations as being exploitative and enhanced by inequality between the two sides, where “the patron is in a position to supply unilaterally goods and services which the potential client and his family need for their survival and well being.”¹³ In other words, in traditional patron-client relations the client is entirely dependent on the patron for survival and the goods and services they receive from the exchange are enough for survival but insufficient to empower the client. To be sure, the bargaining games that take place between religious and local state actors are also asymmetrical, however, the nature of goods and services exchanged go far beyond those needed for survival. In fact, as the following chapters will demonstrate, some religious communities are being rewarded quite handsomely from the bargaining games with the local state. As a result, church-state relations move beyond asymmetrical exploitation to positive-sum strategic partnerships.

Incentives for cooperation

What are the underlying incentives for church-state cooperation? The incentives to collaborate on the part of both the local state and religious groups revolve around three concerns: suspicions, needs, and resources. Each side harbors

¹³ Scott (1972: 125). Simona Piattoni’s (2001) more nuanced conceptualization of clientelism, as a political strategy, is more conducive to understanding religious and local state interaction. According to Piattoni, “patron-client relations are exchange relations whose terms depend on the relative power of the parties, in turn dependent on the contextual circumstances that affect both demand and supply. Some such relations are rather similar to exploitation – the negative end of the spectrum (negative reciprocity) – while others are rather close to gratuitous support – the positive end of the spectrum (generalized reciprocity). In between lies a whole range of relations in all similar to the morally neutral market exchanges (balanced reciprocity). If we interpret clientelism and patronage as strategies we will come to expect that both parties will try to alter the circumstances in which the exchange takes place so as to move the relation to the more favorable end” (Piattoni 2001: 12-13).

suspensions of what the other side can do—for instance, the local state fears religious groups may encourage instability or incite rebellion against the local state, and religious communities fear that the local state may constrain and suppress religious activities. Moreover, each side has certain symmetrical needs that must be met for its survival and prosperity—with respect to money, power, and prestige. These needs are not competing goals, but rather are mutually supportive and reinforcing and can best be met through cooperation. Finally, each side has resources at its disposal that can be offered to the other to help it meet key needs. As Figure 2.1 below illustrates, it is precisely the particular combination on each side of suspicions, needs, and resources that provides strong incentives for collaboration. For these reasons the interaction between church and local-state ends up largely collaborative, rather than conflictual.

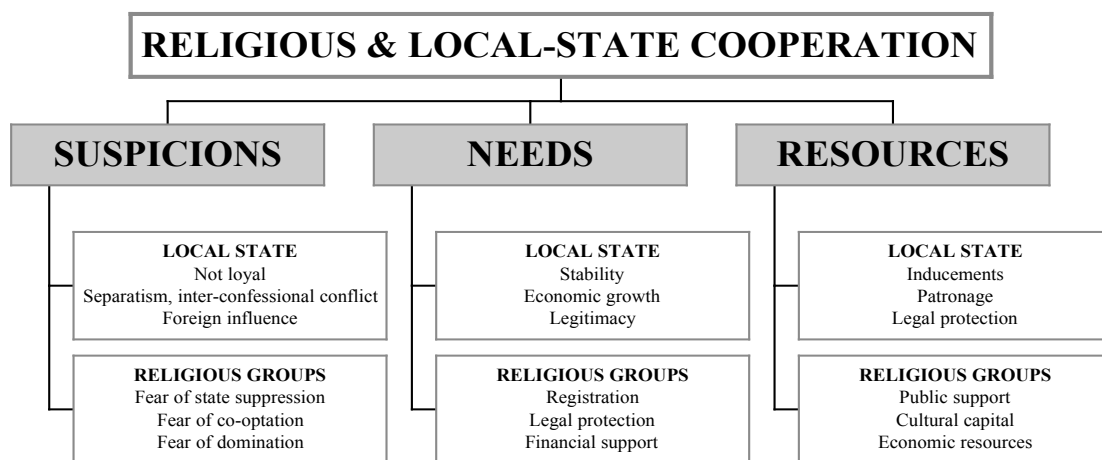


Figure 2.1 The Logic of Religious and Local-State Cooperation

The Logic of Collaboration: The Local State

Much has been made of the conflicts that arise as liberalizing authoritarian regimes distance themselves from their communist past. These conflicts, whether along national or class lines, surface because liberalization produces high levels of uncertainty combined with very high stakes associated with political, economic, and

social change.¹⁴ The process of liberalization has also severely altered the political landscape “from one centrally organized, rigidly bounded, and hysterically concerned with impenetrable boundaries to one in which territorial, ideological, and issue boundaries are attenuated, unclear and confusing.”¹⁵ While local governments have gained greater autonomy from Moscow and Beijing, this independence is not without costs. They are now financially responsible for providing the substantial public goods and services to their communities that citizens came to expect from years of living in a socialist state. However, given the limited taxing capacity of countries in transition, low levels of bureaucratic development, and high levels of corruption, local state officials are often severely constrained in their ability to provide these services.¹⁶

Severe economic constraints, moreover, are joined with severe political constraints. Local government officials must contend with rising distrust of politicians; citizens’ growing expectations regarding the political accountability of local government; and widespread assumptions tied to the legacy of communism that politicians, even under capitalism, are responsible for the economic well-being of their constituents.¹⁷ For instance, Ken Jowitt writes of the surfacing of a “ghetto political culture” in this period of economic and political flux, a political culture “that views the government and the political realm suspiciously, as a source of trouble, even of danger, a distrustful society habituated to hoarding information, goods and goodwill, which shares them intimates and is filled with Hobbesian competition.”¹⁸ In the face

¹⁴ See Bunce and Csanádi (1993); Burawoy and Verdery (1998).

¹⁵ Jowitt (1992: 307).

¹⁶ There are many systematic discussions on the abuses of power, the spread of corruption, difficulties of tax collection, burdens on the local state and the weakening of legitimacy in China and Russia. See, for example, Liu (1983); Oi (1989); Lieberthal (1992); Walder (1994); Levy (1995); Treisman (1999); Zheng (1999); Brodsgaard (2002); Perry & Selden (2003); Tsai (2007); Zhang (2008). On the role of “policy entrepreneurs” to meet these challenges, see Mertha (2008, forthcoming).

¹⁷ On distrust of politicians and public leaders in Russia, see Steen and Gel’man (2003); in China, see Link (2008).

¹⁸ Jowitt (1992: 310).

of such political and economic burdens, budgetary constraints, institutional uncertainty, and weakened legitimacy, local states have used a variety of devices to help reduce the costs of liberalization and remain in power. The use of cultural symbols and the formation of alliances with religious communities constitute one common approach to meeting the needs of the state, including boosting local economic growth, consolidating personal power, and bolstering, more generally, the legitimacy of the state.

Echoing an argument made by Ann Swidler, political elites see culture as “more like a ‘toolkit’ or repertoire from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action.”¹⁹ Activist local officials are turning to culture and to religious actors as strategies to govern more efficiently, maximize economic interests, and minimize conflict. The turn to culture is also hierarchical and functionally driven. Local officials have a variety of resources they can offer religious groups in order to keep them docile, subservient to, and supportive of those in political power. Some of the resources the local state has to offer can be best understood as inducements, including bureaucratic stamps of approval necessary for registration and religious expansion; subsidies and financial support for the reconstruction of religious buildings; interest-free loans; tax-free status and tariff privileges. Other types of resources more closely resemble special privileges, such as legal and political recognition; blessings of the state; ability to pressure the religious competition; and religious influence in public schools. Ultimately, the local government desires a collaborative exchange with religious communities, and offers them a diverse set of resources to keep them from becoming thorns in their sides and help the local state do its job.

From the local state’s perspective, collaboration is preferred for several

¹⁹ Swidler (1986: 277).

reasons. One, collaboration can keep religious groups submissive through inducements. Patronage extends the reach of the local state into religious organizations and demands compliance in return for subsidies, favors, and support. This is particularly useful because the local state is able to neutralize potential threats, ensure a stable distribution of local power, and establish the state as the source of a religious group's legitimacy. Moreover, in binding religious groups through patronage, the local state also advertises the fact that religious communities are receiving benefits from the state. The very appearance of support can be important, because local officials are wary of fostering conditions for religious groups, especially minority religions like Islam, that contribute to mobilization against the state. Local government officials do not want to "overstep bounds between what religious persons will tolerate and treatment or social conditions that will provoke believers into challenging secular authority."²⁰

Collaborative relations are also preferred to combative ones or an absence of interaction, because local elites place a premium on stability and economic growth—which they take to be interdependent. Cooperation allows the local state to draw on the diverse resources of religious groups. For instance, in a collaborative church-state exchange, religious communities may encourage economic development and attract foreign direct investment. Religious groups may also draw on their cultural resources and mobilize support for local governments among citizens, provide electoral support for local candidates and political parties, help legitimate political authority, and define national identity.

Extracting resources from religious communities can be particularly advantageous when local state capacity is limited and political elites are under budgetary constraints. For instance, religious groups may take over some of the

²⁰ Brown (1996: 79).

obligations of the local state, such as providing charity programs or other public goods, such as paving roads.

The fact that local state actors are turning to religious groups for assistance with local development is hardly surprising. Scholars of developmental politics have repeatedly demonstrated that community organizations can be crucial assets for the state in achieving development and social welfare goals.²¹ John Montgomery suggests that bureaucrats may even go so far as to treat local organizations as “administrative resources” to help carry out official duties.²² Milton Esman and Norman Uphoff explain that government actors may seek out rural organizations “not necessarily to control them—though this may be either a motive or a consequence—but to enable the agency to perform its activities more effectively.”²³ As a result, religious groups can become a useful partner to the local state.

Local government dependence on religious groups is also often a welcome proposition for both sides. Local governments are able to devote scarce resources elsewhere, and in taking on some of the roles of the state, religious groups may also be able to negotiate greater autonomy or influence in local politics. An example may help illustrate this win-win exchange. In China, a Protestant minister explained that in his previous posting at a rural church in Henan the local cadres were extremely hostile toward Christians and treated them a part of a “cult.” Worship services were interrupted and members of his congregation were told that the church promoted feudal superstition. The minister used donations from the congregation to pave a road leading into the village. Apparently the local government had been trying to raise funds for several years for this project, but was unsuccessful. After the road was paved, the local cadres posted a banner leading into the village reading: “Christians

²¹ Esman and Uphoff (1984); Elridge (1995); Evans (1997).

²² Montgomery (1998), also quoted in Foster (2001: 92).

²³ Esman and Uphoff (1984: 39), also quoted in Foster (2001: 92)

will always be welcome in this village!” and members of his congregation were never harassed again.²⁴

In addition to providing crucial goods and services to the local state, religious groups may also help prop up the regime. According to Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge, religious leaders have historically been able to “offer supernatural sanctions of the state authority. Thus all challenges to the state will be classified as sins—political dissent will be identified as sacrilege, for the state rules with divine right.”²⁵ Even in more modern political contexts a religious endorsement or “blessing” of those in power carries significant influence, because religious leaders are generally trusted figures, seen as being “above politics” and with the best interests of their followers in mind.

Finally, cooperative church-state relations are preferred because the alternatives can be costly. For instance, coercive strategies require local officials to devote considerable financial and human resources to monitor and police religious communities.²⁶ Moreover, even if the local state has the resources to do so, there is still some question as to the efficacy of a coercive strategy of engagement. For instance, both Russia and China implemented strategies of coercion and domination of religious groups in the past; yet, the current revival of religious life is evidence that the decade-long campaigns did not wipe out religion, but rather drove beliefs underground until the political space again opened. Before the revolution over 90 percent of the population within the Russian Empire identified with a religious confession; by the late nineties over 60 percent considered themselves atheists; yet, within a few short years following the collapse of communism the number of “believers” returned to the

²⁴ Interview with Protestant pastor, April 2007, Shanghai.

²⁵ Stark and Bainbridge (1985: 508).

²⁶ Gill (1988).

pre-revolutionary statistics.²⁷ The resurgence of religiosity is also visible in the number of newly constructed religious buildings. In 1917 the Orthodox Church had over 70,000 churches across the empire; by 1926 the number had decreased to 27,000; and in 1938 only a few hundred churches remained open.²⁸ By January 2008, however, the Russian Ministry of Justice had registered over 12,500 Orthodox churches across the federation.²⁹ Other religions are also engaging in a building spree. In Tatarstan, for instance, only 17 mosques were permitted to remain open by the 1940s; however, by 2004 the numbers of registered mosques had increased to 300, and in 1999 to over 800 mosques.³⁰

The scope of the religious revival is even more staggering in China. Fenggang Yang writes that as soon as the central policies on religion were relaxed, “religious revivals burst through the vast land.”³¹ For example, the Chinese government estimates that Catholics grew from 2.3 million in the early 1950s to 3 million in 1982, to 4 million by the end of 1995. Protestants increased from 0.7 million in the early 1950s to 3 million in 1982, and to over 10 million by the end of 1995. The Muslim ethnic minority population more than tripled from 5 million in the 1950s to 18 million.³²

²⁷ Shchiokov (1999: 84); Powell (1967: 367). In practice, this means Russia is home to over 120 million Orthodox Christians, over 14 million Muslims, 1.5 million Protestants, 900,000 Buddhists, 600,000 Catholics, 400,000 Lutherans, and 230,000 Jews. Lutherans are generally considered in a different category as other Protestant denominations because they are closely associated with the ethnic German population in the Saratov region (Filatov and Lukin 2005).

²⁸ Shchipkov (1999: 84-5).

²⁹ See, <http://www.religarie.ru>, [last accessed January 15, 2009].

³⁰ Burdo and Filatov (2005: 107-118).

³¹ Yang (2004: 111).

³² *Ibid.* Yang explains that Buddhist and Taoist believers have also increased in numbers, but the sum cannot be estimated due to a lack of an organized membership system. However, many scholars maintain that these two religions have the largest number of followers. Scholars of religion in China have also suggested that these “official” numbers are severe undercounts and that the religious reality is even more astonishing. See, for example, Overmyer (2003); Lambert (2003). It is also worth mentioning that the Chinese Communist Party downplays the current religious revival by stating the growth is only a small reflection of an increasing population and that the actual proportion of believers in the population has decreased since 1949.

The Logic of Collaboration: Religious Communities

It is important to remember, however, that church-state relations in Russia and China are interactive, not uni-directional. Religious communities also seek cooperative relations with the local state. It may initially seem counterintuitive for religious leaders to seek alliances with the local state, because religious groups have a spiritual mission, not a political one; the state has had a history of religious repression; and collaboration with the state does not follow from earlier civil society experiences. However, a combination of uncertainty, needs, and limited resources act as powerful incentives for religious groups to also pursue alliances with those in power.

Just as local states face uncertainty in process of greater liberalization, religious groups are also faced with insecurity and seek more predictable and supportive relations with the state. Although religious freedoms are institutionally protected in both Russia and China, there are still limitations on religious expression and activities. Moreover, local officials and bureaucrats have considerable discretion in implementing central religious reforms. This means that it is up to the judgment of local officials to grant permission for the construction of a new mosque, church, or temple; to decide whether religious communities are eligible for state funding for the reconstruction of religious landmarks; and even, to determine whether religious activities, such as tent revivals and proselytizing are legal and protected by the law, or “cult-like” and subject to suppression.

For these reasons, religious groups seek vertical alliances with the local state. They strive for cooperative not combative relations, and they solicit neutral and stable relationships with the state rather than ones based on rebellion. The fact that religious groups are seeking alliances rather than distance from those in power is also an identified strategy of other associational groups in authoritarian regimes.³³ Kevin

³³ On the willing “incorporation” of Chinese associations, see Foster (2001).

O'Brien, for instance, suggests that organizational actors seek to embed themselves with the powerful and resourceful, even if doing so means the sacrifice of organizational autonomy. O'Brien writes:

In an organization seeking to become embedded, the agents of change seek proximity to existing center of power (i.e. entwinement) rather than distance. They are quite willing to sacrifice control of membership and opportunities to embarrass regime leaders to gain a measure of jurisdiction and organizational capacity. They realize that independence at this point means irrelevance and that future development demand sensitivity to existing power relations.³⁴

This quotation suggests that religious groups, like other organizational groups, favor collaboration over conflict, because the local state has the resources that religious groups need to ensure their survival and spiritual prosperity. Religious groups are clear that achieving their goals—whether that means evangelizing, building new religious facilities, developing charity projects, minimizing state intrusion into religious activities, or taking out some insurance against changes in central religious policies—depends on maintaining positive relations with those in power.

In order to achieve these above-mentioned goals, religious groups need resources, especially financial resources. The daily life of religious communities is far more consumed with financial matters than generally assumed. As Anthony Gill puts it,

Ministers must be paid, churches must be built, schools must be staffed, charities must be funded, and so forth. Despite the images scholars paint of progressive clergy constantly fighting the forces of social evil, a substantial portion of a priest's time is devoted to managing the parish budget.³⁵

For religious communities in Russia and China, friendly relations with the state are imperative, not only because the local state has the power to make life difficult for

³⁴ O'Brien (1994: 101).

³⁵ Gill (1998: 55-56).

religious communities, but also because the local state has the crucial resources necessary to rebuild religious communities after decades of neglect and repression.

Religious groups also seek positive relations with those in power in order to maintain the size of their community and ensure their expansion. Sociologists of religion, for instance, often refer to religious groups as functioning within a “religious marketplace.”³⁶ In the religious marketplace, religious communities function like firms, providing consumers with religious goods, such as a moral compass and the answers to the meaning of life and death. Within the religious marketplace religious groups compete with each other for resources and adherents. Proselytizing religions, such as Christianity and Islam, seek to increase the number of their followers and non-proselytizing religions, such as Buddhism and Judaism seek to maintain their current numbers and prevent defection to other religions.³⁷

Since the religious marketplace is regulated by the state, close relations with those in power can help religious communities increase their market share, establish a religious monopoly, and shut out the religious competition. Within the religious marketplace, Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge explain that religious groups seek alliances with the state because “no religion can achieve a monopoly out of its own resources alone. No faith can inspire universal, voluntary acceptance... [A] religious monopoly can be achieved only by reliance on the coercive powers of the state.”³⁸

Finally, the combination of uncertainty, needs, and limited resources must also be placed within the context of the durability of the regime and the larger process of liberalization. As interviews with religious leaders in Russia and China revealed, religious communities are quite aware that the state is not only the “only game in town,” but is also likely to occupy that role for many years to come. Therefore,

³⁶ See, for example, Stark and Bainbridge (1985); Stark and Iannacone (1994); Gill (1998, 2008).

³⁷ Gill (1998).

³⁸ Stark and Bainbridge (1985: 508).

religious groups survival and future prosperity depends on aligning themselves with the powerful and resourceful. Religious groups may even go so far as to compromise their religious teachings and develop “unholy” alliances with the state in return for social acceptance or financial favors.³⁹ This is because at the same time religious groups are struggling to vertically align themselves with the local state, they are also competing with one another on a horizontal playing field for followers, resources and spiritual primacy in their locale. It is striking here to note the contrast between this assumption and the usual characteristics of civil society struggles within authoritarian regimes. The common assumption is that not just conflicting interests exist between the regime and the communities, but also a presumption on the part of civil society groups that their struggles are additive and that their very presence speaks to the precarious future of the regime. Religious associational life, however, is often constrained by doctrinal values that can make cooperation between different confessions extremely difficult.

Dynamics of Collaboration: Money, Power and Prestige

The chapter thus far has conceptualized the relationship between religious groups and local state officials as one in which symmetrical needs for both sides provide powerful incentives for cooperation. The remainder elaborates on the dynamics of religious-state cooperation—what each side brings to the bargaining table and offers to the other in order to achieve strategic needs. Rather than negotiating issues of faith and religious freedom, church and local state actors cooperate around the core issues of politics—namely the distribution of money, power and prestige. More often than not, however, cooperation centers on material concerns.

³⁹ Wood (1999: 49).

Money

There is a cash-nexus at the core of religious and local-state relations. Both sets of actors use material resources as bargaining chips to achieve major goals. Material resources, defined as the economic assets of an organization, are preferred because they tend to minimize confrontation and provide powerful motivators to maintain cooperative and stable church-state relations. Local government officials use material resources as soft power to influence and manage religious communities. In practice, this means that local officials may offer a religious community state subsidies in return for public support or acceptance of state constraints. Depending on the political climate local bureaucrats may offer interest-free loans, bureaucratic stamps of approval, access to land and property, and legal privileges. For instance, local ministries of culture can subsidize the reconstruction of a church under the auspices of preserving cultural artifacts, and historic temples may also be re-invented as “museums,” thereby allowing them to legally receive state funds. This means that select temples and churches are eligible for direct government support by way of shifting reconstruction rationales from the religious to the secular, i.e., cultural, municipal, and even national development.

Although the pockets of religious communities are generally not as deep as those of the local state, they do bring important material resources to the bargaining table that are sought after by those in power. A religious group may mobilize support among parishioners for a local official, or publicly back a local state policy with the understanding that the state will reciprocate with patronage. Religious communities may also offer to take over some of the roles of the state, such as providing charity programs and other welfare services. Religious groups may even promote “faith-based” investment and sponsor temple festivals and religious holidays that can attract thousand of visitors, which can introduce significant revenues to their locales.

Power and Prestige

While material, not spiritual concerns drive the bargaining games between the local state and religious communities, there is ample room to collaborate for power and prestige. In addition to material gains, both religious groups and local state actors also exchange non-material resources in order to consolidate power and enhance legitimacy. Non-material resources can be understood as the non-economic assets of an organization, including organizational networks, symbols, mobilization capacity and access to information. In practice, political elites may invite religious leaders into policy-making circles, participate in religious rituals, invoke religious symbolism, and privilege some religions over others. At the same time religious leaders may endorse a politician for an upcoming election, speak in favor of a government policy, or “bless” the state. The rationale behind non-material collaboration is straightforward. Political elites offer non-material resources to religious communities in order to maintain stability, increase legitimacy, and appease public demands. Religious communities offer non-material resources to those in power in hopes of ensuring their survival, advancing their spiritual agenda and constraining religious competition.

What distinguishes non-material cooperation from its materialist counterpart is that religious communities are comparatively rich in resources. In general, religious groups have few mechanisms of influence over the local state. Yet, in the arena of non-material cooperation they can offer a surprising amount of prestige, primarily in the forms of cultural capital and status to local governments. For instance, endorsements (blessings) of political elites or state policies by religious leaders can add to local state legitimacy because religious leaders are often assumed to be trustworthy and above “politics.” Close relations with religious groups may also broaden the base of support for political elites, particularly among those who hold religious values dear.

To summarize, religious and local state actors exchange material and non-material resources to achieve strategic needs. In this exchange collaboration is not only the norm, but it is also the optimal strategy for both sets of actors. For the local state, collaboration facilitates the management and control of religious communities through a system of patronage that creates docile if not fully obedient religious groups. These factors soften fears among political elites that religious groups seek to challenge the legitimacy of the regime and disrupt national unity, and in so doing create space for greater religious expression. A system of patronage, moreover, can also promote economic growth by enabling the local state to harness the potential capital—monetary, cultural, and otherwise—of religious communities. For religious communities, collaboration is preferred because the religious marketplace is highly unregulated. In spite of official institutional protections, religious communities must develop alliances with the local state not only for survival, but also to secure crucial resources and their position vis-à-vis other religious groups. A religious group that opts-out of a cooperative relationship (even when its motivations are spiritually based and benign) would invite state scrutiny at best, and at worst would result in repression. Moreover, religious competitors would quickly fill the religious vacuum.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to systematically explain the dynamics of church and local-state relations in the process of authoritarian liberalization. I argue that church and state in Russia and China have become strange bedfellows. The nature of the liberalization process generates uncertainty for both sets of actors, and the combination of symmetrical needs and mutually beneficial resources provides incentives for collaborative, not conflictual relations. It is the desire to secure money, power, and prestige that informs local authorities' attitudes and behavior and

encourages their collaboration with religious groups. Moreover, it is at the intersection of these three concerns where local elites choose strategies that support, tolerate, or suppress—politicize or depoliticize—local religious groups and communities. Additionally, it is the capability to attract and encourage capital, consolidate political power, and impart legitimacy that religious groups use as leverage when bargaining with the state to help evade or mitigate control, or turn state-sponsorship to their advantage.

This framework suggests that under most conditions local state actors seek cooperative strategies to minimize conflict with religious groups, and religious communities seek collaborative vertical alliances with the state. However, as the following chapters will demonstrate there is also room for variation in types of collaborative exchanges—ranging in particular from mutually beneficial to selective and even reluctant and coercive.

First, variation in collaborative exchanges depends on what is at stake, the religious groups involved, and what is brought to the bargaining table. Even within positive-sum collaboration there are clear winners from the exchange. Often, but not always, it is the state that gains more, by increasing legitimacy, expanding influence, and filling state coffers. Moreover, the payoffs for building alliances are not necessarily consistent across religious communities. Some religious groups may be strengthened by a close relationship with the local state, while others may face internal dissent for such an arrangement. Given the uncertainties of politics in both countries, some religious groups, furthermore, may be hesitant to cooperate with the local government and might otherwise prefer to remain independent. Likewise, local states may preclude some confessions from the collaboration altogether.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For instance, religious and local state collaboration is unlikely when groups are designated as “cults” by the government. The Chinese government has classified several groups as “cults,” including Falun gong, the Guan Yin (Guanyin Famin or the Way of the Goddess of Mercy), Zhong Gong (a qigong

Second, because church and local-state relations are fluid, collaborative relations may overtime become highly competitive or even parasitic. Collaboration may also dissolve when the arrangement is no longer valuable to one of the actors, or backfire when one group misjudges the importance of an alliance. Moreover, as politicians leave office or are transferred to different regions, religious groups may find themselves scrambling to reestablish close ties with a new cohort of political elites.

Third, it is worth mentioning that although there are clear risks for religious groups in establishing a cooperative church-state relationship—religious groups may be viewed as cash cows of the state or compromising their religious values by their adherents—very few religious communities have the financial independence or political clout to opt-out of such an exchange. This is because there is limited legal recourse for religious communities, and the state controls the purse strings and permissions sought by religious groups to carry out daily religious activities. Therefore, refusal of a state-initiated collaborative relationship would mean that religious groups might be restricting their future financial resources, straining relations with the local government, and limiting influence over local decision-making. In fact, those religious communities that have rejected collaboration on spiritual grounds—including Old Believers and some Baptist groups in Russia, and some Protestant house churches and Catholics in China—are extremely vulnerable to government interference. For instance, in September 2007 the Beijing municipal Public Security Bureau (PSB) passed a regulation prohibiting landlords from renting properties to

exercise discipline), the "Shouters" (founded in the United States in 1962), Eastern Lightning, Society of Disciples (Mentu Hui), Full Scope Church, Spirit Sect, New Testament Church, Three Grades of Servants (also known as San Ba Pu Ren), Association of Disciples, Lord God Sect, Established King Church, Unification Church, Family of Love, and South China Church. See U.S. Department of State International Religious Freedom Report 2008 for China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau), available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108404.htm> [last accessed May 26, 2009].

persons with "irregular lifestyles," including those who conduct "illegal religious activities." This new policy not only interferes with religious groups themselves, but also punishes landlords who rent to them.⁴¹ For most religious communities, therefore, the risks of not cooperating with the local state are significantly higher than the costs of alignment.

Finally, when collaboration fails or is rejected by religious communities the state officials may draw on more autocratic strategies of control, such as introducing local laws and rules restricting religious freedoms, denying registration and accreditation of religious groups, and denouncing religious groups as threats to social stability. Control may also come in more quiet forms of repression, such as denying patronage or refusing permission to hold religious activities. Groups that are willing to form alliances with the regime and demonstrate loyalty are rewarded with patronage; however, those that refuse are left to wither away. Quiet forms of repression are popular government strategies because they do not require overt suppression of religious communities.

While repression and coercion of religious communities is certainly within the "toolbox" of local elites, the following chapters will demonstrate that in both Russia and China collaboration is the norm. In the next chapter, our discussion turns to how Moscow and Beijing have set the parameters for religious expression. This chapter traces the central laws and policies pertaining to religion and religious freedom since the mid-eighties and explains why the politics of religion is largely a local game.

⁴¹ Ibid. According to the 2008 International Religious Freedom Report, "Several house church groups reported that they were forced to change locations for their meetings after Beijing authorities threatened landlords with punishment for renting to them."

CHAPTER 3
REGULATING THE RELIGIOUS MARKETPLACE

“Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful.”

– Seneca (Roman philosopher, mid-first century CE)

“All politics is local.”

– Thomas “Tip” O’Neill

In the previous chapter I argue that the logic behind church and state collaboration is based on a combination of suspicions, needs and resources. Suspicions of what the other side can do to harm the other, symmetrical needs that are mutually supportive and reinforcing, and resources that each side has at its disposal and can be offered to the other to help meet its keep needs. It is precisely this tripartite framework that fosters religious and local-state collaboration within liberalizing authoritarian settings.

In this chapter, our discussion turns to *why* the management of religion is largely a local game. This chapter begins with a detailed tracing of central laws and policies pertaining to religion and religious freedom in Russia and China since the mid-eighties. I argue that while central policies regulating religious expression and activities have certainly created more space for religious freedom, at the same time they have been purposively designed to be ambiguous and contradictory. Ambiguous religious policies give the center the flexibility to adapt and amend them as needed. Policymakers seem to have taken Napoleon’s advice on writing government documents to heart: they should be short and vague. A second rationale for designing such imprecise guidelines in the management of religious communities is to allow local governments a certain amount of leeway in regulating their diverse religious

landscape. In the conclusion of this chapter, I argue that the ambiguity of religious policies, however, is not without costs. In both Russia and China, vaguely defined central policies empower local government officials and bureaucrats to manage religious groups according to different standards. It is the local governments and bureaucracies that decide whether religious activities in their region are illegal, whether their activities fall under the definition of traditional religions or feudal superstitions and should be supported or suppressed, or whether religious communities meet the requirement for registration. Without clear and transparent religious policies the relationship between religion and politics at the local level is open to competing interpretations. Thus, the policies that represent a tactical advantage for the center have fostered considerable diversity among localities and discrepancy in the treatment of religious communities. This is problematic because local officials management of religion can range from collaborative and supportive to predatory and parasitic.

Gorbachev and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

In the mid-1980s as the Soviet Union began to liberalize under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was again recognized as a legitimate public institution. Gorbachev needed moral and material support for the movements of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, and the restoration of religious groups, particularly the Orthodox Church, provided him with some political capital among Soviet citizens.¹ Gorbachev, who later confessed to being baptized as a child in the Orthodox Church, sought to rehabilitate religious organizations in the context of everyday life and harness their power to mobilize popular support for his reforms. In an attempt to reconcile the repressive treatment of religious communities, Gorbachev explained:

¹ Witte and Bourdeaux (1999).

Not everything has been easy and simple in the sphere of church–state relations. Religious organizations have been affected by the tragic developments that occurred in the period of the cult of personality. Mistakes made in relation to the church and believers in the 1930s [the Stalinist era] and subsequently are being rectified. ... Believers are Soviet people, workers, patriots, and they have the full right to express their convictions with dignity. Perestroika, democratization and glasnost concern them as well—in full measure and without any restrictions. This is especially true of ethics and morals, a domain where universal norms and customs are so helpful for our common cause.²

During the mid-eighties, Gorbachev took two important steps in changing Soviet policy toward religious groups; the first was allowing for the millennium celebration of the baptism of medieval Rus' by Prince Vladimir in 988.³ In part of the celebration of the conversion of Eastern Slavs to Orthodox Christianity, Gorbachev gave permission for church bells (which had been silent for decades) to ring during the finale of the Bolshoi Theater's gala, and live religious services were broadcast on state television across the Soviet Union.⁴ This symbolic gesture marked the beginning of religious reform and the return of Orthodoxy's influence; yet, the rhythmic tolling of the bells might now be interpreted as a prescient for the future of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev's second promise was to introduce new legislation on religious expression to replace the 1929 law implemented by Joseph Stalin.⁵ On a trip in December 1988 to the United Nations, Gorbachev pledged that new Soviet legislation

² Quoted in Bourdeaux (1990: 44).

³ Ancient Rus' or Kievan Rus' (880–to the mid-twelfth century) is considered the early predecessor of modern Russia, Ukraine and Belarus and the core of Eastern Slavic identity. Under the rule of Prince Vladimir the Great (980–1015) Rus' accepted Orthodoxy Christianity.

⁴ On the implications of the church bells ringing at the Bolshoi Theatre, see Bordeaux (2000: 10) who was present at this historic event.

⁵ Stalin's 1929 Law on Religious Associations forbids the opening of new religious buildings, religious training academies, the engagement in social work and philanthropy, the publishing and distribution of liturgical literature, or general meeting for religious study. The law held that the only legal place for religious worship was in registered religious buildings; however, this was a difficult task considering only a few hundred churches remained open, a staggering number in comparison to the some forty-six thousand functioning Orthodox Churches before the revolution (Walters 1999: 42). The themes of the 1929 Law were reiterated in the 1936 and 1977 Soviet constitutions.

would meet “the highest [international legal] standards.”⁶ The legislation, however, took longer to put into practice than expected, and it did not come to fruition until October 1, 1990 with the *Law on the Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations* for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).⁷ The 1990 USSR law was designed to bring its religious policy in line with the democratic civil rights tradition in Western Europe, guaranteeing religious liberty to both individuals and religious groups, and ridding itself of its anti-religion aura. The law declared that the “freedom of worship is an inalienable right of the citizens” guaranteed by the Constitution, and that citizens all share “the right to select and hold religious beliefs and to freely change them”; moreover, “all religions and denominations shall be equal before the law.”⁸ Gorbachev’s 1990 Law went further than anyone expected and clearly demonstrated that there was room for religious expression within the Soviet state. However, the space for religious activities was to be closely monitored, and a well-defined barrier between church and state was to be in place. Religious groups were required to stay out of politics, elections, and public education, and in turn, the state would not interfere in internal religious affairs.⁹

While Gorbachev had opened the window for greater religious freedom it was clear by 1990 that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was losing its monopoly

⁶ “The Gorbachev Visit, Excerpts from Speech to UN on Major Soviet Military Cuts,” *The New York Times*, (December 8, 1988): A16. One can speculate that Gorbachev was referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

⁷ *O svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiakh* [On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organization], *Vedomosti SSSR* No. 41, Item No 813 (1990); hereafter the 1990 Law. *Zakon o svobode veroispovedanii* [On Freedom of Religion]; *Vedomosti RSFSR*, Issue No. 21, Item No 267-1, at 240 (1990). A similar law on the freedom of worship was passed in the Russian Soviet Federative Soviet Republic (RSFSR) on October 25, 1990, hereafter the 1990 RSFSR Law.

⁸ As quoted in the preamble of the 1990 Law.

⁹ 1990 RSFSR Law, note 10, Article 25.

on state power and the Union was beginning to disintegrate.¹⁰ Constituent republics had begun to assert their independence from Moscow, calling for popular referendums on national sovereignty. This “parade of sovereignties” continued until December 1991 when Russia seceded from the Soviet Union.¹¹ After this definitive blow, Gorbachev resigned as president of the USSR, handing all powers over to Boris Yeltsin, the new president of Russia.

The early years of Yeltsin’s rule were marred by turmoil as reformers tried to reconfigure the socialist machine into a democratic and capitalistic country. In spite of these chaotic times, however, the spirit of the 1990 Law was upheld and religious freedom was protected in Russia. Churches, synagogues and mosques began the long process of rebuilding, and church bells and calls to prayer could be heard again across all twelve Russian time zones.

This period of liberalized religious expression was also reflected in Russia’s new political institutions. The 1993 Constitution codifies the separation of church and state, protects religious freedom, and promotes equality among religious groups. Article 14 stresses the need for a separation between church and state, stating, “The Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion may be established as a state or obligatory one. Religious associations shall be separated from the State and shall be equal before the law.” Article 28, moreover, protects the freedom of belief proclaiming “Everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of conscience, the freedom of religion, including the right to profess individually or together with any other religion or to profess no religion at all, to freely choose, possess and disseminate religious and other views and act according to them.” The significance and protection of religious beliefs is noted throughout the constitution: Articles 13 and 29 stress the importance

¹⁰ Beissinger (2003).

¹¹ Hale (2000).

of religious tolerance, prohibiting associational life and propaganda that encourages national and religious strife; Article 19 guarantees equal rights and freedoms to all citizens regardless of religious beliefs; and, Article 59 allows citizens of the Russian Federation to replace required military service by alternative civilian service in case his convictions or religious belief contradict military service.¹² Thus, in the early nineties religious groups were well protected and the “religious market” was largely unregulated by the state.¹³

Regulating the religious marketplace

The new protection of religious freedoms, however, like many of the reforms of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, did not accomplish what the designers of these policies had planned. One unintended outcome of increased religious freedom and institutional protection was the flood of foreign missionaries into Russia and the explosive growth of new religious movements. Foreign missionaries were diverse in beliefs and denominations—ranging from the Unification Church (Moonies), Mormons and Scientologists, to followers of the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo sect, Sunni

¹² Article 13: The creation and activities of public associations whose aims and actions are aimed at a forced change of the fundamental principles of the constitutional system and at violating the integrity of the Russian Federation, at undermining its security, at setting up armed units, and at instigating social, racial, national and *religious strife* shall be prohibited.

Article 29: The propaganda or agitation instigating social, racial, national or *religious hatred and strife* shall not be allowed. The propaganda of social, racial, national, *religious* or linguistic supremacy shall be banned.

Article 19: The State shall guarantee the equality of rights and freedoms of man and citizen, regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, *religion*, convictions, membership of public associations, and also of other circumstances. All forms of limitations of human rights on social, racial, national, linguistic or *religious grounds* shall be banned.

Article 59: Defense of the Fatherland shall be a duty and obligation of citizens of the Russian Federation. A citizen shall carry out military service according to the federal law. A citizen of the Russian Federation shall have the right to replace military service by alternative civilian service in case his convictions or *religious belief* contradict military service and also in other cases envisaged by the federal law. *Emphasis added.*

¹³ To reiterate, a religious marketplace is “the social arena wherein religious firms compete for members and resources” (Gill 2008: 231). See also Stark and Bainbridge (1985); Stark and Iannacone (1994); Gill (1998).

Muslims and Hare Krishnas. Many religious communities saw Russia as a large and open market of souls wanting to be attached to a confession.¹⁴ Competition among religious communities, in short, became fierce.

By the mid-1990s, however, there was a noticeable shift in public opinion to this spiritual opening and awakening. Articles began appearing in local newspapers expressing alarm about the flood of diverse religious beliefs and the spread of foreign missionaries, with both seen as an affront to traditional Russian culture. Leading the charge against the influx of foreign missionaries was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had only recently regained a foothold in domestic politics and was beginning to emulate the pre-communist practices by pursuing a closer relationship with those in power. In a speech presented at the World Conference of Churches in November 1996, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad and the External Affairs spokesperson of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church spoke of the problem of foreign proselytism and spiritual colonizers invading Russia.

According to Kirill,

Missionaries from abroad came with dollars, buying people with so-called humanitarian aid and promises to send them abroad for study or rest. We expected that our fellow Christians would support us and help us in our own missionary service. In reality, however, they have started fighting with our church, like boxers in a fight with their pumped-up muscles, delivering blows. The annual budget of some of the invading missionary organizations amount to dozens of millions of dollars. They have bought time on radio and television and have used their financial resources to the utmost in order to buy people. ...For many of Russia today, “non-Orthodox” means those who have come to destroy the spiritual unity of the people and the Orthodox faith—spiritual colonizers who by fair means or foul try to tear the people away from the church.¹⁵

During this period rumors began to emerge of the Orthodox Church trying to broker a

¹⁴ Ramet (1998).

¹⁵ A speech by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad given at World Conference of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, November 1996, reprinted in Witte and Bourdeaux (1999: 74-75).

deal with members of the Duma (lower house of parliament) to restrict the entrance of foreign missionaries into Russia.

Following the lead of the Orthodox Church and then picking up a theme that had disappeared during communism, public opinion regarding the religious deluge was largely negative and fueled the domestic struggle between “Westernizers” and “Slavophiles,” which framed domestic debate on the correct path of the Russian transition. For the most part, the Russian media and the Orthodox Church sided with the “Slavophiles” and devoted significant attention to the harmful activities of foreign “totalitarian sects”; candidates in the 1996 federal election campaigns additionally promised to take measures against harmful (foreign) religious groups; and the Russian Orthodox Church and communists-nationalists formed a surprising, though mutually convenient coalition against the influx of foreign religious groups. The Orthodox-red-brown alliance maintained that the religious policies of the early 1990s that allowed for a plurality of religious beliefs and expression were whimsically adopted “on a wave of democratic romanticism,” thereby giving too much freedom to proselytizing Western religious organizations and failing to protect traditional denominations, such as Orthodoxy.¹⁶ Metropolitan Kirill expressed his contempt at this influx of Western missionaries:

Proselytism is the fact of invasion by another culture, even if Christian, but developing according to its own laws and having its own tradition. This invasion is taking place after the old missionary patterns of colonial times. It is not merely a desire to reveal Christ to people—people have confessed Christianity for over a thousand years at that—but also to refashion their culture in the Western mode.¹⁷

¹⁶ Filatov (1999: 163).

¹⁷ A speech given by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, “The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third millennium,” reprinted in *Ecumenical Review* 52, no. 3 (2000): 74.

The Backlash

By the mid-nineties Russia was a messy state sometimes boarding on anarchy. There was an ongoing war in Chechnya, high-profiled mob-hits in the capital and general lawlessness in the regions. Questionable Western privatization policies had resulted in the plundering of the state's most valuable assets and enriched a new class of oligarchs. Yeltsin's "shock therapy" had produced astronomical inflation, rendering the average Russian's life savings worthless. It is not surprising that there was widespread disillusionment with democracy, resentment toward Yeltsin's and his liberal advisors, and anger directed at the West.¹⁸

By the beginning of 1997 it was clear that the Slavophiles and the Orthodox Church had prevailed over the Westernizers in the domestic debate on the appropriate trajectory for Russia's transition. As a result, central control over religious expression was tightened.¹⁹ This tightening was first felt at the local level, with more than one-third of local legislatures between 1993 and 1997 passing ordinances restricting religious activity, particularly limiting the proselytizing of foreign missionaries.²⁰ At the federal level, the 1990 liberal law allowing for an open and unregulated religious market was replaced with a new federal law reminiscent of Soviet-period state control over religious groups. The 1997 federal law, *On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association*,²¹ marked the beginning of restrictions on religious freedoms for non-Orthodox religions and a growing collaboration between the Orthodox Church and state, an alliance that both saw as beneficial. Russia was in the early stages of de-

¹⁸ Colton (2008) has compared this period in Russia to the Great Depression in the United States.

¹⁹ Gradual restrictions include the 1993 attempt to amend the 1990 Law on the Freedom on Conscience and Religious Organization. While this attempt at shifting federal law was vetoed, several regions passed local laws in the spirit of the 1993 amendment to control the religious revival; see especially, Marsh and Froese (2004).

²⁰ Homer and Uzzel (1998).

²¹ Federal law No 135-FZ (September 26, 1997) *Federalnyi Zakon 'O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniiakh'* [ON Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations]; hereafter the 1997 Law. It is interesting to note that this law was passed with a 337 to 5 vote in the Duma.

democratization and the 1997 Law was one of the first steps.

The 1997 Law is now the principal legislation on regulating religious communities in Russia, but it is far from transparent and rife with contradictions. In the preamble the law affirms that “the Russian Federation is a secular state.” However, the law goes on to recognize the “special contribution of Orthodoxy to the history of Russia and to the establishment and development of Russia’s spirituality and culture.” The law also ensures the legal protection of “Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions and creeds which constitute an inseparable part of the historical heritage of Russia’s peoples.”²² This special attention given to Russian Orthodoxy and the division drawn between it and other historical religions (curiously distinguishing Orthodoxy from Christianity) is somewhat puzzling considering the equality of all confessions professed in the constitution (Article 14) and the multi-confessional reality of Russia.²³

The major contradictions of the 1997 Law become apparent as the law sets the parameters for legal religious associations and activity. A *religious association* is defined as a

Voluntary association of citizens of the Russian Federation and other persons permanently and legally residing [therein] formed with the goals of joint confession and possessing features corresponding to that goal: a creed, the performance of worship service, religious rituals, and ceremonies; the teaching of religion and religious upbringing of its followers.²⁴

²² Taken from the preamble of 1997 Law. Chapter one of the 1997 Law reiterates the themes of the preamble, including the right of citizens and foreign citizens the freedom of conscience and creed (Article 3.1), forbids discrimination based on religious beliefs (Article 3.3), and maintains the secular nature of the Russian Federation (Article 4.1) by stating that religious groups are not to take part in political affairs and that education in public schools must remain secular (Article 4.2)

²³ One can only speculate that Christianity here is referring to Catholics and Protestants. Nevertheless, some Russian scholars of religion have questioned the idea of singling out “traditional religions” and giving them special privileges, because in Russian culture only paganism is “traditional” with native ties. See, for example, L.N. Mitrokhin (2003).

²⁴ 1997 Law, Article 6.1.

One of the more controversial aspects of this law is that it contradicts the equality given to all confessions protected in the constitution to create a hierarchy among different types of religious associations. As Figure 3.1 illustrates below, religious associations are first divided into two categories: *religious groups*²⁵ and *religious organizations*.²⁶

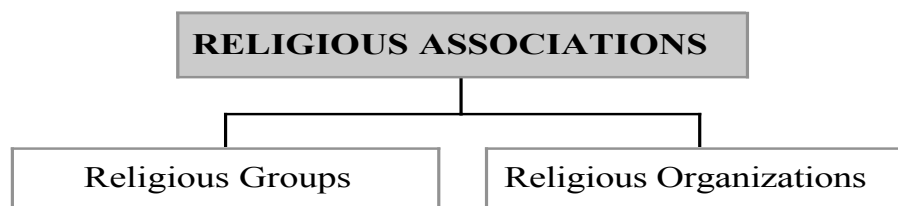


Figure 3.1 A Hierarchy of Religious Associations in Russia

What distinguishes a religious group from an organization is the successful registration of the latter with the federal organs of justice.²⁷ The registration process is fairly straightforward, but can be cumbersome and invasive for some groups to qualify. Registration requires a religious association to submit with their application the following materials to federal authorities within their locale: (1) a complete list of members (indicating their citizenship, home addresses, and dates of birth), including at least ten Russian citizens;²⁸ (2) a religious charter;²⁹ (3) minutes from the founding

²⁵ A religious group is defined as “[a] voluntary association of citizens, formed for the goals of joint confession and dissemination of their faith, carrying out its activities without state registration and without obtaining the legal capabilities of a legal personality, is recognized as a religious group in this federal law. Premises, and property necessary for the activities of a religious group, are to be provided for the use of the group by its participants. ...Religious groups with the intention of eventually transforming it into a religious organization are to inform the local authorities about its creation and the beginning of its activities” (Chapter 2, Articles 7.1-7.2).

²⁶ A religious organization is defined as “[a] free association of citizens, or other persons permanently and legally residing on the territory of the Russian Federation, formed with the goals of joint confession and dissemination of their faith, and registered as a legal personality in accordance with the practice established by law, is recognized as a religious organization” (Chapter 2, Article 8.1).

²⁷ State registration of religious organization “is performed by the federal organs of justice” at the local level (Chapter 2, Article 11.2). The federal organs of justice will be explained later in the chapter.

²⁸ The emphasis on Russian Federation citizenship as imperative in forming a religious organization or religious group marks a shift from the 1990 Law that allowed foreigners to form religious associations.

²⁹ A charter includes: the name and type of religious organization, address, creed, aims and goals, structure of the organization (i.e., its administrative organs and internal measure of competence), and

meeting; (4) documentation from the local government confirming that the religious organization has existed for no less than fifteen years in the relevant territory; (5) a history of the religion and its practices; and (6) documentation confirming the legal address of the religious organization and place of worship.³⁰ Religious associations who refuse to register—for political, financial or spiritual reasons—are classified as religious groups.

Religious groups are permitted to carry out worship services and rituals, but they are guaranteed only minimal state protection and no state benefits. Religious groups vary across Russia's regions; however, they tend to include Old Believers and some Baptist congregations (who refuse for spiritual reasons not to register with the state) and new religious movements (religious groups that entered Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union). Religious groups are situated at the bottom of the legal hierarchy created by the 1997 Law.

Religious organizations, by contrast, are formally registered with the state and eligible for greater state protections and benefits. Some of the entitlements include the right to own property, plots of land, and objects for the purpose of religious veneration. Religious organizations are also exempt from “creditors” who seek to reclaim real estate or other religious property, and have permission to engage in “business undertakings.”³¹ The Russian Orthodox Church, for example, was one of the first confessions to take advantage of the freedom to engage in business by remodeling the Danilovskaya Monastery—the residence of the Patriarch—into a four-star hotel in 1991. By law, religious organizations are also allowed to carry out religious rites in hospitals, orphanages, homes for the elderly or disabled, as well as prisons.³²

source of finances and property (1997 Law, Chapter 2, Article 10.2).

³⁰ See 1997 Law, Articles 9.1, 10.2, 11.5.

³¹ See 1997 Law, Articles, 21, 21.5, 23.

³² See 1997 Law, Article 16.

Religious organizations may produce and distribute print, audio, and visual materials, as well as carry out charitable activities and develop institutions for the professional training of religious personnel.³³ Religious organizations have the exclusive right to establish and maintain international contacts and invite foreign citizens for professional religious purposes.³⁴ Finally, religious organizations are also beneficiaries of direct state support. The 1997 Law affirms that the state must protect religious organizations; more specifically, it is up to the state to grant

tax privileges and other privileges to religious organizations; and is to provide financial, material, and other aid to religious organization in the restoration, maintenance, and protection of buildings and objects which are monuments of history and culture, and also in providing instruction in general education subjects in educational institutions created by religious organizations.³⁵

In comparison with the above rights and privileges granted to religious organizations, religious groups only have the right to worship freely.

The law further divides religious organizations into two additional categories: *localized religious organizations* and *centralized religious organizations*.

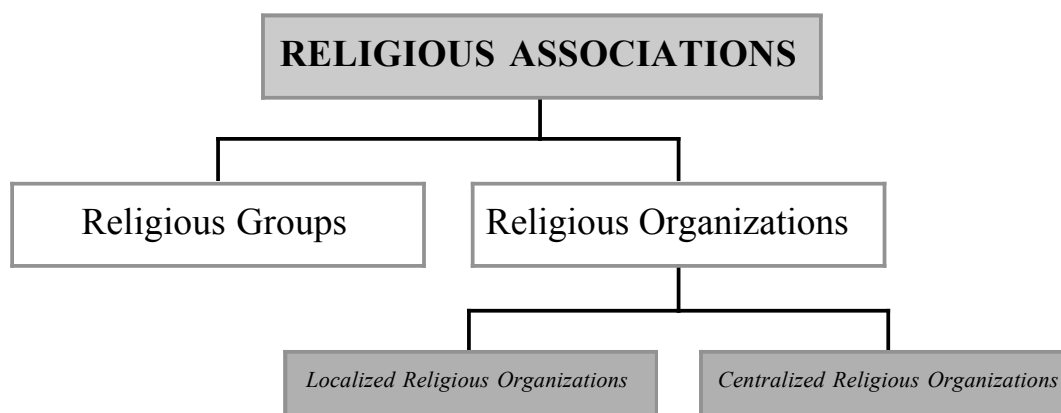


Figure 3.2 Sub-hierarchy of Religious Organizations in Russia

³³ See 1997 Law, Articles 17, 18, 19.

³⁴ See 1997 Law, Article 20.

³⁵ The law is purposely vague on the meaning of “other privileges,” leaving the door open for religious groups to receive state funding. See 1997 Law, Article 4.3.

The key distinguishing factor between local and centralized religious organizations is the amount of time they have been active in the Russian Federation. A localized religious organization must meet the requirement of being active and registered for fifteen consecutive years in the territory of the Russian Federation, consist of ten or more Russian citizens who are at least eighteen years old and permanently reside in one locality, urban, or rural settlement.³⁶ Centralized religious organizations, by contrast, must encompass at least three local religious organizations and have “been active on the territory of the Russian Federation on a legal basis for no fewer than 50 years.”³⁷ Thus, at the time of application for state registration in 1997 a centralized religious organization must have been legally and consistently registered with the state since 1947 and a localized religious organization since 1982.

In the implementation of this law, it is comparatively easier for hierarchical religious organizations like the Russian Orthodox Church to be classified as centralized, and more difficult for diverse Protestant denominations or other less hierarchical religious communities such as Judaism or Islam to meet the criteria.³⁸ Even religious organizations such as the Catholic Church, which are more hierarchical and theoretically could meet the criteria of a centralized religious organization, are still faced with the grim reality that in 1947 only one religious organization was both active and legally registered in the Soviet Union—the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁹

³⁶ See, 1997 Law, Article 8.3.

³⁷ See 1997 Law, Articles 8.4, 8.5.

³⁸ Other traditional religious communities of Russia, such as Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists, were “illegal” after 1917 and before 1905. And while they were “legal” briefly between 1905 and 1917, they were not “centralized.”

³⁹ In the post-war period Stalin relaxed some of the pressure on the Orthodox Christians and allowed several churches to reopen. There were limits, however, to Stalin’s tolerance. Religious activities were confined to worship services and the training of new priests, Church leaders were expected to remain “loyal” to the Party, and the KGB openly interfered in the internal workings of the Church. Some have argued that by the time Gorbachev came to power, over half of all Orthodox priests were on the KGB payroll. On the link between Orthodox and the KGB, see Armes (1994). On the Orthodox Church during communism, see Ware (1997: 155-157).

Moreover, meeting the 1982 threshold for registration in the Russian territory limits acceptable organizations to the “traditional” religions mentioned in the preamble of the law (Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and some Christians) as eligible for “local” status.

The second threshold to qualify as a local religious organization proves to be a significant challenge for many religious groups. In 1982 only a handful of Baptist congregations and two of the 160 Roman Catholic parishes were registered and fully functioning under the communist regime.⁴⁰ This is not to say that religious groups did not exist or were not active across the Soviet Union. Indeed, many mosques, synagogues and churches were open, but they were largely functioning underground. Therefore, the fifteen-year requirement presents a sizeable hurdle, because very few religious organizations were legally and visibly open for business during the Soviet period. Religious organizations that do not meet these requirements are then classified as religious groups, until they can show a fifteen-year presence in the Russian Federation.

The rights and privileges of localized and centralized religious organizations vary along several dimensions. First, localized religious organizations must individually register annually with the state, while centralized religious organizations may submit one registration application on behalf of their parishes. A second difference is that only centralized religions are allowed to use the word “Russian” (in any of its forms) in the title of their religious organization.⁴¹ In practice, this leaves only the Russian Orthodox Church eligible for such a national honor.

The honors of the Orthodox Church extend far beyond the use of titles to the provision of direct government subsidies. For example, the preamble of the law notes Orthodoxy’s special role in Russia’s culture and history, and later goes on to promise

⁴⁰ Witte (1999: 14-15); Uzzel (1998: 17-19).

⁴¹ Witte (1999: 14).

subsidies for the “restoration, maintenance, and protection of buildings and objects which are monuments of history and culture.”⁴² As T. Jeremy Gunn explains, the “1997 Law provides a litany of benefits and privileges that are available to the favored religious organizations, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, but that are denied to religious groups that did not operate in Russia under the Communist regime.”⁴³ It is far from a coincidence that the Russian Orthodox Church is the primary beneficiary of restoration subsidies for cultural monuments and buildings.⁴⁴

Implications of the Laws

Since the Gorbachev period, Russia’s liberalization of religious policy has come full circle. What began with the optimistic reforms of *perestroika* and *glasnost* that allowed greater religious freedom came to a crashing halt with the 1997 law *On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association*. The implications of the 1997 Law are clear: a hierarchy of religions has been created with obvious winners and losers. Orthodoxy enjoys a privileged status at the top as a centralized religious organization similar to its pre-revolutionary position as the center of Russian religious life with full legal protection and special state benefits. The second tier includes localized religious organizations, including Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and some Christian denominations that also are considered to have “traditional” status in Russia; these religions also have full legal protection, but are limited recipients of state benefits. However, because of the fifteen-consecutive-year requirement to qualify as a localized religious organization, there is room for unequal implementation of the law and thus protection of different religious communities across the country. The third and bottom tier

⁴² 1997 Law, Articles 4.3, 22.1.

⁴³ Gunn (1999: 246).

⁴⁴ For more on subsidies given to the Orthodox Church, see Chapter 5, “The Political Economy of Religious Revival.”

includes all other religious groups with no “traditional” or historic ties in Russia; these groups “receive only a pro forma guarantee of freedom of worship and liberty of conscience.”⁴⁵ As Figure 3.3 below illustrates, this hierarchy of religions and guidelines for religious expression created by the 1997 Law directly challenges notions of secularism and the equality of all confessions guaranteed by the 1993 constitution.



Figure 3.3 A Hierarchy of Religions in Russia

The inconsistencies and ambiguities of these policies are best seen at the local level, where it is up to local bureaucrats to interpret and implement the 1997 Law based on its own religious landscape. For instance, local bureaucrats have the leeway to determine whether a group has “historic” roots in the region, whether its liturgical texts are “authentic,” and whether its leaders are “competent.” This can be highly problematic, because “many regional administrations conclude that they can act

⁴⁵ Witte (1999: 12).

arbitrarily and with impunity in dealing with religious minorities and newer religious organizations.”⁴⁶ Moreover, “every bureaucrat at any level can decide the fate of a religious organisation ‘according to his understanding.’”⁴⁷ Thus, while the Russian central state has set guidelines for religious expression, it is at the local state where religion and ritual are regulated. In the next section the discussion turns to how a similar pattern of ambiguous central policies has also created a localized game in China.

Chinese religious reform in the 1980s

Chinese religious policy during the post-Mao period has followed a trajectory similar to that of Russia with central liberalizing reforms that depend on local implementation. Much like Gorbachev’s liberalizing policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Deng Xiaoping’s policies of opening and reform provided the institutional groundwork for the relaxation of religious policy. The cornerstone of these changes began with the 1982 Constitution which marked a major shift in religious policies from the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and the total ban on religious activities by deemphasizing class struggle and calling on all citizens (including non-Party groups) to work together toward the larger goal of modernization, domestic stability, and economic liberalization. The constitution not only lays out the rights and duties of citizens, but also safeguards religious beliefs (and the freedom not to believe) as well as guarantees legal protection for “normal” religious organizations. Article 36 of the Constitution states,

Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief.

⁴⁶ Homer and Uzzell (1999: 285); Knox (2005) makes a similar argument.

⁴⁷ Taken from a speech for the book launch of the *Encyclopedia of Religious Life in Russia Today*, at the Carnegie Center, Moscow. Available at: <http://www.starlightsite.co.uk/keston/encyclo/knorretranslation.html> [last accessed March 01, 2005].

No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion.

The state protects *normal* religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state.

Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.⁴⁸

Although the protection of religious beliefs was previously included in the 1954 and 1957 constitutions, before the late 1970s religious freedoms were largely ignored. Religious adherents were commonly branded as anti-revolutionary, rightists, or puppets of imperialists and subsequently sent for re-education or jailed. In more extreme cases, religious personnel were executed. The 1982 Constitution and the consolidation of power by Deng, however, marks a noticeable shift where religious freedoms were both institutionally protected and enforced by the Party.

Although the 1982 Constitution affirms the protection of religious beliefs it fails to explain what constitutes a “normal” (正常) religious organization or activity.⁴⁹ In fact, no official documents pertaining to religion in China attempt to define what is a normal or abnormal religious organization or activity. Ostensibly, normal activities are those that are under state management.

In spite of this ambiguity the Party Central Committee issued a directive in 1982 on religious policy: *Document 19: The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period*.⁵⁰ This document

⁴⁸ On the importance of the Chinese constitution protecting religious freedom, see MacInnis (1989); Liu (1996). The Chinese constitution is available on the Chinese Legislative Information Website of the Information Centre of Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council of the P.R. China, available at: <http://www.chinalaw.gov.cn>, [last accessed April 8, 2008]. *Emphasis added*.

⁴⁹ 正常 (*zhengchang*) is most often translated into English as “normal,” but may also be read as “orthodox.”

⁵⁰ "Zhonggong Zhangyang Guanyu Woguo Shehui Zhuyo Shiqi Zongjiao Wenti De Jiben Zhengce" [Document 19, The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's

functions less as a law detailing definitive policies—in fact there is no “religious law” in China—and more as an internal circular of the new philosophy of state-religious relations in China. The document begins much like Gorbachev’s 1990 Law, by recognizing the tenuous relationship between religion and politics in China, and stating that past treatment of religious groups, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, requires a shift in thinking.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, there have been many twists and turns in the Party's work with regard to the religious question. ... [T]he antirevolutionary Lin Biao-Jiang Qing clique... forcibly forbade normal religious activities by the mass of religious believers. They treated patriotic religious personages, as well as the mass of ordinary religious believers, as “targets for dictatorship,” and fabricated a host of wrongs and injustices which they pinned upon these religious personages. They even misinterpreted some customs and practices of the ethnic minorities religious superstitions, which they forcibly prohibited. In some places, they even repressed the mass of religious believers, and destroyed ethnic unity. They used violent measures against religion which forced religious movements underground....⁵¹

The call for new guiding principles toward religious groups in Document 19 maintains that Marxist theory is correct and that religion will eventually die out; however, when religious beliefs are driven underground (as during the Cultural Revolution) they will grow stronger, create martyrs and become more difficult to control.⁵² The first major theme of the liberalizing circular is familiar to the previous chapter—religion should serve the state.⁵³ Document 19 declares that

Socialist Period]. Reprinted in *Feiqing Yuebao* 10 (April 1983). An electronic version of Document 19 is provided by the State Administration of Religious Affairs, available at: <http://www.sara.gov.cn/GB//zcfg/zc/75352506-2bd0-11da-8858-93180af1bb1a.html>, [last accessed April 14, 2008]. A translation of Document 19 is reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33 (March-April 2000): 17-43.

⁵¹ Document 19, section 3.

⁵² On the mistakes of managing religious groups in communist countries around the world, see Zhong (1998).

⁵³ Liu Peng (1996) suggests that the “policy of religious freedom is based on the realistic and pragmatic consideration that religion can serve the political goals of the Party and state, rather than any awareness of theism and a religious view of values.”

In this new historical period, the Party's and government's basic task in its religious work will be to firmly implement and carry out its policy of freedom of religious belief; to consolidate and expand the patriotic political alliance in each ethnic religious group; to strengthen education in patriotism and socialism among them, and to bring into play position elements among them in order to build a modern and powerful socialist state and complete the great task of unifying the country. ...[O]ur policy and freedom of religious belief lies in our desire to unite the mass of believers and nonbelievers and enable them to center all of their will and strength on the common goal of building a modernized, powerful socialist state.⁵⁴

In order to harness religion for the development of the socialist state, much like the 1997 Russian federal law which sets up a hierarchy of religious confessions, Document 19 also identifies normal religious activity as involving one of the five major religions with a long history in China: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism.⁵⁵ Groups operating outside of these five religions have no legal protection and are considered illegal.

Religion also serves the state by encouraging national unity. For instance, Document 19 calls developing model leaders from each of the five religions who will love their motherland and support the socialist path.⁵⁶ This goal is to be accomplished first through the restoration and administration of churches, temples and other religious buildings. The document states that religious sites of cultural and historic value should be restored and returned to religious communities. However, the restoration of religious sites should be dictated by their cultural value and local

⁵⁴ Document 19, section 3, 4.

⁵⁵ Document 19, section 3 identifies the long history of only five religious groups: Buddhism (dating over 2000 years in China), Taoism (a 1700 year history), Islam (1300 years), and Catholicism and Protestantism (arriving following the Opium Wars 1834–1843 and 1856–1860). It is also important to note that legitimate or normal Catholicism is considered to be completely autonomous from the authority of the Pope and Vatican. Recent accounts, however, suggest that the two Catholic churches of China are rapidly moving closer together. The Vatican last year revealed that it had secretly approved 49 of 79 government-sanctioned bishops (Weisman 2005). On the history and conflict of the Catholic Church in China, see Weist (2004) and Madsen (2004).

⁵⁶ According to Document 19, section 5, "We must foster a large group of model figures, who love their motherland, accept the leadership of the Party and the government, firmly support the socialist path, and safeguard national and ethnic unity; are knowledgeable about religion and capable of working with the religion-practicing mass."

demand, that is to say, “major temples and churches famous for their scenic beauty...[and] important historic value” and only in locations where there are still believers.⁵⁷ Moreover, the document warns of “indiscriminate building and repairing of temples in rural villages,” and emphasizes the importance of restoring temples in mid-size cities, presumably where state organs are more able to monitor religious activities.⁵⁸ Funding for the restoration and maintenance of religious sites is specifically limited to religious organizations and believers in the form of alms and donations received, and income derived from house and property rentals of religious buildings. Religious organizations may not solicit funds from foreign church organizations.⁵⁹

Another means to cultivate national unity is through the training of religious personnel. Document 19 states that seminaries are required to only admit “upright, patriotic young people” who will loyally implement the Party’s religious policy and cultivate “young religious personnel, who, in terms of politics, fervently love their homeland and support the Party’s leadership and the socialist system, and who possess sufficient religious knowledge.”⁶⁰

Finally, Document 19 stresses that religion can help cultivate national unity and training patriots from the five official religious groups through the reinstatement of state-sponsored religious patriotic organizations. Document 19 announces that Religious Patriotic Associations (RPA), which had been disbanded since the Cultural

⁵⁷ Document 19, section 6.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ According to Document 19, section 7 and section 11, foreign believers in China may personally give donations or offerings; however, large contributions must not come from foreign churches. Moreover, if a foreign believer wishes to donate a sizable private contribution to temples or churches within China, “permission must be sought from the provincial, urban, or autonomous-area governments or from the central government responsible for these matters before any religious body can accept them on its own, even though it can be established that the donor acts purely out of religious fervor with no strings attached” (Document 19, section 11).

⁶⁰ Document 19, section 9.

Revolution, were to be reorganized for each of the five religions to ensure that religious leaders worked with the larger goals of the Party-state.⁶¹ These associations are not independent of the government, but considered a branch of the government.⁶² For instance, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, or National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TSPM), is the legal Christian church of China. The TSPM is a non-denominational organization founded on the following principles: self-governance, self-support (i.e., financial independence from foreigners), and self-propagation (i.e., indigenous missionary work). Likewise, there is a Buddhist Patriotic Association of China that oversees the Buddhists, and the Catholic Patriotic Association that oversees Catholics. The nominally autonomous “patriotic” associations serve as central bureaucratic structures that reach down to the village level and have the task of keeping each of the five religious groups in line, and are designed to serve as conduits between religious groups, the Party, and the state. The associations are hierarchically organized and the Party must approve its leaders. The heads of the RPAs are not required to be believers and can be Party members (i.e., mandatory atheists). Usually associations are made up of both believers and non-believers, but among the leadership ultimate loyalty rests with the Party. As the founder and first president of the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement Y.T. Wu explains in the quotation below, the relationship between the RPAs and the Party are quite close.

⁶¹ RPA’s were originally established in the 1950s to assist the government in implementing religious policy and were disbanded during the Cultural Revolution. They are organized on the national, provincial, municipal and prefectural level to control various religious organizations within the regions.

⁶² Document 19 permits the reorganization of eight national patriotic organizations: The Chinese Buddhist Association (中国佛教协会), The Chinese Taoist Association (中国道教协会), The Chinese Islamic Association (中国伊斯兰教协会), The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (中国天主教爱国会), The Chinese Catholic Religious Affairs Committee (中国天主教教务委员会), The Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference (中国天主教主教团), the Chinese Protestant “Three-Self” Patriotic Movement (中国基督教“三自”爱国运动委员会), and the Chinese Christian Council (中国基督教协会).

Without the Communist Party there would not have been the Three-Self Movement of the Christian Church, nor the new life of the church, and we Christians would not have received education in socialism and the opportunity to change our political standpoint and become one with the people as we march happily on the road to socialism.... I love the Communist Party.... For over a hundred years imperialism had been using the Christian church to advance its aggressive designs.... And so for now the Three-Self Movement has carried on this work of cleansing the church, but this was a work which could not have been carried on without the support and direction of the party.⁶³

The central charge of religious patriotic organizations, like the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement, is to implement the Party's religious policy, organize "normal" religious activities, and act as a compass to direct every element of the Chinese Church.⁶⁴ According to Document 19,

[T]he basic task of these patriotic religious organizations is to assist the Party and the government to implement the policy of freedom of religious belief, to help the broad mass of religious believers and persons in religious circles to continually raise their patriotic and socialist consciousness, to represent the lawful rights and interests of religious circles, to organize normal religious activities, and to manage religious affairs well. All patriotic religious organizations should follow the Party's and government's leadership.⁶⁵

The patriotic associations additionally control the allocation of religious groups' resources and personnel. For instance, it is the patriotic association that has the final authority within a religious group for opening a new religious building. The patriotic association also determines the distribution of religious personnel. A recent graduate from seminary will be sent to a church and given a position based on the RPA's needs. Regardless of training, seminary graduates can be posted as a ministers, preachers (who have limited capabilities in the church), or teachers (in charge of bible studies), or bureaucrats for the TSPM.⁶⁶ The Patriotic Associations, furthermore, are

⁶³ Wu (1958).

⁶⁴ Document 19, section 7.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Interview with former TSPM employee, May 2007, Shanghai.

to act as intermediaries between their religious communities and other world religions. Again, we can observe the fears of foreign interference outlined in the previous chapter being implemented into policy. Document 19 allows for mutual exchange and friendly visits with foreign religious persons; however, all contact with foreign religious groups

must firmly adhere to the principle of an independent, self-governing church, and resolutely resist the designs of all reactionary religious forces from abroad who desire to once again gain control over religions in our country. They [the Patriotic Associations] must determinedly refuse any meddling or interfering in Chinese religious affairs by foreign churches or religious personages, nor must they permit any foreign religious organization to use any means to enter our country for missionary work or to secretly introduce and distribute religious literature on a large scale.⁶⁷

Ambiguity of Document 19

Document 19 outlines the basic framework for religious policy within a socialist framework; however, the new policy reads more as a philosophical approach toward religion than a guideline for implementing religious reforms. Themes such as the ultimate demise of religion are contrasted with the importance of protecting normal religious activity and the importance of creating patriotic religious believers who will play a positive role in the development and unity of China. Document 19 presents religious policy with broad strokes and was a signal to local cadres that they would have to rehabilitate outcast religious professionals, restore places of worship and legitimize normal religion. The document, however, pays little attention to the implementation of these new sweeping changes.

Some of the more problematic areas of the document include the five-fold institutionalization of normal religions; this institutionalization is particularly

⁶⁷ Document 19, section 11.

problematic because much of the current religious revival and popular religious practices in China do not fall neatly into one category of religion, but rather blend elements such as popular religion with Taoism or folk culture with Christianity.⁶⁸ In fact, recent surveys estimate that the most significant religious revival in China has been of popular and folk religion; yet, the constitution and document make no mention or protection of these syncretic religious practices.⁶⁹ Instead, the new policy only calls for the protection of “normal” religious activities, but nowhere in the document are normal religious practices defined. Thus, at the local level it can be difficult for officials and bureaucrats to enforce central policies and to distinguish between legitimate religious activity and “feudal superstitions.”⁷⁰

A second notable absence from the new religious policy is the particulars on the registration of religious communities and property. Document 19 only alludes to local bureaucratic institutions, such as the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB),⁷¹ the United Front Work Department (UFWD), and local branches of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) to help register and oversee religious groups. Yet, there is no mention in the policy of how to treat religious groups that do not fit into the five-fold category of religion or of groups that refuse to register with the state, such as the Protestant house church movement or the underground Catholic Church loyal to the Vatican. Instead, Document 19 declares the state should crackdown on “all criminal and antirevolutionary activities which hide behind the façade of religion, which includes all superstitious practices which fall outside the scope of religion,” and that religious

⁶⁸ See, for example, Dean (1989, 1993); Pas (1989).

⁶⁹ A state-funded survey conducted by professors Tong Shijun of East China Normal University and Liu Zhongyu of Shanghai Academy of Social Science, found that over 40 percent of the 300 million religious adherents in China practice some form of popular or folk religion. Interview with Liu Zhongyu, April 2007, Shanghai.

⁷⁰ Seymour and Wehrli (1994: 9).

⁷¹ The central Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) has been renamed as the State Administration for Religious Activities (SARA), whereas the provincial offices remain named the RAB.

activities involving secret societies, sorcerers, witches, phrenology, fortune telling, and geomancy (*fengshui*) will be “severely punished according to the law.”⁷² The problem, however, is that the criteria determining whether a religious group crosses one of these boundaries remains unspecified.

A final problem is that although the new religious policy stresses the need to reopen places of worship, it offers no guidelines for the return of religious property or how local governments should address religious buildings that were destroyed or converted for other uses during the Cultural Revolution. For instance, it is unclear whether functioning hospitals and schools established by missionaries should be returned to religious authorities or remain under the control of their current work units (单位). Also uncertain is the fate of religious relics that wound up in museums, or temple lakes and grounds that were “collectivized” into fishponds and farms. Local officials are additionally given no guidelines in addressing religious property that was confiscated after 1949 and presently houses military and other government personnel. Given this lack of detail in Document 19, the reforms that followed were haphazardly implemented and led to considerable confusion and conflict at the local level.

Making religion work for the state

Some scholars argue that shortly after the introduction of Document 19, the central government was aware of these difficulties in implementation at the local level and began looking for ways to clarify Document 19. In a survey conducted in 1985 by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, it was clear that local bureaucracies needed more guidance than simply the spirit of Document 19 to protect religious freedom and activities.⁷³ The survey, which focused

⁷² Document 19, section 10.

⁷³ “Zhongyang bangongting diaocha zu guanyu luoshi dang de zongjiao zhengce yi youguan wenti de diaocha baogao,” [Survey Report Concerning the Implementation of the Party’s Policies and Religion

primarily on the Buddhist and Taoist revival, found that “some local authorities show very little conscientiousness where the returning of building properties is concerned, and use various pretexts to withhold some of this property for long-term use by their employees and family members.”⁷⁴ A related matter of contention discovered by the survey was competing local bureaucracies vying for influence and control over newly opened religious sites. Document 19 failed to define the duties and responsibilities of different local departments; therefore, departments in charge of the management of cultural relics, the management of parks and gardens, and tourism competed with the RAB for influence over the planning and reconstruction of religious sites that were of historic and cultural value.⁷⁵ Religious groups desired to return these sites to their pre-1949 religious glory, while other government departments had larger designs on developing the tourism industry. The survey suggested a middle ground should be established between the competing departments and religious interests.

Cultural relics, religious, and parks-and-gardens departments and their affiliated units must actively support and assist tourist departments in their work and promote the development of the tourist industry. Tourist departments should show conscientious concern and support for the construction of scenic and historic sites and, while developing tourism, pay attention to the actual difficulties of cultural relics, religious, and parks-and-gardens departments and give consideration to their real interests.⁷⁶

The final challenges of managing religious groups according to the survey lie in religious groups themselves. The survey found a “paucity and poor quality of

and Relevant Issues (December 10, 1985)], examined and approved by the Committee on Legal Work of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. Reprinted in *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo falu quan shu* (The Complete laws and regulations of the People’s Republic of China) vol. 10: Civil Law (continued), in *Zhongguo minzhu fazhi chubanshe* (Beijing: China Democratic Legal System Printing House, 1994) pp. 1099-1101. A translation of the survey report is reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 35-45. Translated by Ted Wang.

⁷⁴ Survey Report Concerning the Implementation of the Party’s Policies and Religion and Relevant Issues (December 10, 1985), p. 37.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 42.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

monks and priests” in key monasteries and temples across China.⁷⁷ Therefore, religious communities should attempt to attract a “fewer but better” quality of young people who are politically vetted. In other words, a core priority is locating priests and monks who “politically love their country and support the Party’s leadership and the socialist system and who are at the same time well-versed in religious learning and knowledge.”⁷⁸ Considering the decade-long campaigns banning religious activity, and the concomitantly few qualified religious personnel who were willing and able to step-in and manage temples and churches in the 1980s, the finding concerning the “paucity and poor quality” of religious personnel is far from unexpected. However, what is surprising is the reason the investigators of the survey gave for concern over the poor quality of monks and priests—the survey revealed that local officials and religious organizations had improperly accepted foreign funds to set up monasteries, temples and churches across China. In other words, local actors had unwittingly invited foreign influence into China.

In the same year as the 1985 survey, the Ministry of Public Security (PSB) released a limited-circulation book alerting public security organs to an increase in reactionary sects and societies across China.⁷⁹ Much like Russia’s experience of a diverse religious revival in the early 1990s following liberalizing religious legislation, the PSB manuscript reported that the liberalizing policies of the Opening and Reform period had allowed for a dramatic reemergence of reactionary sects and secret societies that were masquerading as legitimate religious groups.⁸⁰ This concern of syncretic sects and secret societies is not surprising, considering China’s long history

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 39

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 40.

⁷⁹ *Fandong Hui-Dao-Men jianjie* [An Introduction to the Reactionary Sects and Societies], No. 1 Bureau of the Ministry of Public Security, Beijing: Qunzhong Chubanshe, 1985, reprinted in *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 21 (Fall 1988-Summer 1989): 49-84.

⁸⁰ On the danger of folk religions transforming into “cults,” see Luo (1997).

of quasi-religious sects and secret societies encouraging rebellion, such as the Yellow Turban movement of the Eastern Han Dynasty, and the White Lotus and the Taiping rebellions in the late Qing dynasty. The PSB manuscript warned that since the enactment of greater religious freedoms, there has been a significant increase in the spread of reactionary sects and secret societies across the country, which might lead to political uprisings and challenge the legitimacy of the Party. In some areas of China, entire villages have opted out of the socialist dream and reverted to their pre-1949 syncretic loyalties. For instance,

In every region and province of China with the exception of Tibet, acts of disruption by the reactionary sects and societies have occurred—most prominently in the provinces of Henan, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Yunan. The vast majority of these activities have taken place in the countryside, and particularly in remote mountainous areas along the borders between different counties or provinces.⁸¹

The manuscript also warned that quasi-religious groups “flaunt the banner of freedom of religious belief” and are “falsely proclaiming themselves to be adherents of the ‘Buddhist religion,’ or of the ‘Confucius religion.’”⁸² Moreover, secret societies and quasi-religious groups “fabricate rumors, attack the party and the socialist system, and proclaim themselves to be gods in the vain hope of bringing about a change of dynasty.”⁸³ The manuscript goes into great detail about the risks associated with the spread of syncretic sects and the danger of reemerging secret societies in China. For instance, in Jilin province the leader of one secret society declared himself emperor and then swindled followers out of 8,500 Yuan, six watches, and one bicycle on the pretext that he was planning to overthrow the People’s Republic of China.⁸⁴ In Sichuan, the sect *Da Dao Hui* (Big Sword Society) publicly screamed: “First we’ll kill

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p. 56.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 61.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 63

the party, then we'll kill the Youth League, and then we'll kill every single cadre in the brigade and in the commune!"⁸⁵ In Yunnan, the Taoist sect *Yi Guan Dao* (Way of Unity) was found to have extensive networks extending to "over six different regions, prefectures, and municipalities—embracing in all 78 communes and six labor reform units, and encompassing a total of 1,045 active members," striking fear into the Party that they would soon be replaced.⁸⁶

The 1980s-90s: Revising Document 19

Following the release of the 1985 survey and the internal PSB book warning of the rampant activities of reactionary sects and societies, a whirlwind of documents were circulated from various central ministries with the common purpose of better managing the religious revival. By this time it was clear that local cadres did not know quite what to make of the central directive or how religion should be used to serve the state.⁸⁷

By the late 1980s, China's religious policy began to respond to recent events in the Communist neighborhood. Of particular concern was growing the Solidarity Movement in Poland, which united workers, teachers and intellectuals with the Catholic Church.⁸⁸ Images of the Solidarity Movement marching behind anti-

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

⁸⁷ Some of these documents include: *Zhong Ban Fa 16* or *Document 16*, from the Ministry of Education, which details how religion was to be treated in schools in minority areas; *Document 60* released by the Religious Affairs Office of the State Council, which contains information concerning mainly Han-area Buddhist and Taoist Monasteries and their reconstruction; *Zhong Ban Fa 68* or *Document 68*, a combined document from eight ministries to distinguish between religion and feudal superstition; and 5-points Document emphasizing the need for "patriotism" in religion. For a discussion of these directives, see Seymour and Wehrli (1994). For a Chinese-perspective on how to "manage" religious groups and interpret central policies, see Yu (1994).

⁸⁸ A second event may also have resonated with Beijing elites, the 1989 "Revolution of the Candles" in East Germany, which began as small candle-lit demonstrations around the Leipzig Nikolai Church and escalated into mass gatherings of 300,000 protestors over several weeks. On the Solidarity Movement and the Revolution of the Candles, see Ramet (1992); Tischner (1982); Nielsen (1991).

communist banners and pictures of Pope John Paul II were not lost on the Chinese Communist Party. In 1989, a circular was released from the Central Office of the Communist Party's Central Committee calling for greater control over the Catholic Church in China. *Document 3: A Circular on Stepping Up Control over the Catholic Church to Meet the New Situation* (released in February 1989)⁸⁹ claims that the Vatican is trying to gain control over the independent Chinese Catholic Church and has "made use of its international status and the faith that the clergy show toward the Pope to send agents into China."⁹⁰ The document goes on to explain that the Vatican "has also used other clandestine means to appoint bishops secretly and has conspired to stir up underground groups"; therefore, the Party must firmly implement the policy of independence and autonomy of the Chinese Catholic Church and intensify the ideological education of the clergy.⁹¹

The fears of foreign influence and the potential role for religion of challenging the authority of the Party and unity of the nation were not alleviated. In the wake of the 1989 student democracy movement, central party documents began to reflect the leadership's escalating concern with religion as a force splitting the nation. This shift is not surprising considering the recent collapse of the Soviet Union and the view that Communist states in Eastern Europe had failed to control religion. Although the 1989 student movement had no ties to religious communities, the protests and subsequent crackdown suggested to the regime that all forms of associational life needed greater supervision. To reflect these concerns and in keeping with the larger goal of rule of law as a mechanism for political stability, *Document 6: A Circular on Some Problems Concerning the Further Improvement of Work on Religion* (released February 1991)

⁸⁹ *Document No. 3: Circular on Stepping Up Control over the Catholic Church to Meet the New Situation* (February 17, 1989) released by the Central Offices of the Communist Party and the State Council, reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 49-55.

⁹⁰ Document 3, p. 50.

⁹¹ Document 3, p. 50-51.

emphasizes that religion must not be used by external forces to divide the nation.⁹² To help ensure that “hostile forces from abroad” would not infiltrate China, Document 6 tightens and clarifies the policies for the registration of religious groups, places of worship, and regulations over foreigners.

To ensure greater state supervision of religious groups, two documents were handed down from the State Council in January 1994: *Order No. 144: Regulations on the Supervision of the Religious Activities of Foreigners in China* and *Order No. 145: Regulations Regarding the Management of Place of Religious Activities*.⁹³ These documents attempt to standardize the management of religious venues of worship and detail the limitation of foreign involvement into the religious affairs of China. Order No. 145 explains religious groups must meet a series of registration criteria, including being one of the five major religions and having a fixed place of worship; having a professional clergy and a legal (domestic) source for funding.⁹⁴ Groups that do not satisfy any one of these criteria are denied registration and legal protection, and therefore considered illegal. Shortly after these two documents were released, the State Council circulated yet another document outlining the registration procedures for religious buildings: *Registration Procedures for Venues for Religious Activities (May 1994)*.⁹⁵ The new registration procedures state that the following conditions must be met to establish a religious venue and allow for religious activity, including: a fixed name, citizens who are religious believers and regularly participate, a management

⁹² Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council, Document 6 - A Circular on Some Problems Concerning the Further Improvement of Work on Religion (February 5, 1991), reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 56-63.

⁹³ In January 1994 the State Council released an Order No. 144: Regulations on the Supervision of the Religious Activities of Foreigners in China, and Order No. 145: Regulation Regarding the Management of Place of Religious Activities, reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 64-68.

⁹⁴ Spiegel (1997).

⁹⁵ The State Council, Registration Procedures for Venues for Religious Activities (released May 1, 1994), reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 69-70.

committee of religious adherents, a state-approved professional clergy, and a legal source of income.⁹⁶ Like Russia, the registration process is on an annual basis and is fairly straightforward; however, it requires an “opinion” be submitted by the village (or township) People’s Government or from the city neighborhood committee.⁹⁷ The document does not explain what the “opinion” of the local People’s Government should contain; however, it is fair to say that local officials must weigh in on the legality of the religious venue and patriotic nature of the religious personnel.

By the mid-1990s, reports began to reach Beijing of local governments’ inconsistent registration or suppression of different religious communities. This reinforced the opinion that the center needed to further clarify central policies dealing with how local officials should monitor and regulate religious groups. Due in part to the inconsistency in the local registration of religious venues, the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council circulated another document to local officials on the rules for the inspection of religious sites.⁹⁸ This document declares that in order to protect the legal right of places of religious activity and to strengthen management of religious venues, the local departments responsible for the registration must also conduct annual inspections. The inspections are evaluated on a “pass” or “fail” basis. The main criteria for inspection include, obedience to national policies, no connections with foreign religious groups, and transparent financial practices.⁹⁹ Religious venues that fail the inspection are given a grace period to rectify any errors; yet, if a religious group is unable to rectify the errors or refuses any aspect of the inspection it will be ordered to cease all religious activities.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ 1994 Registration Procedures for Venues for Religious Activities, Article 2.

⁹⁷ 1994 Registration Procedures for Venues for Religious Activities, Article 3.

⁹⁸ The Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council, Method for the Annual Inspection of Places of Religious Activity (released July 29, 1996); reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 71-74.

⁹⁹ 1996 Method for the Annual Inspection of Places of Religious Activity, Articles 8-10.

¹⁰⁰ 1996 Method for the Annual Inspection of Places of Religious Activity, Article 14.

It is fair to say that since the introduction of the new religious policy with Document 19 in 1982 through the mid-1990s, the various branches in the Chinese government, from the State Association of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education to the State Council, attempted to create greater bureaucratic accountability for religious groups and activities and more detailed policies that could be standardized down to the local level. In spite of the ambiguous policies, this was a liberalizing period for religious policy and signaled an important break from the past. By the end of the decade, however, there was a noticeable and negative shift in central directives on religious freedom. This downward turn coincides with the rise of Falun gong. However, leading up to the crackdown on the Falun gong spiritual movement, it is striking to note the parallel trajectories of religious liberalization and subsequent de-liberalization in Russia and China. Both regimes introduced central policies that broke from the past and allowed for the development of religious associational life. Yet, as it became apparent that the religious landscape was becoming increasingly plural, central policies were tightened to limit legal religious activities and acceptable religious groups.

The Rise and Fall of Falun gong

By the end of the 1990s it was clear that the greater latitude toward religion by the Party and the series of documents that followed had created space for more open religious expression in China. This liberalization of policies had allowed for not only a religious revival, but also the return of traditional Chinese *qigong* groups (气功).¹⁰¹ In Chinese, *qi* literally means “energy” or “cosmic breath” and *gong* translates to “skill”; while there is no Western equivalent to *qigong*, it most closely resembles New

¹⁰¹ For a fascinating discussion of the origins, rise and fall of the *qigong* movement in China, Palmer (2007); Chen (2003; 1995).

Age movements where practitioners combine breathing exercises, meditation and mysticism to improve spiritual and physical well-being.¹⁰²

In the 1980s and 90s *qigong* grew in popularity across all strata of society—from homemakers to teachers to high-ranking cadres—with its promise of healing powers and a new ethical code. The *qigong* movement has a long history in China, dating back to medical texts in the Jin Dynasty (265-317 CE). In modern history its importance can be traced to the 1950s when *qigong* was championed by the Communist Party as a more holistic and Chinese alternative to Western medicine.¹⁰³ In the opening and reform period *qigong* fever (气功热) spread as rapidly as the religious revival encompassing between 60-200 million practitioners.¹⁰⁴ Somewhat more surprising is that in spite of the supernatural qualities associated with its practices, such as the ability to cure illnesses or to move objects with one's mind, *qigong* was clearly propagated by the government and reached into the senior ranks of the Party.¹⁰⁵ For instance, in 1986 the government supported the establishment of the nationwide *Qigong* Chinese Research Association, with the hope that mass practice of *qigong* among citizens would lessen the demands on an already overburdened healthcare system.¹⁰⁶ *Qigong* fever, however, was not universally welcome in all locales.

Reports of local governments criticizing and cracking down on different *qigong* groups and their charismatic masters began to appear in the Chinese press by the end of the nineties. At the center of many of these controversies was the popular

¹⁰² An increasingly popular form of *qigong* in the West is taichi.

¹⁰³ Leung (2002: 767).

¹⁰⁴ See statement made to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China by David Ownby, "Unofficial Religions in China," May 23, 2005, available at <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/052305/Ownby.php>, [last accessed May 6, 2008].

¹⁰⁵ Leung (2002: 772). It is worth mentioning that Falun gong was a registered member of this association in 1992 and that the association sponsored Li Hongzhi (the founder and leader of Falun gong) to give a series of lectures across China. See, Ownby (2003: 306).

¹⁰⁶ Ownby (2003: 304).

qigong group Falun gong or Falun Dafa (法轮功 or 法轮大法) and its founder Li Hongzhi.¹⁰⁷ Falun gong is a quasi-religious movement that began in the early 1990s in northeast China that combines breathing exercises, daily meditation and shadowboxing routines with the teachings of Buddhism and Taoism.¹⁰⁸ The teachings of Falun gong explain that meditation cultivates truth, benevolence and forbearance among followers, and with great discipline one can cultivate supernatural powers and “reach very high realms, enlightening to the true meanings of life, and finding the path of return to their origins and true selves.”¹⁰⁹ The path to enlightenment is attained through the nurturing of the Falun or Dharma wheel, which is purportedly inserted telekinetically by Master Li into the lower abdomen of each practitioner. Through daily practice the Dharma wheel absorbs positive energy from the universe and heals the body from troubling ailments.

The teachings of Falun gong and its path to enlightenment, however, were not universally appreciated, and various media outlets began to question the authenticity of the *qigong* group and its claims.¹¹⁰ Supporters of Falun gong mobilized in response to the criticisms. In 1998, over one thousand practitioners gathered outside of a Beijing television station after a critical report about Falun gong. The following summer, a sit-in was staged in front of the Shandong *Qiliu* Evening News Daily office demanding an apology for an inflammatory report about Li Hongzhi.¹¹¹ The protests

¹⁰⁷ *Falun gong* literally means “Practice of the Law Wheel” and *Falun Dafa* translates as the “Great Way of the Law Wheel.” These names are used interchangeably.

¹⁰⁸ Li Hongzhi, *Zhuan Falun*. The *Zhuan Falun* is the primary text of the Falun gong movement and is available in ten languages for free download at: <http://www.falundafa.org/eng/books.html>, [last assessed May 6, 2008].

¹⁰⁹ Quoted from the Falun gong official website, available at <http://www.falundafa.org/eng/intro.html>, [last assessed May 6, 2008].

¹¹⁰ Criticism of Falun gong in local media spawned over 300 protests in 1998, in Guanxi, Henan, Gansu and Shenzhen; see the *People’s Daily* (oversees edition), “Xinhua Commentary on the Political Nature of Falun gong,” August 2, 1999, p. 1. According to Leung (2002): 763, Falun gong practitioners organized protests in over thirteen cities across China in 1998.

¹¹¹ Xiao (2001: 2-3).

escalated after the publishing of an editorial, entitled “I Do Not Agree with Youth Practicing *Qigong*,” in which a Tianjin University Professor warned Falun gong practitioners of being swindled by “deceitful lies” and parlor tricks.¹¹² This polemic article piqued the Falun gong community and encouraged over 6,000 followers to march on Tianjin’s City Hall, demanding an apology and reprimand of the author. Unsatisfied by the response of the Tianjin government, and perhaps even a bit emboldened by the lack of action taken by the government, Falun gong practitioners escalated their tactics. In April 1999, ten thousand Falun gong enthusiasts sat in silence from sunrise to sunset outside of *Zhongnanhai*—the offices and residential compound of top-ranking Party officials in Beijing. The protestors called for an end to harassment of Falun gong by provincial media and the freedom to practice their form of *qigong* without local government interference or discrimination. This time the government took notice.

The protests in front of *Zhongnanhai* did not achieve their intended goal of greater tolerance for Falun gong. Instead, they signaled to the Party that Falun gong was an organized and efficient group willing to take political risks to achieve its aims. To make matters worse, the mobilization of so many practitioners in front of the politically important *Zhongnanhai* seemed to take the government and public security forces by surprise, fueling fears that Falun gong was more than a *qigong* group, but a secret society with intentions to challenge the Party.¹¹³

Shortly following the silent protests in Beijing the denunciation of Falun gong began. The propaganda machine of the CCP unveiled a swift media campaign defining Falun gong as a cult with a nefarious agenda. An official warning was issued on the front page of the *People’s Daily* forbidding citizens, especially Party members,

¹¹² He (1999); Eckholm (2001).

¹¹³ On the government’s failure to anticipate the Falun gong protests, see Hu (2003); Kipnis (2000); Chen (2003); Shue (2001).

to take part in the beliefs and practices of the cult;¹¹⁴ news reports showed images of Falun gong books and videos being burned and bulldozed; a government documentary about the evils of the cult and how it had disrupted social order, spread fallacies, and deluded people was repeatedly shown on national television; and, finally an order for the arrest of Li Hongzhi was released to all internal public security organs and Interpol.¹¹⁵ Acting as a spokesperson for the Party, Wang Zhaoguo, the head of the United Front Work Department (UFWD), asserted that Falun gong was a profound threat to social stability.

The Falun gong incident is the most important political incident since the “June 4” [Tiananmen Square Massacre] political disturbance in 1989. The generation and spread of Falun gong is a political struggle launched by hostile forces both in and outside the country to contend with our Party.... [T]he Falun Dafa fabricated by Li Hongzhi propagates idealism and theism, negates all scientific truth, and is fundamentally opposed to modern science, to modern civilization, to the basic theories and principles of Marxism, and to the great cause of constructing a socialism with Chinese characteristics.¹¹⁶

The media campaign was quickly followed by legislation banning Falun gong, outlawing heretical sects, and legalizing the suppression of those who took part in cult-like activities.¹¹⁷ The National People’s Congress passed a law suppressing and

¹¹⁴ See for example, *The People’s Daily*, overseas edition, “Circular of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist (CCP) Party on Forbidding Communist Party Members from Practicing Falun Dafa,” July 23, 1999, p. 1; *The People’s Daily*, overseas edition, “Ministry of Personnel Issues Notice Stipulating that State Functionaries May Not Practice Falun Dafa,” July 24, 1999, p. 3

¹¹⁵ Chen (2003): 514-16; Leung (2002): 778-780. See also, *The People’s Daily*, overseas edition, “Regard the Wanted Order Issued for the Suspect of Li Hongzhi,” July 30, 1999, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Wang, Zhaoguo “Notification from Wang Zhaoguo Regarding the Essence of the Central Government Document on Handling the Falun gong Issue,” *The People’s Daily*, overseas edition, July 24, 1999, p. 2, reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 32, no. 5 (September-October 1999): 22-25.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, “Decision of the NPC Standing Committee on Outlawing heretical organization and guarding against and punishing heretical activities (*Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui changwu weiyuanhui guanyu quid xiejiao zushi, fanfan he chengzhi xiejiao huodong de jue ding*) 30 October 1999, which outlawed heretical sects and activities; “The Regulations of the Registration and Management of Mass Organization” which stated that mass organizations, must abide by the policies of the state (Article 4); the “Law of the People’s Republic of China on Assembly, Parades, and Demonstrations,” which forbids mass organizations to assemble without permission or in cities outside their places of residence (Articles 12, 15); The “Regulation for Punishment with Respect to the Administration of Public Security of the People’s Republic of China,” which criminalizes those who

criminalizing heterodox religion (邪教) and “persons who organize or make use of superstitious sects, secret society, or heretical organization or utilize superstition to disrupt the implementation of state laws and administrative rules and regulations, shall be meted a term of penal servitude of not less than three years and no more than seven.”¹¹⁸ The Ministry of Public Security released a notice to all local public security offices and religious bureaus regarding the identification and banning of cults. The notice explained that any organization with the following characteristics shall be identified as a cult (邪教):

- (1) groups that set up illegal organizations in the name of religion or *qigong*;
- (2) groups that defy leaders;
- (3) groups that initiate and spread superstitious and heterodox beliefs;
- (4) groups which utilize various means to excite doubts and deceive the people and recruit and control members by force; and
- (5) groups who incite social disorder and bring injury to citizens.¹¹⁹

At the height of the anti-cult campaign, the Chinese government continued to stress its respect and protection of legal religious activities. However, all religious groups were placed under greater scrutiny.¹²⁰

The propaganda campaign against Falun gong extended far beyond the state and into the legal religious communities. Religious leaders of the five normal religions all released statements against Falun gong, calling it a cult and its members “hoodwinked by the malicious fallacies of Li Hongzhi.”¹²¹ The vice-chairman of the

disturb the order of the government, fabricate or distort facts or incite people to disturb the social order (Article 19); the “Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China,” which charges “ringleaders in the assembling of mobs for the purpose of disturbing public security” (Article 290). These laws are reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 32, no. 5 (September-October 1999): 46-50.

¹¹⁸ Article 300 – The Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China, 1999; reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 32, no. 5 (September-October 1999): 46-50.

¹¹⁹ Notice on Various Issues Regarding Identifying and Banning of Cultic Organizations, The Ministry of Public Security of The People’s Republic of China, (2000) No. 39; reprinted in “Religion and Public Security in China, 1999-2002,” *Chinese Law and Government* 36, no. 2 (2003).

¹²⁰ “Freedom for Religion, No Room for Evil Cults,” *The People’s Daily*, February 20, 2001.

¹²¹ “Chinese Religious Leaders Indignant over Falun gong,” *The People’s Daily*, February 01, 2001.

Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Protestant Churches described Li Hongzhi as “a vulture covered with beautiful feathers, whose ugly body will be exposed to the public if shaken slightly,” and the chairman of the Taoism Association called on all Chinese Taoists “to strongly fight against the cult and try to help more victims of Falun gong return to the right track.”¹²² The official publications from Patriotic Religious Associations all contained anti-Falun gong editorials, denouncing the spiritual groups as a cult, publicly distancing their religious practices from the cult. This was especially apparent among Buddhists and Taoists, who organized public forums in their temples after Falun gong teaches claimed to draw on both of these religious traditions.¹²³

The anti-Falun gong campaign spilled over into other organizational groups; for instance, groups that engaged in *qigong* and traditional meditative practices also became targets of the new policy.¹²⁴ Even groups with no ties to *qigong* or religion felt pressure to censor their activities. In Jilin, Li Hongzhi’s home province, groups of retired women who met each evening along Guilin Avenue to practice the northeastern tradition of *Yangge* folk dancing cancelled their activities for the summer to avoid being associated with Falun gong.¹²⁵ This self-censorship demonstrates the intensity of the crackdown, especially when considering that *Yangge* folk dancing bears no resemblance to the silent and methodic movements of Falun gong. *Yangge* folk dancing is a deafening affair, where women twirling brightly colored fans move their feet quickly to the enthusiastic banging of drums, crashing of cymbals, and shrill sounds of the *suona* trumpet. In Changchun, the Avon Cosmetics and Amway

¹²² “Leaders of Five Major Religious Groups Condemn Falun gong,” *The People’s Daily*, March, 16, 2001.

¹²³ “Forum Opposing Falun gong Cult Held at Sacred Buddhist Sites,” *The People’s Daily*, April 26, 2002.

¹²⁴ Other *qigong* groups that have mystic elements were also banned, including the *Zhonggong*, *Guogong* and *Xianggong* movements.

¹²⁵ Interview with *Yangge* dancer G, June 1999, Changchun.

companies were temporarily shutdown in 1999 by the local Public Security Bureau pending an investigation of their “cult-like” activities.¹²⁶ Local officials were concerned that these companies used pyramid-schemes to swindle their customers and trick them into becoming addicted to their products. Avon and Amway, therefore, were temporarily classified under the center’s definition of a cult: “groups which utilize various means to excite doubts and deceive the people and recruit and control members by force.”

The campaign against cults and superstition remained at the core of religious policy for several years until that Party was confident that the threat of Falun gong was erased. During this time, the government maintained its stance that it protected religious freedom of normal religious groups; however, it would not tolerate cults and sects that challenged the authority of state and breed social instability.

New Regulations on Religious Affairs

In March 2005, the State Council returned to the task of standardizing religious policies. It developed a series of new directives to clarify the registration of religious groups and to enhance state authority over religious practices. The lengthy *Regulations on Religious Affairs* (forty-eight articles and seven chapters), was six years in the making, and provided guidance to local officials in everything from how licensed organizations can accept religious donations and claim tax exemptions, to how religious institutions may accept foreign students and send Chinese abroad for religious education.¹²⁷ The new regulations did not mark a fundamental shift from previous policies in either spirit or content, but instead were designed to eliminate some of the arbitrariness in the implementation of central directives and solidify

¹²⁶ Interview with Avon salesperson Z, June 1999, Changchun.

¹²⁷ Reprinted in *Chinese Journal of International Law* 5, no. 2 (2006): 475-485.

control over religious affairs. Some of the amendments to previous policy include greater specificity in bureaucratic oversight over religious activities and sites of worship, with the common theme of greater state control.

The new regulations limits where legal religious activities may take place to five locations: at registered Buddhist monasteries, Taoist temples, mosques, churches and other “fixed premises for religious activities.” If a site is used for religious activity without state approval, the religious affairs bureau has the right to confiscate the financial gains or property of the illegal religious activity.¹²⁸ This suggests that underground Catholics and the House Church movement who meet in private apartments run the risk of their property being confiscated by the state.

For new sites of worship to be established, the 2005 regulations state that proposals must now be unanimously approved by three levels of bureaucracy, including the county or municipality religious affairs department where the religious site is planned, the religious affairs bureau at the provincial or autonomous region, and finally, at the national level by the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA). Registration begins at the lowest level and then moves upward toward the State Administration of Religious Affairs. The criteria for approval of a new religious site is based on the following:

- (1) a sufficient demand among local citizens to frequently carry out religious activities,
- (2) demonstration that qualified religious personnel (approved by the state) exist and conduct religious rituals,
- (3) evidence that there are necessary funds for construction and maintenance of a religious site,
- (4) and a guarantee that the intended place of worship will not interfere in the normal production and livelihood of neighboring units and residents.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Article 43.

¹²⁹ Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Articles 12-14.

The need for approval at three layers of bureaucracy is also applied to religious education. The 2005 regulations state that all institutes for religious education must likewise be approved at three bureaucratic levels and be able to demonstrate to all levels that there are sufficient facilities, funds and “qualified” teachers and students. The new policy additionally gives the (national) SARA final control over admitting foreigners to study at Chinese religious institutes, approving Chinese students who wish to study abroad at religious institutions, and sanctioning participation in religious pilgrimages outside of China—in effect, this means that Chinese Muslims must seek national permission before embarking on the hajj.¹³⁰

The new regulations also state that “qualified” religious personnel must be approved by the religious affairs department at the county level, and that religious leaders must also demonstrate their qualifications in order to meet the approval of their Religious Patriotic Association and the State Administration for Religious Affairs. The new regulations go so far as to single out two types of religious leaders that must be approved at the nation level—the secession of living Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism and the appointment of Catholic bishops—indicating the importance of state control over, and perceived threats of Tibetan Buddhism and Catholicism.¹³¹

The new regulations further seek to clarify the management of religious sites that serve the dual purpose of places of worship and (cultural) tourism. While earlier documents suggest that the management of such places of worship would be shared among the three separate departments of religion, tourism, and parks, the new regulations clarify that the local people’s government is in charge of the management of religious sites that function doubly as tourist attractions.¹³² This shift in policy is significant because a preponderance of religious sites are designated as tourist

¹³⁰ Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Articles 8-11.

¹³¹ Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Articles 27-29.

¹³² Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Article 26.

attractions; for instance, of the 350 religious sites in Shanghai, a sizable number are also considered tourist attractions. This means that a majority of religious sites are under the authority of non-religious bodies.

While a better part of the forty-eight articles clarify new levels of bureaucracy and state control over religious activities, one section increases the protection for religious communities. Article 48 warns that if

any State functionary, in administration of religious affairs, abuses his power, neglects his duty or commits illegalities for personal gain or by fraudulent means, and a crime is thus constituted, he shall be investigated for criminal liability according to law.¹³³

Article 48 illustrates a positive step for the protection of religious rights in China by addressing state abuses of power over religious communities; however, this positive addition is mitigated when considering the failure of the new religious policy to solve many long-standing problems. First, the new regulations continue to employ the artificial terminology of the five normal religions in China, perpetuating the monopoly of legal religions to Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism. Religious groups that fall beyond these five religions are offered no legal protection or right to engage in religious activities. The new religious activities also continue to employ the terms “normal and abnormal,” yet fail to identify what qualifies as normal and, therefore, legal religious activity, and what may be construed as abnormal or superstitious. “Religious extremism” is another term that remains undefined, giving local officials considerable leeway in determining what qualifies as extremist behavior, and religious communities no guidelines as to which rituals may be subject to state suppression.¹³⁴

¹³³ Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Article 38.

¹³⁴ Article 3 states that it protects “normal religious activities”; Article 7 stresses that religious bodies shall not propagate “religious extremism.” A roundtable discussion of the implications of the March 2005 decree was held in the US Congress, see “China’s New Regulations of Religious Affairs: A

Although the new religious policies were designed to clarify and simplify the registration and administration process of religious activities, in effect, they do little more than create additional layers of bureaucracy. Religious communities must “solicit the opinion” of three layers of government in order to develop religious sites, plan large activities, and appoint religious leaders. The problem with the new policies is that they offer little guidance on how to “solicit opinions,” what these opinions signify and how they should be constituted, and whether there are any avenues of appeal.¹³⁵ For instance, if Catholics in Shanghai want to reconstruct a church that was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, they must first gain approval of the Shanghai Catholic Patriotic Association and then seek approval from at least three additional layers of bureaucracy.¹³⁶ What is unclear, however, is that if one layer of bureaucracy refuses a religious community permission to expand, are there means for redress elsewhere? Can a religious community appeal higher up the bureaucratic ladder?

Like Russia, and after almost two decades of clarifying policies, the 2005 religious reforms still left many questions unanswered for local officials. In spite of the policy changes from the center, it remained under the discretion of local governments and bureaucracies to decide whether religious practices in their region are illegal, whether they fall under the definition of feudal superstitions and should be suppressed, or whether they can be officially registered.¹³⁷ Thus, like Russia, while the central state has set guidelines for religious expression, it is at the level where the

Paradigm Shift,” transcripts available at: www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/031405/Bays.php [last accessed May 5, 2008].

¹³⁵ Regulations on Religious Affairs, March 1, 2005, Articles 5, 31, 33.

¹³⁶ In 2002, the Catholic Church in Shanghai sought to rebuild a chapel in the Huangpu district of the city—one of the earliest chapels built in Shanghai—but was turned down by the local government. The Catholic Church appealed to open a museum of Catholic history instead of a functioning chapel; however, their application was still pending as of August 2007.

¹³⁷ Spiegall (1997); Seymour and Wehrli (1994).

actual regulation of religion and ritual takes place.

Conclusions

From this survey of central religious reforms in Russia and China we can draw two lessons. The first is that in spite of the very different economic and political restructuring taking place during the 1980s to late 1990s, both Moscow and Beijing have embarked on remarkably similar paths of creating a more hospitable environment for religious expression while simultaneously implementing policies to control growing religiosity. In the 1980s both countries set upon a path to reconcile their regimes' repressive histories with religion and usher in a period of greater religious freedom. Gorbachev and Deng spoke of the need of the state to reconcile with the past and bring their countries religious polices more inline with an international standard. A brief honeymoon period of liberalizing reforms and an unregulated religious market followed. However, as the religious revival grew in strength and diversity, it became clear that central policies on religious groups would tighten. Fear of foreign influence and religious communities challenging central legitimacy loomed large, and increasing state control of the religious marketplace was reflected in new policies and laws. Hierarchies of religions were established with clear winners and losers, and the procedures for registering and monitoring religious groups were clarified and strengthened. In Russia this meant that the Orthodox Church regained its place of privilege, cementing its position of importance in the Russian Federation and the state-building project of the Kremlin. In China, religious groups from the five "normal" religions and their Patriotic Associations were strongly encouraged to develop patriotic believers and promote national unity. As a result, through either direct or indirect channels, as both countries embarked on paths of greater liberalization the return of religiosity was intended to serve the goals of the state.

This analysis of two decades of religious reforms has also shown that the central laws and policies adopted to manage the religious revival are often vague and rife with contradictions. Religious policies follow a familiar pattern—they are implemented, reformed, revised, and then again followed by another round of policies. The need for constant revisions, however, is more than simply a product of carelessly written policies—it suggests a tactical approach by Moscow and Beijing to managing religion in this period of liberalization.

In this time of political and economic flux, the center desires the flexibility to adapt based on changes in political climate. As the center's priorities become better informed—based on internal surveys, pressure from religious communities, or reports filtering up from the regions—vaguely written policies give the center the elasticity to release another round of policy to manage religious groups. This is not entirely surprising, considering religious policies are following the pragmatic mantra of the Opening and Reform period, “crossing the river by feeling the stones” (摸着石头过河).¹³⁸ Given the differences in Russian and Chinese policy-making institutions, however, the “rinse and repeat” strategy is more noticeable in China, where the Central Committee of the Communist Party is less constrained by democratic institutions and can introduce new policies without going through the appearance of legislative debate.

From the perspective of the center, then, the creation of ambiguous policies is a strategic process that allows the center the flexibility to adapt and amend its preferences over time. In keeping policies vague and lacking in specificity, considerable discretion and autonomy in decision-making is given to local officials and bureaucrats to implement the priorities of the center. This helps to account for the

¹³⁸ Deng Xiaoping famously described the Opening and Reform period policies as “crossing the river by feeling for stones” (摸着石头过河).

diversity (and likely incommensurability) of local situations while maintaining the prerogative of the center's unity and power. A second rationale for ambiguous religious guidelines is to allow local governments a certain amount of leeway in regulating their diverse religious landscape. This follows from the fact that local governments normally have a more nuanced grasp of the situation "on the ground," as well as close ties to the religious networks and bureaucracies capable of dealing with issues identified by the center. To this extent then, delegation from the center to the local takes advantage of the decentralized systems already in place.

The Sky is High and the Emperor is Distant (天高皇帝远)

The uncertainty and lack of clarity in religious policies in both Russia and China, however, is not without costs. Vaguely defined religious policies empower local officials and bureaucrats to manage religious groups according to different standards. As Melanie Manion (1992) finds in a study of the implementation of central cadre retirement policy, local bureaucrats view ambivalent central policies as the equivalent of having no policies at all.¹³⁹ This suggests that the lack of clarity in policies can run counter to the center's intended goal, and what may represent a tactical advantage for the center can foster non-compliance or considerable discrepancy in the treatment of religious communities at the local level. Moreover, "wiggle room" in one policy area can spill over in to others. As Tu Wei-ming explains, "the regions themselves have clearly benefited from the accommodating policies of the center. They seem to know well how to exploit Beijing's lack of self-confidence and the ambiguity of the central directives, without totally undermining the system and thus risking the danger of anarchism or, perhaps worse, warlordism."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Manion (1992).

¹⁴⁰ Tu (1993: xii).

Thus, the second and more important lesson from this chapter is that in spite of the imprecision of central religious policies, the implementation of these directives lies in the hands of local governments and bureaucracies. It is up to local elites to decide whether religious activities and rituals in their region are illegal, whether they fall under the definition of feudal superstitions and should be suppressed, or whether they can be officially registered. Religious policies that are lacking in content or in clear methods of implementation have left local officials to their own devices. This has resulted in diverse situations, ranging from greater religious freedom and church-state collaboration to the passing of local regulations that challenge central authority.

Several regions in China have issued new religious regulations or amended existing policies to help clarify the ambiguity of central policies.¹⁴¹ The majority of these regional regulations followed the spirit of the central religious reforms; however, there are noticeable shifts and contradictions at the local level. Zhejiang and Hunan's policies deleted the reference to five official religions, presumably to allow for the legal practice and registration of folk religions; Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia added sections recognizing the Russian Orthodox Church as a traditional religion; Zhejiang, Hunan and Chongqing's policies permitted religious services to be held in private homes, so long as these activities were "normal" and did not negatively influence the lives of participants and neighbors.

Other regions that did not go as far as writing new policy were creative in the implementation and compliance of religious reforms. In Fujian, for example, the popular Mazu cult, which falls within the center's definition of "feudal superstition" and is therefore illegal, has regained popularity with the help of the local state. Local elites permit greater popular religious freedom by "re-inventing" Mazu as a cultural

¹⁴¹ These regions include: Shanghai, Henan, Shanxi, Zhejiang, Anhui, Beijing, Hunan, Chongqing, Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia.

relic and tourist attraction. Similarly, the island of Putuoshan in Zhejiang offers an example of how local officials have harnessed the healing powers of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, *Guanyin*, to serve the capitalist ideal of earning tourism revenue.¹⁴² By treating popular religious practices as tourism, the local state is able to bypass the central directives on religion and the layers of bureaucracy needed for approval.

In Russia similar patterns have emerged. Following the 1997 Law on Religious Freedom local bureaucrats are still left to determine whether a group has “historic” roots in the region, whether its liturgical texts are “authentic,” and whether its leaders are “competent.” This can be highly problematic, because of the arbitrary characters of administrative decision-making. For instance, in Tula the local state initiated intimidation campaigns against Baptists, including shutting off power and water to the church and hiring local laborers to break up a tent revival.¹⁴³ In June 2004, a Moscow district court banned all organized activity of the city's ten thousand Jehovah's Witnesses on the grounds that they posed a threat to society; and the Salvation Army has been fighting a legal battle in Russian courts for almost five years to defend its right to exist after Moscow city authorities brought the local branch to court in an effort to liquidate it.¹⁴⁴ Thus, while the Russian central state has set guidelines for religious expression, it is at the local level where religion and ritual are regulated.

These examples remind us that religion is political and that all politics, even in

¹⁴² For the “re-inventing” of religious activities as culture, see also Yang (2003); Wang (1993); Lyons (2000); Yeung (2000: 367); Szonyi (2005); Savadove (2005).

¹⁴³ Levison (1997: 4). See also Elliott and Corrado (1999) for an itemization of 69 instances of state harassment, restriction or threat of restriction against non-Orthodox (Moscow Patriarchate) religious communities in the fifteen months following the implementation of the law.

¹⁴⁴ Since the closing of the tent revival, there have been 10 arson attacks on Baptist churches in the region. Pastor Nikolai Dudenkov, of the Tula Baptist Church, told International Religious Freedom Watch that the local police are the key suspects. See, U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) on Hearing of Unregistered Religious Groups in Russia, April 14, 2005, full transcript available at *Congressional Quarterly* 2005.

highly centralized states, is local. It also compels us to focus our analysis on the local state, and to systematically rethink what factors firstly, shape local authorities' attitudes and behavior toward competing religious groups; and secondly, the political strategies employed by religious communities to pursue their own cultural interests. It is these issues that serve as the focus of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

“When it’s a question of money, everybody is of the same religion.”

–Voltaire

The previous chapter concluded with two lessons that have shaped the regulation of religiosity in Russia and China. First, as both countries embrace greater liberalization, Moscow and Beijing have made considerable efforts to define and thereby control the parameters of religious expression. However, it is at the local level where the political management of religion largely takes place, and as a consequence, where the relationship between the state and religious associational life is defined. Second, because central religious policies are often vague, local officials and bureaucrats are left to their own devices when mapping out church-state affairs. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to march down to the local level in order to explore the dynamics of this relationship.

This chapter draws on empirical examples from the four case sites that illustrate varying degrees of cooperation, compliance, and control among the local state officials and religious groups. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that the key points of contact between these two sets of actors are based on material, rather than spiritual concerns. Indeed, what often brings church and state together is their common preoccupation with money.

This chapter proceeds in three steps. The first introduces the logic of interaction between local state officials and religious groups—tackling the why, what, and how of church and local-state bargaining. I argue that material concerns are at the core of church and state relations. First, the material resources of both sides are

offered to the other side to help achieve strategic needs. Material resources, in other words, become bargaining chips that each side offers to the other in order to secure its interests and goals. Second, material resources are the preferred transactions for both sides because they are divisible and transferable. It is easier for both sides to strike a mutually beneficial “bargain” when money is the bottom line. Finally, material arenas function as the key points of church-state interaction, where both sets of actors seek to profit from a collaborative exchange.

The second step introduces the material resources that religious and state actors bring to the bargaining table. This section reveals that material resources often come in unusual packages, but their function is similar for both sets of actors: material resources are exchanged to achieve strategic goals. Church and local-state bargaining in Russia and China mirrors the logrolling of elected officials in democratic legislatures. Local state officials offer subsidies and interest-free loans to assist the reconstruction of religious buildings, provide parcels of land, or even pay the tuition of religious leaders to attend local universities as incentives for collaboration and compliance with state policies. Religious groups may also provide material resources, including assistance in attracting investment and providing public goods (such as paving roads and developing charity programs) as ways of improving their standing with local government officials and achieving other spiritual goals.

The third section of this chapter complicates the bargains struck between church and local state actors by introducing collaborative exchanges, where religious groups and local government officials enter into partnerships. I introduce two complimentary arenas of material collaboration: faith-based tourism and commercial development. These arenas of cooperation suggest that church-state bargaining can depart from the single-issue games where the logic is quid pro quo to relationships that resemble joint ventures.

The conclusion of the chapter revisits several of the propositions guiding this study, compares and contrasts church-state material interaction and suggests which religious communities are winning the most from such exchanges.

The Logic of Material Bargaining Games

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the lines between church and state are porous at the local level. The process of liberalization in both Russia and China has left local states and religious communities facing numerous challenges and vulnerabilities that can best be lessened through cooperation. Some of the most pressing concerns for local states are economic, including high levels of corruption, low levels of bureaucratic development, and fiscal reforms that have ossified local budgets. As a result, local states are constrained in their ability to provide public goods and services—services that citizens have grown to expect from living years within a socialist state. Such economic constraints, moreover, are joined with political constraints. Local government officials must also contend with growing demands for accountability, increasing distrust of political elites, intensifying calls from below for the wealth to be spread more evenly around, and commands from above to encourage economic growth. In the face of these challenges, local states are seeking solutions that will not only maintain local stability and assist in local governance, but will also maximize economic interests. Local states are looking to external resources of support for part of the solution, which creates an opening for religious groups.

Religious communities are also facing economic challenges of their own. Since the 1980s, religious groups have been slowly reclaiming property that was confiscated by the state. They are now faced with the daunting task of rebuilding and renovating what was vandalized during the anti-religious campaigns or converted to perform other functions, such as barns, nightclubs and swimming pools. The grim

reality is that much of the property returned is in a state of serious disrepair after decades of neglect. Moreover, there is growing demand for more monasteries, seminaries, temples, mosques and churches; yet, religious communities' coffers are meager and donations are inadequate. In addition to financial burdens that slow the growth of religious associational life, religious communities must also navigate "bureaucratic red tape" in order to re-open places of worship. For instance, the restoration of religious property and the construction of new religious buildings must gain local bureaucratic approval. This means that even religious groups that have accumulated the capital necessary for a reconstruction project or have raised the funds needed to purchase land for a new church or mosque, must first secure the required permits from the local state. All of this suggests that religious communities have strong incentives to forge alliances with the powerful and resourceful—the local state.

In the face of these challenges local government officials and religious communities are choosing cooperation over conflict. Such church-state cooperation is strategic. Local government officials and religious leaders are trading in favors, exchanging promises of reciprocal support, but mostly are bargaining over material resources. Indeed, there is a "cash-nexus"¹ at the core of church and local-state relations, where both players trade material resources to secure stability and maximize profits.

Material resources can be defined as the economic assets of an organization that can be drawn on to achieve a desired outcome. Material resources are tangible and quantifiable; they are easily identifiable and can be reduced to their monetary value. This does not mean, however, that the vast majority of material resources exchanged are limited to simple transfers of hard currency. On the contrary, both

¹ My thanks to Rob Weller for suggesting this term.

local states and religious communities are creative in identifying their own assets, the needs of the other side, and then offering material resources in unexpected packages.

One way to think about material resources is as inducements or even proverbial carrots that are offered to the other side to secure interests and reach goals. Material resources flow between local governments and religious communities; they lubricate the interactions of the two sets of actors; and they promote smooth and efficient relations where both sides stand to profit. From the local state's perspective, material resources may be "bargained" with competing religious communities to mobilize support for state policies and to establish positive relations with religious groups, essentially currying favors to call-in at a future date. For religious communities, material resources are "bargains" to help smooth relations with the local state officials; they are gestures of goodwill that may help them secure greater influence for their community or autonomy from the state. This is not to suggest that non-material resources, such as cultural capital, group mobilization or a political power (which are the focus of the subsequent chapter), do not enter into the complex bargaining relationship between church and local-state actors, but instead that material concerns strike to the core of church-state relations. After all, it is much easier for the two sides to find agreement on issues of money, rather than on more dangerous – and less easily denominated and divisible – areas, such as power and prestige.

The Material Resources of the Local State

The material resources that local governments bring to the table are diverse, but can generally be divided into two categories: (1) bureaucratic stamps of approval, and (2) subsidies. Both of these types of material resources are exchanged to further the goal of stability in church-state relations. Bureaucratic stamps of approval are important for religious communities because they are the necessary "red stamps" that

make the organization of daily religious life legal. The most basic bureaucratic stamp sought by religious communities is local state registration, which allows religious groups to organize and conduct religious activities. Other sought after bureaucratic stamps can include permission to invite foreign religious guests to visit a locale.

Bureaucratic stamps of approval are considered to be material resources because they have real monetary value and are given selectively. In consolidated democracies bureaucracies are relatively rule-bound organizations. Thus, if a religious organization in the United States is applying for tax-exempt status, for example, the process is straightforward – as long as a religious group’s paperwork is in order. The bureaucratic organs and institutional structures in liberalizing authoritarian regimes, by contrast, function quite differently. There is little transparency in part because of communist legacies, and when a religious group attempts to register, there is always the real possibility that their application will be denied or by accident or decision lost for decades. Therefore, given the bureaucratic uncertainty in these countries, bureaucratic stamps are powerful resources that local officials bring to the exchange. Such stamps are also treated as material resources because they are the necessary conditions for religious communities to grow (both spiritually and materially), for example, to expand their places of worship and even open direct financial channels from the state.

Other types of material resources that local officials and bureaucrats offer to religious communities come in the form of subsidies. Local state subsidies can include anything from overt cash transfers to undisclosed discounts for state services. Subsidies, like bureaucratic stamps of approval, have tangible material benefits. They are offered on a discriminating basis, and they are used as a form of soft power to manage religious communities and solidify relations between the two. To help clarify this discussion, Table 4.1 below and the discussion that follows elaborates on the

material resources of the local state, their monetary values, and how they are exchanged with religious communities to achieve strategic outcomes.

Table 4.1 The Material Resources of Local States

Bureaucratic Stamps	Subsidies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration • Permission to print literature • Permission to travel abroad/invite foreign guests • Permission to build or expand places of worship • Designation as a ‘cultural relic’ • Approval of petitions for return of religious property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to tax-free imports/exports • Free heating and electricity • Interest-free loans • University tuition

“Bureaucratic Stamps”

One of the most powerful and important resources sought after by religious communities are bureaucratic stamps of approval. As the previous chapter outlined, in both Russia and China the local states are the gatekeepers of religious freedom, empowered with red stamps and setting the parameters on religious activities. It is local bureaucrats who determine whether the activities of a religious community are legal and can register, or whether a religious group’s activities should be classified as a cult-like and subject to suppression. It is up to the discretion of local officials to determine whether religious leaders are competent to conduct services, and whether religious groups are able to publish and distribute liturgical literature. The local state must also give permission for religious leaders to travel abroad; for instance, for an imam to participate in the hajj. Finally, it is the local state that must sign-off on the

bureaucratic permits to build or expand a place of worship and centers of religious training. In other words, because local states are the gatekeepers of *all* legal religious activity, bureaucratic stamps of approval become powerful resources that can ensure the survival and development of religious communities. Such “red stamps” can also become important inducements or rewards to religious communities for compliance and loyalty to the local state.

The minimum bureaucratic stamp sought after by religious communities is official registration; however, the local state has other stamps within its bureaucratic toolbox that are desired by religious groups. For instance, local bureaucrats have the option of designating a place of worship or a religious monument as a “cultural relic.” Such an appellation is a desirable resource for religious communities for several reasons. First, and most importantly, the status of a “cultural relic” signifies the state’s financial commitment to the preservation of religious property. As a cultural relic, the local state is able to directly support a religious organization, something that is otherwise prohibited in a secular Russia and China. The political institutions and laws managing religious groups in both countries emphasize the separation between church and state, where “God” and “Caesar” should remain in their own distinct spheres. However, once a place of worship is designated as a cultural relic the distinction between church and state becomes more blurred. The state is able to legally subsidize religious communities under the auspices of historical preservation.² Financial transactions are funneled through the local Ministry of Culture or Department for the

² The laws and central directives managing religion in both Russia and China have also included clauses that allow the state to support the preservation of religious relics and places of worship with historic significance. Article 4.3 of the Russian 1997 Law on allows for state to grant “aid to religious organizations in the restoration, maintenance, and protection of buildings and other objects which are monuments of history and culture.” In China, a 1985 government report stresses the importance of preserving religious sites for both their historic and tourist value. See “*Zhongyang bangongting diaocha zu guanyu luoshi dang de zongjiao zhengce yi youguan wenti de diaocha baogao*,” [Survey Report Concerning the Implementation of the Party’s Policies and Religion and Relevant Issues (December 10, 1985)], examined and approved by the Committee on Legal Work of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.

Preservation of Cultural Relics, which sets aside part of its budget for the preservation of religious buildings and relics, or through presidential and gubernatorial funds.

The status as “cultural relic” is useful for religious communities in other ways. Religious communities also gain a certain amount of local recognition and prestige as a cultural relic by demonstrating their continuity with the past. The appellation also lengthens the shadow of the future, by ensuring that some part of their community will survive.³ For example, being appointed as a cultural relic today gives a religious community a certain amount of assurance that developers will not be able to edge them off their land or that their religious buildings will not be mysteriously destroyed tomorrow to make way for commercial development.⁴

Cultural and historical preservation is an important responsibility of the local state in both countries, and I do not mean to suggest that it is purely an instrumental tool nor that local bureaucrats can designate sites as cultural relics at their whim. Rather, what I wish to highlight is that the designation of a “cultural relic” is a powerful resource with limitations. In order for a local bureaucrat to designate a religious site as a cultural relic, a religious group must have a legitimate historical claim. In practice, this means that most places of worship have, at a minimum, pre-revolutionary roots. Still, even when pre-revolution histories are present, there

³ In China, State Council Decree No. 426, "Regulations on Religious Affairs," (March 1, 2005) guarantees the protection of cultural relics. Chapter 5 of the regulation deals with religious properties; Article 30 states: “No organization or individual is allowed ... destroy the cultural relics possessed or used by religious organizations or venues.”

⁴ In Russia, there is concern of developers destroying property or attempting to push residents off of their land to make way for commercial development has been a serious concern in Nizhny and Kazan. Property values have increased and there is growing demand for both commercial development and modern/luxury apartment complexes. Somewhat surprisingly, local governments have been involved in this effort. The Shaimiev administration in Tatarstan announced a plan in the mid-nineties entitled “Slum Clearance and Modernization of Slum Areas,” also known as the “President’s Housing Project.” The plan involved clearing large swaths of the inner city to make way for luxury apartments. Following the announcement of the President’s Housing Plan, there were a series of unexplained arsons in designated areas. The targeted buildings tend to be dilapidated houses and pre-revolutionary buildings where the residents have refused to sell or relocate. Local rumors suspect the mafia and real estate developers are responsible for the arson. On the President’s Housing Plan, see Graney (2007: 19).

remains a considerable amount of elasticity in what local officials are willing to designate as a cultural relic, and not all religions are rewarded with this “red stamp.”

In Nizhny Novgorod, the Evangelical-Christian Baptist Church is one of the oldest Baptist congregations in Russia, dating back over 130 years. After the Russian Revolution the Baptist Church was one of the first to be destroyed; the 200-member congregation became itinerant and was forced to rent various spaces for services—for example, the Nizhny Philharmonic and a secondary school auditorium. Finally, the Baptists were able to broker a more permanent arrangement with a Lutheran church to rent their facilities on Saturdays. By the 1930s the state began to more closely regulate and monitor religious activity, and it became impossible for the Baptists to secure places of worship. The remaining option for Baptists and other Christian denominations was to worship in the basement of one of the few remaining open Orthodox churches. From 1931-35 the Baptist congregation held services in the basement of an Orthodox church adjacent to the Kremlin, which had maintained good relations with the local government.⁵

By the mid-thirties the window for religious expression, even in borrowed church basements under the watchful eye of the state, was quickly closing. After 1935 all religious services were considered illegal; the Baptist pastor in Nizhny was imprisoned for refusing to cease preaching, and the remaining congregation was dissolved. It was not until the beginning of the Second World War—when Stalin allowed for more open religious expression to strengthen support for the regime and

⁵ During the 1930s places of worship were closely monitored by the state and those that remained open for business were able to do so because they allowed the state and KGB complete access to their congregations and priests (See, Armes 1994; Ware 1997). The Nizhny Baptist community was able to rent space in the basement of the Orthodox Church, as opposed to being driven completely underground, because it allowed the state a window into their activities. They were well aware that their services were monitored and their congregations were watched, but the state-sanctioned space was the only place they felt they could worship that would not result in the absolute suppression of their community. Interview with Pastor V.D. Runov, February 28, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod. Pastor Runov’s grandfather was the pastor in the 1930s and presided over the worship services in the basement church. Runov’s grandfather was later imprisoned for 14 years for his spirited sermons.

lessen some of the wartime hardships on the public—that the fragmented Baptist congregation began to reorganize and, somewhat surprisingly, realize that its membership had doubled in size. Although the Baptists lacked a house of worship, the congregation continued to attract members and they began plans to rebuild their church.⁶

In the early nineties it became clear that the Baptist congregation had outgrown its ad hoc use of private apartments, and, with the support of U.S. Baptist churches, raised enough funds to purchase land and rebuild.⁷ With an emphasis on historical continuity, the plans for the new church followed the blueprints of first Baptist Church in Nizhny, built in 1912. When church leaders approached the local government for the necessary permits, they realized they were also eligible to apply for status as a cultural relic (because they were reconstructing a pre-revolutionary building following its original blueprints). Yet, in spite of the strength of the Baptist's historical claim, they were denied status as a cultural relic and any financial support from the local state. In fact, one pastor of the church explained that during their interview, a local bureaucrat stated that all cultural relics, which are religious in nature and worthy of state protection, belong to the Russian Orthodox Church.⁸

“Property Politics”

Bureaucratic stamps and permissions also spill over into the realm of property politics. Another powerful material resource of the local state is the return of confiscated land and property. One of the most contentious issues for religious groups since the center introduced more liberal policies on religious freedom is the return of

⁶ Interview with Pastor V.D. Runov, February 28, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁷ There are numerous restrictions on foreign organizations financially supporting Russian churches; however, these laws did not come into place until 1997, long after the Nizhny Baptist's had received financial support from U.S. Baptists.

⁸ Interview with Pastor V.D. Runov, February 28, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

pre-revolutionary religious property, and compensation for property that was destroyed or rendered un-returnable. According to central policies in both Russia and China, if a religious building is still intact, the state must take efforts to return the structure to its rightful owners.⁹ If a religious building has been destroyed—as many were during the 1930s in the Soviet Union and the 1960s during the Cultural Revolution in China—religious groups may petition the state for the return of land, the lost property, and state compensation.

The types of religious property under dispute generally fall into three categories: places of worship, such as monasteries, temples, mosques, and churches; religious buildings that provided social and welfare services, such as hospitals, schools and homes for the elderly; and investment property of religious groups that was not used for religious purposes, such as estates or land that had formerly been willed to religious communities.

The petitioning process for all three types of religious property is long and arduous and can take decades before an application is approved. The process is so

⁹ See *O svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiakh* (On Freedom of Conscience and [on] Religious Organization), *Vedomosti SSSR*, Issue No. 41, Item No 813 (1990); *Zhonggong Zhangyang Guanyu Woguo Shehui Zhuyo Shiqi Zongjiao Wenti De Jiben Zhengce, 1982* (Document 19). The Report on the Implementation of Policy on Real Estate of Religious Organizations by the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau and National Construction Committee etc. State Council Release (1980) No. 188 states, "All real estate to which religious bodies have a right should be returned to them. When there is no way to return it, then they should be repaid the monetary value.... Churches, mosques, temples and their auxiliary buildings, which were occupied for use during the Cultural Revolution, if religious bodies need them for their internal or external work, should be restored to each religion. If a religious body does not need the property for its own use, then the occupying unit or private individual using it should pay rent based on the date of occupation. If the building was re-built or demolished, the monetary value should be evaluated and repaid." Document 3, "A Circular on Stepping Up Control Over the Catholic Church to meet the new situation" (1989) affirms that "Each locality, therefore, must seriously see to it that churches and properties are returned. (These properties include churches, seminaries and the properties that these structures use.) ... Those buildings that the Church in fact needs must be returned without question. If it is impossible to return them at the moment, a contract must be made stating the fact of their eventual return and the reasonable price fixed by national standards must be paid to the Church by the unit that presently occupies the property in case the original building has been torn down, changed to another use or sold. If the military is occupying the buildings or property the matter must be resolved according to Document No. 46 issued by the Central Government in 1988." No. 188 and Document 3 are reprinted in Lam (2006).

time consuming because religious groups must compile detailed dossiers of confiscated religious property, complete with deeds, maps, and blueprints of religious buildings. For many religious communities, such documentation was lost or destroyed after the revolution, and what remains is scattered among different domestic and foreign archives—the former also often in various states of neglect and disrepair, or under controlled access. For example, when the Catholic Church of Nizhny Novgorod began to compile its dossier in 1991, the priest had to make a special trip to the Vatican archives in search of documents to establish the church’s pre-revolutionary presence in the community, as there were no local documents to be found.¹⁰ Another challenge facing religious groups, especially in China, is the limited access to government archives (yet one more institution of the local state) that hold the blueprints and maps of pre-1949 religious buildings. Because of the sensitive nature of religion, many archives have tagged documents with religious references as closed or internal documents (内部), which require special government permissions to view. Without access to these critical materials, religious communities are unable to successfully “prove” their case and reclaim their property.

Even if religious communities are able to compile complete dossiers claims to religious property are rarely simple. The petitioning process can be further complicated if the property in question was formerly a school or hospital. In these cases, the local state will not return management or ownership of the property to the religious group, because this violates important principles of secularism, but should instead offer compensation. If the religious property in question has been converted for residential or commercial purposes, the local state must make a concerted effort to relocate the current residents and businesses, or work out an agreement where the deeds will be transferred and the religious group will be able to collect rents on the

¹⁰ Interview with Father Mario, March 20, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

property. If neither option is viable, the state may alternatively offer religious communities a comparable parcel of land. During this process of negotiation, it is important to note that religious groups still retain the right to refuse land that the local state offers in compensation. For instance, if a pre-revolutionary temple was converted to a hospital, the state must make a conscious effort to find an equivalent piece of land. This indicates that religious groups have some power in assuring that they will not be relocated to the outskirts of their community far from public transportation.

“Property politics” is a highly contentious issue, and has become increasingly so over time. As religious freedom increased in the mid-eighties and early nineties, local officials returned keys to religious buildings without question. Religious communities reclaimed their monasteries, churches, temples and mosques that had been boarded up for decades. In fact, government officials often held grand ceremonies celebrating the return of religious property and showing their respect for religious pluralism.¹¹ Over time, however, the return of property became more complicated. Once the majority of the religious buildings that were still standing were given back to religious groups, local bureaucrats were left to sort through the thousand of petitions of religious buildings that had been destroyed and converted to other uses; i.e., petitions that would either involve monetary compensation, an alternative parcel of land, or the relocation of existing residents and businesses.

Considering the sensitive nature of “property politics,” it is not surprising that petitions for disputed property are selectively approved. In fact, even when religious groups have solid legal claims to property, the local bureaucrats are prone to stall applications for decades, honor only part of the petition, or tack on extraneous conditions. This is because it is much easier to stall religious communities, rather than

¹¹ On the increasingly contentious nature of the return of religious property, see Lam (2006).

face protesting residents and powerful members of the business community who would require compensation and relocation.

One example of such the contentious nature of religious property and the lengthy petitioning process is in Nizhny Novgorod. Since the late 1990s the Religious Board of Muslims of Nizhny Novgorod has been appealing for the return of the land where Yarmarka Mosque once stood, the Exhibition Mosque (*Ярмарочная мечеть*) that had been razed in the 1930s to make way for the construction of Lenin Square and Soviet's Street.

Historically, during the eighteenth century Nizhny emerged as a prosperous inland port on the Volga River and important trading city, attracting travelers from the Silk Road. At this time, to accommodate the spiritual demands of the merchants who settled in Nizhny, in 1822 the local government permitted the construction of Yarmarka Mosque in the heart of the commercial district, opposite Makariev Fair (*Макариевская Ямарка*).¹²



Illustration 4.1 Yarmarka Mosque, c. 1900, photo by M. Dmitriev.

The mosque was well attended by the Volga Tatars, the traditional Muslims of the region, and also by Muslim merchants from China, Iran, Azerbaijan and the Crimea who had settled in the region.¹³ The Yarmarka Mosque is both historically

¹² O.N. Senjutkina (2005).

¹³ D.V. Muhetdinov (2005).

and symbolically significant for the Tatar-Muslims in Nizhny. It is not only the first mosque in the area, but also stands as a testament to the religious freedom in the city during the eighteenth century—a time when Orthodoxy was the state religion and Muslims were persecuted in other parts of Russia. The mosque is also an important cultural relic, because it became the government approved architectural prototype for mosques across the Russian Empire.¹⁴ In spite of Yarmarka Mosque's historical and symbolic significance and the Religious Board of Muslims of Nizhny Novgorod's ability to secure funds from foreign investors for the reconstruction of the mosque, the petition for the return of the land is still pending.¹⁵

The Catholic Church in Nizhny Novgorod, on the other hand, has had much more success than the Religious Board of Muslims in getting their petition partially approved. In 1991 the church began to compile its dossier for the return of three Catholic churches and a nunnery on the outskirts of the city that existed in the city prior to the revolution.¹⁶ However, the buildings in question had long since been destroyed to make way for other developments. After considerable review the local government agreed to return a portion of the land, and the Catholics were given a small piece of property adjacent to one of the three historic churches. According to the bureaucrats from the ministry of religious affairs, it was much easier (and more cost effective) to offer an adjacent property, which was a closed factory and storage shed, rather than relocate the businesses that now stood on the original property. In an interview with the priest of the Catholic Church, he expressed satisfaction with the settlement even though it was considerably less than he had hoped. Although the Catholic Church had a strong case for the return of all of their pre-revolutionary

¹⁴ O.N. Senjutkina (2005).

¹⁵ Interview with Olga Senjutkina, Historian for the Religious Board of Muslims in the Nizhny Novgorod Region and leading the collection of materials on the Yarmarka Mosque, February 2005, Nizhny Novgorod.

¹⁶ Only two of the three churches were registered with the Nizhny government.

property, the priest decided not to pursue further legal channels. He explained that as a minority religion in the city a legal claim would “damage the image of local Catholics and complicate matters with the government.”¹⁷ Moreover, the restoration of the Catholic Church, and especially of the nunnery, had been the target of intense local criticism. For instance, in response to the Catholic Church’s petition, a group of Orthodox intellectuals published a series of editorials denouncing Catholicism and reminding residents that Russia is home of Orthodoxy and should be free from Vatican influence.¹⁸

In Kazan, Tatarstan, the return of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord provides a third example of a partially successful petition with conditions attached. The Orthodox cathedral sits on the corner of Bauman Street in the heart of the historic and cultural center of the city and dates back to the sixteenth century. Before the Russian Revolution, the cathedral was one of the largest in Kazan, known for its seventy-four-meter Baroque-style bell tower, which would ring to call the diverse congregation of nobility, merchants and peasants to services. The cathedral remained open and functioning until 1939 when it was confiscated by the state. Once the state took over ownership of the cathedral, the property was divided up among various state institutions. The main cathedral was given to Kazan State University (Lenin’s alma mater), the five domes were torn down, the icons were painted over, and the mail hall was converted into a gymnasium. The bell-tower became a government storage shed, and the bell was transferred to a nearby theatre to ensure that it would not ring from the cathedral.

¹⁷ Interview with Father Mario, March 20, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

¹⁸ “Zachem Nizhnemu katolicheskij monastyr'?” [Why does Nizhny need a Catholic Monastery?] *Golos veterana [Voice of the Veteran]* 7, no. 126 (February 19-25 2004): 15.



Illustration 4.2 The Bell-tower of Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord, Kazan
photo by D.A. Shchukin

After the Soviet collapse, the Russian Orthodox Dioceses of Kazan began petitioning the local government for the return property, with the plan of rebuilding the Cathedral of the Epiphany of Our Lord. Their petition, however, met strong opposition from some circles of the new government.

The 1990s was a politically turbulent period within Tatarstan. In late August of 1990, the Republic of Tatarstan declared its independence from the Soviet Union, and its future as part of the Russian Federation was uncertain.¹⁹ A Tatar nationalist movement emerged in the autonomous republic calling for Tatarstan to follow the path of independence taken by other Soviet republics. As the movement gained momentum, their demands grew to include calls for the revival of Tatar identity with

¹⁹ Solnick (1998).

appeals for linguistic and religious revitalization, greater political autonomy from Moscow with lower taxes, greater protection of property, and more control over Tatarstan's natural (oil-rich) resources. In the midst of the political turmoil, in 1992 a referendum was held to gauge public support for an independent Tatarstan. The referendum passed with a solid majority, and emboldened the separatist-leaning leaders of the nationalist movement.²⁰ Now with a strong public mandate, the more radical factions of the movement captured power and refused to recognize the Russian constitution, which put them on unequal footing with Moscow, and the calls for secession intensified. For the leaders of the movement, it looked as if Tatarstan would be the next republic to join the "parade of sovereignties,"²¹ and that violent conflict with Moscow was unavoidable.²² However, the fate of Tatarstan was not yet sealed. While Russian troops amassed on Tatar borders, President Yeltsin initiated negotiations with the leaders of the nationalist movement and brokered a deal with the Mintimer Shaimiev, the president of Tatarstan. On February 15, 1994, a power-sharing agreement was signed by Yeltsin and Shaimiev, which affirmed Tatarstan's place within the Russia Federation, quieted calls for secession, and granted the republic exceptional privileges.²³ Bloodshed and further disintegration was avoided, but local Tatar politics were forever changed.

²⁰ The 1992 referendum passed with a 62 percent majority.

²¹ In the span of thirty-three months, forty-one former federal units of the Soviet Union declared themselves as sovereign; hence, the phrase the "Parade of Sovereignties." See, Kahn (2000).

²² Interview with Damir Iskhakov, Chairman of the Political Council of the Tatar Public Center and leader in the Tatar nationalist movement, June 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan. Interview with Rashit Akhmetov, Leader of the Tatarstan Branch of the Democratic Party of Russia and leader in the Tatarstan nationalist movement, June 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

²³ The "Treaty of the Demarcation of Objects of Jurisdiction and the Mutual Delegation of Powers between the Bodies of State Power of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan" allowed Tatarstan to independently exploit all of its natural resources, including gas and oil, exempt its men from military service in the Russian army, the creation of a Tatar national bank, and greater autonomy in foreign trade. See, for example, Solnick (1996); Debardeleben (1997); Kirkow (1998); Treisman (1999).

It is in the midst of this political turmoil and growing Tatar nationalism that the Russian Orthodox Dioceses of Kazan was petitioning the local government for the return of property originally a part of the Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord. In 1995, the local Tatar government approved a portion of the petition, returning one of the four remaining church buildings and the bell-tower. Father Oleg, the archpriest and rector of the Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord, explained that the church was not surprised when one of four buildings were returned because the church is located in the most expensive part of Kazan and that costs involved in the relocation of businesses were too great. What caught him and the Orthodox Church by surprise, however, was the local government's refusal to return the accompanying bell for the tower, stating that it was still "in use" at the nearby F.I. Shalyapin Theatre²⁴ and could not be moved. Although the petition was in order and the church had a legal claim to their property, Father Oleg rationalized the local government's refusal as the nature of local politics in the nineties and the minority status of Orthodoxy in Tatarstan. Even after Tatarstan signed a power-sharing agreement with Moscow, Father Oleg believed that the nationalist movement still had influence in local politics and "the nationalists did not want Russian Orthodox Churches in the center, and especially not our [Orthodox] bells ringing."²⁵

The elasticity given to local officials in approving petitions and tacking on amendments is also present in China. The Catholic Church has a long history in Shanghai dating back to the Ming Dynasty. In 1608 Xu Gangqi, a practicing Catholic and government official, resigned his post in Beijing and was traveling home to mourn the death of his father.²⁶ En route Xu Gangqi stopped in Nanjing where he met Father

²⁴ F.I. Shalyapin (1873-1938) was a famous Russian opera singer of the twentieth century. Somewhat ironically, Shalyapin was baptized in original the Cathedral of Epiphany.

²⁵ Interview with Father Oleg Sokolov, rector of the Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord, May 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

²⁶ In the Ming Dynasty when the parent of a government official passed away, he resigned his post and

Lazarus Cattaneo S.J., and invited him to Shanghai. Less than two years after Father Lazarus' arrival, over two hundred people had converted to Catholicism. Catholicism continued to grow with the assistance and good reputation of the Xu family, who actively supported the expansion of Christianity and funded the building of Catholic churches in the surrounding area. The Xu family's embrace of Christianity laid the foundation for Shanghai to become a center of Catholicism in China. By the eighteenth century, thousands of Catholics, both Chinese and foreign resided in Shanghai. In fact, before 1949 there were over 300 Catholic churches,²⁷ and the Shanghai Diocese had ownership over one-third of all of the land in metropolitan Shanghai.²⁸ During the Cultural Revolution all religious buildings were closed, with many of them destroyed or used for other purposes. In the 1980s the Shanghai Diocese began petitioning the return of much of the confiscated property. Many of the building were rendered un-returnable, having been converted to schools and hospitals; yet, the district level governments across Shanghai have gone a considerable distance in returning property. Approximately one-third of all confiscated churches and cathedrals were returned, yet often with extraneous conditions.²⁹

In Huangpu district the Shanghai Catholic diocese has been in negotiations with the district government for over two decades regarding the return of the Jun Yi chapel (尊一堂), located in the heart of the Old City. The chapel was originally part of the Pan family estate, one of the most prominent families in Shanghai and builders of the famous Yu Yuan Garden. The chapel was built in 1640 by a granddaughter of

returned home for three years of filial mourning, called a *dingyou* (丁忧).

²⁷ *Jintian Tianzhujiao Shanghaiqu* [Catholic Church in Shanghai Today]. Shanghai: Shanghaishi xinwen chubanjū, 2000, p. 15.

²⁸ Several Shanghai priests quoted this figure; however, I was not able to confirm this number with government sources. The priests estimate this the property by explaining that before 1949 several large districts in Shanghai were under the authority of the Catholic Church, including a majority of Xujiahui, and large portions of Luwan and Huangpu districts. Interview with Catholic priest W, April 18, 2007, Shanghai.

²⁹ Interview with Catholic priest Z, May 2007, Shanghai.

the Catholic pioneer Xu Gangqi, who married into the Pan clan. Because the Pan family was largely Taoist, she wanted a Catholic chapel where she and her children could worship freely without having to travel across the city, so she converted an old temple (世春堂) into a Catholic chapel. After her death the chapel was given to the Shanghai dioceses and briefly served as the headquarters of the Catholic Church and a small school.

Over the years, the Pan family fell on misfortune. Their seventy-acre estate in the heart of the Old Town was the center of violent conflict in the late Qing Dynasty. Their residence housed imperial troops fighting the rebels of the Taiping Rebellion, the British occupied their gardens during the Opium Wars, and the Japanese bombed their remaining estate in 1937. During this period the fate of the chapel also went through various manifestations. It was converted into a temple to honor Guandi, the Taoist god of War, and then later converted to a school.³⁰ After 1949, the communists confiscated the dilapidated Pan-family estate, and the municipal government spent almost a decade rebuilding the gardens for a public park, which opened in 1956. In 1982 the central government declared this area a national historic treasure, and it has since become a center of tourism.

The Shanghai diocese has been in negotiations with the Huangpu district government for the return of the chapel for almost two decades. The return of the chapel is complicated on several accounts. First, the Old Town area has been converted into a tourist and entertainment center with the Yu Yuan Gardens and the Taoist City God Temple (城隍庙) as the main attractions. According to one local Catholic priest, to introduce a Catholic Church to this area complicates the religious

³⁰ See, Bp. Aloysius Jin Luxian, SJ, "400 Years of Catholicism in Shanghai A pastoral letter issued at Christmas 2007," translated by Michael J. Sloboda, M.M. and reprinted in *Tripod*, Spring 2008 Vol. 28 - No. 149 The Ethnic Minorities in China and Religion, available at: http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/tripod_en/en_tripod_149_02.html [last accessed January 29, 2009].

dynamic. Catholicism, after all, is viewed as a foreign religion, whereas the Taoist temple is an indigenous Chinese faith.³¹ Moreover, the temple honors a very local god—the City God, protecting the city of Shanghai. Second, the history of the Catholic chapel is complex because it was built over an old temple (世春堂), and was later converted back to a Taoist temple. This raises the question as to whose religious community property should be returned. Finally, because this is a heavily commercial and tourist district, the real estate prices are extremely high and property rents are a lucrative enterprise for the local government. The rents of the tourist cites now go to the local government; however, if the land was returned, the rents would be divided between the local government and Catholic Church.

By the autumn 2007 part of the Shanghai diocese's petition for the return of the chapel had been approved; they would regain possession on the condition that the property would not be used as a place of worship. Instead, the space should be converted to a museum. The local government's rationale was that the Huangpu District is already home to two Catholic churches so there is limited demand, the chapel space is too small to accommodate many worshipers, and a museum would fit better within style of the historic Old Town development. The Catholics accepted the local government's conditions and are in the process of converting the space into a museum for the history of Catholicism in Shanghai.³²

Other religious communities' petitions have met with far greater degrees of success, but have also dealt with local state conditionality. Hidden behind apartment blocks in the Hongkou district of Shanghai is the Sanguan temple or Three Outlooks temple (三观堂). The temple dates back over 300 years when it was first built to honor a local Taoist god; however, locals considered the temple not-very-prosperous

³¹ Interview with Catholic Priest X, June 2007, Xujiahui.

³² Ibid.

and transformed it to a Buddhist temple. At the turn of the century a wealthy family purchased the temple and converted it into a private family temple that was run by a family relative who was a Buddhist nun. Once the communists came to power the temple was officially closed, and all but two of the buildings were destroyed to make way for a small factory. At the end of the Cultural Revolution the factory closed and local residents began using the space once again as a makeshift temple; in 1990 the last of the factory equipment was removed and the Three Outlooks temple reopened.

Although the Three Outlooks temple was active during the nineties, it took over nine years to register with the Hongkou district Religious Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Buddhist Association. During this period of registration limbo, the temple remained open for business and its following grew. Once the temple finally secured the bureaucratic stamp of registration, it began the petitioning process to reclaim the temple's lost property—only two small halls remained, and the temple was quickly outgrowing its space.

The Three Outlooks temple's petition for the return of religious property was largely successful. The Hongkou district government was willing to grant the temple official permission to reclaim its land, rebuild, and even went so far to as to issue an official housing relocation announcement for residents living on the former temple property.³³ What was the catch? The local government was so agreeable because the temple's successful petition was contingent on the temple footing the bill for the relocation of residents and renovations.

³³ On December 26, 2006 the Shanghai Hongkou District Housing Administration Bureau (上海市虹口区房屋土地管理局) issued a public announcement permitting the expansion of the temple and relocation of residents. The announcement, entitled “房屋拆迁公告” is available on the Hongkou district government website, http://hkq.sh.gov.cn/WebFront/Sub_XinXiGongKaiContent.aspx?cid=490&id=3496, [last accessed January 29, 2009].

The local government officials agreed to provide land for new apartments to be built to house the dislocated residents, but the temple was required to pay for the construction of the apartment building, the costs of moving, and compensation to the residents. For many of the residents this was a great opportunity. They would be able to exchange their 1960's vintage 40-square meter apartments for brand new 90-square meter apartment just 500 meters down the road. Most residents jumped at this opportunity; yet, several families stayed longer to negotiate private deals from the temple. In other words, by holding out in their apartments longer, they hoped to reap a larger relocation settlement from the temple.

In addition to paying for new apartments and the physical costs of the move, the temple was also required to give a fixed sum to each legal resident affected by moving. This created a bureaucratic scramble for people to change or add family members to the household registration (户口).³⁴ Although the temple was dealing with the relocation of only forty-eight people who had Hongkou resident cards, each resident card carried the names of multiple people. As one temple elder explained, of the forty-eight resident cards, each card had several family members attached to them, sometimes up to twenty people on one card.³⁵ The temple's settlements were to be based on the number of people, so each resident with a Hongkou resident card had an incentive for registering their family members as living within their flat in order to increase the size of their settlement. In the end, one temple elder estimated that they had paid approximately 5.8 million RMB, approximately \$850,000, to covers the cost of the new apartments, moving expenses, relocation settlements, demolition of the old apartment complex and construction of the new temple.³⁶

³⁴ The hukou (户口) is the household registration record, which is required by and officially identifies a person as a resident of an area. A hukou generally includes identifying information such the name of the person, date of birth, the names of parents, children, and name of spouse, if married.

³⁵ Interview with Sanguantang temple elder Y, July 30, 2007, Shanghai.

³⁶ Interview with Sanguantang temple elder G, July 20, 2007, Shanghai.



Illustrations 4.3 and 4.4 Sanguantang temple gate and demolition of adjacent apartment complex, photos by author.

Subsidies

The material resources that local governments bring to the exchange can also come in the form of subsidies. Subsidies are defined as state forms of financial assistance given selectively to religious communities. Local states use subsidies as ways to strengthen relations with some religious groups or to privilege one religion over another. In the early 1990s, the Russian Orthodox Church of Nizhny Novgorod struck an unusual bargain with the local government. The government was supposed to help rebuild numerous cathedrals that had been closed or converted to other uses during the Soviet period. The local government, however, was short on funds and instead allowed the Orthodox Church to import cigarettes to sell domestically and export vodka without paying taxes—both highly lucrative commodities. This created a financial windfall for the Orthodox Church that was funneled into restoring and rebuilding dilapidated churches and cathedrals across the Volga region. By the mid-1990s, however, this practice was gradually phased-out (after the bulk of the construction was finished and as other religious groups got word of the special trade privileges). This did not mean that subsidies given to the Orthodox Church were

coming to an end. Cigarettes and vodka were replaced by alternate subsidies in the form of free heating and electricity for drafty Orthodox cathedrals. Considering the age and size of a typical Orthodox cathedral, and the long, near-arctic winters in the Volga region, heating subsidies can be a tremendous inducement for some religious groups. However, as in the case with cigarettes and vodka, as other confessions learned of the heating subsidies they demanded equal treatment and the free heating for the Orthodox Church was cut off.³⁷

Subsidies for religious organizations can also be funneled through interest-free loans. At a large Buddhist temple located in one of the wealthiest commercial districts of Shanghai, the abbot was able to negotiate a unique loan with the district government. In this case the temple property was returned in 1980; however, having been vandalized during the Cultural Revolution, the temple was closed for over two decades and was badly in need of renovation. The remaining monks, like most religious communities across China, were unable to afford the reconstruction costs necessary to reopen the temple. Consequently, the local government offered an interest-free loan with the understanding that 80 percent of all temple admission fees would go directly to the local government until the loan was repaid.³⁸ A second stipulation was that the local government would have a hand in the scale of the renovations, planning an elaborate remodeling which would make the temple one of the largest and most impressive in the city. The logic here was to transform the temple into a landmark tourist attraction. Finally, and perhaps most revealing of the district government's motivations, was that the refurbished temple would set aside part of its property for commercial development. To comply with this arrangement, two of the

³⁷ Interview with Father Alexander, February 2006, Nizhny Novgorod. According to Father Alexander, this practice and close relationship between Orthodoxy and the local state was quite widespread in other regions as well.

³⁸ Admission to the temple on the first and fifteenth of each month is 30 rmb (\$4.40 USD); on all other days admission to the temple is 8 rmb (\$1.16 USD), which includes two sticks of incense.

temple's outer walls were converted into small up-scale shops, where it is possible to purchase a Rolex watch and sip a latte. It is important to note that the rents of these shops go directly into the coffers of the district government for twenty years; after twenty years the temple may decide what they want to do with this commercial space—either reconvert it into space for worship, or continue the current commercial arrangement and collect the rents for the temple³⁹



Illustrations 4.5 and 4.6 Buddhist temple and attached commercial development, photos by author.

It is worth mentioning that not all monks at the temple have welcomed the collaboration with the local government, but have found themselves in such an arrangement because of insufficient funds to re-open their temples. Many monks openly disapprove of the government's investments in their temples, because it runs counter to Buddhist principles—the temple should be a place of learning, not of commerce. Yet, each of my respondents admitted that the five-thousand-plus visitors each month, among which about half are tourists, has certainly increased the profits of

³⁹ Interview with Buddhist monk and head accountant for the temple, May 2007, Shanghai. As of 2007, the monks were quite excited about the moneymaking potential of the commercial property, and how the profits would be directed at other temple projects.

the temple and the prestige of Buddhism in the area; therefore, Buddhist-state collaboration may not be all that negative in the long run.⁴⁰

Beyond interest-free loans for the reconstruction of religious buildings, local governments also draw other material resources to entice cooperation with religious communities. In the case of the above-mentioned Buddhist temple, when the local government officials faced opposition by monks at the temple to be turned into a tourist venture, they offered to sweeten the deal by paying for the tuition of the temple's abbot to study for his MBA at a local university. Other district governments in Shanghai have followed suit. Muslim, Taoist and Buddhist leaders across Shanghai have been attending private English classes at local universities at the expense of district-level Religious Affairs Bureaus. According to one imam, participating in the courses is an excellent opportunity for religious leaders on several counts. First, the government pays the tuition that a religious leader's salary could not afford. Second, the government allows them to attend classes without going through the normal and somewhat rigorous application process. Religious leaders do not have to take college entrance exams or even to have graduated from secondary school to enroll. Finally, on a more personal level, many of the religious leaders are eager to attend university courses because their educational opportunities in the past were often cut short due to their religious beliefs.⁴¹

The Material Resources of Religious Communities

The collected revenue of religious groups often pales in comparison to that of the local state, but they too can bring important material resources to the bargaining exchange that are desired by political elites and that will help solidify the relations

⁴⁰ Focused discussion group with Buddhist monks, May 2007, Shanghai.

⁴¹ Interview with imam Z in Yangpu district, July 27, 2007, Shanghai. Interview with imam Y in Huxi district, August 15, 2007, Shanghai.

between church and state actors. The material resources of religious groups can best be divided into two categories: (1) public goods and services, and (2) investment.

As detailed in the previous chapter, some of the most pressing concerns for local states are economic, including high levels of corruption, low levels of bureaucratic development, and fiscal reforms that have tightened local budgets. As a result, local states are constrained in their ability to provide public goods and services—services that citizens have grown to expect from their years of living in a socialist state. This is where the skills and assets of religious communities, such as their capacity to organize and emphasis on charity, become very attractive resources to local states. Religious groups are able to provide goods and services, such as paving roads or opening drug rehabilitation centers, which the local state may be unwilling to or unable to offer. Even when local state capacity is high and officials do not need to rely on religious communities to provide welfare services, such farming out of public goods is attractive to the local state because it allows local government officials to concentrate their resources elsewhere, as well as shift the responsibility of success (or failure) to another entity. Thus, the material resources of religious communities are attractive both across strong and weak, rich and poor local states.

A second material resource of religious communities is their connection to economic investment. Although religious organizations may not have very deep pockets, their followers often do. Religious communities, moreover, are able to tap into these resources, which include attracting foreign and domestic investment or other types of “faith-based” business to their communities. Such “promises of plenty” are sought-after by local states whose own legitimacy is tied to delivering economic prosperity to their locale. A summary of the material resources of religious communities is presented below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 The Material Resources of Religious Communities

Public Goods & Services	Investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public works projects • Welfare services • Poverty and disaster relief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract faith-based investment • Christian bosses • Ties to international capital

Public Goods & Services

Public goods and services are one of the most important material resources that religious communities bring to the table and provide for the local state. They can be defined as goods and services provided by religious groups without cost to benefit all members of a community. Economists define public goods as being both non-rival and non-exclusionary, meaning that consumption of a good or service does not diminish its availability to others, and that access to such consumption is difficult to limit. Two common examples of public goods and services are a lighthouse and clean air. For religious communities, public goods and services are smaller scale projects that include organizing volunteer-labor for paving a new road, raising money for victims of natural disaster, or organizing facilities that provide welfare services.

Providing public goods and services is a natural extension for religious groups on several accounts. Religious groups are endowed with dense networks that provide a solid base of volunteers; they are organized and meet on a regular basis, which facilitates coordination; and they are often comprised of highly motivated members driven by strong normative commitments of altruism. Across various belief systems, religious communities also have a strong sense of philanthropy informing their behavior and justifying their actions.⁴² Providing public goods and resources, or what

⁴² For instance the Koran states: “Prayer carries us half way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms-giving procures us admission.” The Bible reads: “You should generously open up

religious groups would describe as charity, moreover, allow religious groups to fulfill their religious-ethical commitments.

The advantages of providing public goods extend beyond fulfilling religious doctrine. Religious communities gain power and influence from the coordination of their members and the spreading of their religious message. For instance, by opening a soup kitchen, a religious group may attract and even convert new members who seek to follow their example. It may also energize its base, which sees its religious values in practice. Religious groups' acts of charity may also improve their standing in the community. Finally, offering public goods and services also allows religious communities to assuage the suspicions of the local state, and to demonstrate their (civic) value to the larger community.

In terms of church and state relations, providing public goods and services can become an important strategy for religious groups to curry favor with the state, especially for those groups who have tense relations with those in power. This is not to suggest that religious groups are purely instrumental and are not also being guided by their own teachings, but merely that faith-based philanthropy has multiple rewards for religious groups, including state-centered returns.

The Chinese underground Catholic Church has also adopted a strategy of providing public goods and services to secure greater autonomy from the local state. In China there are two Catholic Churches: the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Church, which is managed by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (中国天主教爱国会), and the underground Roman Catholic Church, which is loyal to the Vatican. The two churches have been slowly converging in recent years,⁴³ the rapprochement of an

your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land" (Deut 15:7-11). In Buddhism charity is viewed as a road to happiness: "Although a man be ever so excellent by his birth, figure, age, superior power, or the wealth of his estate, never will he enjoy happiness in the other world unless he has been purified by charity, good conduct (sila), and the rest of the virtues" (Jatakamala).

⁴³ Since 1989 the Chinese government has allowed for greater Sino-Vatican relations and the

initial split fomented by government policies in the 1950s. At that time, the Religious Affair Bureau established the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association to manage the Catholic population, and to rid the church from (the foreign cum political) Vatican influence. The staunchly anti-communist Pope Pius XII, however, did not recognize the authority of the Patriotic Association over Chinese Catholics and declared that church leaders who participated in the activities of the Association, especially in the consecration of CCP appointed bishops, would face excommunication.⁴⁴ The church was split into two groups: those who would break ties with the Vatican and agree to management by the state-sponsored Patriotic Association, and the remaining priests and bishops who refused to denounce the Pope and be managed by the Patriotic Associations became the underground Catholic Church.

The underground Catholic Church, like the Chinese Protestant house church movement, is illegal and functions in the shadows, without formal places of worship or state protection. Clergy are trained abroad or in hidden seminaries, and live quite itinerant existences, moving from city to city to remain below the radar. In spite of these challenges, the underground Catholic Church has managed to establish a presence in some districts of Shanghai with little government interference. Members of the underground church credit their success, in part, to the provision of much needed welfare services. In one rural district, underground Catholics have established a home for the mentally disabled. The facility is over a decade old and houses 15-20

recognition of the Pope within China. See Document 3, "Directives of the Party on How to Deal with the Catholic Church in the New Situation," which allows Chinese Catholics to "maintain purely religious relationships with the Holy See." This means that Catholics can acknowledge the Pope as the head of the church, publicly pray for him, and hang his picture in their church (Tong 1993: 24). On the history and conflict between the Catholic Church and Chinese state, see, Weist (2004); Madsen (2004). In recent years, the Vatican has also been moving toward a more cooperative relationship with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and has approved approximately 96 percent of all Chinese bishops (interview with Catholic priest, April 18, 2007, Shanghai).

⁴⁴ See "Ad Apostolorum Principis Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on Communism and the Church in China," given June 29, 1958, available at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061958_ad-apostolorum-principis_en.html [last accessed February 3, 2009].

men with severe disabilities that need constant care. Most of these men were abandoned in state orphanages and never adopted. When they came of age, they were no longer considered wards of the state and had few options. The underground church provides an alternative for these men, other than homelessness or death. The facility does not hide its religious underpinnings—there are pictures of the pope on the walls, and the outside placard suggests strong religious overtones. Volunteers at the home explained that the local state is quite aware of their presence, and that they are members of the “so-called illegal Catholic Church”; yet, because they do not have the resources, facilities, or the desire to care for these men, the state overlooks their religious affiliation.⁴⁵ As a result, the underground church has been able to partially emerge from the shadows and establish a presence in the community.

In Russia, other religious communities that have found themselves out of favor with the local state have also turned to providing welfare services as a way of improving their standing. In 1995, Pastors Paul and Vera Ryndic founded the Christian Evangelical Church Bible Center “Pagit” (Пажить) in the city of Bor, which sits on the opposite bank of the Volga from Nizhny Novgorod. Pastor Paul, who was trained as a linguist and interpreter, wanted to establish a ministry that reached out to the “lowest common denominator of society—drug addicts and alcoholics.”⁴⁶ He chose to begin his ministry in Bor, as opposed to Nizhny, because of its local reputation of being a haven for drug addicts and criminals.⁴⁷ The Pagit Bible Church began as an unregistered nomadic ministry with an unusual method of evangelization. On a weekly basis it would rent meeting halls—from movie theatres to hotel ballrooms—and a large bus that would cruise the streets collecting the homeless and

⁴⁵ Interview with layperson GG, May 14, 2007, Shanghai.

⁴⁶ Interview with Pastor Paul Ryndic, March 09, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁴⁷ Among residents of Nizhny, Bor has quite a seedy reputation as being a controlled by the mafia and a river port for trafficking of heroin from Central Asia.

addicts. The services came with a warm meal, a clean changes of clothes, information about drug rehabilitation, and a heavy dose of charismatic evangelizing.⁴⁸

In a few years the Pagit Bible Church grew to over 150 members and had successfully rehabilitated dozens of addicts. In fact, one of their first success stories—a homeless HIV-positive addict—later became a second pastor in the Bor ministry. Yet, as membership grew, it became increasingly difficult to rent meeting space. Owners were reluctant to let their halls to unregistered religious groups that would turn around and use them as a refuge for vagabonds and drug addicts; the services (which were charismatic in nature) were considered “too aggressive”; and rumors began to emerge that the Pagit Bible Church was simply a cover for drug smuggling.⁴⁹ Members of the congregation who had become “clean” lost their jobs, and Pastor Paul was arrested and charged with heroin distribution. He remained in prison for over two months; during this time he explained, “I was told on a daily basis that I could just ‘disappear!’” Pastor Paul was later released when a network of other charismatic churches in Russia and abroad vouched for his ministry, and reformed drug addicts with inside information about local trafficking came to his defense. After his release, Pastor Paul handed over the ministry to his second pastor, which continues today in Bor. Although the Pagit Bible Church is still unregistered with the local state (and therefore illegal), their activities and ministry continues with little interference. In fact, the church has grown considerably.

In 2003 Pastor Paul expanded his ministry to Nizhny Novgorod and founded the “Jesus Embassy Charismatic Christian Church” (Посо́льство Иису́са). The Jesus Embassy followed a familiar path of development as the Bor ministry. Because they were not registered, they held worship services in rented spaces, utilized buses to

⁴⁸ Interview with Pastor Paul Ryndic, March 09, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

round up the congregation, and, most importantly, concentrated evangelizing efforts on addicts. The second time around, however, Pastor Paul was much more transparent about his evangelizing efforts and contacted the local government to inform them of his activities. This was a potentially risky move, because the ministry was still not a legal religious group, and his activities could land him back in prison. Pastor Paul, however, wagered that the local officials would eventually find out about his ministry, so it was better to be open from the start about their activities and goals. It also did not hurt that they were focusing their efforts on the “lowest common denominator of society.”⁵⁰ The gamble paid off, and despite similar challenges in finding space to rent, raucous services that occasionally drew noise complaints, and rumors of drug trafficking, the Jesus Embassy found little local state interference. In fact, by 2006 the congregation had well over 600 members, over 200 cell groups,⁵¹ and had expanded to three other cities. Given their new size they decided to pursue state registration, and figuring prominently in their application was data on the ministry’s welfare services, including the number of reformed addicts who were now clean productive members of society.⁵² The Jesus Embassy was successfully registered in 2007.

In Tatarstan other minority religious groups have turned to charity projects to improve their odds of registration. In the early nineties Pastor Pavel Yakovenko returned to Kazan to found the Protestant Nazareth Church of Kazan (Назарет).⁵³ According to Pastor Pavel, in the early nineties registration for religious communities

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Cell groups are comprised of 12 members that meet on a weekly basis for fellowship. According to the Jesus Embassy beliefs, “Church is Christ’s Body. The body consists of cells. Cells are alive organisms, which are able to be fruitful and multiply. That is why little groups serve as a basis for the vision of 12. It is much easier to get spiritual support and to confide something on personal level (to the leader) through little home groups....Cells are little groups aimed at apprenticeship and discipline...” Quoted from Jesus Embassy webpage available at: <http://ru.jesusembassy.org/?id=47> [last accessed February 10, 2009].

⁵² Interview with Pastor Paul Ryndic, March 09, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁵³ His family had been relocated to Central Asia and denounced as “enemies of the state” for refusing to renounce their protestant beliefs.

was a straightforward process that required little more than filing the necessary paperwork. All that was needed was the names of twenty members of the congregation and an address of the place of worship. This process changed dramatically in 1997 when the new law on the “Freedom of Conscience and Association” was passed, and non-traditional religions were required to document their history in the community. This historical documentation was crucial for religious communities because the new law distinguished between localized religious organizations, and religious groups—with the former given significantly more privileges. For instance, localized religious organizations must be considered “traditional religions,” with at least a fifteen-year history in a region. This status grants them full legal protection for conducting religious services and some state benefits. Religious groups, on the other hand, are those religions with a purportedly less than fifteen-year history in a locale, and are granted minimal legal protection and no state benefits. Religious groups essentially are limited to holding worship services and nothing else. They cannot officially publish literature, proselytize, engage in charity activities, or invite religious leaders from abroad.

After the passing of the 1997 law, all religious organizations in Tatarstan were required to re-register with local state bureaucracies. For the Protestant Church of Nazareth, this meant that they were in danger of being classified as a “religious group,” which would severely limit their religious activities or lose their registration entirely. The new registration application, however, included a section on charitable activities, which Pastor Pavel explains significantly strengthened their application. They were a new religious group, which had only been in operation in Kazan since 1990. Although there was always a small Protestant community in the republic, the Church of Nazareth had no official ties to any of these groups. Therefore, according to a strict interpretation of the law they ought to be classified as a “religious group,”

which would limit their rights. Yet, they were able to negotiate registration status as a “local religious organization.”

According to Pastor Pavel, what made their application stand out was their history of established charity work. The Church of Nazareth was extremely active in the local community, and included a wealth of details of its’ activities on the application. “Philanthropy,” explained Pastor Pavel, “is an active part of church life and the government noticed.... They [the local government] now even encourage the homeless (бомжи) to come to our church for help.”⁵⁴

Providing much needed welfare services has also helped faith-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) get their foot in the door with local governments. In China, the Protestant Amity Foundation (爱德基金会) has been remarkably successful in courting the Chinese government on both a central and local level. The Amity Foundation is a Chinese Christian organization established in 1985 to promote education, social services, health, and rural development in mainland China. Amity’s goals are threefold: to contribute to China’s social development and openness to the outside world; to promote awareness of Christian involvement and participation in meeting the needs of society; and to serve as a channel for face-to-face contact and the ecumenical sharing of resources.⁵⁵ The activities of the Amity Foundation in China are wide-ranging, from education and environmental protection to public health and gender equality. In addition to providing a wide range of social and welfare services, the Amity Foundation is also active in more faith-focused projects, including support for Christian artists, and the printing of Bibles, hymnals and other religious materials. The Amity Printing Company, located in Nanjing, is the only licensed (and legal) printer of Bibles in China, and prints over three million copies a year for domestic

⁵⁴ Interview with Pastor Pavel Yakovenko, June 01, 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

⁵⁵ See Amity foundation guiding principles available at: http://www.amityfoundation.org/wordpress/?page_id=14 [last accessed February 11, 2009].

distribution.⁵⁶ The printing press has been in operation since 1986 and has produced more than 58 million copies of the Bible.⁵⁷ Some of Amity’s projects are highlighted in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 A Summary of the Amity Foundation’s Projects⁵⁸

Education	Environmental & Public Works	Public Health	Social Welfare	Gender Equality
“Back to School Projects” promoting equal education for the poor	Rural community developmental projects focusing on environmental sustainability	HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programs	Healthcare for children with congenital deformities and disabilities	Micro-credit lending for female entrepreneurs
Tuition assistance for poverty-stricken families	Clean water and well projects	One year training courses for “barefoot doctors”	The “Grandma Project,” which recruits retired teachers and medical workers to provide support for children in state-run orphanages	Job training for laid-off female workers
Subsidies for special education with an emphasis on blind and deaf children	Village road construction	Blindness prevention campaigns	Development of foster care programs	Women’s health/hygiene awareness campaigns
Donation of libraries	Irrigation and canal construction	Mobile medical teams to reach rural communities		
Teacher training programs at migrant schools	Small reservoir construction	Half-year courses for obstetricians, gynecologists and surgeons		
Rural school construction	Bridge construction	Village clinic construction		
	Tree planting			
	Animal husbandry projects			

⁵⁶ Interview with Peter McInnis, Amity Printing Press general manager 1988-1993, June 2007, Shanghai.

⁵⁷ The Amity Printing Company has printed 43 million copies of the complete Bible for distribution in Mainland China, including copies in Braille and eight minority languages, while the remaining 7 million were exported to over 60 countries around the world. See, “Printing of the 50 millionth Bible to be Celebrated,” Amity Foundation, December 2007, available at:

<http://www.amityfoundation.org/wordpress/?p=133> [last accessed February 11, 2009]. As of May 18, 2008 over 56 million Bibles have been printed by Amity, see Amity Printing Company, Inc statistics available at: <http://www.amityprinting.com/cms/EArticle/gyad/qvjj/index.html> [last accessed February 11, 2009].

⁵⁸ Zhang, Liwei, ed. *The Amity Foundation 2006 Annual Report*. Nanjing: The Amity Foundation, 2006.

According to Dr. Theresa Carino, the coordinator of the Amity Foundation's Hong Kong Office, relations with the Chinese government have warmed over time. When Amity was founded in 1985 it consisted of three staff members and two tables in the corner of a Nanjing warehouse. In fact, the only reason they were initially allowed into the country was with the help of liberal (and Christian) allies in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a powerful domestic think tank, who vouched for the good intentions of the NGO.⁵⁹ Amity was allowed two "trial" projects: the invitation of foreign English teachers, and a small printing press to publish Bibles in Chinese. Seeking to build a long-term presence in China, Amity took several precautions, including: vetting and training its teachers to ensure that they would not use their position in the classroom as a cover for evangelizing; following government guidelines in the distribution of religious materials; working only with state-sanctioned religious communities; and seeking ways to provide public welfare and services projects that were desperately needed in rural China.

In the first few years following Amity's presence in China, local cadres were skeptical of its activities and refused to allow their projects in their area. The common excuse was that "no Christians lived in their locale so they did not need Christian help."⁶⁰ In reality, local governments were nervous of faith-based NGOs operating in their region, and even though many admitted that Amity's service projects were desperately needed, they did not want to rely on a Christian organization in lieu of the local state.⁶¹ It took Amity almost a decade before its service projects attracted national praise, and they gained the confidence of local officials. They credit part of

⁵⁹ It was Bishop Ding of the Nanjing Protestant Seminary and his son that vouched for the non-threatening role that of the Amity Foundation. Interview with Dr. Theresa Carino, coordinator of the Amity Foundation Hong Kong Office, June 27, 2007, Hong Kong.

⁶⁰ Interview with Dr. Theresa Carino, coordinator of the Amity Foundation Hong Kong Office, June 27, 2007, Hong Kong.

⁶¹ Ibid.

their success to the insistence of a “participatory approach” of development, where local government, Amity staff, and local residents share the responsibility of community development.⁶² In other words, a participatory approach gives local governments a stake in the project as well as the right to claim the projects’ success (while still shifting away any potential failure). Such an approach has allowed the Amity Foundation to forge strong alliances with local governments, and to grow into the largest faith-based NGO active in the country.⁶³

When religious groups do not have the resources or organizational capacity to develop their own charitable projects, they can still improve their standing with the local state by donating to state-sponsored charities and welfare services. Religious groups may organize volunteers to work in state-run orphanages and homes for the elderly; they may sponsor “state-appointed” needy families; or collect donations for national disaster relief. Contributing to state-run charities and collecting donations for disaster relief has become an increasingly popular strategy for religious communities to demonstrate their value to the local state.

In the event of a natural disaster, such as the constant summer floods or catastrophic 2008 earthquake in Sichuan province, religious leaders stress the importance of fundraising within their religious community. Collection boxes are passed and placed near the entrances of places of worship; details of the disasters are published in religious circulars; and religious leaders speak about the importance of

⁶² The Amity Foundation and local governments first select an area that was in need of a public service and organize a workshop with local official and residents from the area. The locals are asked to compile a ‘wish-list’ of 10-15 projects that the community needed, such as a new school, health clinic, clean water, or a new road. Then the residents and local officials would vote on the list. Once a project is agreed upon all three parties divide up its implementation. For instance, the local government would provide a third of the experts, Amity would provide the materials and the locals would provide the labor.

⁶³ Interview with Dr. Theresa Carino, coordinator of the Amity Foundation Hong Kong Office, June 27, 2007, Hong Kong.

charity in their services and ceremonies. The collected donations are then transferred to the local government office in charge of coordinating disaster support.

It is worth mentioning that donations of this type are part of the public record; local governments publish donation sources in local newspapers, religious communities publish the amounts collected in religious bulletins, and all sides are acutely aware of how much their “competition” is donating.⁶⁴ It is not only religious groups that are competing with each other, but there is also competition among government officials. District level officials also keep a close eye on how much is being raised in neighboring districts, municipal level officials are aware of how much is raised in nearby cities, and the trend continues up the ladder of officialdom. It goes without saying that government officials have strong incentives to deliver large donations, especially when the target is for a natural disaster that has captured national (and international) attention. And for the most part religious groups willingly participate. As one religious leader explained, “We know that the government is under pressure to support these projects, but has no money. We are happy to help and show that Protestants are also patriotic.”⁶⁵

The desire of local officials to “deliver” donations for disaster relief can put religious communities in an awkward position. Religious leaders in both Changchun and Shanghai found their organizations frequently courted by local official to support various state-sponsored charities, from support for rural education, to minority development projects in Tibet and Yunnan, to flood relief. Most religious communities willingly assisted the local government with fundraising efforts; however, many worried about the growing burden on their members. According to one religious leader, “It seemed like every month we were told of a new charity to

⁶⁴ Interview with Protestant minister G, October 14, 2006, Changchun.

⁶⁵ Interview with Protestant minister D, August 01, 2007, Shanghai.

support. The government asks us to give, give, give... and they will take all of our Sunday offering... sometimes cadres even suggest an amount!”⁶⁶

Investment

A second type of material resource that religious groups can bring to the bargaining exchange is economic investment. Religious organizations are able to enhance local economic development primarily in three ways. First, they can go into business for themselves. Such investment tends to be small, such as halal butcher shops, vegetarian restaurants attached to temples, or hotels and spas. Although religious groups’ businesses tend to be on a small-scale, this is an attractive resource for the local state because the businesses bring taxable revenue. Second, if religious groups do not go into business for themselves, their activities can still bring important revenue to the local state. For instance, temple festivals and other religious holidays can attract thousands of visitors and bring significant commercial investment for the local state. Third, religious groups are able to tap into the resources of their more entrepreneurial members to encourage faith-based local investment, such as the development of factories and other commercial ventures. These large-scale investments can be highly lucrative exchanges for the local states by providing jobs and revenue, which gives local officials powerful incentives to ignore the strong religious overtones of these economic investments.

In both Russia and China religious communities are trying their hand at business, and many of the business have become quite profitable. The businesses tend to be on a small scale and aimed at providing religious-based goods for their members. For example, the mosques in Nizhny Novgorod opened halal butcher shops on their property to provide a service for local Muslims, because there were no halal butchers

⁶⁶ Ibid.

in the city.⁶⁷ Several Buddhist and Taoist temples in Shanghai have also opened teahouses and vegetarian restaurants attached to their temples to accommodate the monks, worshipers, and to attract tourist revenue.⁶⁸

Other religious communities have invested in the local economy on a larger scale. The Orthodox Church was one of the first confessions in Russia to engage in business by converting the Danilov Monastery in Moscow into the four-star hotel "Danilovskaya," complete with conference center and spa. The hotel capitalizes on its faith to attract customers:

Hotel "Danilovskaya" makes it possible to conduct business conferences, assemblies, and also to welcome guests with traditional Russian hospitality.... The austere beauty, harmonious maturity, and gracious harmony of its presence make the Monastery a reflection of the elevated simplicity and purity of the Russian Orthodox faith.⁶⁹

The monastery officially serves as the residence of the patriarch of the Orthodox Church, yet it is more commonly used as conference center and retreat for political elites. Most recently, the Hotel "Danilovskaya" hosted a conference for the United Russia Party's State-Patriotic club and the Russian Entrepreneurs' Foundation; the theme was the "Problems of Russian Society's Moral Revival," and how the Ten Commandments inform the new platform of the United Russia Party.⁷⁰

The economic investment of religious communities tends to be on a small scale, serving a niche in the local economy. This type of investment is beneficial to the state in that it is taxable income, but this is not generally the type of investment

⁶⁷ Interview with Umar-khazrat Idrisov, Chairman of the Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁶⁸ See for example the Taoist City Gods Temple (城隍庙) and the Jade Buddha Monastery (玉佛禅寺).

⁶⁹ See <http://www.allrussiahotels.com/russia/moscow/hotel/danilovskaya.html> [last accessed February 1, 2009].

⁷⁰ The January 2009 conference was reported on by Aleksandra Samarina, "Jesus and United Russia: The Party of Power Interprets the Bible," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, January 21, 2009. It is worth noting that United Russia is the party of consolidated power.

that impresses local governments, or the type that would greatly improve a religious group's standing with the local state.⁷¹

A second type of investment, which does attract local officials attention and brings in considerable revenue, is religious ceremonies and festivals. The actual religious ceremonies are not a source of revenue in themselves, but the activities that surround these events can be significant sources of revenue for the local state. In China the celebration of religious holidays can be extravagant events. Temple fairs (庙会) are generally celebrated at least two times each year, at the birth and death of the deity of the temple.⁷² Temple festivals are elaborate events that span several days and attract thousands of participants. As Illustration 4.7 below shows, the visitors are not necessarily only pilgrims, but also the tourists drawn to the performances of local operas, acrobatic troops, folk music, carnival rides, and hundreds of vendors selling their wares.⁷³



Illustration 4.7. Temple Fair in Shanghai during Lunar New Year 2007, photo by author.

⁷¹ Yet, Russian President Medvedev has recently stressed the importance of small business development in Russia, see “Medvedev Stresses Importance Of Developing Small Business” VOLOGDA, February 11 (Itar-Tass), re-printed on JRL February 11, 2009.

⁷² Temples also hold large festivals during Lunar New Year.

⁷³ For a discussion of the commercial side of temple festivals in Shaanbei, see Chau (2003).

Temple festivals are important material resources because they are occasions for commerce for the local state. The local state not only collects fees and taxes from the vendors, but also is paid for providing security. The thousands of visitors in attendance require local police oversight, which the temples fund. The police also benefit in more informal ways, by being “paid for their service with money, free tickets, good food, cigarettes, and liquor.”⁷⁴

A third type of investment, which also attracts local state attention, targets the investments of faith-based entrepreneurs. The economic reforms in both countries have created a business class, the so-called “New Russians” (новый русский) or nouveau riche (暴发户), who were some of the first to get rich and benefit from privatization. Within this class are also those with strong ties to religious communities, who want to use their investments as a platform to further their belief system. In China, these individuals are commonly called “Christian bosses” (老板基督徒).⁷⁵ Christian bosses tend to be wealthy Christians, usually of ethnic Chinese origin, who have made their fortunes abroad and are now reinvesting in the mainland. What distinguishes Christian bosses from other newly rich entrepreneurs is that they believe their businesses and subsequent economic success are a blessing from God.⁷⁶ As such, they use their wealth, influence, and business operations to promote Christianity.⁷⁷ Christian bosses are quite open about their dual identities as Christians and entrepreneurs, and do not hide their proselytizing activities from the local state.⁷⁸ Local governments have been surprisingly tolerant of the illegal proselytizing

⁷⁴ Chau (2003: 44).

⁷⁵ Chen Cunfu, a Chinese scholar from Zhejiang University, has coined the term “Christian bosses” to describe the Wenzhou Protestant entrepreneurs. On Christian bosses, see Chen and Huang (2004); Chen (2005). On the Wenzhou model of Christian revival, see Cao (2008).

⁷⁶ Interview with Wenzhou Christian boss J based in Shanghai, June 15, 2007, Shanghai.

⁷⁷ The phenomenon of Christian bosses is not limited only to Protestants; all religions have “bosses” who are merging their business practices with their belief system. For a profile of a former PLA general who retired, converted to Buddhism and is now a “Buddhist boss,” see Webster (2008).

⁷⁸ Cao (2008: fn 4).

activities of Christian bosses, and have embraced their model of mixing business and religion.

The Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC) is one of the leading semiconductor companies in the world that manufactures integrated circuits (i.e., “wafers” for computer chips). The founder and CEO of the company, Dr. Richard Ru Gin Chang, was born in China, raised in Taiwan, educated in Texas at Southern Methodist University, and worked for over twenty years at Texas Instruments developing semiconductors before starting his own business. With the opening of China’s borders to foreign investment, Dr. Chang founded SMIC in the Zhangjiang Hi-tech Park area of Pudong, Shanghai. What distinguishes Dr. Chang from other Chinese entrepreneurs is that he is also a “Christian boss” integrating his strong religious beliefs with his business practices. In fact, the guiding motto of SMIC is: “We are called to China to share God’s love!”

Because of the investment potential of SMIC, local governments have welcomed Dr. Chang’s model of mixing business with Christianity.⁷⁹ At each of SMIC’s factories (located in Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu and Tianjian) the local governments have built a large Protestant church on the scale of a mega-church in the U.S. In fact, when SMIC was deciding where to build its factories in China, competing municipal governments all offered to build churches next to the facilities. One SMIC executive explained that during the negotiations, municipalities “all of over China dangled churches in front of us in hopes of attracting our investment to their city.”⁸⁰ The photograph below shows the Thanksgiving church built next to SMIC headquarters in Shanghai. This church is a state-sanctioned Protestant church (TSPM), which holds 4000 worshipers in the main hall, and was paid for by the

⁷⁹ In 2001 SMIC spent \$US100 million on building its facility in Shanghai and employs over 6,400. Interview with Beverly Liu, SMIC management, August 2008, Shanghai.

⁸⁰ Interview with Beverly Liu, SMIC management, August 2008, Shanghai.

district government.



Illustration 4.8 Thanksgiving Church, Shanghai, photo provided by church layperson

Local governments have embraced Christian boss Richard Chang and the valuable investment SMIC brings to their districts.⁸¹ They have outfitted each of his plants with a state-state sponsored TSPM church, and helped smooth the way for religious activities. At each of the four factories, the local government has gone through the necessary official bureaucratic channels for building the TSPM churches. Yet, when economic stakes are high, local government officials are willing to be quite flexible in their interpretation of central religious policies, and allow places of worship that openly violate the law.

Not far from SMIC headquarters, other Christian bosses have also opened non-state sanctioned churches with little government interference. These are Christian bosses who identify with the underground Protestant house church movement and view the state-approved TSPM churches as illegitimate. Like Richard Chang they are

⁸¹ SMIC relations with local governments are so close that leading up the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, the Beijing municipal government invited Dr. Chang to participate in the Torch Relay on the opening day of the 2008 Summer Olympics. As the torch passed through the Beijing Economic and Technical Development Area (BDA), the location of one of SMIC's largest plants, Dr. Chang carried the torch in its anchor leg. Press release from SMIC "President and CEO Dr. Richard Chang to Run Anchor Leg of Beijing Economic and Technical Development Area Portion of Olympic Torch Relay, Beijing [2008-08-08], available at: http://www.smics.com/website/enVersion/Homepage/index_1024.jsp# [last accessed August 17, 2008.]

dedicated to integrating their religious beliefs with the business; however, unlike Chang's business-state cooperation, they chose to do so without working through the official government churches. These Christian bosses complete the necessary government paperwork to open their factories, such as securing land permits and building-code certifications, and once the factory is complete and all of the official paperwork in order, they make one final slightly surreptitious addition before the ribbon-cutting ceremony: a cross on top.

Christian boss factories serve dual purposes; during the day they produce manufactured goods, and in the evening and on weekends they hold religious services. These unofficial churches function with the full knowledge of the local state, yet their activities tend to be ignored for at least two reasons. First, factory complexes in China tend to follow the socialist, planned economy model of economic production. Factories are isolated microcosms of daily life, complete with dormitories, cafeterias, convenience stores, clinics and bathhouses. Christian bosses are adding churches to these microcosms to fulfill the spiritual needs of their employees,⁸² and giving them little reason to venture beyond the factory compound.⁸³ The isolated and insulated nature of factory life, including the evangelizing and worship that takes place within factory walls, allows the local government to ignore these indiscretions. Second, because the factories are valuable investments in the local economy, paying taxes, providing jobs, and investing in infrastructure, a crackdown would jeopardize this investment. In one interview at a textile manufacturing plant in Shanghai, one Christian Boss explained that the local government has been known to lean on him to

⁸² On a side note, not all workers at SMIC factories or other Christian Boss factories are in fact Christian. Interviews with Christian bosses and SMIC management revealed that many of their employees are Buddhist or atheist, and they do little to pressure them into conversion. Moreover, so long as there are no religious conflicts, being Buddhist or atheist will not result in termination. However, Christian bosses make it a point to emphasize that many of their employees do indeed convert to Christianity after a few short weeks in the factory.

⁸³ For a look into contemporary factory life of Chinese migrants, see Chang (2008).

limit his plant's religious activities, especially leading up to the Olympics. He usually responds by taking down the cross for a few months until the political winds have shifted, or in this case, until the closing ceremony.⁸⁴

Varieties of Financial Collaboration

Thus far this chapter has examined the types of material resources that local states and religious communities bring to the bargaining table, how they offer them to the other side, and what they hope to gain from the exchange. I argue that material resources take a variety of forms and are transferred between church and state actors to help achieve individual strategic needs. Material resources, in other words, are the currency of exchange within bargaining games. Local officials offer bureaucratic stamps of approval, which are crucial for the legal practice of religious activities; they also provide useful subsidies, which allow privileged religious groups to rebuild and expand. In return for these carrots, local states extend their reach into religious communities, ensure their place as the gatekeeper of religious freedoms, and extract rents from religious groups. I have also argued that religious communities are not only on the receiving end of this exchange, but also have important material resources to offer the local state. Religious communities provide public goods and services, which relieve the local state of responsibility and enable officials to direct resources elsewhere; and they encourage faith-based investment, which enhances local economic development and frequently provides lucrative revenue for the local state. In return for providing these inducements, religious communities improve their standing with the local state and increase their opportunities for greater religious expression. Much like logrolling in the U.S. Congress, church and local state actors trade material resources to achieve individual strategic needs.

⁸⁴ Interview with Wenzhou Christian Boss Q based in Shanghai, June 6, 2007, Shanghai.

Beyond viewing material resources as bargaining chips, there is also ample room for church and local state collaboration around shared material goals. In both Russia and China, two arenas have emerged where church and state actors collaborate around shared material goals: (1) tourism, and (2) commercial development. These arenas of cooperation suggest that church-state bargaining can depart from the single-issue games of quid pro quo to resemble joint ventures. Indeed, in these financial arenas presented below material resources are not exchanged to reach different strategic goals, but rather the goals of religious groups and local states converge in ways that are mutually beneficial and reinforcing.

The Tourism Arena

Tourism is one of the most prominent arenas where we can observe partnership between religious groups and local governments. Entrepreneurial local officials are interesting in “selling” and “re-packaging” their locales to attract potential residents, investors, and visitors. Local officials keen to attract tourist revenue to their cities understand that religious monuments can enhance the appeal of a place, act as important sites of local investment, and points of pride.⁸⁵ Religious communities also often welcome the marketization of their facilities into tourist sites for several reasons. First, the government usually foots the bills for renovations that the religious community could not otherwise independently afford; second, religious groups are still able to conduct services, rituals, and ceremonies with little interference, aside from the shuffling of tourists snapping photographs; third, such collaboration opens secondary moneymaking possibilities for the religious group; and fourth, as a designated tourist site, religions may be able to attract and eventually convert those who might otherwise

⁸⁵ For the “re-inventing” of religious activities as cultural tourism, see Anholt (2007); Wang (1993); Lyons (2000); Yeung (2000); Wu (2000); Huang (2005); Szonyi (2005); Savadove (2005).

have never set foot inside their walls. This last rationale can be particularly important in China, where there are strict rules against proselytizing beyond the grounds of state-sanctioned religious buildings.

The transformation of a religious site into a tourist attraction requires cooperation on both sides. Religious groups must first agree to the transformation of their place of worship into a tourist site, and commit to supporting the tourist industry. This means permitting visitors to observe religious activities and employing religious staff to manage tourists. Such a commitment also comes with risks. As a tourist venue, religious communities take the chance that their religious lives will be trumped or marginalized by tourist interests, and of disenfranchising their believers (who, as I explain above, are frequently the bedrock of material support), especially as of places of worship and meditation are heavily commercialized.

Local governments must also commit to the tourist arena by providing the necessary bureaucratic stamps and help financing the renovations. Such counter-secular collaboration is also risky for local governments—not only must they put up the capital, but local officials also need to circumvent or rationalize central policies and laws that mandate a strict separation of church and state. Local officials run the risk of seeing a small return on their speculative investment, but also in attracting unwanted attention from their respective political centers. Such church-state collaboration, after all, is illegal and such an offense could end a political career.

Local government officials, however, have developed several tools to minimize their risk and maneuver around strict central policies of secularism. For instance, while it is illegal for local governments to financially support religious groups, there is little concern when a local official develops its tourist sector, even if a tourist attraction has strong religious overtones. In this way, local states never invest directly in “religious communities,” but rather invest in the commercial enterprise of

“tourism.”⁸⁶ This distinction is important because it provides state funds for rebuilding temples, churches or religious infrastructure to be transferred through various bureaucracies, such as the local ministry of tourism and commerce, or through the ministry of culture. Monies transferred through these departments are earmarked for improving the appearance of (religious) buildings, such as adding gardens, (religious) statues, and restaurants, or for the preservation of “cultural relics.” A second strategy for local officials for circumventing central policies of secularism is to rename places of worship as “museums.” Essentially, the local state “secularizes” places of worship. In doing so, they are able to avoid altogether registering places of worship and religious monuments with Religious Affairs Bureaus, and instead transfer their registration first through other bureaucracies, such as tourism and commerce or culture. Once a religious site has been “cleared” through these other bureaucracies, the process is expedited through the Religious Affairs Bureau.⁸⁷

In Nizhny Novgorod, the local government and the Russian Orthodox Church have established a collaborative relationship around tourism. *Il'inskaja sloboda* (*Ильинская слобода*) is a boulevard of eighteenth century wooden houses that runs from the kremlin through the oldest part of the city. The majority of buildings that line the boulevard all follow a similar eighteenth century architectural style—two stories, wooden, and highly decorative.⁸⁸ In attempts to compete with other Russian cities that have capitalized on faith-based tourism, the local government invested heavily in the reconstruction of the boulevard, which when complete will be the home to ten new Orthodox Churches. To help legitimize state investment in the project, the Nizhny government declared the street a “historic-cultural treasure,” and prohibited

⁸⁶ Interview with bureaucrat from the Beijing Religious Affairs Bureau, June 05, 2007, Beijing.

⁸⁷ Religious sites that are also tourist ventures tend to be registered with multiple departments.

Interview with bureaucrat from the Beijing Religious Affairs Bureau, June 05, 2007, Beijing.

⁸⁸ The Russian architect G.I. Kizevetter designed many of the houses on *Il'inskaja sloboda*.

the destruction of any of the wooden buildings.⁸⁹ The local government also established a “fund” for the reconstruction and management of the tourist area, comprised of three groups: the Presidential Fund of the Russian Federation, the local government, and the bishop of the Nizhny Novgorod Orthodox Diocese (*eparkhyia*).⁹⁰

It is worth mentioning that the historical accuracy of a tourist joint venture seems to have relevance in the promotion of faith-based tourism. Local states are willing to designate projects as a “historical treasures,” and religious communities are eager to participate. In the interest of turning a profit, local governments are prepared to re-brand their city images with “conscious and deliberate manipulations of culture in an effort to enhance the appeal and interest of places.”⁹¹ For instance, in an interview with the historical advisor for the *Il'inskaja sloboda* restoration project, he explained that the Orthodox presence on the boulevard is essentially a “re-invention of tradition,” one that over emphasizes the dominance of Orthodoxy in the region.⁹² Nizhny Novgorod, as an inland port on the Volga, has always been home to a plural population, and the Orthodoxy monopoly is a recent invention based on the close Orthodox-state relations. In fact, according to historical documents, there were only four to five small Orthodox chapels along the *Il'inskaja sloboda* boulevard, not the ten presently under construction.⁹³

⁸⁹ The street was declared a “historic treasure” in February 2004.

⁹⁰ Interview with the advisor and historian for the *Il'inskaja sloboda* fund, February 03, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁹¹ Philo and Kearns (1993: 3).

⁹² The concept “invented tradition” is borrowed from Hobsbawm and Ranger (1990). An invented tradition is a set of practices, rituals or symbols that induce certain values, norms and imply continuity with the past. Invented traditions are attempts by those in power to establish continuity with the past; however, invented traditions do not necessarily imply authenticity with the past.

⁹³ Interview with the advisor and historian for the *Il'inskaja sloboda* fund, February 03, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.



Illustrations 4.9 and 4.10 A typical wooden house on *Il'inskaja sloboda* and the Church of the Nativity of John the Baptist under construction (Храм Рождество Иоанна Предтечи)

The intersection of church and local state in the arena of tourism is equally present in Tatarstan. In the capital city of Kazan, the local government has partnered with the Religious Board of Muslims for the Republic of Tatarstan (Духовное Управление Мусульман Республики Татарстан) for the reconstruction of the sixteenth century Kul-Sharif Mosque (Колшәриф мәчете, мечеть Кул-Шариф). Such a partnership was beneficial to both sides on numerous levels.

The Kul-Sharif Mosque is somewhat of a legend in Tatar history. The mosque was originally located within the Kazan Kremlin,⁹⁴ but was destroyed during the final battle of the Russo-Kazan Wars in 1552.⁹⁵ During the final days of the siege, the army of Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) captured the city, and slayed most of the inhabitants

⁹⁴ In Russian the word “kremlin” (кремль) translates to “fortress” or “fortified complex,” but is often used in reference to the Moscow Kremlin or as a metonym for central authority. Many Russian cities have remains of kremlin’s that continue the role as the center of local government. Such is the case in Tatarstan, where the presidential palace and Shaimiev administration is headquartered in the Kazan kremlin.

⁹⁵ The Russo-Kazan wars were a series of wars fought from the fifteenth to sixteenth century between the Kazan Khanate (Tatar state) and Muscovite Russia. The wars ended in 1552 with the capture of Kazan by the Russian army.

except for a small group of holdouts led by the Tatar poet Kul-Sharif.⁹⁶ Kul-sharif and his loyal students staged their final attack against the Russian invaders from the Kremlin mosque. Although they all perished in the battle, Kul-sharif was memorialized as one of the last defenders of an independent Tatar state (Kazan Khanate),⁹⁷ before the Russian Empire annexed it and forced Orthodox baptism on the survivors.⁹⁸

In the summer of 1990, shortly before Tatarstan proclaimed state sovereignty, there was growing public debate surrounding reclaiming of the Kazan kremlin. Leaders of the nationalist movement along with local government officials moved their headquarters into the kremlin, the former in search of a new symbol of Tatar identity—a symbol that evoked images of national heroes defending Tatar culture that was distinct from Russia. Leaders of the nationalist movement and various Muslim organizations published an open letter to President Shaimiev in a local newspaper with two key demands: first, that a monument be built to commemorate those who died defending the city from the 1552 Russian invasion. The letter reminded the president that the Russians had built such a monument to honor fallen (Russian) soldiers in the city, but there was nothing to honor the 30,000 massacred Tatars. The second demand of the letter was that a mosque be rebuilt within the Kazan kremlin, asserting that the two Orthodox churches still standing in kremlin yard were built “on the graves of Tatars and their mosques.”⁹⁹

⁹⁶ The siege lasted from September to October 1552 and approximately three to four hundred thousand Tatar-Bashkirs were killed. The 40,000 resident population of Kazan was reduced to 6,000 after the siege. See Devlet (2001).

⁹⁷ The first Tatar state ancient Volga Bulgaria converted to Islam in 922. The state was later became the part of the Tatar Kingdom, Kazan Khanate with Kazan as the capital city. The Tatar states territory ran from the northern boundaries of Volga Bulgaria to the river Sura in the west and the river Belaya in the east. See, Bukharaev, Zabiroya, and Sitdikov (2000).

⁹⁸ Following the conquest of Ivan the Terrible most of the mosques of Kazan Khanate were destroyed or converted to Orthodox Churches.

⁹⁹ The letter is quoted in Graney (2007: 21).

There were many years of public debate as to how to best assert Tatar identity, and in 1994 President Shaimiev responded with a decree declaring the kremlin as a “Museum Complex and Historical Preserve.”¹⁰⁰ The objective of the decree was to re-claim the Kazan kremlin as part of the Tatar nation, and to develop it into a place that would attract tourism and international attention. The Kazan kremlin was to become the defining symbol of a sovereign Tatarstan.

Shortly following the presidential decree, the local government initiated a petition to designate the Kazan kremlin a UNESCO World Heritage Site. According to the Shaimiev administration, the reconstruction effort was designed to restore “the Kazan Kremlin to a state fitting its significance as an object of historical-cultural importance for the republic, the Russian Federation and the international community.”¹⁰¹ In a nod to the plural nature of Tatarstan, the plans also included a facelift for the two standing Orthodox churches in the kremlin, a museum of Islamic Culture of the Volga Region, a Museum of the Culture of Slavic Peoples of the Volga, and a National Art Gallery for the Republic of Tatarstan. Yet, in spite of the appeals to multiculturalism, the crowning jewel of the revamped kremlin was the reconstructed Kul-Sharif Mosque.

The Shaimiev administration and the Muslim Board for the Republic of Tatarstan were hoping to build a mosque that would attract international attention, yet their plans almost derailed the UNESCO petition. This is because UNESCO World Heritage sites are intended to protect existing cultural relics; however, the Kremlin Museum Complex and Historical Reserve required the destruction of a historic building to make way for the new Kul-sharif Mosque. This was a problem for

¹⁰⁰ Presidential Decree President RT, “*O Kontseptsii sohraneniya, razvitiya i ispolzovaniya ansambliya Kazanskogo Kremli*,” [On the concept of preservation, development and use of the ensemble of the Kazan Kremlin], November 13, 1995.

¹⁰¹ *Sic*. The decree is quoted in Graney (2007: 21).

UNESCO officials because the remains of a sixteenth century “Russian” building were to be razed to rebuild a sixteenth century “Tatar” mosque.¹⁰² After significant lobbying on the part of the Tatar government, and an agreement to adjust the mosque’s location in the kremlin yard, UNESCO was willing to sign off on the project and the Kazan kremlin joined the list of UN sites that are considered to have universal historic and cultural value.¹⁰³ The only hitch was that the architects were still arguing about how to proceed with the construction of the mosque—there were no images or historical records describing the original mosque, and all that was known of the structure was the number of minarets.¹⁰⁴

Rather than taking a preservationist’s approach and rebuild the mosque in the style of other sixteenth century Tatar mosques, the local government organized design competitions before a final plan was chosen.¹⁰⁵ While there were no records describing the original mosque, it is clear that the reincarnated Kul-sharif Mosque shares little in common with the original. The new mosque is decisively modern, with polished marble floors, and crystal and gold chandeliers hanging in a lobby; it is monumental in size, making it the largest mosque in Europe; even so, its gleaming eight minarets and turquoise dome look out of place in Tatarstan.

¹⁰² See Kinossian (2008).

¹⁰³ The UNESCO Justification for including the Kazan Kremlin as a World Heritage Site is based on the follow criterion:

- The Kazan Kremlin complex represents exceptional testimony of historical continuity and cultural diversity over a long period of time, resulting in an important interchange of values generated by the different cultures.
- The historic citadel represents an exceptional testimony of the Khanate period and is the only surviving Tatar fortress with traces of the original town-planning conception.
- The site and its key monuments represent an outstanding example of a synthesis of Tatar and Russian influences in architecture, integrating different cultures (Bulgar, Golden Horde, Tatar, Italian, and Russian), as well as showing the impact of Islam and Christianity.

A complete list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites is available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/980> [last accessed February 19, 2009].

¹⁰⁴ Interview with PV, archaeologist at the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan, Tatarstan, May 09, 2006.

¹⁰⁵ The design firm that eventually one the contest was “*Tatinvest-grazhdanproyekt*,” lead by A.V. Golovin, A.I. Ishakov, I.F. Saifullin, A.C. Sattarov, M.V.Safronov, S.P. Shakurov. The design is based on composite influences of mosques in Turkey.



Illustration 4.11 Kul-Sharif Mosque and Kazan Kremlin Wall, photo by Patrick W. Deegan

The “re-inventing” of the Kul-Sharif mosque is of little importance for the Shaimiev administration or for the Tatarstan Board of Muslims. The reclaiming of the Kazan kremlin has been an economic and political coup for both sides.¹⁰⁶ First, the Kremlin Museum Complex and Historical Reserve is the symbol of revival for Tatar national identity. The fact that the new mosque now sits within the walls of the kremlin (which is historically and metonymically the center of power) emphasizes the importance of Tatar sovereignty. According to Nadir V. Kinossian who writes on the politics of city image in Kazan, “the idea of reconstructing the legendary mosque fit very well into the political agenda. Politicians saw the role of the project as emphasizing the new political status of the republic as a sovereign state as opposed to that of a ‘subject’ of the Russian federation.”¹⁰⁷

Second, the successful UNESCO petition elevated Tatar cultural heritage to that of other Russian World Heritage sites, including Red Square and the Russian Orthodox Cathedrals of Suzdal. Joining this prestigious UNESCO list put Kazan on a tourist map along with other major Russian and global attractions. As a result, tourism has become an important catalyst for Tatar urban renewal and development as busses

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Imam from the Board of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan, April 15, 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

¹⁰⁷ Kinossian (2008: 200).

of school children, domestic tourists, pilgrims and heads of state all include the Kazan kremlin on their travel itinerary.

Third, for the Muslim community, the monumental Kul-sharif Mosque has become a place of pilgrimage for Muslims across the Russian Federation; many refer to it as “Russia’s Mecca.” As a place of pilgrimage, Tatar Muslims are also able to use the mosque as a platform to promote Tatar’s brand of Islam—“Cosmopolitan” or “Euro-Islam.” Cosmopolitan Islam traces its roots to nineteenth century Tatar scholars, who call for peaceful integration with their Russian neighbors. They reject inter-confessional violence and Wahhabism, and they consider Turkey an impressive model of how to balance a secular state with religious pluralism. The leaders of this movement, moreover, view Tatarstan as a model for the rest of Russia, and in fact, for the rest of the world, where Muslim, Christians, and Jews live together in a secular society without conflict. The Kul-sharif Mosque also serves as an important illustration for this movement because it shares the kremlin yard with two Orthodox Churches.

Finally, it is important to mention that the 400-million ruble price tag for the reconstruction of the Kul-Sharif mosque (\$14 million) was paid for largely by the state. Tatar Muslims are in control of the largest and most impressive mosque in the country, a place of pilgrimage and international importance, and no financial burden to speak of.

Tourism Converges with Commercial Development

Church and local state collaboration around tourist sites is also quite popular across China. Entrepreneurial local officials and religious communities forge alliances with the goal of economic development, and religion is “big business.”¹⁰⁸ For the

¹⁰⁸ Webster (2008).

local state, faith-based tourism has several advantages. It is a way for it to showcase their local culture, earn extra revenue, and simplifying the management of religious communities.¹⁰⁹ For religious communities, collaboration around faith-based tourism is attractive because it permits religious expansion and renovation (often at the expense of the state), as well as opportunities to earn money from the growing number of religious pilgrims attending religious festivals.

The Songjiang district government, located forty kilometers to the southwest of metropolitan Shanghai, has been extremely active in promoting faith-based tourism.¹¹⁰ Songjiang has traditionally been seen as a sleepy fishing village on the Wusong River, but in the mid-eighties the local government began to invest in historic preservation as a way to boost revenues by encouraging tourism. Religious groups became one of the primary beneficiaries of this endeavor.

In the Shanghai Fangta Park (上海方塔园), located in the center of Songjiang, the district government has converted a Song Dynasty teahouse into the Shanghai Mazu Cultural Palace (上海天妈官). Shanghai was originally home to three Mazu temples, as it was customary for government officials to offer incense at one of the temples before they embarked on a sea-faring voyage, but the last of the temples was destroyed during the late Qing Dynasty (1883).¹¹¹ During the reform period, the Songjiang government petitioned the Shanghai Municipal Government to gather the remaining ruins of the temple and transfer them to Songjiang. The plan was to rebuild a Mazu temple in the center of a Songjiang city park. Building a Mazu temple, however, requires special bureaucratic stamps, even for local governments. This is

¹⁰⁹ This is because the bureaucratic restrictions on tourist locations are more flexible than those for religious ones.

¹¹⁰ The history of a city in present day Songjiang dates back to the Tang Dynasty (751 CE); the city was formerly called Huating, Yunjian, and Rongjiang. The city takes its name from the Song River (the present-day Wusong River), which flows from Lake Tai to the sea, through Shanghai. Songjiang was originally part of Jiangsu province, but in 1959 was incorporated municipal Shanghai.

¹¹¹ The remaining temple was located on Henan Lu next to the Suzhou creek.

because Mazu is a folk religion and not one of the five “official” religions. Mazu is as an indigenous goddess of Fujian province that protects fisher-people and sailors; religious studies scholars generally consider Mazu worship a popular religion.¹¹² Although there are some aspects of Mazu rituals that resemble Taoist and Buddhist practices, it remains classified in both China and Taiwan as a popular religion.¹¹³ Being classified as a folk religion in the mainland means that Mazu worship is

¹¹² The legend of Mazu begins on March 23, 960 CE with the birth of a young girl, Lin Moniang (林默娘, the silent one). Lin Moniang’s birth was rumored to be auspicious, with a red and fragrant light filling the room. As a girl, she was believed to be an exceptionally clever child, had a photographic memory, was well versed in Buddhist sutras and Confucian classics, and never expressed emotion (*Fujian wenhua gailan* 1994).

There is some disagreement among scholars as to the family of Lin Moniang; some interpretations situate her within a prestigious Fujianese lineage, where her great-grandfather was a Marshall in the Imperial Army and grand-father the former governor of Fujian. Less elaborate interpretations place her as the seventh child in a simple fishing family. These versions, however, agree on the fact that Lin Moniang’s father and elder brothers were fishermen (Nyitray 2000: 167). The legend explains that at the age of 15, Lin Moniang had a transformative experience and began to heal people in her surrounding village. Her powers of healing appeared during dream-like states where she could protect those in need. At the age of 23, Lin Moniang dreamt that while her father and brothers were fishing they were overcome by a sudden storm. In her dream-state she was able to help her father and brothers swim safely back to shore. When Lin Moniang awoke from this trance and retold the story to her mother, they ran to the shore to hear her father retelling a story of a goddess from the sea guiding them safely to shore. Various endings of the legend have Lin Moniang’s father drowning at sea or her igniting her house as a beacon to guide her brothers back to shore; nevertheless, following this experience, the legend speaks of her growing supernatural powers and strong connections to the inhabitants of the Taiwan Straits. At the age of 29, legend tells of Lin Moniang climbing to the highest peak in Meizhou Island off of the coast of Fujian and ascending to the heavens. In the aftermath of her death, the worship of Lin Moniang remained localized to temples in her hometown in Putian harbor and then relocated to Meizhou, the place of her death.

By the 12th century Mazu’s cult following grew considerably in size. A Song bureaucrat was traveling by sea and caught in an unexpected storm; he prayed to the goddess of the sea and claimed that she guided his small vessel safely through the storm (*Fujian wenhua gailan* 1994: 180-82). To honor her, the bureaucrat petitioned the emperor to canonize her into the imperial pantheon of gods. Mazu remained the popular goddess among the fisher people, sailors, and maritime merchants of Fujian. As these groups immigrated to Taiwan during the 17-19th centuries, they carried Mazu with them to bless their sea voyage. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, official statistics estimated over 150 registered Mazu temples, and 2000-5000 “unofficial” or “popular” temples in the region (Rubinstein 1995). During the height of the Cultural Revolution, a majority of the Mazu temples were torn down, yet the Mazu cult has reestablished itself across the coastal region. In recent years, religious festivals have been held on Mazu’s birthday across Fujian province attracting thousands of worshipers, and in 2001 Mazu pilgrims from Taiwan made their first direct voyage to Meizhou Island, the home of the mother Mazu temple. Despite the superstitious activities associated with popular religious festivals and the large numbers of pilgrims traveling to Meizhou each spring, the open worship of the Mazu cult has grown in the reform period.

¹¹³ See, for example, Watson (1985); Boltz (1986); Sangrin (1988, 1993); Pas (1989); Dean (1993); Rubinstein (1995, 2003).

considered a feudal superstition (封建迷信) and illegal. While it is not impossible to build and register such temples, as there are dozens of Mazu temples lining the coast of Fujian Province, local governments must first demonstrate a strong local demand. Yet, there are very few Mazu worshipers in Shanghai, and only a handful of migrants in Songjiang who worshiped the goddess in the nineties.¹¹⁴ This raises the question of why the district government would go through the trouble of building a temple for a non-local goddess that is considered a feudal superstition by the state.

In an interview with the Mazu temple manager, she explained that in the mid-nineties the Songjiang district government saw the building of the temple as a business opportunity.¹¹⁵ The Mazu cult is well known along the southeastern coasts of China and Asia, with temples scattered along former trade and migration routes to Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and across Southeast Asia.¹¹⁶ In particular, Mazu's largest following is in Taiwan. The rationale behind the temple was that as the sole Mazu temple in Shanghai, they would draw in Taiwanese businessmen and attract investment in the city. This gamble was actually partially successful. A wealthy Taiwanese businessman heard of the temple project and funded the majority of the restoration; the Mazu temple officially opened in 2002.

During the interview, the temple manager was also quick to add that although the temple looks like a practicing temple with altars, incense and a piped in recordings of monks chatting in the background, it is not registered with the Religious Affairs Bureau. The Mazu temple is considered a museum and part of folk culture (民间文化), which places it under the protection of the local Ministry of Culture, and under

¹¹⁴ Interview with Mazu Temple manager, May 30, 2007, Songjiang District, Shanghai.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Mazu temples have been estimated at 800 in Taiwan, 57 in Hong Kong and Macau, and 135 in Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, Japan Malaysia, Indonesia, India and the Philippines. Mazu temples have additionally been established as far as Paris, New York, San Francisco, and Sao Paulo (Yang 2004; Nyitray 2000; Wu 1992; Li 1995).

the management of the Parks Department. This means that all profits from admission tickets and temple donations go directly to the Parks Department, not to any religious organization. The Mazu temple also does not have priests and a majority of their visitors do not worship the goddess. Yet, for the believers, like the Taiwanese patron who funded the temple, the local government imports Mazu priests from Fujian province each year to conduct religious ceremonies on the birthday and anniversary of the goddess' death. According to the temple manager, "this is just good business" (这是笔好买卖).¹¹⁷

The Songjiang district government has also used faith-based tourism as a springboard for other types of commercial investment. In addition to the Mazu temple, the district government has also invested heavily in the renovation of the Songjiang Old Town, converting it into a commercial and tourist center. A pedestrian mall has been built lined with retail shops, restaurants, and historic religious buildings. At one end of the mall is the Songjiang mosque, *Yunjian Beihe Si* (White Crane in the Clouds Mosque).¹¹⁸ In 1985 the mosque entered into a collaborative relationship with the district government. The terms of the partnership were straightforward: the local government would help repair the historic structure to its pre-1949 appearance and allow the mosque to reclaim some of its former land. In return, the mosque would function simultaneously as a tourist venue and museum.

To facilitate this process, as a newly established "museum" the district government reinstated the Songjiang mosque as a "cultural relic" under its protection, and funded the necessary repairs for the 1989 reopening. The local government also awarded the mosque an annual stipend of 100,000 RMB (\$14,500).¹¹⁹ Such a large

¹¹⁷ Interview with Mazu Temple manager, May 30, 2007, Songjiang District, Shanghai.

¹¹⁸ A Muslim merchant built the mosque during the Yuan Dynasty (1314).

¹¹⁹ In 1905 the Shanghai government declared the Songjiang Mosque a cultural relic and under its protection; however, after 1949 the mosque went into disrepair and almost destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

financial contribution was not controversial because the mosque was in desperate need of repair and its unique architecture made it a good candidate for cultural (and thus national) preservation—from the exterior façade it has many characteristics of a Buddhist or Taoist temple, yet from within its walls it has somewhat more conventional Muslim influences.

Both the head imam of the mosque and the Shanghai Islamic Association explained that they welcomed their partnership with the local government, because without government support they would not be able to afford the mosque's maintenance costs. And, considering the mosque's over-one-thousand-year history, and that the structure's foundation has over time sunken several feet below street level, they need help to drain the mosque after the frequent rains.¹²⁰ In addition to direct government financial support, part of the agreement for becoming a tourist site/museum includes the mosque's successful reclamation of some of its pre-revolutionary property. However, when considering the small Muslim population in the city, rather than returning this land to green space or expanding the mosque to accommodate more worshipers, the mosque leadership council decided to follow the advice of the district government and rent out the property to commercial developers. Where gardens once stood before 1949, now restaurants surround the mosque serving halal specialties, as well as shops that sell sporting goods and designer clothes. According to the chief accountant for the mosque, this was the best financial solution because the government stipend goes almost entirely for maintenance expenses, and the rents from the commercial development allow the mosque to turn quite a handsome profit; a profit that can be shared with other struggling mosques in the greater Shanghai area.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Interview with imam and chief accountant, May 27, 2007, Songjiang.

¹²¹ Interview with chief accountant, May 29, 2007, Songjiang.



Illustrations 4.12 and 4.13 The exterior of the Songjiang mosque and adjoining shops, photos by author

The transformation of religious landmarks into tourist ventures is not always as successful as the Songjiang mosque. On a peak in western Songjiang, approximately twenty miles from the mosque, sits the Catholic basilica of Our Lady of She Shan (佘山进教之佑圣母大殿). A catholic church in some form or another has stood on the hillside in She Shan since 1863, when Jesuit missionaries seeking shelter from the Taiping Rebellion built the first chapel. The present basilica has gone through several reincarnations; however, most of the structure was constructed during 1925–1935, and is also home to China’s first observatory. After the communists came to power, the She Shan basilica was confiscated and the acting Bishop Gong was arrested and imprisoned.¹²² The basilica remained closed until 1981, when the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) regained ownership.¹²³

¹²² Bishop Gong (Cardinal Ignatius Kung) was sentenced to life in prison for leading a “counterrevolutionary clique under the cloak of religion.” In 1979, while still in prison, Bishop Gong was secretly elevated to cardinal by Pope John Paul II; however, this was not made public until he immigrated. In 1985 he was released from prison, but then placed under house arrest. Cardinal Gong passed away in 2000 after immigrating to the United States. See, “Cardinal Ignatius Kung, 98, Long Jailed by China, Dies,” Elisabeth Rosenthal, *New York Times*, March 14, 2000.

¹²³ The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) is the one of the Religious Patriotic Associations (RPA) in China. These associations were reorganized in the 1980s for each of the five official religions in China to ensure that religious leaders worked with the larger goals of the Party-state. These associations are not independent of the government, but considered a branch of the government. The nominally autonomous “patriotic” associations serve as central bureaucratic structures that reach down to the village level and have the task of keeping each of the five religious groups in line, and are designed to serve as conduits between religious groups, the Party, and the state. The

In the mid-eighties the district government approached the CCPA and priests of She Shan with an offer to help with the reconstruction of the basilica, which had been badly damaged during the Cultural Revolution. The Songjiang district government had larger plans to develop She Shan and its surroundings into a tourist attraction, hoping to attract leisure-seeking urban Shanghainese to the more pastoral She Shan. Plans were underway to create a 401-hectare “Shanghai She Shan National Holiday Resort” to take advantage of the twelve mountain peaks in the area. However, according to one priest, they suspected that the holiday resort was also intended to profit from the growing number of Catholic pilgrims.¹²⁴

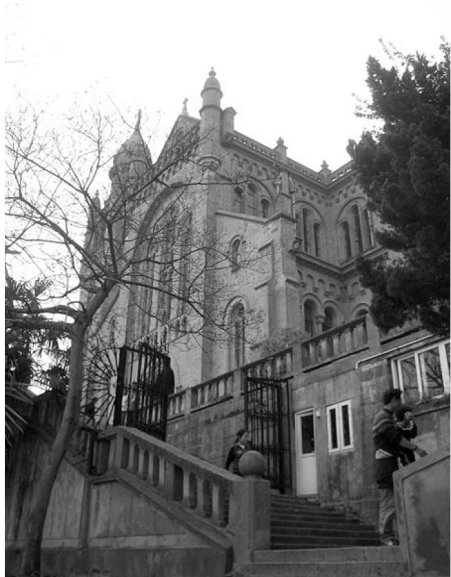
Although many of the She Shan priests disapproved of the commercialization of their basilica, the basilica was eventually incorporated into the holiday resort. Authority for the new park was divided among three separate work units (单位)¹²⁵: the CCPA, the Songjiang Parks Department, and the Songjiang Cultural Relics Bureau. As the Parks Department set about developing the tourist potential, such as erecting a chair lift to take visitors to the top of the peak, tensions rose with the priests. The Parks Department (with the backing of the local government) requested an admissions fee be charged at the base of the peak. This meant that all visitors to She Shan, both Catholic pilgrims walking up to the fourteen Stations of the Cross and tourists alike would be charged a 30 RMB (\$4.40) fee. For the Catholic Church, this was unacceptable on both spiritual and economic grounds. Those attending mass

associations are hierarchically organized and the Party must approve of its leaders. The leaders of the associations are not required to be believers and can be Party members (i.e., mandatory atheists). Usually associations are made up of both believers and non-believers, but among the leadership ultimate loyalty rests with the Party.

¹²⁴ Interview with Catholic priest, July 11, 2007, She Shan.

¹²⁵ The term *danwei* (单位) is used to refer to one's work unit or place of employment. Before the 1980s, all Chinese were assigned to a work unit, which administered housing, education, medical care, etc. Individuals generally stayed with the same unit for life. The work unit had considerable power over one's life; for instance, before traveling, marriage or having children, one had to gain permission from the work unit.

should not have to pay in order to pray, and 30 RMB was a considerable amount for even the wealthiest Catholic parishioners. After extensive negotiations that lasted for several years, the Parks Department agreed to have two entrances for the peak, a centrally located gate for tourists with an 80 RMB (\$11.64) ticket fee and a free, unmarked gate on the undeveloped other side of the mountain for practicing Catholics. As a compromise the Catholic Church agreed to collect a 2 RMB (\$0.29) fee to enter the basilica, with the exception of scheduled masses and on holidays.



Illustrations 4.14 and 4.15 The Basilica of Our Lady of She Shan and chair lift for the Holiday Resort, photos by Patrick W. Deegan

The basilica serves as an interesting point of comparison with the Songjiang mosque because the Songjiang Cultural Relics Bureau designated both sites as “cultural relics,” and agreed to help in the preservation effort. The local government also declared both of these sites as “local tourist attractions.” Yet, there are considerable differences in state financial support. She Shan basilica’s annual stipend is approximately 600 RMB (\$87.30), while the nearby mosque’s stipend, which is dealing with the exact same local officials, is roughly 100,000 RMB (\$14,500). As

one Catholic priest explained, “the money isn’t even enough to pay someone to clean the basilica’s gutters.”¹²⁶

A final area of observation for church-state collaboration spilling over into the area of commerce is over property values. As famously demonstrated by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who had a penchant for only renting apartments that faced an Orthodox Church, religious buildings have the potential of increasing property values. Consequently, real estate developers are brokering deals between local governments and religious communities to encourage the reconstruction or building of new religious structures.

Pudong is the eastern financial center of Shanghai, and by far the largest of the nineteen districts in the city. Land that farmers sparsely populated less than twenty years ago is now home to some of the priciest real estate in China. The Pudong boom is driven, in part, by the construction of gated expatriate communities, complete with two-story villas, lush parks, and foreign schools. In order to attract foreigners to these enclaves, developers have sought alliances with religious communities to help erect new churches.¹²⁷ In the past decade, real estate developers have sold parcels of land at below market prices to Catholic and Protestant religious bodies for the construction of new churches. Moreover, developers have assisted these churches’ governing bodies to lobby the district government for the necessary permissions for the construction of religious buildings.¹²⁸ According to one Catholic priest in Pudong who brokered an arrangement with a real estate developer, this is a “win-win” (双赢) situation for all parties involved. The church is able to purchase land that they could not otherwise afford, and gain assistance from a powerful developer in walking the applications

¹²⁶ Interview with Catholic priest B, July 11, 2007, She Shan.

¹²⁷ Developers have sought alliances particularly with Catholics and Protestants because the majority of ex-patriots working in Shanghai are assumed to be Christian.

¹²⁸ Interview with Protestant minister X, August 2007, Pudong.

through the bureaucracy. The developer also wins because they attract foreigners, who pay substantially higher rents than local Chinese. Finally, the locals benefit with the increase of their property value, while at the same time enjoying the gardens surrounding the churches, the beauty of the cathedrals, and the safety of knowing they have “honest Christian neighbors.”¹²⁹

To summarize: this section illustrates that the nature of the relationship between church and state actors is more multifaceted than the political economy of pure bargaining might initially suggest. Rather than using material resources as carrots to achieve individual strategic interests and goals, religious groups and local states cooperate in unexpected ways. They forge alliances under the aegis of tourism and commercial development; they enter into business together and share the profits; their material goals converge around joint ventures.

Conclusions

The cases presented in this chapter suggest that there are two types of cooperative relationships occurring between church and local state actors: bargaining games and collaborative exchanges. At the core of both of these relationships are material resources, which come in a variety of packages. In bargaining games, each side gathers its material resources around the proverbial negotiating table. Material assets are the currency of exchange; they are a means to an end; and they are traded to the other side with the explicit intention of securing specific goals.

It would be mistaken to suggest that bargaining games are equal exchanges—they tend to be asymmetrical, with the local states usually gaining more. This is because local government officials are the gatekeepers of religious freedom and, therefore, may be selective about which religious communities have a seat around

¹²⁹ Interview with Catholic priest F, June 2007, Pudong.

bargaining table. Although church-state bargaining is asymmetrical, the outcome is not zero-sum. A gain for the local state is not necessarily a loss for religious groups, and vice versa. While tensions do exist between the two sides, bargaining games are not inherently confrontational. Religious groups and local government officials provide a service to the other; they offer resources that lessen the other's vulnerabilities; and they engage in logrolling to better achieve their own strategic goals.

Therefore, it might be useful to think of bargaining games as the first stage in the relationship between church and state actors, while they negotiate with each other to secure their position and influence. Collaborative relations are the next step in the blurring of church and state, where the two sides become partners to achieve shared material goals. Whether the goals of collaboration are focused on the political economy of reconstructing national identity or attracting commercial investment, religious leaders and local officials cooperate and share a stake in joint venture. It is also fair to say that like bargaining games collaborative exchanges also favor the state, but the playing field is considerably more level. For instance, there is a diminished threat of local officials engaging in rent seeking because cooperation on the part of religious communities is critical—faith-based tourism and the spin-off commercial developments are joint ventures.

This chapter also suggests that some religious communities are winning more than others. These are the religious communities on the receiving end of state patronage; those that have carved out the closest niches with those in power; and those that are able to move from a bargaining relationship to a partnership. This raises the question: why do local officials choose to bargain and partner with some religious groups and leave others to wither?

To address this question, it is instructive to recall the “economic resources” proposition presented in the introductory chapter. This proposition suggests that religious-local state cooperation is more likely to occur when religious communities bring desirable material resources to the exchange. The cases of religious-state cooperation presented in this chapter provide some support for this proposition. For instance, if we return to a previous argument of this thesis—that church and local state cooperation is about fulfilling the needs of the other side—we find that local officials and bureaucrats are logrolling with religious communities that fill the needs of the local state, whether that means paving roads or investing in high-tech industry. Local government officials are willing to make exceptions and cooperate with non-registered or illegal religious groups when these groups provide attractive resources and fill a need of the local state. Recall, for instance, the local cadres who openly supported a clinic run by underground Catholics because it was fulfilling a local need. This would suggest that resource endowments do matter and that those groups that are “resource rich” tend to cooperate more than those that are “resource poor;” however, it is the local state that determines the *market value* of a resource.

When we take into account the needs of the state, the chapter further suggests that some religious groups are nevertheless cooperating more. To help explain this observation is it useful to revisit the “cultural capital” proposition from the introductory chapter. This proposition suggests that religious and local-state cooperation is more likely when religious communities have “native ties” to a country. This chapter provides some support that the historical position of a religious community also influences cooperation. For instance, consider the tourism arena. In China there is an established market for tourism around Buddhist and Taoist temples. Faith-based tourism for these religions is a safe investment for local government officials on numerous levels, because there is a demand among domestic and foreign

tourists, not to mention that these religions are seen as a native and integral part of Chinese culture. Faith-based tourism for other religious communities such as Protestants, however, is much riskier. There is little market demand to visit Protestant churches, and Christianity more generally is viewed as a foreign religion (and thus somewhat “invasive”), making it increasingly difficult for even “resource rich” Protestants to collaborate with the state. Moreover, the examples of the She Shan Catholic basilica and the Songjiang mosque presented in this chapter are quite exceptional. For instance, of the seven mosques in Shanghai, only the Songjiang mosque has successfully collaborated with the local state. Such collaboration is only possible because of mosque’s historical significance, dating back to the Yuan Dynasty (1314), and an impressive candidate of Chinese-hybrid architecture.

The enhanced market appeal and historical position of some religious communities is also observed in Russia. Recall in Nizhny Novgorod local politicians have “invented” an Orthodox historical presence in the city to compete with other Russian cities that have capitalized on faith-based tourism. This invention is possible because of Orthodoxy’s special place in Russian history and the large population of practicing Orthodox Christians in Nizhny; yet, other religious communities, such as Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Catholics and Buddhists are excluded from the prospects of faith-based joint venture.

In Tatarstan, a collaborative tourist relationship between Islam and state is also present. This is feasible because visitors travel to Kazan to see Tatar Muslims, not Orthodox Christians or other minority religions. Thus, understanding why local governments collaborate with some religious communities while ignoring others must not only take into account the “resource endowments,” but also the “cultural capital” of religious communities. Religious communities that are considered local or

indigenous have a natural advantage in forging alliances and cooperating around shared material goals.

Finally, this chapter points to an important difference in religious and local-state cooperation between Russia and China. Church and local-state joint ventures are much more widespread and plural in China than in Russia. There is a cash-nexus at the core of Chinese church-state relations, where religious groups of all stripes are forging alliances with local cadres, challenging notions of secularism, and sharing stakes in the financial arena. Although some Buddhists and Taoist have a clear “cultural” advantage in China because they are treated as “indigenous” religions, local cadres are willing to go into business with other minority religions if there is a profit to be made. Recall, for instance, the Mazu temple built on the outskirts of Shanghai. Local government officials constructed a temple for an illegal popular religion in order to attract Taiwanese investment and tourism. There is also the case of local Chinese officials who built a church for a Christian boss because of the crucial investment he would bring to their district. In Russia, by contrast, church-state joint ventures rarely extend beyond the Russian Orthodox Church.

In the next chapter, the discussion turns to how bargaining and collaboration plays out when non-material resources are at stake and religious groups and local states are negotiating over power and prestige. The chapter continues to flesh out the limits, consequences, and costs of church-state collaboration, as well as highlights the differences between Russia and China.

CHAPTER 5

THE POLITICS OF FAITH, POWER AND PRESTIGE

The previous chapter demonstrated that the politics of religion in liberalizing Russia and China is largely a political-economic story. Local state officials and religious groups material interests have become intertwined in mutually beneficial partnerships that can translate into “big business.” In this chapter, the discussion continues to illustrate the closing gap between the sacred and secular; however, the focus now turns to the ongoing process of negotiation over non-material concerns. In addition to seeking material gains, local political elites and religious communities are also simultaneously vying for power and prestige. Local elites seek power to coerce behavior, enhance legitimacy, and command respect. Religious leaders also seek power to influence political decision-making, manipulate the religious landscape and pursue their spiritual agenda.

The chapter proceeds in three steps. First, I introduce the logic of cooperation over non-material resources, exploring how competition for power and prestige shapes church-state relations. Here, while I continue the argument from the previous chapter that non-material resources are bargaining chips offered to the opposing side to achieve strategic needs, I also suggest that the exchange of power and prestige is a riskier strategy for both sides. Local government officials endanger empowering religious communities, who in turn could nourish civil society, establish competing centers of power, and at the extremes “capture” the local state. Religious leaders also risk alienating their base by developing “unholy alliances” with those in power and becoming increasingly dependent on state support. The second section of the chapter elaborates on the non-material resources available to each side, how these resources are exchanged, and the outcomes of church-state interaction. I consider, for instance,

local government officials inviting religious leaders to participate in political rallies to broaden political appeal, and religious communities backing state policies in return for a voice in political decision-making. Additionally, I address the outcomes of non-material cooperation, including the conditions under which church-state cooperation can backfire. This chapter ends by exploring the implications of church and state actors vying for power and prestige, and addresses which groups are gaining the most from the exchange. In the conclusion, as in Chapter 4, I highlight the similarities and differences between Russia and China.

The Logic of Non-material Cooperation

Scholars from Niccolo Machiavelli to Hans Morgenthau have understood politics as the struggle for power and prestige.¹ Whether the actor is a newly crowned prince, a nation-state, or empire, political behavior is driven by the desire to control, coerce and influence. The fact that power and prestige also drive local government officials and religious leaders does not need a long introduction. Power, for government officials, is a vehicle to consolidate authority, facilitate governance, curtail opposition and implement political agendas. Although religious groups' goals and ambitions are weighted toward spiritual concerns, they also seek power to ensure their survival, enlarge their base, expand their influence and further their spiritual agenda.

For both sets of actors, prestige is an indirect pathway to increase influence through non-coercive means—prestige engenders authority and enhances legitimacy. Prestige is tied closely to status; religious groups with cultural prestige are in a position to receive state favors as well as use their moral authority over society to influence political decision-making. For local officials, prestige feeds directly into the

¹ Machiavelli ([1532]1984); Morgenthau (1967).

regime's insatiable need for legitimacy, where legitimacy is the capacity of the state to maintain and engender belief in its existing institutions and values.² Prestige, in other words, gives local officials a "moral authority" of their own to govern, punish and coerce its citizens.

The struggle for power and prestige are relatively ubiquitous goals shared by all actors regardless of time or place, yet these concerns are particularly acute in contemporary Russia and China where pathways away from authoritarian rule have given rise to a unique political vacuum.³ Power holders in both countries are quite aware that the guiding ideologies of the past, including Marxist-Leninism and Maoism, and the more recent experimentations with liberalization and democracy (especially in Russia) have little normative resonance with the citizenry. This absence of ideology can be troubling for political elites because ideology is often a key pillar of power, control and morality in non-democratic regimes. As a dissident during the late-sixties in Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel wrote of the power of ideology to demobilize citizens by providing an excuse not to rebel. For Havel, ideology gives individuals

the illusion of an identity, of dignity, and of mortality while making it easier for them to part with them.... [Ideology] is a very pragmatic, but at the same time an apparently dignified, way of legitimizing what is above, below, and on either side. It is a veil behind which human beings can hide their own "fallen existence," their trivialization, and their adaptation to the status quo. It is an excuse that everyone can use, from the greengrocer, who conceals his fear of losing his job behind an alleged interest in the unification of the workers of the world, to the highest functionary, whose interest in staying in power can be cloaked in phrases about service to the working class. The primary excusatory function of ideology, therefore, is to provide people, both as victims and pillars

² Lipset (1983).

³ For an important discussion of the legitimacy crises in China and Russia, see Tu (1993); Frolic (1997); Gudkov (2001); Chen and Sil (2002); Colton and McFaul (2002); Potter (2003); Sil and Chen (2004).

of the post-totalitarian system, with the illusion that the system is in harmony with the human order and the order of the universe.⁴

Although government officials may continue to give lip service to socialist and democratic ideals, they are quite aware that these moral codes have little resonance and that ideology no longer functions as a unifying myth. As a result, political elites seek alternative ways to reorient those living within their locales, enhance loyalty, social stability and to positively position themselves in power. In the absence of ideology, local government officials turn to religious communities for support.

It should come as no surprise that religion's cultural capital is a sought after resource by political elites. History is replete with examples of religion being used to maximize regime support, minimize political challenges and define national identity.⁵ Such an appeal to religion and religious symbols allows political elites to increase local solidarity and win support for themselves and their policies, particularly among citizens who hold religious values dear.⁶ According to Jeffrey R. Seal, tapping into the cultural capital of religion is an optimal strategy for political elites, because "no other repositories of cultural meaning have historically offered so much in response to the human need to develop a secure identity."⁷

Following the logic of political competition, local elites also have powerful incentives to reach out to a diverse body of constituents, including religious communities, in order to expand coalitions of support.⁸ Local elites incorporate religious symbols into politics because these symbols resonate favorably among the population and thereby associate elites with popular cultural symbols. Close cooperation with religious communities can also permit local officials to borrow the

⁴ Havel (1985: 28-29, *italics in original*).

⁵ Smith (1996).

⁶ Almond and Verba (1963).

⁷ Seal (1999: 558).

⁸ See, especially, Horowitz (1991); Wilkinson (2004).

moral authority, respect, and trust that the population has in religious organizations, in order to implement controversial political agendas and produce compliance.

Moreover, in an effort to safeguard power, political elites can claim religious symbols as their own to signal state superiority over religion.⁹ As David I. Kertzer explains, “new political systems borrow legitimacy from the old by nurturing the old ritual forms, redirected to new purposes.”¹⁰ This helps explain the irony of Soviet-era Christmas trees trimmed with photos of Lenin, or why communism, in effect, canonized its own set of gods (Lenin and Mao), saints (Marx and Engel), sinners (Trotsky and Lin Biao), holy books (*The Communist Manifesto* and *Little Red Book*), hymns (“the International”), and a clergy (the cadres). In short, local government officials are turning to religion to help bring about solidarity, shore up regime support, and enrich their own power and prestige.

Just as local states are facing an ideological vacuum that can compromise their rule, religious groups are also facing challenges of their own. Since the 1980s, religious communities have been rebuilding under the shadow of communism. Although Moscow and Beijing have created more space for religious associational life, and respondents overwhelmingly describe the current political climate as a “golden age” of religious freedom, religious groups must still come to terms with decades of propaganda aimed at their eradication. Religion was a feudal superstition, an instrument of western imperialism, un-scientific and backward. Religious groups were renounced, activities were driven underground, and believers had no choice but to hide their religious identities and practices. The anti-religious propaganda of the past still looms in many circles. For instance, interviews with Chinese government officials charged with managing religious groups and scholars of religious studies

⁹ Kertzer (1998: 43)

¹⁰ Kertzer (1998: 42).

frequently made light of the current revival as fueled by the backward and uneducated (文化水平很低).¹¹ The implication was that an educated and rational individual would never embrace religion. Moreover, a Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) survey of Protestants found that “illness” was the primary reason why people were embracing Christianity in Shanghai.¹² Russia, some religious groups are also experiencing a resurgence of anti-religious sentiment. For instance, the popular media commonly refers to non-native religious groups, such as Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists, and Baha’i, as “sects” or “cults” (секты, культы). Such pejorative language is further reinforced by religious communities with native claims, such Orthodox Christians and Muslims, who often consider their religious competition as belonging to “totalitarian sects” (тоталитарные секты).¹³

¹¹ It is not surprising for government officials to discredit and downplay the religious revival in China because it parallels the larger official state narrative that religion will eventually fade in importance and disappear. It was initially puzzling, however, to hear identical responses from academics studying religion, especially after having participated in hundreds of religious rituals to know that the believers cut across all social stratum. What I realized was that there is an entire generation of scholars who study the philosophy of religion and are housed in Marxist-Theory departments (马克思主义学院). An overwhelming majority of these scholars had never set foot inside a temple, mosque of church or interviewed a religious believer. In fact, their research did not require them too and it was better to not associate with “superstitious” groups and be confused with being sympathetic. This is not to suggest that no Chinese academics are researching religion, in fact there are quite a few, but in these cases scholars tend to be housed in Sociology and History departments, where it is possible to frame their research in non-religious and, therefore, non-sensitive ways.

¹² Liu, Luo and Yan (1999).

¹³ In April 2001 a conference entitled "Totalitarian Cults - Menace of the XXI Century" was held in Nizhny Novgorod. The welcoming remarks were given by Alexander Leonidovich Dvorkin, Ph.D., M. Div., Chairman of the Department of Sectology of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Institute, Chief Editor of the *Prozreniye* [recovery of sight] magazine. Dvorkin identified the following “cults” in Russia: Pentecostals, Moonies, Scientologists, Mormons, Hare Krishna, Jehovah Witnesses, the Anastasia and Radasteya cults (an offshoot of Russian Orthodoxy), New Apostolic Church and Church of the Last Testament of Vissarion (charismatic Protestants), and Aum Shinrikyo. Opening remarks of the conference are available at: <http://www.lermanet.com/cisar/russia/010423.htm> [last accessed March 12, 2009]. In April 2004, the Nizhny Novgorod Orthodox Diocese organized a round-table meeting on sect activity in the region. The discussion included representative from three “traditional” religions that are considered as native religions—Orthodoxy, Judaism and Islam. Participants in the roundtable lumped all other religious communities under the negative umbrella of “sects,” and defined a sect as: “authoritarian organizations, whose leaders, in their struggle toward absolute power over their followers and their organization, hide their intentions under religious, political- religious, psychotherapeutic, health-improvement, educational, scientific-cognitive, and other covers.” See Nizhny Novgorod Orthodoxy Diocese, “Заседание Круглого стола по антисектантской деятельности” [Round-table meeting on the anti-sectarian activity] available at: <http://www.nne.ru/news.php?id=524> [last accessed

Therefore, at the same time that political elites are turning to religion, members of religious associational life are simultaneously orienting themselves toward politics. Religious communities are quite aware that their goals—from improving their image, to evangelizing, shutting out the religious competition, or influencing policy-making—can be best achieved by establishing close relations with the powerful and resourceful. Moreover, interviews with religious leaders revealed that they view the state as a necessary partner, who is likely to be around for the long-term. As a result, the optimal strategy for religious groups to enhance their power and prestige is by cooperating with the most powerful legitimizing institution around—the local state.

The Politicization of Religion and 'Religiosicization' of Politics¹⁴

Just as local government officials and religious communities exchange material resources to achieve strategic needs, there is also ongoing transfer of non-material resources to consolidate power and enhance prestige. The sacred and the secular are again seated around the bargaining table where local state officials offer blessings of the state, participation in policy-making, and in return religious groups promise support, recognition and mobilization. The decision of local officials to turn to religion, and of religious groups to turn to the state to enhance power and prestige is not without risks.

State Capture

When local government officials invite religious communities into the political sphere, they not only violate central policies of secularism, but may also contribute to instilling competing sources of authority.¹⁵ Consider, for instance, regimes that

March 10, 2009].

¹⁴ This subheading is borrowed from Linz (2004: 112).

¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that excluding religious leaders completely from the political sphere may also

invoke religious symbols and seek close alliances with religious groups to enhance their own legitimacy. By transforming religious bodies into “legitimizing institutions,” political elites may indirectly embolden religious leaders and provide them with a voice in political decision-making. The voice of religious leaders may be particularly threatening to political elites, especially because they are perceived as transcending politics and have greater moral authority than political elites.

The decision to use religious groups to enhance support of the regime may also backfire when religious leaders attempt to distance themselves from those in power, as was the case in Franco’s Spain. Following the Spanish Civil War, Generalissimo Francisco Franco established a collaborative relationship with the Catholic Church, restoring its power and religious monopoly across Spain. Franco’s strategy of church-state alignment had two purposes. One was that since Spain was a predominately Catholic country, alignment with the Church provided an opportunity for Franco to consolidate and expand his political base. The other was that the moral authority of the Church was assumed to help legitimize the Franco regime. The Church-state alliance, however, was not durable. In 1971 following the Second Vatican Council, the Spanish Catholic Church began to distance itself from those in power and religious leaders resigned their political posts. Withdrawal of Church support signaled a loss of legitimacy in Franco’s regime and created an opening for democratic reformers.¹⁶ Moreover, because the regime had earlier sought the “blessings” of the Church, the Church was in a position of power to both “de-legitimize” the regime and “bless” the democratic opposition.

result in state capture. For instance, Reza Shah’s promotion of a secular Iran encouraged mobilization among the religious opposition. Moreover, after the Shah fled Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini used the Shah’s polices of secularization as justification for the establishment of an Islamic theocracy.

¹⁶ Philpott (2005: 107-108); Gill (2008).

A similar story of church defection may also be told in the Balkans, where the Serbian Orthodox Church after years of loyalty demanded the resignation of President Slobodan Milosevic and that he hand over power to the opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica.¹⁷ These examples illustrate the danger of relying on religious institutions for state legitimacy; concomitantly, inviting religious groups into the political sphere may also result in political marginalization and at the extremes even “state capture,” where religious groups set the political agenda and determine the “rules of the game.” For example, many countries in the Middle East and northern Africa incorporate some aspects of religious law (sharia) into secular legal codes and national policies, particularly in personal areas of marriage, divorce and inheritance. Sharia literally means “path” or “path to water,” and is the traditional formulation of Islamic laws and ethics based on the Koran that are intended to govern all aspects of Muslim life—from relations between men and women to ethics in business and banking.

The adoption of sharia courts has also been a strategy of some political elites to avoid state capture.¹⁸ Since the end of Muhammad Siad Barre’s dictatorial rule in Somalia, the international community has considered the country a “failed state.” Somalia has been plagued by famine and civil war as various factions fight for control over the national territory. In January 2009 the transitional government elected Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as president, a moderate Islamist and former rebel leader. The hope was that a moderate Islamist would be able to create a bridge to the Islamic militants and bring stability to the war-torn country. To achieve this goal, the new president proposed to implement sharia, with the hope that this would drain popular

¹⁷ Silber (1992); Crawshaw and Peric-Zimonjic (2000).

¹⁸ Under sharia women in Syria and Yemen may only work with their husband’s consent. A Muslim woman cannot be married legally to a non-Muslim man, but a Muslim man can be married to a non-Muslim woman. In Iran sharia is the basis for laws, e.g., Article IV of the constitution states: “all civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic criteria” (Otterman 2005).

support from Islamic rebel groups and end attacks on the transition government. According to the president, implementing Islamic law is “the only option to get solutions for the problems in this country.”¹⁹ This strategy, however, is not without considerable risk. President Ahmed has been quite outspoken that sharia will likely marginalize his authority; yet, to not implement sharia would likely result in the collapse of the central government.²⁰ Thus, the only option is to risk state-capture and accommodate the religious opposition by inviting them into the political sphere.

Empowering religious communities and enhancing their prestige may also have the effect of nurturing civil society, which can be equally threatening to those in power. Recall, for instance, the role of the Catholic Church in Poland under communism in organizing the opposition. One of the greatest challenges facing any opposition group is coordination; opposition groups must come together to determine their size, strength and ability to challenge authority.²¹ The Polish Church helped solve the coordination and collective action problems by using its power and prestige to create an umbrella of protection and shelter for opposition groups. Churches facilitated the early stages of anti-Soviet mobilization by providing places where large numbers of people could legally gather without attracting unwanted attention. In addition to providing safe havens, the Church also functioned as a bridging organization where a variety of activist groups—intellectuals, students, labor, and clergy—could meet, debate and coordinate their activities.

For liberalizing authoritarian regimes a robust and dense civil society can be threatening for several reasons. One is that associational groups provide a ready-made base for political mobilization, coalition-building and oppositional politics. Another

¹⁹ See, “Somali Cabinet Backs Sharia Plan” March 10, 2009, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7935879.stm> [last accessed March 18, 2009].

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Olson (1965).

reason is that associational groups help articulate interests among members, which makes these groups more effective at promoting political change.²² For instance, Robert Putnam's influential study of Italian politics suggests that participation in civil society groups generates norms of trust and reciprocity among participants, which leads to more engaged and active citizens and more stable and effective democracies.²³ In times of political transition, Larry Diamond has further argued that civil society groups can be instrumental, because they enhance "the accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and hence legitimacy of the political system."²⁴ Third, associational groups are seen as problematic in authoritarian settings because they often increase the distance between state and society by creating islands of autonomy for societal actors. Such autonomy from the state can be threatening to the survival of the regime, especially if associational groups begin to act as a check on the regime or attempt to chip away at the authority of incumbents. Therefore, considering the potentially destabilizing role of civil society groups, empowering religious communities is indeed a risky strategy for political elites.

Unholy Alliances

Religious communities may also pay a price for collaborating with state officials. When a religious community aligns itself with a regime or endorses those in power they jeopardize disenfranchising their base and may be perceived as betraying their religious principles. For instance, following the military defeat of France by Nazi Germany, bishops of the French Catholic Church declared Marshal Philippe Pétain as the "legitimate authority" and openly supported the Vichy regime.²⁵ The

²² de Toqueville (2000); Diamond (1992).

²³ Putnam (1993).

²⁴ Diamond (1999: 249).

²⁵ Curtis (2003: 327).

Catholic hierarchy had loathed the secular policies of the Third Republic and welcomed the pro-Catholic agenda of Marshal Pétain and the Vichy.²⁶ Church support was further pledged because “the heralded values of Vichy, *Travail, Famille, Patrie*, were those of the Church. The adversaries of the Church – Freemasons, communists, and the secular – were ‘enemies’ of the Vichy, the promoter of Christian Catholic civilization.”²⁷ Yet as the war progressed and French Catholics learned of the mass deportation of Jews, collaboration damaged the moral authority of the Church and membership waned.²⁸

Alignment with state authorities may also lead to internal divisions within religious communities. During the transition to communist rule in China, Christian elites were divided on how best to ensure their survival and demonstrate that they were not a threat to the new regime. The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) was founded by a group of liberal Protestants who hoped to carve out a place for Chinese Christians. The TSPM was designed as a non-denominational Protestant organization to serve as a conduit between Protestants and the state. The TSPM hoped that the organization’s three guiding principles—self-governance, self-support (i.e., financial independence from foreigners), and self-propagation (i.e., indigenous missionary work)—would foster friendly relations with those in power. Not all Chinese Protestants, however, were willing to be incorporated under the new state umbrella, or wanted to worship in state-sanctioned churches. Theological conservatives and leaders of the indigenous Protestant churches viewed the new atheist regime as overtly hostile toward Christianity, and the TSPM organization as a state instrument to infiltrate churches. The concerns of the dissenting Protestants were warranted. As Jason Kindopp explains, the TSPM “was a monolithic, nationally integrated Leninist

²⁶ Paxton (2001: 149).

²⁷ Curtis (2003: 327) *italics* in original.

²⁸ Paxton (2001: 153).

mass organization. Formally subordinate to the CCP's ruling institutions ('loyalty' to the party was enshrined in its constitution), the TSPM's affairs were determined by a forty-two-member Standing Committee, led by a chairman and several vice chairpersons."²⁹ The TSPM-state alliance fractured the Chinese Protestant community in two: those who foresaw a Chinese Christian future working with the regime, and those who viewed the "unholy alliance" as a betrayal of Christian principles.

When weighing the needs of both local states and religious communities, alongside the risks associated with non-material cooperation, it is reasonable to expect the strategic interaction between the two sides to be quite selective and perhaps episodic, depending upon political climate. For instance, history teaches political elites that empowering religious associational life today may usurp their power tomorrow, and religious leaders are quite aware that aligning with those in power may result in co-optation and internal dissent.

The next section elaborates on the non-material resources available to each side, how these resources are exchanged, and the outcomes of church-state collaboration. I argue that the outcomes of non-material cooperation are far more uncertain than the bargaining games presented in the previous chapter. This uncertainty is driven, in part, by the nature of the resources being exchanged—promises of favors, influence, blessings and prestige are far more nebulous than the transfer of bureaucratic stamps and public goods. Moreover, with power and prestige as the desired outcome, the stakes of non-material bargaining for both sides are considerably higher.

²⁹ Kindopp (2004: 123).

Church-State Non-Material Collaboration

One of the central premises of this thesis is that church-state cooperation is strategic. In spite of the risks associated with the exchange of non-material resources, local government officials and religious communities are choosing cooperation over conflict. Both sides are reaching out to the other and offering resources at their disposal to attain strategic needs. The rationale behind church-state cooperation returns us to Machiavelli and Morgenthau and the ubiquitous struggle for power and prestige. Activist local-states are turning to religion to govern more efficiently, maximize power and minimize conflicts. Religious communities are aligning with those in power to not only ensure their survival, but also to enhance influence over their competition. Recall, for instance, the metaphor of religious communities as economic firms from an earlier chapter. Each “firm” produces religious goods and is in competition with other firms for resources and market share. In other words, at the same time religious groups are struggling to vertically align themselves with the local state to secure resources, they are also competing with one another on a horizontal playing field for followers and spiritual primacy in their locale.

The stakes of church-state non-material interactions are also considerably higher on both sides. This is because as the outcomes shift from profit to power and prestige, both sides have potentially more to gain and lose. In the material bargaining games of the previous chapter, there is a direct transaction of goods and services and the outcomes are clear. Religious groups, for instance, pave roads and are rewarded with ease in bureaucratic registration. The exchange of non-material resources, by contrast, is far less transparent, can lead to unintended consequences, and is much more difficult to reel-in than material cooperation. As a consequence of heightened risk and uncertain outcomes, non-material collaboration is considerably more

selective, especially on the side of the local state that is in the business of maintaining power.

Propositions

It is useful to recall some of the propositions presented in the introductory chapter to help explain why political elites cooperate with some religious communities over others, and which religions are winning the most from non-material collaboration. For instance, Proposition 5 points out that local state and religious community strategic interaction is shaped by the cultural capital of religious groups. This means that religious communities that are considered to be native or integral parts of Russian or Chinese culture—such as the Russia Orthodox Church, and Buddhism and Taoism in China—are more likely to establish cooperative relations with local officials than minority or “foreign” religions.³⁰ It also follows that the same “native” religions have more bargaining power with the local state and subsequently have more to gain.

Second, local elites, even in liberalizing authoritarian regimes, are concerned about building coalitions of support among their constituents in order to maintain order and are reaching out to religious communities to do so. For that reason, political elites also take into account the local religious landscape—and size matters. Proposition 1 suggests that political elites seek to cooperate with religious groups that represent the majority in their locale.

With these propositions in mind, it is also important to elaborate on the non-material resources that each side brings to the bargaining game. Non-material

³⁰ In Russia, bureaucratic officials of the region determine which religions are considered “native religions.” In Nizhny Novgorod native religions include the Russian Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism. In Tatarstan, Russian Orthodoxy and Islam are considered native. In China, the central government recognizes five official religions, but only Buddhism and Taoism are understood as having native ties.

resources, however, can be tricky to identify, observe, and quantify. We are accustomed to thinking of an organization’s resources as being tangible and as amenable to quantification – for example, money, property or people. Non-material goods, by contrast, are the non-economic assets of an organization, including its symbols, organizational networks, mobilization capacity, and access to information. In practice, the exchange of non-material resources means that local political elites invite religious leaders into policy-making circles, invoke religious symbols and rituals, and publicly privilege some communities over others. Religious communities also draw on their cultural capital and religious prestige and offer it to those in power, including “blessings of support,” and endorsement of state policies. Table 5.1 summarizes the types of non-material resources that each side brings to the exchange.

Table 5.1 Non-material Resources of Local States and Religious Groups

Local State	Religious Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in political rallies, marches, events - Incorporation of religious symbols, rituals, ideas into politics - Political recognition - Influence in political decision-making - Access to political agenda-setting - Blessings of the state - Prestige or face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural capital (symbolic support) - Endorsement of regime, government policies and political elites - Voter mobilization - Blessings of religious community - Prestige or face

Symbolic Support

Some of the most readily identifiable non-material resources exchanged between church and state actors are symbolic. Local elites slip religious symbols into politics and religious groups incorporate political symbols into ritual. The fact that both regime and religion appropriate symbols to secure power and prestige reaffirms that “politics is not merely about material interests but also about contests over the symbolic world, over the management and appropriation of meanings.”³¹

All political elites, even in liberalizing authoritarian regimes, must build support in the eyes of their public. The inclusion of religious symbols and leaders into the public activities of the state can help political elites strengthen their base by visually anchoring a religious community to those in power.³² In Russia, it is quite common for local government officials to invite religious leaders to participate in the ceremonies of the state, such as national holidays and political events. In Nizhny Novgorod, for instance, where the majority of the population is ethnic Russian (and therefore “claimed” by the Orthodox Church), during local political events the Russian Orthodox bishops are placed directly next to high-ranking political elites, such as the mayor, followed by Old Believer priests, while imams are generally seated in the third row, and the final row is made up of the one local rabbi. The religious order is determined by the fact that Orthodoxy (the Russian Orthodox Church and Old Believers), Islam and Judaism are considered to be the only religions with “native” ties to the region, and their position mirrors their relative share of the local religious population. As one rabbi explained, “our official status [as a “traditional religion”] is largely symbolic. Although we have excellent relations with the local government and

³¹ Weeden (1999: 30).

³² Weeden (1999: 19).

whenever we need help with something, they are willing to offer assistance if they have the resources. However, the local government is also struggling financially... and frankly speaking, our official status only gives us symbolic support, and never financial support.”³³ This leads to a more general point. It is difficult for local officials and bureaucrats to exclude religions with “native ties” status; however, such status does not necessarily mean religious groups are on the receiving end of state resources or engaging in cooperative exchanges.

Symbolic support is extremely selective and not available to all religious communities. In Nizhny Novgorod, for instance, it is extremely rare for “foreign” religious leaders, e.g., Catholic priests or Baptist and Lutheran ministers to be invited to political events, in part because these groups represent a smaller percentage of the population and the local state does not see the need to reach out to them to build support. However, considering the very small size of the Jewish population in the region (less than one percent), the omission of non-native religious communities suggests that the exclusion of some confessions is also a way for those in power to signal a hierarchy of religious support.³⁴

In Tatarstan, where the population is more equally divided between ethnic Russians (Orthodox) and Tatars (Muslims), the local government strives to send a more balanced signal. At political events and ceremonies, imams generally stand to the right of the Tatar President Mintimer Shaimiev, and Orthodox bishops to the left. One government official explained that the Shaimiev administration is very deliberate in its positioning of religious leaders at political events—it does not want to aggravate the Russian population nor appear to be privileging Islam, which might lead to inter-

³³ Interview with Rabbi Simon Bergman, March 15, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

³⁴ The Jewish population of Nizhny Novgorod oblast is estimated to at 12,000. See the Federation of Jewish Communities in the CIS, available at: <http://www.fjc.ru/news/newsArticle.asp?AID=245831> [last accessed April 4, 2009].

confessional conflict.³⁵ As a result, the local government orchestrates an “Orthodox-Shaimiev-Islam sandwich” to demonstrate their equal commitment to the two largest religions in the republic and to maintain strong ties with both communities.

The inclusion of religious leaders into state ceremonies, however, may have unexpected outcomes for those in power. For example, in Russia, November 4th has been recently created as a new national holiday—the Day of Patriotism and Remembrance. This day was selected because in 1612 a butcher from Nizhny Novgorod, Kuzma Minin, formed a militia to go to Moscow and fight the Poles occupying the Kremlin. This “invented” holiday was designed to celebrate national unity and pluralism, because Minin's militia was multi-ethnic and multi-confessional.³⁶ In spite of the good intentions of the creators of the holiday, a conflict arose over how the holiday was to be celebrated.

Minin’s militia was founded in Nizhny Novgorod and to celebrate the festivities the former Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church was invited from Moscow to lead the local procession. The official celebration began with a long procession of Orthodox icons and political leaders marching around the city, making the holiday appear to be very ethnically Russian and Orthodox. Although other local religious leaders, including Old Believers, Jews, and Tatar Muslims were invited to participate, they were placed well towards the end of the procession, behind dozens of Orthodox leaders and local political elites. Minor religious groups in the region, including Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists and Buddhists, were not formally invited.

According to one retired bureaucrat, the Nizhny government knew the procession would be broadcast on local and national media, and therefore wanted to use this opportunity to signal its close relationship with the Orthodox Church.³⁷

³⁵ Interview with advisor to President Shaimiev, April 19, 2005, Kazan, Tatarstan.

³⁶ For a discussion of “invented” traditions by the state see, for example, Hobsbawm (1990).

³⁷ Interview with former bureaucrat, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

Unfortunately, while this strategy did illustrate a close Orthodox-state alliance, it also singled to the non-Orthodox citizens that the national holiday to celebrate patriotism and unity was only for Orthodox Russians. In the weeks following the procession, members of the marginalized religious communities openly protested the Orthodox monopoly, claiming the local state treated non-Orthodox groups as second-class citizens. The dissent was so intense that local bureaucrats feared that violence might break out between the Tatar Muslims and Russian Orthodox communities.³⁸



Illustration 5.1 Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and local government officials beginning the procession to honor Kuzma Minin, November 1, 2005, photo by Boris Poravov.

³⁸ Ibid.

The frustration felt by the Nizhny Tatar community over the Orthodox-state alliance resurfaced several months later during the March 2006 elections. Two candidates running for seats in the local parliament—Nikolai Pyrkov of the United Russia Party (Единой России), and Valerie Antipov from the Russian Party of Pensioners (Российская партия пенсионеров)—published campaign literature with their photographs superimposed next to Nizhny mosques. The literature shown below in Illustrations 5.2 and 5.3 was then mailed to all potential voters with Tatar surnames, which make up less than 20 percent of the Nizhny population.



Illustrations 5.2 and 5.3 Campaign literature of Nikolai Pyrkov and Valerie Antipov for the March 2006 elections, photos provided by the DUMNO³⁹

Pyrkov's and Antipov's strategy of incorporating Islamic symbolism to reach out to Muslim voters failed. Neither candidate had formal ties with the Tatar Muslim community, but instead were better known for their close ties to the sale and manufacturing of vodka, something the Religious Board of Muslims in Nizhny

³⁹ Photographs are available at: <http://islamnn.ru/> [last accessed March 29, 2009].

Novgorod (DUMNO) actively opposed. Pyrkov, for instance, was infamous for sponsoring legislation that permitted liquor-selling businesses to open next to mosques and Islamic schools (madrassa); and before running for office, Antipov served as the chairman of the board of a local vodka distillery, “Chugunovskiy” (Чугуновский).⁴⁰ Thus, rather than building alliances with the Muslim community, the campaign literature with Islamic symbols mobilized opposition against the candidates.⁴¹

“Medina Al-Islam” (Медина аль-Ислам), a widely read newspaper published by the DUMNO, ran editorials asserting that Pyrkov and Antipov had no connections with the Muslim community. The editorials identified the candidates’ close ties to alcohol, and chastised them for pretending to be “pseudo-Muslims.”⁴² The leadership of DUMNO also planned to publish a “blacklist” of candidates and their party affiliations before the election, which would identify those who were “dishonestly” trying to court the Tatar-Muslim community. Yet, as the election drew near, the Muslim leadership decided against publishing a blacklist of candidates and political parties, and instead, issued a press release identifying the two most egregious offenders, Pyrkov and Antipov.⁴³ According to Damir-khazrat Mukhetdinov, one of the leaders of DUMNO, the decision to publish a press release as a replacement for a more inflammatory blacklist was due to considerable pressure from local and central party elites, who asserted that a blacklist would both tarnish the reputation of Muslims and encourage inter-confessional strife in the region.⁴⁴ In the end, Pyrkov and Antipov’s photographs superimposed next to local mosques did not ingratiate

⁴⁰ Interview with Umar-khazrat Idrisov, Chairman of the Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁴¹ Sukhonina (2006).

⁴² Muharirova (2006: 4).

⁴³ Sukhonina (2006).

⁴⁴ Interview with Damir-khazrat Mukhetdinov, Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

themselves with the Tatar-Muslim community; nevertheless, both candidates were able to win seats in the local parliament, if only by narrow margins.

Beyond incorporating religious symbols into campaign literature or inviting religious leaders to partake part in state events, political elites can also use religious rituals to reach out to religious constituencies to increase support. For instance, each January the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany, which signifies Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. In Russia, the celebration of the feast often includes a reenactment of the baptism, where adherents submerge themselves in a body of water, which is believed to protect them from evil influences throughout the following year. Leading up to the local elections in 2006, a cohort of Nizhny political elites publicly reenacted the baptism to demonstrate their piousness. In front of local and national media, an Orthodox cross was cut out of the frozen Volga river, and politicians stripped down to their swimsuits, took a ceremonious shot of vodka, and then submerged themselves into the blessed river.⁴⁵ With the election only a few months away, participation in the public baptism provided an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their faith and support of the Russian Orthodox Church. Moreover, footage of the Nizhny mayor and other political elites emerging from the icy waters saturated the media for days; this footage was wildly popular among the Orthodox community, especially because the politicians had braved the minus 40°F temperatures to partake in the ritual.⁴⁶

Political Symbolism

Local government officials, however, are not alone in their use of symbolism to generate compliance and build support. Religious communities can also

⁴⁵ Some of the political elites included the popular Nizhny mayor, Vadim Evgenievich Bulavinov, and head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovskiy.

⁴⁶ Focused discussion group with Orthodox believers, January 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

appropriate symbols of the state to strengthen alliances with those in power and increase their spiritual influence. For instance, just as local governments request religious leaders to take part in state ceremonies, religious leaders return the favor and invite local political elites to play a part in religious events. Where local officials may sometimes find it difficult to actively participate in rituals (e.g., Party members in China are officially atheists), they are nevertheless given a place of honor at groundbreaking ceremonies and the openings of refurbished religious buildings.

The inclusion of political elites at religious events has several potential advantages for religious groups. First, it permits religious communities to honor local officials and demonstrate their loyalty to those in power. Political elites often welcome the invitation because it gives them opportunities to expand their base of support in communities where they may otherwise have little influence. Second, the inclusion of political elites in rituals and ceremonies also helps religious groups demystify their activities, and help demonstrate that they have nothing to hide from the state. Finally, the presence of the local officials at temple and church openings helps legitimize the religious community as both legal and something that is tolerated (if not supported) by those in power. Moreover, religious openings are generally covered in the local media and a visual linkage of a religious community with those in power can be particularly valuable for religious groups, especially among those that have been labeled as sects and cults in the popular media, or are viewed as foreign religions.

Beyond inviting political elites to participate in rituals, religious communities may also adopt the discursive tropes of the regime to strengthen alliances with those in power. The strategy of assuming the language of the state is a reoccurring theme among associational groups and protesters in China. Kevin O'Brien writes of farmers as "rightful resisters," who frame their grievances against local cadres by adopting the

rhetoric and policies of the state.⁴⁷ Ching Kwan Lee examines the resurrection of Cultural Revolution-era slogans by laid-off workers as ploys they use to help insulate them from state crackdown.⁴⁸ Mobilizing behind banners reading “Yes to Socialism, No to Capitalism!” and “Long Live the Working Class!” can have a talisman effect on protestors, helping to shield them from harm.

Even in times of increased liberalization, religious communities have also gone to great lengths to adopt the language of the state. Although the needs and goals of religious communities are often quite different than those of protesting farmers and laborers, both types of actors are using state discourse to signal loyalty, to demonstrate that their actions and activities support, rather than subvert, the authority of the state. A strategy of redeploying the language of the state and “playing by the rules” is also a reoccurring theme in Chinese politics. Elizabeth J. Perry suggests,

today’s protests perpetuate certain core features of both Mao-era and pre-Mao-era protests. Among these features is a pronounced penchant on the part of protestors to advance their claims within the “legitimate” boundaries authorized by the central state. To be sure, these boundaries have shifted in significant ways over time – as a result of state initiatives as well as societal innovation. But whether we are talking about the pre- or post-1989 reform-era period or for that matter about the Maoist era (or even Republican or imperial periods) that preceded them, Chinese protestors have shown a consistent tendency to “play by the rules.”⁴⁹

This quotation suggests that generations of societal actors, including protestors and religious communities, have gone to considerable lengths to demonstrate their loyalty to the regime in order to pursue their own agenda. The implication of such a strategy is, of course, “to undergrid more than to undermine, the authority of the state.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See O’Brien (1995); Li and O’Brien (1996).

⁴⁸ Lee (2003: 80-81).

⁴⁹ Perry (2008: 5).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

In recent years, the leaders of the five official religions in China have consciously adopted the language of “harmonious society” (和谐社会)—the new Party mantra.⁵¹ In 2005, President Hu Jintao gave a speech to provincial level officials and cadres on the importance of building a “harmonious society”—a society that achieves balance between economic growth and social development.⁵² According to Hu, a harmonious society at its core should feature “democracy, rule of law, equality, justice, sincerity, amity and vitality.”⁵³ These ideals are crucial for China’s progress because “the reforms and opening-up of the past two and a half decades have brought prosperity for many Chinese citizens. But at the same time, problems, such as corrupt officials, the widening gap between the rich and poor, conflict between an increasing demand for energy and exhausting natural resources available, and the lack of an effective social welfare system, are crying out for solutions.”⁵⁴

Since President Hu’s 2005 speech calling for “harmony,” the phrase has permeated all aspects of economic, political, cultural and social life.⁵⁵ According to John Deluhry, the viral spread of “harmony” is both obligatory and voluntary: “In the case of the media directly controlled by the government, the quantum leap in allusions to ‘harmony’ was obligatory. In other instances—for example, academics seeking to influence policymakers—references to ‘harmonious society’ seem to purchase acceptability at little cost. Who doesn’t want harmony, after all?”⁵⁶

⁵¹ “China’s religious leaders urged to play ‘active role’ in achieving social harmony,” *People’s Daily*, February 13, 2007.

⁵² “Building Harmonious Society Crucial for China’ Progress: Hu” *People’s Daily*, June 27, 2005.

⁵³ *Ibid.*; “NPC deputy proposed inking ‘harmonious society’ into Constitution, *Xinhua*, August 03, 2005.

⁵⁴ Wu (2005: 3).

⁵⁵ For instance, a search of the largest Chinese journal database shows that in 2003 only 30 articles referenced “harmony;” in 2005, however, following Hu’s speech the number jumped to over 6,600. See, Delury (2008: 39).

⁵⁶ Delury (2008: 40).

Religious communities have also adopted the official language of “harmony” to pursue spiritual agendas and demonstrate loyalty to those in power. In 2006 China hosted the first World Buddhist Forum entitled “In Search of Peace and Harmony.”⁵⁷ The theme and opening remarks of the conference advocated a “harmonious coexistence of mankind and nature, a natural extension of President Hu Jintao’s ‘harmonious world concept.’”⁵⁸ The conference additionally focused on the spiritual agenda of Buddhism, suggesting it might play a geo-political role as an important bridge between China and other ASEAN countries. The *China Daily*, for instance, reported that:

Buddhism could provide this important spiritual link and affinity to transnational Asian societies that seek a better tomorrow, but not just through materialism alone, as the frantic pace of economic growth and development unfortunately dictates today. As Asian societies “modernize,” there is an urgent need for them to seek religious directions to fill the moral void. Buddhism, with its philosophy of peace and harmony, could provide this important linkage.⁵⁹

Other official religious communities in China have also incorporated the language of “harmony” in their printed materials and religious activities to show their loyalty and compatibility with the regime. In fact, in interviews with religious leaders I often asked about their religion’s influence on the local community. The responses sounded like pre-approved recordings—Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Taoist religious leaders alike invariably spoke of “promoting a harmonious society.”

Religious communities are quite aware that adopting the language of the state can help legitimize their goals and limit suspicions of their activities. One Protestant minister, for instance, explained that when she knew bureaucrats from the Religious

⁵⁷ The Buddhist Association of China and the China Religious Culture Communications Association organized the forum. Over 1,250 delegates, including Buddhist leaders, scholars and government officials from 34 countries participated.

⁵⁸ See “Buddhism may act as a ‘Harmonious Bridge,’” *The China Daily*, August 26, 2006.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Affairs or Public Security Bureau would be visiting her church, she tried to draw on Bible passages that spoke of harmony. Although in her sermons she never mentions government policies directly, she explained that integrating “harmonious” themes into her sermons helped educate the atheist cadres that Christianity is compatible with the agenda of the government. Moreover, she hoped it would send a clear message that the state has nothing to fear from Chinese Christians.⁶⁰

Skeptics may argue that religious communities only adopt the “harmonizing” rhetoric of the state because failure to do so would increase state suspicions and lead to suppression. If this were the case, we might expect to find all religious groups re-deploying the rhetoric of the state to put their loyalty on display. Religious communities, in other words, would be the modern day equivalent of Havel’s greengrocer. The greengrocer hangs a poster reading “Workers of the World Unite!” in his shop window, not because he is compelled to do so, but “simply because it has been done that way for years, because everyone does it, and because that is the way it has to be. If he were to refuse, there could be trouble.”⁶¹ Religious communities in China, however, differ from the greengrocer there in two respects. First, there is considerable variation in the types of state symbols and slogans that religious groups adopt, and some religions are much more assertive in performing their loyalty. Second, the motivation behind invoking symbols is not to avoid conflict or remain below the state radar, but instead to advertise state support. Religious communities are politically savvy actors and know that adopting the language and slogans of the state will allow them to negotiate better bargains.

Like Havel’s greengrocer, some religious communities in China do hang state slogans in their places of worship, yet there is considerable diversity in the slogans

⁶⁰ Interview with Protestant minister, June 2006, Shanghai.

⁶¹ Havel (1990: 28).

they select. Within a majority of the mosques in Changchun and Shanghai, religious leaders voluntarily display posters reading: “Love your country, love your religion!” (爱国爱教!) or “Love your country, love your religion, United we progress!” (爱国爱教, 团结进步!). Although other religious communities are familiar with this state slogan, I only observed this slogan posted in mosques. This raises the question, when given a menu of state slogans to choose from, why the Muslim community privileges this slogan over others?

Interviews suggested that “Love your country, love your religion!” holds particular meaning among the Muslim community.⁶² Islam in China is considered to be a minority religion, not only because the number of believers is quite small, (less than 2 percent of the population), but also because Muslims generally are ethnic minorities.⁶³ Among these diverse minority populations, relations with the central government range from peaceful and largely assimilated, such as the Hui population, to outright animosity, as in cases where the state has linked the Uighurs to separatism and terrorism. In Shanghai and Changchun, where the majority of the Muslim population is Hui, but also includes Muslims from more contentious regions like Xingjiang, one Imam explained that following the September 11, 2001 attacks there were heightened suspicions against the Muslim community. Hanging a “Love your country, love your religion” poster above the mosque entrance helped signal support of the regime, and that the mosque was not a front for organizing terrorist activities.⁶⁴

Buddhist and Taoist temples have taken to more aggressive strategies to demonstrate their support for policies of the regime, yet tend to draw on more recent

⁶² I am grateful to Wang Jianping for pointing out that state-slogans, such as “Love your country, love your religion!” (爱国爱教!), began appearing in mosques across China in the 1950s. Although there is no direct quotation in the Koran, Wang explains that the idea of submitting to authority is compatible with many ideas in Islamic teachings, and, therefore, this slogan was quite popular in mosques.

⁶³ The Chinese government recognizes 55 minority groups, 10 of which are predominately Muslim, including: Hui, Uighur, Kazah, Dongxiang, Kyrgyz, Salar, Tajik, Uzeek, Bonan, and Tatar.

⁶⁴ Interview with imam, July 2006, Shanghai.

state slogans. In several districts of Shanghai, for example, it is not unusual to find large red propaganda banners draping across temple gates with slogans calling for action, including:

Safeguard religion, peaceful relations and a harmonious society!

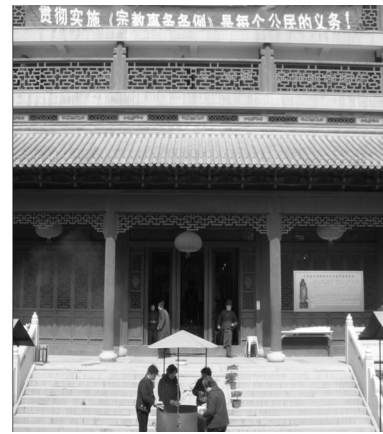
To implement and carry out the Religious Affairs Regulations is every workers duty!

Majority and minority nations must work together and unite for an affluent development!

Encourage the education of law and enhance the quality of law for all citizens!

When inquiring about the origins of these banners, Buddhist monks and Taoist priests explained that they are provided by the district-level Religious Affairs Bureau. However, religious leaders made it clear that it was not mandatory for temples to hang the banners, and if the temple chooses not to display to banner there are no repercussions. Nevertheless, the monks of the temple chose to hang the banners as a ways to demonstrate their patriotism (爱国) and harmony with the state.⁶⁵ As for the frequency of the banners, during the summer of 2006, roughly one-third of Buddhist and Taoist temples in Shanghai displayed propaganda banners; however, it is worth mentioning that such banners were more common in “active” temples than “tourist” temples. This would imply that the banners are aimed at adherents and not tourists.

⁶⁵ Interview with Buddhist monks, July 2006, Shanghai.



Illustrations 5.4 And 5.5 Propaganda banners at a Shanghai Taoist temple, photos by author.⁶⁶

In an interesting point of comparison, Protestants and Catholics religious leaders residing in the same districts as the Taoist temple shown above also revealed that they too had been offered the red banners. Yet, not wanting to invite the state propaganda inside the walls of their churches, they found ways to politely decline the banners, or accepted the banners and never hung them. One Catholic priest explained that several years ago he was visited by a young bureaucrat who presented him with a large red banner reading, “It is good to have just one child!” (只生一个孩子好!). The bureaucrat was promoting the national one-child policy and insistent that the priest hang the banner outside of his church to show support for the national campaign. The priest, who had lived through the Cultural Revolution, politely refused and explained that his church would be a place only for religious worship. Privately, however, the priest also made clear that even though the leadership of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA, 中国天主教爱国会) officially supports the one-child policy, he did not want his church to promote something that the Vatican openly opposes. Since this encounter, the priest joked that local bureaucrats have

⁶⁶ The banners read: 贯彻实施“宗教事务条例”，维护宗教和睦社会和谐！ [Implement and Carry out the Religious Affairs Regulations, Safeguard Religion, Peaceful Relations and a Harmonious Society!] and 贯彻实施“宗教事务条例”，是每个公民的义务！ [To Implement and Carry out the Religious Affairs Regulations is Every Workers Duty!].

simply stopped offering him propaganda posters, knowing he will continue to refuse their “gifts.”⁶⁷

All of this points to a more general observation. Both local government officials and religious leaders are readily borrowing the symbols, rituals and rhetoric from each other to achieve individual strategic needs. Local government officials invoke religious symbols and participate in rituals to expand their bases of support. At the same time, religious communities re-deploy the rhetoric of the regime to demonstrate their loyalty and pursue their own spiritual agenda. For both sets of actors, the exchange of symbolic non-material resources reveals the indirect ways each side attempts to achieve its strategic needs and goals. Symbols, rituals and rhetoric are used to signal preferences, indirect support and loyalty.

The exchange of such resources, however, is not without limitations. Recall the two candidates who grossly miscalculated the effectiveness of campaign literature that superimposed their photos next to mosques. This suggests that the religion-regime transfer of symbols, rituals and rhetoric requires both a willingness to offer these non-material resources to the other, and a shared understanding of what these symbolic resources entail. Imagine, for instance, the repercussions if Barak Obama had traveled to Ithaca, New York during the presidential election campaign, cut a cross into the ice of Cayuga Lake and then submerged himself in the frigid waters to demonstrate his piousness. The local electorate at best might have questioned his sanity, and at worst such a stunt would have cost him the election. Yet, within the heavily Orthodox culture of the Russian Federation, reenacting the baptism of Jesus in -40°F temperatures is a calculated political move. The exchange of symbolic resources between religious communities and local state officials illustrates the indirect exchange of non-material resources. Performing rituals and hanging slogans

⁶⁷ Interview with Catholic priest L, July 2006, Shanghai.

are calculated strategies to achieve specific outcomes. Yet, beyond the trading of symbols, the following section demonstrates that both religious groups and local government officials also engage in formal support of the other—the connotative symbolic world is being supplemented with outright endorsements.

Endorsements

Beyond symbolic support, some local political elites and religious leaders bring formal endorsements to the bargaining table. Both sides move beyond the symbolic, indirect and implicit ways of support and offer outright endorsements of the other. For religious communities, this can include backing a political candidate in an election or state policy. According to Anthony Gill, religious leaders then to have a comparative advantage in the trust market, making a “blessing” an attractive resource for local elites. Alternately, an endorsement from local political elites means open public support of a religious community, even when this may go against central religious policies.

In both Russia and China laws and policies strongly discourage religious groups’ participation in politics; nevertheless, some are openly bending the rules to endorse political candidates. Among the diverse religious communities in Nizhny Novgorod, the “Old Believers” (Старообрядцы) play one of the most active roles in campaign politics, endorsing candidates and publishing suggested voting lists for members of their community. Such political savvy is surprising, not only because religious groups meddling in politics is illegal in Russia, but also because the Old Believer’s have a history of denouncing political authority, rejecting modernity, and preferring seclusion.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ For instance, Old Believers declared Peter the Great the antichrist after he imposed a double tax on them for refusing to shave their beards.

Old Believers are Orthodox Christians who split from the Russian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century, because they rejected the liturgical reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon.⁶⁹ After the split, the dissenters, who are sometimes called “Raskolniki” (Раскольники), divided into several factions to survive. Some groups resettled in Siberia, others immigrated as far as Oregon, but most worshiped in secret communities to avoid persecution. Old Believers remain scattered across Russia, but as a religious community they are best known for their adherence to tradition, preference for isolation and deep suspicions of outsiders. Yet since the mid-nineties the Old Believers of Nizhny Novgorod have become important political players.⁷⁰ Sergei Rudakov, the editor of the newspaper “Old Believer” (Старообрядецъ), explained that after the collapse of the Soviet Union democratic elections and campaigning was in its infancy; as a result, the newspaper began endorsing candidates to not only demonstrate their support and gratitude to political allies, but also to educate their community about the most amiable candidates.⁷¹

Endorsements by the newspaper are always given to candidates with familial ties to the Old Believers, but the newspaper also actively supports Russian Orthodox candidates. For instance, before local parliamentary elections in 1998 the newspaper endorsed two candidates, describing them as “people, who in a difficult moment always arrive with help” (Люди, которые в трудную минуту всегда приходили на помощь).⁷² Although neither candidate practiced the Old Believer faith, they had

⁶⁹ Some of the controversial changes introduced by Patriarch Nikon included: a sign of the cross made with three, rather than two fingers; baptisms that did not involve complete submersion in water, (i.e. sprinkling of water on children was allowed); and religious processions that moved in a clockwise pattern, rather than counter-clockwise.

⁷⁰ The Old Believer population in the Nizhny Novgorod region is approximate 80,000. The community has roughly 200 places of worship, which included churches, prayer houses and designated places in the forest. Interview with Sergei Vladimirovich Rudakov, editor of Старообрядецъ [Old Believer] newspaper, March 13, 2006.

⁷¹ Interview with Sergei Valdimirovich Rudakov, editor of Старообрядецъ [Old Believer] newspaper, March 13, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod. The endorsements generally provide a brief biographical sketch and highlighting the candidate’s connections, if any, to the Old Believer community.

⁷² “People, who in difficult times always arrive with help,” Старообрядецъ [Old Believer], March

helped the community secure bureaucratic stamps to open a printing press. Outside of election cycles, the newspaper is also used as a platform to endorse political elites who have favorable relations with the community. In 2001, for example, the newspaper endorsed the vice-governor Alexander Vasil'evich Batyrev, who happens to be a devout Orthodox, for his support with restoring places of worship.⁷³ The editor explained that the stereotypes of Old Believers—as a community of recluses shrouded in mysticism, shunning modernity and rejecting Westernization—are grossly exaggerated. The Old Believers are politically active because they are a marginalized religious group living in the shadow of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁷⁴

The extent of the Old Believer's political activism is quite unusual among the religious groups in the region. Father Igor, the editor of the Russian Orthodox Nizhny Novgorod Diocese Bulletin (*Нижегородские епархиальные ведомости*), explained that although individual priests may have strong opinions about local politics and particular candidates, the Orthodox newspaper never endorses candidates or political parties. The newspaper is registered as a religious publishing house and prints information only about the Orthodox Church's activities. In the situation where believers ask a priest for advice about the elections, such as who to vote for, Father Igor emphasized that a priest should simply encourage education and prayer. He stressed that the Russian Orthodox Church is not in the business of politics, "We were once a state church and have no desire to go back to that."⁷⁵

1998, No. 8, pg. 10.

⁷³ "Vice-Governor Batyrev: I stand close to and understand the Old Believer," *Старообрядецъ* [Old Believer], April 2001, No. 2, pg. 2.

⁷⁴ This political activism of the Old Believer community has a long history. In the Nizhny Novgorod elections of 1917 they published a "list" of endorsed nine candidates from their religious community. See, "Elections and Old Believers," *Старообрядецъ* [Old Believer], March 2000, No. 16, pg. 2.

⁷⁵ Interview with Father Igor, editor of the *Нижегородские епархиальные ведомости* [Nizhny Novgorod Diocese Bulletin], March 06, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

A local bureaucrat in charge of managing the religious communities in the region explained that religious communities should not be endorsing or denouncing candidates.⁷⁶ He recalled an example of the Tatar-Muslims threat to publish a “blacklist,” and such a provocation would likely have led to inter-confessional conflict. Yet, when pressed about the unusual political activism of the Old Believers—the fact that they use their religious publishing house to endorse candidates and provide voting lists—he suggested that the local government does not have the “willpower” (сила) to take on the Old Believers. It is not that they do not have the capability, because the Old Believer community is quite small (less than 1 percent of the population), but rather that no politician wants to be seen as challenging the moral authority of the Old Believers. Old Believers, after all, are the forbearers of the Russian Orthodox Church and an integral part of Russian culture.

Beyond endorsements of the political elites and championing state policies, religious leaders are also willing to take on the role of “state defender.” In response to international reports critical of human rights violations, such as published by Amnesty International and Freedom House, the Orthodox Church has begun publishing its own. The Church maintains that foreign criticisms of Russian human rights are based on “western” and “secular” standards that alien to Russian society. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not apply and in a 12-page document, “The Bases of the Russian Orthodox Church's Teaching on Dignity, Liberty and Human Rights,” and instead the Church outlines its own vision.⁷⁷ The document states that human rights belong to everybody, and not just to the “priests and priestesses” of the new human rights religion. Human rights, however, must be placed within the context of

⁷⁶ Interview with Nikolai Borisovich Cheremin, consultant for religious organization for the Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin, March 21, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁷⁷ Zolotov (2008).

faith, morality, patriotism, and the environment.⁷⁸

Local religious leaders in both Russia and China have also taken on the role of “state defender.”⁷⁹ During interviews it was common for religious leaders to pull well-marked copies of the most recent US Department of States' Report on Freedom of Religion from their desks.⁸⁰ Religious leaders in Changchun and Shanghai universally complained that the report does not reflect the reality of local religious freedom, and the reports often lead to heightened tensions between church and state actors. Each year after the reports are released bureaucrats from the Religious Affairs Bureau also visit religious leaders. One imam explained that the visits usually have two competing goals.⁸¹ The first is genuine concern that the religious group might be experiencing the problems outlined in the report, such as local elites suppressing legal religious activities. The second goal of the visit is to ascertain whether religious leaders are revealing information to foreigners that might be harmful to the regime. In spite of the motivation behind the visits, religious leaders were both mystified and angered by the inaccuracy of State Department Freedom of Religion reports, and on more than one occasion they expressed hope that I was collecting data for next year's report.

Just as religious communities reward local politicians with endorsements and speak out in defense of the state, local government officials are also finding creative ways to publicly support religious groups in order to achieve strategic goals. In Qingpu, the westernmost district in Shanghai's municipality, sits the rural community

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ See, for example, “Russian Church urges USA to assess religious situation in Russia proceeding from objective picture, not from their own ideological clichés,” Moscow Interfax, September 24, 2006, reprinted on JRL #2006-214.

⁸⁰ Religious leaders are very aware of the State Department Report on Freedom of Religion. In fact, the week that the 2005 report was published, five religious leaders in Changchun cancelled pre-arranged interviews and cited the Report as making the meeting “too sensitive.”

⁸¹ Interview with imam, July 2006, Shanghai.

of Jinze. Jinze is crisscrossed by canals, lakes and wetlands, and it is well-known for its historic bridges built during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE). Among the locals, however, Jinze is also known for its popular religion.⁸²

Although Jinze is also home to a newly built Protestant church, Catholic retreat center, and several temples that blend Buddhism, Taoism and local folk practices, the majority of residents worship a local god, Tian Huang Lao Ye (天皇老爷), who protects the ancient stone bridges that cover the district.⁸³ At the base of each bridge residents have constructed small, informal altars where worshipers offer incense to the bridge god. Illustrations 5.6 and 5.7 show two of Jinze bridges, the wooden “Rainbow Bridge,” and a stone bridge from the Song dynasty. Scorch marks from an informal altar are visible at the base of the stone bridge.



Illustrations 5.6 and 5.7 The bridges and folk alters of Jinze, photos by Xiayu

⁸² A layperson at a Protestant church in Jinze complained that the church mainly serves migrant workers and not locals. She complained that after the new church was built the church tried to hire a local caretaker, but no local residents wanted the job because they all worship the bridge god. Eventually the church hired a Christian from a neighboring town to serve as the caretaker. Interview with layperson at Jinze Protestant church, August 17, 2007.

⁸³ *Tian huang lao ye* is a common title used to refer to gods in Chinese folklore. In Qingpu, local residents do not have a name for the local god who guards the bridges, but refer to him as *Tian huang lao ye*.

During Chinese traditional holidays, such as Spring Festival (春节), Tomb Sweeping Day (清明节), and particularly before high school and college entrance exams, residents make a pilgrimage through the community offering incense and prayers at each of the forty-nine bridges.⁸⁴ This is a large event where anyone with ancestral ties to Jinze returns with their extended families each year to participate. Although this popular religious practice is technically illegal—since popular religion is not one of the five official state religions and is considered a superstition—the Jinze local government does not interfere in the ritual. In fact, according to several practitioners, local officials take great pride in leading the large processions. Local government support of folk religions has greatly warmed relations between the two.⁸⁵ One believer who had traveled to Jinze from Anhui province explained that the Jinze cadres were not as corrupt as cadres in other regions, because they honored the bridge god and he was watching over them.⁸⁶

Local state endorsement of popular religious activities suggests that relations between the two sides are quite strong. Local government officials are willing to participate in the rituals to demonstrate solidarity with those living in their locale. Perhaps more striking is their wiliness to ignore central religious policies, which call for the suppression of popular religious practices, by permitting the open worship of the bridge god. Local officials are able to rationalize their support of illegal religious activities by referring to the practices as “local culture” (地方文化). Jinze cadres, in

⁸⁴ Spring Festival also referred to Lunar New Year is one of the most important Chinese holidays and begins on first day of the month of the Chinese calendar and lasts 15 days. Tomb Sweeping Day is a traditional Chinese festival on the 104th day after the winter solstice (or the 15th day from the Spring Equinox), usually occurring around April 5 of the Gregorian calendar. During this day family members return to the graves of their ancestors to clean them, offer food and burn paper money for ancestors to use in the afterlife. In 2008 the Chinese Government declared Tomb Sweeping Day a national holiday. Before this time, it was considered superstitious behavior and illegal. See “New holiday system set for first test,” *People’s Daily*, March 26, 2008, available at *People’s Daily*: <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/6380659.html> [last accessed April 6, 2009].

⁸⁵ Interviews with worshipers at various bridges, August 17, 2007, Jinze.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

other words, are protecting and preserving local cultural practices, and not endorsing popular religion and promoting superstition.

In addition to building solidarity among the local residents, the bridges have also brought a considerable amount of prestige to local cadres. In 1999 local officials welcomed the PBS program NOVA to film part of the series “Secrets of Lost Empires.” The NOVA program assembled a team of Chinese and foreign scholars to reconstruct the wooden “Rainbow Bridge” from a 900-year-old painting.⁸⁷ The NOVA program brought international recognition to the small town, which according to some local believers helped the local government lobby for a designation as a “historic area” for the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. Among thousand of applications, Jinze won one of thirty coveted “historic sites” designations for the World Expo, which means the municipal government will be funding a “face-lift” for the town and also capitalizing on the local bridge folk culture.⁸⁸

The Jinze folk religion demonstrates that government endorsement of a religious community is motivated by multiple factors. Jinze cadres are not only strengthening legitimacy among residents, but also enhancing their prestige. This suggests that local states may also openly support religious communities not because they have an interest in aligning with the religious group, but rather to make an impression on other political players. For instance, in preparation for hosting the World Expo in 2010, many religious buildings in Shanghai are getting a facelift.⁸⁹ One Protestant deacon described the planned renovations as an unexpected blessing.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Photographs and details of the Rainbow Bridge construction are available at the NOVA website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/lostempires/china/builds.html> [last accessed April 2, 2009].

⁸⁸ See press release from the Shanghai Municipal Government, “Suburban Relics Saved,” November 21, 2004, available at: <http://www.shanghai.gov.cn/shanghai/node17256/node18151/userobject22ai14923.html> [last accessed April 2, 2009].

⁸⁹ The Shanghai Municipal Government has dedicated 5.28 square kilometers for the World Expo, in these designated districts (Luwan and Pudong) in the process of renovation.

⁹⁰ Interview with deacon from Protestant Church, June 2007, Luwan.

Dilapidated churches are being moved and replaced by buildings twice their original size, complete with carved benches, stained glass windows, lush gardens, and most importantly, air conditioning. All of these renovations are courtesy of the local government. According to one local bureaucrat, Shanghai is expecting over 70 million visitors and will be on display to the world. Many of the World Expo guests will have strong religious beliefs and we do not want to disappoint them by the poor quality of our temples and churches.⁹¹

Local government support for renovating religious buildings can also feed into regional competition. One government official assisting in the overhaul of a Protestant church explained that direct government (financial) support was not unusual—the Beijing municipal government revamped many churches and temples in preparation for the 2008 Summer Olympics. Moreover, Shanghai is also doing so because it does not want to “lose face” (丢面子) to its northern neighbor.⁹² This observation suggests that reputation may also be driving the endorsement and renovations. Regardless of the local government’s intentions, religious communities affected by the Shanghai World Expo are thrilled with the unexpected renovations and the prospects of larger facilities, especially because this is all at the government’s expense.

The cases presented in this section suggest that both religious groups and local state officials are offering endorsements to one another to achieve strategic objectives. Whether the motivating factors behind endorsements is to build bases of support among a religious community, reward local officials for their assistance, or enhance local prestige, open endorsements for both sides are powerful non-material resources.

⁹¹ Interview with bureaucrat from the Religious Affairs Office, June 2007, Luwan.

⁹² Ibid.

Political Decision-making

A final type of non-material resource that local officials may bring to the bargaining table is participation in political decision-making and agenda-setting. Local political elites may invite religious leaders into the realm of politics in order to solidify alliances with a religious group, reward them for their loyalty, or to utilize their cultural and moral capital to increase authority. For most religious groups, an invitation into the political sphere is often highly desirable, because it gives them power to shape the social agenda and manipulate the religious marketplace. With a direct line to those in power, a religious group may be able to shut out the religious competition or make life generally difficult for other religions. Inviting religious leaders into politics, however, is not without risks. It violates laws that mandate a strict separation of church and state, and can result in political destabilization or disintegration. In spite of these considerable risks, some local governments still selectively invite religions into the policy-making world—the outcomes of which are quite mixed.

In an interview reflecting on the twenty years since the collapse of communism, Mikhail Gorbachev suggested the Russian Orthodox Church “has become a serious power in society.”⁹³ A mutually beneficial Orthodox-state alliance has emerged, with the Kremlin using the Church to help define the guiding principles of the state and serve as the backbone of Russian nationalism. As a result, the Church has reclaimed much of its pre-revolutionary power and prestige.⁹⁴ On numerous occasions, former President Yeltsin and Putin both have spoken of the special role of Orthodoxy in Russia and the Church’s close relationship with the state. Most recently, at a reception honoring the newly elected Patriarch Kirill, Putin said “the Russian

⁹³ “Gorbachev criticizes Putin's party,” AP interview by Dan Perry, March 5, 2009.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Chernyshova (2007); Witte (1999).

Orthodox Church has always defended and hopefully will continue to defend the national and spiritual identity of Russians.”⁹⁵ He went on to stress his hopes for the Orthodox-state relationship to continue because Orthodox Christianity was responsible for Russian statehood.⁹⁶

The political loyalty and endorsements of those in power by the Orthodox Church has paid off handsomely, and the Orthodox-Kremlin alliance is also being replicated on the local level. The previous chapter demonstrated that “property politics” is one of the most contentious issues facing religious communities in both Russia and China. The return of religious land and property is a long and arduous process often spanning several years with uncertain outcomes. Religious groups must first provide documentation proving ownership of destroyed or confiscated property before local bureaucrats begin the negotiations regarding the relocation and compensation of current residents.

In Nizhny Novgorod, the local state has given the Orthodox dioceses an unusual position of power in local property politics. According to Russian law, all religious groups wishing to open a new church, temple or mosque, must first secure the required bureaucratic stamps of approval from local ministries. Once this is accomplished, all non-Orthodox religious groups must further collect one more stamp—they must also gain written approval from the local Orthodox bishop before opening a new religious building.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ See “Russian Orthodox Church to work for Russian identity,” remarks by Prime Minister Putin, Moscow, Interfax, February 3, 2009. Reprinted on Johnson’s Russia List, JRL 2009-23-02.

⁹⁶ Putin was referring to Ancient Rus’ (880–to the mid-twelfth century), which is considered the early predecessor of modern Russia. Under the rule of Prince Vladimir the Great (980–1015) Rus’ accepted Orthodoxy Christianity.

⁹⁷ Interview with Umar-khazrat Idrisov, Chairman of the Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod. This was confirmed with several Christian denominations.

A Protestant minister, for example, explained that his congregation had no problems registering with the local government, but when it came time to build a church they were told that they must also get permission from the Orthodox bishop. Yet, after six months of unanswered phone calls the Protestant minister was beginning to wonder if his congregation would ever be able to break ground. The minister also explained that since the founding of their congregation in 1992, it has become increasingly difficult to find places to rent. Their last landlord refused to renew their contract because his priest told him supporting Protestantism is a sin.⁹⁸ As of March 2009, has still been unable to secure the “blessing” of the Orthodox bishop.

One local bureaucrat rationalized this arrangement as a way of maintaining inter-confessional harmony by explaining that, because Orthodoxy is the dominant religion in the Volga region and culturally important to Russia, it should have influence over minority religions.⁹⁹ Moreover, by giving the Orthodox bishop an “unofficial stamp,” the city can ensure that religious buildings are evenly distributed and there is a respectable buffer zone between confessions. For example, a Seventh Day Adventist Church would not be built across the street from an Orthodox one. Empowering the local Orthodox bishop is also a way to control the spread of “foreign religions” into the region. In the mid-nineties when there were few restrictions on religious associations Nizhny was flooded with a variety of religious groups—including Hare Krishnas, Mormons, Scientologists, Pentecostals, and Buddhists. Among these diverse religious communities, several had quite attractive proselytizing methods. Christians held tent revivals, rock concerts, and screened free movies; Buddhists organized yoga and meditation classes; Hare Krishnas provided free vegetarian dinners; Scientologists donated laboratory equipment to local universities

⁹⁸ Interview with Pastor Igor, March 08, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁹⁹ Interview with bureaucrat from the Religious Affairs Office, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

and schools; and Mormons canvassed the city, knocking on doors and inviting citizens to worship services.

These “new religious movements” were seen as particularly threatening to the Russian Orthodox Church, because their methods of proselytizing were extremely effective and many came with extensive international networks and funding. This meant that new religious movements were able to purchase land and establish a presence in the region quite rapidly. The Orthodox Church warned the Nizhny government that such an influx of foreign denominations would be detrimental to the rejuvenation of the Orthodox Church and the preservation of Russian culture. As a result, since the mid-nineties, all non-Orthodox religious groups must also receive permission from the Orthodox dioceses. For Muslims and Jews, which are considered “traditional” religions with long ties in the region, such permission has been relatively easy. However, other Christian denominations have had much more difficulty. Leaders of these religious communities often complained of Orthodoxy’s close relationship with the local state, because it allows them to shut out religious competition and establish a religious monopoly.¹⁰⁰

The role of the Orthodox Church in local property politics and shaping the religious landscape illustrates the indirect power local officials can bestow upon religious communities. A final non-material resource that local bureaucrats can offer religious communities is a voice in defining the political agenda. For religious groups, influence in setting the agenda is highly desirable, because it empowers them to push their own spiritual agenda and shut out the religious competition; yet, doing so can have significant consequences for those in power.

¹⁰⁰ A religious monopoly is a locale comprised of predominately one religious confession, such as Orthodoxy or Buddhism, where this confession exercises dominance over the local religious marketplace. See, Stark and Finke (2000).

In the past several years a controversy has been brewing across Russia regarding the appropriate separation of church and state; the church is pursuing the state and it seems like the state is not opposed. The target is to influence the most massive state institution—public schools.¹⁰¹ In 2002 the Russian Education Minister, Vladimir Filippov, sent a thirty-page memorandum to all regions recommending the introduction of a new course into the curricula, the “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture.” According to the memo, the goal of the course is to familiarize Russian pupils with Orthodox culture, art, music and key ideas. The course will also touch on ethics and religious themes, such as the purpose of fasting, baptism, heresy, and schism, as well as identify “destructive sects and cults.”¹⁰² The memorandum states that the new course should be uniformly adopted in both primary and secondary schools, for a minimum of one to two hours per week. In primary schools “The Foundations of Orthodox Culture” may be integrated into other core subjects, such as History and Reading; and in secondary schools, it may replace or supplement courses, such as Philology, Ethics and Art.¹⁰³ The memo finally suggests that the course be divided into several topics, including “Orthodox Christian picture of the world, History of the Orthodox religion and culture, Literary culture of Orthodox (Orthodox literature), Orthodox way of life, Moral culture of Orthodoxy, and Orthodoxy, the traditional religion of the Russian people.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Kolymagin (2003).

¹⁰² The memo offers several suggestions for the implementation of the course. For instance, the course will prepare a ninth grade student to be able to explain, “the Abrahamic religious complex, caesaropapism, clericalism, ecumenism, neopaganism in the Christian world, distinctive of the apocalyptic notions of destructive religious sects” (Moiseenko and Pavlova 2002). See also, “Russia: Public Opinion Divided Over Tuition of Orthodox Culture in State Schools,” Keston News Service, December 4, 2002, available at: <http://www.keston.org.uk/>, [last accessed March 31, 2009].

¹⁰³ See “Russia: Public Opinion Divided Over Tuition of Orthodox Culture in State Schools,” Keston News Service, December 4, 2002, available at: <http://www.keston.org.uk/>, [last accessed March 31, 2009].

¹⁰⁴ Moiseenko and Pavlova (2002).

The “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture,” illustrates the close Orthodox-Kremlin alliance and the potential outcome of religious groups’ influence in setting the political agenda. Not surprisingly, President Putin and the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church came out in strong support of the new course, suggesting that it would provide a much-needed moral compass for Russian youth and strengthen national identity under a shared Orthodox culture. Mindful of criticism, the former Patriarch of the Orthodox Church explained, “We do not at all wish to create our own ideological monopoly in education.... Still less do we wish to transfer the responsibility of the moral and spiritual upbringing of children and teenagers to state schools, as is sometimes alleged.”¹⁰⁵

The pro-Orthodoxy course and the changes to curricula are extremely controversial and have been the focus of intense national debate. Opponents of the course have challenged the expanding presence of Orthodoxy in state schools because it is seen as infringing on principles of secularism and equality of all religions enshrined in the constitution (Articles 14 and 19). Others suggest the course also violates the 1997 federal law on religions, which states that religion may only be taught in public schools as an elective course, with the written permission of parents, and if the instructors are non-state employees (Article 5).¹⁰⁶ Still others argue that the course breaks the 1992 Education Law that prohibits activity by religious groups in public institutions (Article 1).¹⁰⁷ The chorus of critics also includes non-Orthodox religious leaders, who see the education reforms as an insult to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious reality of the country.¹⁰⁸ Borukh Gorin, a spokesperson from the

¹⁰⁵ *Pravoslavnaia Moskva* [Orthodox Moscow], June 2004.

¹⁰⁶ Federal law No 135-FZ (September 26, 1997) ‘*O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob’edineniakh*’.

¹⁰⁷ Members of the Russian Academy of Sciences and several Noble Laureates have written an open letter to President Putin expressing concern over the legality of the new course. See “Reading, Writing...And Religion?” July 27, 2007 (RFE/RL), available at:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1077844.html> [April 6, 2009]; Pavlikova (2007); Baskakov (2002).

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, “Muslims wary of teaching Orthodoxy in Moscow schools: Head of Council of

Federation of Jewish Communities in Russia, explained, “We oppose the obligatory study of the foundations of Orthodoxy. In the first place, pupils are deprived of the right of choice; in the second, I personally am not convinced that they will get anything out of it. Before the revolution, the Law of God was taught in the schools, but the population did not become more religious because of it. Third, this will require great financial expense; after all, right now there are few competent teachers in any confession.”¹⁰⁹

At the local level, the “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture” has been equally controversial. In the Republic of Tatarstan the local government was caught in a difficult situation. As a Tatar and largely Muslim Republic the introduction of such a course on Orthodoxy would be disastrous for political elites. Yet, to ignore the central directive might have equally harmful implications, especially because the curricula changes have support from the highest levels of government. To address these concerns, the local Tatar government formed a working group of religious scholars and representatives from all of the major religions in the republic. After several months of negotiations the groups came up with the following recommendations: first, the course title would be changed to “World Religions”; second, the course material would expand to include all major religious groups represented in the republic (e.g., Islam, Orthodoxy, Judaism, Buddhism, non-Orthodox Christianity, such as Catholicism and Protestantism); third, the theme of the course would shift from religious doctrine to a largely historical comparison of the origins of each major religion; finally, the course would be an elective, with pupils required to have parental permission in order to participate.

Mufts of Russia Opposes Compulsory Study of Orthodoxy in Schools,” published December 23, 2002, available at: <http://Portal-credo.ru>, [last accessed, January 30, 2005].

¹⁰⁹ “Variety of opinions on teaching Orthodoxy – Question of the Day: Do Schools Need Religion Classes?” *Komsomolskaia pravda*, November 20, 2002.

Central authorities did not oppose the amendments to the course in Tatarstan, especially because some leaders in the Orthodox Church had been advocating for flexibility in the curricula for minority regions. For instance, a spokesperson for the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarch stated that although “I consider that it is impossible to understand Russia without knowledge of Orthodox culture.... In some republics, let's say in Tatarstan, it would be possible to introduce the foundations of Muslim culture.”¹¹⁰ One Tatar bureaucrat from the Religious Affairs Department explained that had the administration wanted to, they could have implemented a “Foundations of Tatar Culture” instead; yet, mindful of the diverse religious landscape, they chose to reach out to the religious community to redefine the parameters of the course, explaining that teaching only about Tatar culture would create just as much polarization and intolerance as the originally proposed Orthodox course.¹¹¹

The inclusive approach toward religion in Tatarstan provides some support for Proposition 1 on political accountability, e.g. that local elites in religious plural settings reach out to multiple religious communities for support. More importantly, this example indicates that religion does not stand alone in Tatarstan. As a minority republic in two respects, Tatar and Muslim, in order to remain in power local elites must not only keep locals happy, but also must keep the center from grabbing back its autonomy.

In contrast, the local government in Nizhny Novgorod has taken a decidedly different approach to the course. Nizhny Novgorod was selected as a test region for the implementation of the new course because of its strong Orthodox community. Shortly following the Ministry of Education’s memorandum, local educators and

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Interview with bureaucrat in Religious Affairs Department, April 25, 2005, Kazan, Tatarstan.

religious scholars were invited to a meeting in the Nizhny kremlin. A bureaucrat from the Ministry of Education explained that in the following year, eighty-four public schools in the region would introduce the new course, “Foundations of Orthodox Culture.”¹¹² The meeting attendees were instructed to design a series of training manuals for teachers at various grade levels and suggest materials for the new course.

When the group reconvened several weeks later to present their recommendations, members from the local Orthodox dioceses were also present. The educators and scholars presented a united front of opposition to the new course, arguing that it would not achieve the intended goal of local unity, but rather pit the Orthodox Church against the other unrepresented religious groups. The bureaucrat assured them that the course would be optional, and it was their task to develop the materials that would not instigate inter-religious conflict.

Local religious leaders and members of the public attended the third meeting of the group. Again there was considerable opposition to the new course. The majority of parents maintained that spirituality and religion are best left taught in the home or at Sunday school. School administrators argued that their teachers were not trained as theologians, and students will inevitably have religious questions they are not qualified to answer. Other teachers stressed that they were atheist and found it insulting to teach themes such as “the moral culture of Orthodoxy.” During the meeting it also became clear that the opinions of religious leaders were decidedly mixed. One Catholic priest spoke in favor of the course, agreeing that Orthodoxy is an integral part of Russian culture with over a thousand year history. He expressed delight to see people returning to the Orthodox Church; yet, also showed concern about how other groups might be portrayed, especially because the suggested course

¹¹² Nizhny Novgorod was originally selected as one of the experimental locations to implement the course.

outline called for identifying sects and cults.¹¹³ Orthodox Christians also expressed reservations. Several Orthodox scholars and priests expressed concern that the course would be taught by atheists who might actually do more harm than good.¹¹⁴ One Orthodox priest explained that he feared it might turn the youth against the Church.¹¹⁵ Leaders of the Tatar-Muslim and Jewish community were much more critical, suggesting that they too should have their own specialized courses for young Muslims and Jews.¹¹⁶

After considerable public debate, the experimental course was renamed “World Religions.” The course expanded from Orthodoxy to include all traditional religions in the Volga region, including Orthodoxy, Islam, Old Believers, Judaism, and Buddhism. The time allotted to the study of each traditional religion reflected their percentage of the population. Finally, to help appease religious leaders concerns, each religion would be asked to approve the course materials and have the opportunity to provide their own teachers. For the local government and the traditional religious communities this was the best arrangement, but it continued to privilege Orthodox. For instance, finding qualified religious teachers to meet the demands of the course can be quite taxing for the smaller religious communities. The Russian Orthodox Church has a seminary of potential teachers to draw from, but the Muslims and Old Believers have fewer resources, the Jews have only one Rabbi in the area, and the Buddhists have no representatives at all.

The “Foundations of Orthodox Culture” provides an important within country comparison of the Nizhny and Kazan local governments on several counts. First, it demonstrates the extent to which local elites are willing to invite religious

¹¹³ Interview with Father Mario, March 20, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Father Andre, January 26, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Father Igor, March 6, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Damir-khazrat Mukhetdinov, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

communities into the decision-making process. Once handed the directive from the center, officials in Kazan immediately invited religious leaders to participate in re-defining the course and setting the agenda. Nizhny officials initially reached out to the academic community and Orthodox Church to implement the course. It was only after considerable negotiation that select religious leaders were also invited to participate in the discussion. Second, the final product of the course also reflected local government preferences. The “World Religions” course developed in Tatarstan focused equally on all religions in the republic; whereas, the “World Religions” course in Nizhny Novgorod included only traditional religions, and the course materials were proportioned relative to the group size. This means that over 70 percent of the course was dedicated to Russian Orthodoxy, 20 percent to Islam, and 10 percent dedicated divided between Old Believers, Judaism and Buddhism. Catholics and Protestants were excluded from the Nizhny course. Finally, the comparison demonstrates the limited autonomy for the regions in implementing directives handed down from Moscow, especially when the directives come heavily endorsed by the president and patriarch. Although the Tatar administration was initially opposed to the new course, they chose to implement a pragmatic alternative that would not cause tension among religious communities or with the Kremlin. The local bureaucrats in Nizhny Novgorod, by contrast, were willing to ignore local outcry to ensure that the course followed the spirit of the original Ministry of Education design plan, which privileged the Orthodox-state alliance.¹¹⁷

Conclusions

This chapter demonstrates both the willingness and the ability of religious and local state actors to cooperate with each other around non-material resources. Political

¹¹⁷ Interview with retired bureaucrat, March 15, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

elites delve into the symbolic world, hoping that the cultural capital of religion will benefit them. They invite religious leaders into the political sphere and give them a voice in decision-making and influence over the local agenda. In exchange, local officials seek to consolidate authority, broaden their bases of support, curtail opposition and enhance their prestige. Religious communities are also equally interested in the interplay of power and prestige. They adopt the symbols and discourse of the regime to demonstrate their loyalty, and religious leaders endorse political candidates in elections, defend the state and champion its policies. In exchange, religious groups not only ensure their own survival, but also are able to enlarge their community, advance their spiritual agenda, and constrain the religious competition.

This chapter also demonstrates that the mixing of religion and politics can be a risky strategy for both sets of actors. When local political elites participate in religious rituals and invite religion into political arena, they run the risk of alienating other religious communities, creating an opening for religious leaders to undermine their authority, and, at the extremes, permitting religious groups to capture the state. Recalling, for instance, the Orthodox monopoly in Nizhny Novgorod, which most closely resembles state capture—political elites openly disregarded the principles of secularism and equality of religions enshrined in the constitution to maintain close ties to the Orthodox Church. Such an alliance has paid off handsomely for the Church. Local bureaucrats empowered the Nizhny diocese to shape property politics and influence the religious landscape according to Orthodoxy's interests. Such empowerment has meant that Orthodoxy's major competitors, including Catholics, Protestants and Old Believers, face additional hurdles when opening a new church.

The cozy Orthodox-Nizhny alliance has also allowed the Church to flex its muscle in the educational arena. For example, local bureaucrats largely ignored the

academic and public criticisms directed at the experimental course the “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture,” and arrived at a course design that openly favors the Orthodox Church. A majority of the course is dedicated to the study of Russian Orthodoxy, and even the concerns of many Orthodox priests, e.g., that atheist teachers may do more harm than good in presenting the materials, has been rectified by allowing priests into the classroom. Although the invitation is ostensibly open to other religious leaders, no other religious communities have the necessary depth of resources.

The mixing of politics and religion can also create problems for religious communities. Religious groups that adopt the symbols and discourse of the state may pay an internal price for such collaboration. Close relations with those in power can lead to a decline of legitimacy perceived by believers. Recall the example of the Shanghai Catholic priest who refused to hang a banner reading, “To have one child is good.” The priest feared that such an open endorsement of the One-Child policy would give the appearance of an “unholy alliance,” and the impression that his church was an extended mouthpiece of the regime. In this case, local bureaucrats did little to sanction the priest’s behavior; however, this is not the case for all religious leaders who refuse to adopt the symbols of the state. A protestant pastor explained that after she decided to not to hang a state banner in the main worship hall of her church the other pastors criticized her behavior as being anti-patriotic. In her defense she stated that the church was very simple, with only a painted cross on one wall; therefore, red banner would be out of place. Over this conflict she eventually resigned her position and she now works for an underground house church.¹¹⁸

Skeptics may argue that it is common for political elites to manipulate religion, and that religious groups are forced to support the state because there is no alternative. Does this mean that the cooperative exchanges presented in this chapter are really state

¹¹⁸ Interview with protestant pastor, August 2007, Beijing.

co-optation in disguise? The cases presented here suggest that although coercion may be present, the vast majority of non-material exchanges are mutually beneficial for both sides. This analysis carries several implications. First, although within most bargaining relationships the state generally has the upper hand, the relative power balance begins to tip when non-material resources are the currency of exchange. This is because religious groups are rich in the cultural capital, prestige, and moral authority that state bureaucrats lack and therefore seek to cement their power.

Second, the fact that religious groups of all stripes—native and foreign, and majority and minority—are voluntarily endorsing those in power, rather than using their cultural capital and prestige as leverage against the state suggests this relationship is more than mere co-optation. Religious communities are neither facilitating dissent nor are they using their moral authority to criticize the regime. They are not nascent democrats patiently waiting for the regime to crumble. Rather, they are offering non-material resources to those in power to achieve their own strategic goals.

Third, non-material collaboration is considerably more selective than its materialistic equivalent. In the previous chapter, local state officials forged joint ventures with a variety of religious groups, especially if there was a profit to be made. Yet the risks associated with non-material cooperation make the practice far less common. Local state officials, especially in China, only invite a handful of religious communities to the bargaining table and these religious groups tend to be limited to religions with “native ties.”

This observation echoes a recent finding of Lily L. Tsai in *Accountability without Democracy*.¹¹⁹ Tsai finds that in authoritarian contexts—where mechanisms of political accountability are weak or non-existent—village-level cadres that are

¹¹⁹ Tsai (2007).

embedded in “solidarity groups” do a better job delivering public goods and services than cadres with no or weak societal ties. Solidarity groups represent non-state organizations based on common interests and moral obligations, including religious and lineage groups. Tsai explains that not all types of solidarity groups are able to encourage local accountability in the same way. In fact, only solidarity groups with “native ties” are able to encourage greater accountability and governmental performance. Tsai writes,

both temples and churches generally encompass the administrative village in which they are located. They differ, however, in their embeddedness of local officials. The Communist Party’s deeply ingrained distrust of Christianity and Christian organizations prevents village officials from participating in village churches even when the majority of the people in the village consider themselves part of the congregation. In contrast, village officials often participate in the activities and rituals of temple groups in their community, which are tolerated by the state as long as they limit their activities to within the village.¹²⁰

This quotation suggests that in the eyes of local officials, some religions have clear advantages while others have clear liabilities. As a result, some religions are predisposed to non-material cooperative exchanges over others. In Russia, the Orthodox Church has cornered the market on cultural capital and religious prestige. Whereas in China, no single religious community has established this kind of monopoly; yet, those with deep historical ties, such as Buddhism, Taoism and folk religions, as the Jinze case demonstrates, have the most to offer local elites with the least amount of risk. Protestants and Catholics, in spite of their deep historical ties in both countries, are still considered “foreign” or “Western” religions, which is the equivalent of having only cultural stigma in the eyes of local political elites.

Thus far, I have drawn examples from Russia and China in order to explain how non-material bargaining is closing the gap between the sacred and secular.

¹²⁰ Tsai (2007: 253).

However, this should not obscure a key point: differences between the two liberalizing authoritarian regimes. What emerges in the discussion is, first, the fact that non-material cooperation is considerably more pervasive in Russia than in China. This is partially because no religious community in China can match the power and autonomy of the Russian Orthodox Church. Although there is evidence that both Buddhism and Taoism were treated as state-religions in Chinese history, the current regime is not interested in advertising these particular historical aspects. In Russia, however, historians and politicians credit the Church with unifying the Russian state, and the Kremlin has turned to the Church to define Russian nationalism and to “protect” the nation in times of de-democratization. For instance, Russian Orthodox priests frequently “bless” nuclear submarines and “lend icons to warships.”¹²¹ The close center-Orthodox alliance is even evident at the headquarters of Federal Security Bureau (FSB), where the Church has opened a small chapel.¹²²

The Orthodox-Kremlin alliance has also seeped down into local politics, which helps explain the frequency of non-material collaboration. In Russia, church-local state cooperation is further assisted by the comparatively open political climate. Russian political elites have more freedom in their relations with religious groups than their Chinese counterparts. For instance, Russian politicians can, and frequently do, openly display their religious values and preferences, where such action by a Chinese bureaucrat would likely result in demotion or outright dismissal from the post. This suggests that the boundaries separating the religious and political spheres are much more porous in Russia than in China. Addressing the question of why this is the case is the task of the next chapter.

¹²¹ De Waal (2009).

¹²² Dubas (2009).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS: COLLABORATION & CONFLICT IN COMPARISON

“The devil is in the details.”

Karl Marx declared religion the “opium of the masses,” and for decades the state waged its war: churches, mosques and temples were destroyed, religious leaders were executed, scientific atheism was taught in schools, and propaganda denouncing religion as feudal, superstitious and backwards permeated all aspects of society. But in the end, as the Soviet Union crumbled and post-Mao China embraced capitalism, it was clear that another aspect of the great socialist experiment had failed. Religion did not die out as Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideology had predicted. In fact, as Russia and China distanced themselves from their communist pasts and embraced greater political and economic liberalization, it became increasingly apparent that religious associational life was also flourishing.

Approach

This project set out to enhance our understanding of the role of civil society in liberalizing authoritarian regimes by using the religious revival as a microcosm to understand the larger political dynamics. For instance, is the emergence of a religious associational life a harbinger of crisis for a liberalizing Russia and China? Does religious associational life function as a constraint on or partner to regime incumbents? Under what conditions do religious groups, as members of civil society, encourage liberalization or reinforce autocratic traditions of political rule? How do different trajectories from authoritarian rule, such as a dramatic regime collapse and the adoption of democracy followed by a process of de-democratization in Russia, and selective and pragmatic liberalization in China, affect the development of associational

life?

I have addressed these questions by constructing three levels of comparison, each of which was designed—through a particular combination of similarities and differences—to address the issues at hand and inform the other levels. Thus, when I was interested in explaining how a liberalizing Russia and China had dealt with growing religiosity within their borders, I compared the central policies that regulated the religious marketplace, which had been authored in the 1980s and henceforth revised. This comparison demonstrated that central policies in both countries were instrumental in lifting the lid on religion and creating more space for religious expression and freedom. However, this comparison also revealed that the policies regulating the religious marketplace in both countries remained vague. As a consequence, religious groups and local state bureaucrats are in a position to bargain with each other and define in the process what each wants, what they can get from the other, and whether cooperation or conflict is the best form of interaction to meet their concerns.

With the understanding that the politics of religion is a local game, I introduced four case studies to explain variation in types of religious and local state interaction. Here, I compared how differences in political contexts, economic burdens, and religious landscapes might impact the relations between religious and local state actors. What made this comparison so illuminating is that I was able to control for many likely causes of cooperation and conflict, and at the same time maximize variation of one of my dependent variables—types of religious-state cooperation. Thus, an intra-country Russia-China comparison also sheds light on issues, such as how “more” or “less” authoritarianism informed the behavior of political elites and their relationship toward associational groups; and, how different pathways of liberalization, including regime openness and degree of religious

freedom, shaped the autonomy or dependence of religious organizations and their relationship to those in power.

A third level of comparison addressed in this study centered on the differences among religious communities. Here, I was interested in explaining how different religious groups attempted to protect and promote their interests. The goal of this comparison, therefore, was to isolate which religions were gaining the most from cooperation with those in power and which ones were being excluded. What made this approach so instructive was that an inter-religious comparison lends itself to numerous internal comparisons. For instance, religious actors were grouped according to their religion, such as Muslims and Catholics; they were compared according to their size, such as religious monopolies and religious minorities; religious actors were also categorized as having either “native” or “foreign” status; finally, religious groups were disaggregated according to their resource endowments, such as “resource rich” and “resource poor” religious groups. Thus, the various ways to organize religious communities allowed for greater confidence in explaining patterns of religious and local state cooperation. In short, this approach testified to the methodological advantages of comparative inquiry by weaving together multiple levels of comparison.

Central Argument

To understand the comparative politics of religion in a liberalizing Russia and China, I have argued that at the local level the interests of religious and state actors converge, and as a result both sides are pursuing active collaborative relations. Religious-state cooperation is based on a combination of suspicions, needs and resources. By suspicions I refer to what each side believes the other can do to harm or threaten its position. For instance, the local state fears religious groups may encourage instability or incite rebellion against those in power, and religious communities fear

that the state may limit and suppress religious activities. Moreover, each side has certain symmetrical needs that must be met for its survival and prosperity—with respect to money, power, and prestige. These needs are not competing goals, but rather are mutually supportive and reinforcing and can best be met through cooperation. Finally, each side has resources at its disposal that can be offered to the other side to help it meet key crucial needs. As a result, religious and local state actors are pursuing cooperation over conflict.

To be sure, there are many reasons why this argument is surprising. Russia and China have a lengthy history of religious repression and tensions have long existed between the sacred and secular. From the states perspective, religion is a competing center of power and asserts an authority that transcends that of the state. Religious communities are also generally organized, dense networks, with a clearly identified leadership and devoted followers willing to mobilize. These characteristics make them more threatening to those in power. From the perspective of religious groups, states have also attempted to control, coerce, and co-opt religious actors to serve the needs of the state. Nevertheless, this dissertation argued that in the cases studied the relationship between religion and state is not one of a predatory state, penetrating and dominating religious communities. Nor is it one of religious groups mobilizing to challenge the authority of the regime. Instead, I have argued that at the local level in Russia and China—where the management of religion largely takes place—relations between local government officials and religious groups are best described as cooperative and co-dependent. Local state officials and bureaucrats offer crucial resources to religious groups to ensure compliance and extend their base of support; and religious groups, in turn, use their own economic and cultural capital to cement alliances with those in power. Rather than antagonistic relations, the needs of both sides converge. As a result, there are strong incentives for collaborative

interactions and these interactions are mutually empowering.

Expectations

To explain the bargaining games that have developed between religious and local state actors in both Russia and China, this project introduced five propositions.¹ These propositions addressed how issues of political accountability, religious competition, economic resources and cultural capital inform our expectations about the nature of religious-state interaction and the likelihood of cooperation or conflict between the two.

The first two propositions presented in the introductory chapter highlighted the importance of political accountability and political influence in liberalizing authoritarian regimes. They predicted that a more open political context has two implications for the autonomy and dependence of religious and local state interaction. First, in such open settings where local government officials are more accountable to those living within their locale, political elites are more inclined to look past central policies that mandate a clear separation between church and state and engage religious groups. As a result, local political elites willingly and strategically reach out to religious communities as potential bases of support to remain in power. For instance, when local officials are held accountable through elections (even when elections are not considered entirely free and fair), political elites have strong incentives to build coalitions of support among religious groups. In contrast, when local elites' are primarily accountable to the power above, they are less likely to engage religious associational groups in ways that would challenge central secular policies. Therefore, based on these predictions, we expected local elites in Russia to view collaboration as a potentially attractive and wise political strategy to build their constituency and

¹ The propositions are restated in the Appendix.

remain in power. In contrast, greater autocracy in China would make collaboration less imperative and even a potentially risky strategy for political elites, because their accountability rests with those higher up on the political ladder, and close relations church-state relations are discouraged.

Second, these propositions predicted that a more open political context would also permit religious groups to be more autonomous or independent from regime incumbents. As a consequence, collaborative relations are less vital for religious communities when the regime context is less autocratic. Thus, we expected the more-closed political context in China to mean that religious groups are far more dependent on those in power for resources and survival than religious groups in Russia.

In addition to the importance of regime openness, a third proposition presented in the introductory chapter suggested that the religious plurality influenced religious-state interaction. For instance, religious diversity would enhance competition among religious groups because they compete with one another for resources from the state and for followers. Based on this proposition, we anticipated the more-crowded religious marketplace in Russia to encourage greater religious competition than in China. In fact, we expected to see Russian religious groups actively courting the state to establish local monopolies in order to shut out religious competition.

The remaining propositions of this project predicted that the resource endowments and cultural characteristics of religious communities shape and constrain religious-state interaction, i.e. resource rich religious groups as well as religions with “native ties” are more likely to cooperate with those in power.² Therefore, we anticipated religious groups like the Orthodox Church in Nizhny Novgorod, Muslims

² To reiterate, in Russia bureaucratic officials in the region determine “native” religions. In Nizhny Novgorod native religions include Russian Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism. In Tatarstan, Russian Orthodoxy and Islam are considered native, and Judaism is considered to have “deep historic” ties. In China, the central government recognizes five official religions, but only Buddhism and Taoism are considered to have deep cultural ties to China.

in Kazan, and Buddhist and Taoist temples in China to be at the forefront of religious and local state cooperation because these communities are both native and generally “resource rich.” At the same time, foreign religious groups, such as Catholics and Protestants, in both countries would have the most difficulty courting the local state.

To summarize: these propositions were designed to shed light on several key questions of this study. These included when and how do political elites and religious groups cooperate? How do religious-state interactions differ between Russia and China? Finally, which sets of religious actors are gaining the most from cooperation with those in power, and which religious groups are being left behind? To be sure, these propositions brought us closer to a systematic understanding of the political consequences of religious revival in Russia and China; however, as the chapters have demonstrated, the reality is far more nuanced than these guiding propositions allow. As a result, in the remainder of this chapter I summarize the major findings of this study, paying particular attention to how religious-state collaboration plays out differently in Russia and China. Here, I highlight how variation in pathways of regime liberalization shape and constrain religious and local state interaction. Next, I discuss the limitations of the central arguments presented here, and suggest cases where religious-state collaboration is unlikely to occur. In the final section, I call attention to the larger implications of the comparative project and suggest how the findings engage several scholarly debates in comparative politics. In particular, how this study contributes to the literature on authoritarian resilience and adaptability, and the ways in which this project helps us rethink the role of civil society within non-democratic settings.

Findings

This project began by asking what are the political consequences of growing

religiosity in Russia and China—two countries that share a communist past, have a long history of controlling and co-opting associational life, but have followed very different economic and political trajectories since the 1980s. What stands out from this comparative endeavor is a strikingly similar story. There is strong evidence that patterns of collaboration are re-appearing and repeating themselves both within and across Russia and China. Religious and local-state cooperation is not only increasingly common across Russia and China, but it is also an optimal strategy for religious and local state officials to follow. Both sides seek stability, influence and legitimacy, and they understand that these concerns can best be met through cooperative interaction. For the local state, collaboration facilitates the management and control of religious communities through a strategy of patronage that creates docile if not fully obedient religious groups. These factors soften fears among political elites that religious groups seek to challenge the legitimacy of the regime and disrupt local stability, and in so doing create space for greater religious expression. A system of offering the state resources, moreover, can also promote economic growth by enabling the local state to harness the potential capital—monetary, cultural, and otherwise—of religious communities. Moreover, local officials may also rely on religious groups to assist with issues of governance and take on some of the responsibilities of the state. For religious communities, collaboration is also preferred because the religious marketplace is highly unregulated. In spite of official institutional protections, religious communities must develop strategic alliances with the local state not only for survival, but also to attain resources necessary to achieve their goals and to secure their position vis-à-vis other religious groups. As a result, religious and local state actors engage in cooperative bargaining games as a way to achieve strategic needs.

This leads to another shared finding that travels across the cases. Religious

and local-state interaction is not based on issues of faith; in fact, spiritual matters rarely enter into the discussion. Instead, religious and local state bargaining converges around the familiar interests of politics—that is, each side tries to maximize money, power, and prestige. Religious and local state actors exchange diverse sets of material and non-material resources in order to achieve these goals; however, more often than not, material concerns drive the bulk of the interactions between the two.

Thus, one striking finding from this comparative project is the absence of variation between Russia and China. In spite of divergent trajectories of liberalization, heterogeneous political cultures and diverse religious complexions, the dynamic of cooperation and collaboration between religious and local state actors—patterns that were absent only two decades earlier—are well represented in both countries. In both Russia and China the needs of religious and local-state actors have converged in many ways, making the interaction between the two sides largely collaborative and mutually empowering rather than conflictual. As a result, religious groups and local state officials are challenging conventional understandings of secularism.

Pathways of liberalization

In spite of the general pattern of cooperation, however, differences in political contexts between Russia and China and different religious communities in each case affect how collaboration actually plays out. For instance, the pathway of liberalization and degree of political openness played a significant role in defining patterns of religious and local state cooperation and conflict in both countries. Since the 1980s Russia and China have both moved away from their communists pasts and toward greater economic and political liberalization. The distinct trajectories taken by each country—Russia’s simultaneous transition toward democracy and capitalism that was followed by a process of de-democratization, and China’s privileging of marketization

alongside the maintenance of single-party rule—plays a significant role in shaping and constraining religious and local state interaction. Although neither country can be considered democratic; though, Russia’s brief embracing of democracy in the mid-1990s has created a more open political context in which both local government officials and religious communities have greater flexibility in defining their interaction than their Chinese counterparts, who still operate within a largely communist system.³ In other words, Russia’s flirtation with democratization significantly changed the playing field for both political elites and religious groups. During this period of liberalization political institutions were installed, the religious landscape was diversified with a flood of foreign religious groups, and religious associational life developed and matured outside of state influence.

Religious Autonomy and Religious Dependence

The empirical chapters of this project demonstrated that a more open regime context in Russia allows religious groups greater autonomy from the local state than religious groups in China. For example, while religious communities in both countries still must register with the local bureaucracies, a failure to do so in Russia does not necessarily result in negative consequences. In fact, some Russian religious groups may even refuse registration, yet are still permitted to open churches and conduct religious activities with little state interference. Recall, for instance, the example of Old Believer congregations in Nizhny Novgorod and Kazan that refused to register on the grounds that the state has no moral authority over spiritual concerns. In both

³ Freedom House, for example, ranks Russia as “partially free” from 1991-2004 and “not free” from 2005-2008. During this period, China is consistently rated as “not free.” Levitsky and Way (2002) classify Russia under Vladimir Putin as an ideal example of a “competitive authoritarian” regime – a hybrid regime where formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority, but there are significant violations, such as rigged elections, legislatures with weak or no opposition parties, and a judiciary with questionable authority.

cases, local bureaucrats explained that these groups are not “cults,” and so long as their activities are not harming their followers or causing local instability, there is no need to compel registration or to punish them for their refusal.⁴ Moreover, the Old Believers’ refusal to register simply means that they are ineligible to receive state resources.

A former bureaucrat from the Religious Affairs Office in Nizhny Novgorod further explained that forcing religious groups, such as Old Believers, to register against their will might be a potentially costly strategy for local politicians. Although Old Believers are a relatively small percentage of the population (less than 1 percent), no politician wants to be seen as coercing or challenging a religion with the moral authority of the Old Believers, who are considered to be an integral part of Russian culture.⁵

The laissez-faire attitude toward registration in Russia has also been extended to new religious movements, which the state generally views with greater suspicion.⁶ As pointed out in chapter 4, the Jesus Embassy Charismatic Christian Church was able to evangelize and provide drug rehabilitation services without securing registration.⁷ The pastor of the church explained that it took him seven years to gather the financial resources necessary for registration; however, because he was transparent about his religious activities and his ministry was providing a useful social service, the local state did little to interfere with his activities prior to the Church’s registration.

In contrast, the more constrained political context in China makes it much more difficult for religious groups to refuse registration or to seek autonomy from the

⁴ Interview with bureaucrat from the Religious Affairs Office, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁵ Interview with former bureaucrat from Religious Affairs Office, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁶ One former bureaucrat explained that during his 15 years in the Religious Affairs Office, he knew of only one religious group whose registration was denied. Interview with former bureaucrat from Religious Affairs Office, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

⁷ Interview with Pastor Paul Ryndic, founder of the Jesus Embassy Charismatic Christian Church, March 09, 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

state without engendering uninvited scrutiny. For instance, Chinese religious communities on the margins, such as the unregistered and illegal Protestant house churches or the underground Catholic Church, do not share the same kind of unrestricted autonomy to conduct religious activities as unregistered religious groups in Russia. Although there are zones of tolerance for registered religious communities, unregistered religious groups have no legal rights, must hold religious services in private apartments, and develop complex organizational strategies to protect their congregations.⁸ Moreover, harsh penalties exist for religious groups that refuse registration, including steep fines and up to three-year sentences at reeducation-through-labor camps.⁹

To appreciate the differences in autonomy of unofficial religious groups in Russia and China it may be instructive to consider an example of an unregistered religious group in China. The underground China Gospel Fellowship House Church (中华福音团契) claims over one million members, has established an extensive network across the country, and even sends Chinese missionaries to the Middle East. It is ironic, then, the underground church has adopted an organizational strategy that bears a striking resemblance to the “organizational weapons” used by the Bolshevik

⁸ There is some evidence that the treatment of underground religious groups is relaxing in China. In the summer 2006 some local governments were experimenting with directly registering underground religious communities. For instance, one underground house Church minister from Wenzhou explained that her local government has allowed underground churches in Wenzhou to directly register without being affiliated with the government sanctioned Three-Self Patriotic Movement Churches. This is a significant step because all churches must first affiliate with a Three-Self Church in order to qualify for registration. However, by allowing underground Protestant Churches to register directly with the state, the government sanctioned “patriotic” churches become irrelevant. Other regions in China have also experimented with different arrangements. On April 12, 2009 a municipal government in Sichuan province also permitted an underground church to conduct Easter Sunday services for over 5,000 worshippers. Such flexibility was granted because local cadres are attempting to rebuild their base of support following the devastating earthquake of the previous year that killed over 60,000. The only requirement was that the local government would be allowed to preview the sermon, entitled “How to heal a broken heart” before the service (Personal correspondence with lay-person to the underground Sichuan church and participant in Sunday services, April 9, 2009).

⁹ The U.S. Department of State China International Religious Freedom Report 2007 (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau), available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90133.htm> [last accessed June 1, 2009].

and Chinese Communist parties of yore. Much like the spread of communism, the organizational tactics of the China Gospel Fellowship are designed to function in the shadows and at multiple levels. The different levels are insulated from the others, with limited knowledge of the members above and below them. In this way, if one level is raided by the authorities, the others can continue to function with little interruption. For instance, a leadership council of seven “uncles” posted in different Chinese cities directs church activities. Below the uncles are 25–30 mission centers, each which claim 30,000 members and are responsible for coordinating religious activities in the provinces and training ministers. Provincial mission centers are further divided into autonomous districts, and then again into “local house churches,” which meet only on religious holidays. To make evangelizing both more effective and discreet, local churches are divided into smaller “family churches” of 30–50 members that change locations on a regular basis, and finally into cell groups of 5–30 members, which meet weekly.¹⁰ Thus, the highly-touted “organizational weapon” developed by the Bolsheviks and re-cycled, for example, by the Chinese Communist Party in their struggles for power, has been adopted by an underground religious “vanguard” to avoid persecution. Thus, a key difference is that Russian religious groups may distance themselves from those in power without suffering negative repercussions, whereas religious groups in China that seek autonomy from the state must conduct their activities underground.

This leads to a more general point. The greater political openness (and corresponding religious freedom) in Russia has also made the need for collaboration with the local state far less critical for religious groups. Russian religious communities are not as dependent on the local state for fulfilling strategic needs, and

¹⁰ Interview with one of the founding “uncles” of the China Gospel Fellowship, October 11, 2006, Beijing.

may seek out alternative resource bases to pursue their spiritual goals. For instance, one imam explained that the growth of Islam in Tatarstan is not because the Shaimiev administration has been enthusiastically supportive of Islam.¹¹ Although President Shaimiev has not stood in the way of Islam's revival, local-state resources tend to be directed to large, symbolic projects, such as the rebuilding of the Kul-Sharif Mosque in the Kazan kremlin. The imam inferred that the more important projects that are facilitating the Islamic revival—including the building of thousands of mosques and madaris schools across the republic—are a function of generous support from “sponsors” in the Middle East.¹² Thus, Tatar Muslims have been able to tap into foreign resources to help rebuild the foundations of Islam across the republic.

Chinese religious groups, however, remain largely dependent on the state for resources and access to foreign funding remains tightly controlled. For instance, as outlined in chapter 3, local Religious Affairs Bureaus must approve all “sizable” foreign donations, and such approval is rarely granted.¹³ One protestant minister, for example, whose church is frequented by many foreigners explained that several years ago a member of his congregation returned to the United States. A short time after, the man's American pastor contacted him wanting to “sponsor” his Chinese church. An American church had raised funds for the expansion of the Chinese fellowship hall, which was currently too small to hold entire the congregation. When the minister approached the local Religious Affairs Bureau for approval of the sponsorship, his request was denied on the grounds that Chinese churches must not open themselves up

¹¹ Interview with imam, April 21, 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ According to Document 19, section 11 if a foreign believer wishes to donate a sizable private contribution to religious groups within China, “permission must be sought from the provincial, urban, or autonomous-area governments or from the central government responsible for these matters before any religious body can accept them on its own, even though it can be established that the donor acts purely out of religious fervor with no strings attached.”

to foreign manipulation. A contribution from abroad might give foreign powers influence over the religious community. In fact, the only practical way a Chinese church may receive a foreign financial gift is if the money is donated privately from an individual (rather than an organized church) directly to the local branch of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the government organization that oversees all Chinese Protestant churches. The Three-Self Patriotic Movement would then redistribute a portion of the gift to the intended recipient, and reallocate the remainder to other designated religious projects.

Political Autonomy and Political Dependence

The regime context and greater political freedom in Russia also allows local government officials more flexibility in their relations with religious groups than in China. As observed in the empirical chapters, Russian politicians do not have to be as “creative” in their support of religion. They do not need to hide their patronage of religious communities, often installing plaques in the entrances to religious buildings naming themselves, their department, and the amount contributed. In China, local government officials (who are usually Party members and thus required to be atheists) are much more constrained in their relations with religious communities, because their careers are more closely tied to the political authority above them. For instance, promotion of local cadres can be restricted if they are seen as non-complaint and disloyal to the center, or if protests or “mass incidents” are common in their locale, or directed at local cadres. As a result, Chinese political elites are careful to ensure any church and local-state collaboration is justified along politically expedient terms, primarily entrepreneurial, such as investments in the local economy, tourism, or preserving local “cultural relics” and the establishment of “museums.” Chinese political elites, in short, are mindful that collaboration should fulfill an economic or

cultural function, rather than naked support for religion.

The relative flexibility and constraints on local officials returns us again to the role of political accountability in liberalizing authoritarian regimes. The liberalizing reforms in Russia have made political elites considerably more accountable to local constituents than their Chinese counterparts. Although Russia is far from democratic, political elites at the municipal level secure and maintain power through elections. In contrast, Chinese political elites remain in power by being loyal to the center and maintaining local order.¹⁴ The variance in accountability suggests several important differences between the two countries. One is that the role of the center is less pronounced in Russia than in China. Russian local elites must build bases of support, in order to effectively campaign and win elections to remain in power. While the center may remove them, it is more likely that their political futures rest in the hands of local voters. Another important difference is that the political futures of local officials in China are decided by their ability to manage their locales, loyalty to the center, and compliance with central policies. This is not to suggest that Chinese local elites do not also need to build bases of support among citizens to help with local governance and stability, nor that Russian political elites must not also cultivate loyalty with the center, but rather that the political fate of Chinese officials is largely determined from above, and the fate in Russia from below. Thus, the differences in accountability mechanisms encourages Russian local elites to reach out to religious groups, especially to large religious communities, to build loyal constituents. In contrast, Chinese local elites reach out to select religious groups to maintain stable, docile and dependent religious communities—qualities that are valued by the center and will help them keep their jobs.

¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that not all political elites in Russia are accountable to citizen's living within their regions. Governors and mayors of large municipalities are appointed and dismissed by the center, rather than elected.

This raises another important point: although Russian and Chinese local state actors both court religious groups to stay in power, the different mechanisms of political accountability and political influence constrain the type of collaborative arrangements local officials are able to pursue. The empirical chapters suggested that collaborative relations could be conceptually divided between material and non-material bargaining games. In the first type of bargaining relationship there is a cash-nexus driving collaboration, where tangible and quantifiable material resources are exchanged between the two sides to achieve strategic and primarily materialistic goals. For instance, local state officials may offer subsidies and interest-free loans to some religious communities in return for compliance, support and access to financial resources. Non-material bargaining, by contrast, best reflects instances where religious and local state actors cooperate to secure power and prestige. Local state officials may offer a variety of non-material resources, such as inviting religious leaders to participate in state ceremonies and decision-making, and incorporating religious symbols and rituals into politics.

As observed in chapter 5, non-material cooperation poses greater risks for local officials because the exchange of non-material resources is far less transparent and has the potential to introduce unintended consequences. For instance, local state support of a one religious community may nurture civil society groups, establish competing centers of power, and at the extremes result in state capture. Another risk associated with non-material cooperation is that once it begins it may be very difficult for the local state to reel it back in, especially if the relationship goes in the wrong direction. Imagine, for instance, local state bureaucrats inviting religious groups into decision-making circles in order to expand their base of support among religious constituents. Once religious leaders have a voice in local politics, however, it may be extremely difficult, and politically costly, to silence them.

All of this points to a more general observation about religious-state collaboration in Russia and China. Considering the increased risks associated with non-material collaboration, this type of cooperation is far less common in China than it is in Russia. To echo an earlier point, Chinese local leaders are far more beholden to political forces above them, making it an extremely risky strategy to empower local religious communities. Moreover, even if a local bureaucrat wanted to invite religious leaders into policy circles or to incorporate religious symbols next to the existing communist ones, it would be extremely difficult to justify these choices to their political superiors. Therefore, recognizing the greater risks associated with non-material collaboration, and the increased constraints on Chinese officials leads to a final difference—Chinese collaboration tends to center on material concerns, whereas Russian local government officials engage in both material and non-material bargaining.

What stands out from this comparison is that the degree of political freedom serves as a fundamental difference between the two countries. Vestiges from the 1990s in Russia have created a political context that gives both religious groups and local officials more flexibility in defining the nature of their relationship. Russian local officials are free to support, subsidize and even empower selective religious communities without justifying their behavior. In contrast, the more authoritarian regime context in China constrains local officials' interactions with religious communities. Collaborative arrangements tend to reflect less controversial material concerns, such as tourism and financial investments, and local officials are mindful to frame such engagement in non-religious terms, including enhancing “local culture” and preserving “cultural relics.”

Like political elites, religious groups in Russia also have more autonomy than their Chinese counterparts. Russian religious groups may also choose to distance

themselves from the state, yet still function and even achieve their spiritual goals with support from foreign resources. Distance from the state in China, however, often means increased suspicions, absence of resources, and state repression. Thus, religious groups in China are much more dependent on those in power than religious groups are in Russia. However, the greater autonomy of Russian religious groups does not necessarily mean that collaboration is an uncommon outcome, nor does it mean that religious groups do not court the local state. Russian religious groups continue to seek alliances with those in power, but have more flexibility in defining the relationship than do religious groups in China. For Russian religious communities, cooperation is less about survival and more about achieving desired goals, such as securing state subsidies and influence over the religious competition.

Crowded and Controlled Religious Markets

In addition to degree of liberalization, there are several conclusions we can draw about how different religious landscapes in Russia and China shape and constrain religious-state collaboration. In particular, the increased political openness in Russia has permitted a much more diverse religious profile than in China. While China has only five official religious communities, the Russian religious marketplace is quite crowded. In the latter case, before the late nineties there was little regulation of religious groups, and foreign missionaries—from Moonies to Mormons, Pentecostals, Scientologists, and Transcendental Meditation—flooded into Russia in search of “souls.” The more crowded religious marketplace in Russia has two important implications for religious and local state interaction.

As observed in the empirical chapters, a plural religious marketplace in Russia has increased horizontal competition among religious communities. Recall from chapter 3 that it was the Russian Orthodox Church behind the adoption of the 1997

federal law *On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association*¹⁵ -- a law that limited the rights of non-Orthodox religious groups and granted special privileges to the Church. Moreover, as detailed in chapter 4, the diversity of Russia's religious revival has also increased horizontal competition among religious communities, because they battled each other for state resources, influence, and followers. Religious groups are quite aware of what type of support their competition may be receiving from the local state, and this has led to some inter-confessional tension. In Tatarstan, for example, the Orthodox minority openly criticized the Shaimiev administration's support of Islam and the Kazan kremlin's "Museum Complex and Historical Preserve." Even though the project also included state funding to renovate two Orthodox Cathedrals in the kremlin yard, local Orthodox believers viewed the tourism industry as catering primarily to the Kul-Sharif mosque and slighting Orthodoxy. This has become a point of contention and even of protest for local Orthodox priests in Kazan, because they perceive the state as financially privileging Islam.¹⁶

Horizontal competition has also led religious groups to band together (something that is prohibited in China), in hopes of alerting the local state to their importance and counter-balancing the influence of the Orthodox Church. For example, in Nizhny Novgorod, where the Orthodox Church has secured a cozy alliance with the state and established barriers for other religious communities, Protestant ministers from different denominations have formed a coalition to make their claims heard by the local state and balance against the Orthodox monopoly.

The more crowded and competitive religious marketplace in Russia also leads to another important difference between the two countries: the establishment of

¹⁵ Federal law No 135-FZ (September 26, 1997), *Federalnyi Zakon 'O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh'*.

¹⁶ Interview with Father Oleg Sokolov, rector of the Cathedral of Epiphany of Our Lord, May 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

religious monopolies. In Russia, it is impossible to discuss the politics of religion without taking into account the role of the Russian Orthodox Church. In many ways the Orthodox Church has regained its position as the state or “national” church, and its influence is visible across Russia. Orthodox priests flank politicians at political events, onion-topped cathedrals have been lavishly refurbished, and Orthodoxy has become an important cultural marker, defining in the post-communist experience what it means to be Russian. The predominance of Orthodoxy, however, does not mean that it has experienced a tremendous religious revival among the population. While the vast majority of Russian citizens do identify as Orthodox, less than a third actually attend services. This lack of attendance is not because Russians are “believing, but not belonging,” but instead because their attachment to Orthodoxy is largely cultural, rather than spiritual. Nevertheless, even as a cultural symbol Orthodoxy has regained its pre-communist position of prominence, and as such, has established strong ties with regime incumbents, which gives it considerable influence over politics and local decision-making. In China, however, no religious group has come even close to Orthodoxy’s status. One could make the argument that China has five “state” religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism. However, among these five official religions many have suggested, and I would agree, that Buddhism is the most favored religion by the state. Nevertheless, the Buddhist-state partnership in China is extremely thin in comparison to the state-Orthodox alliance in Russia.

The power of the Orthodox Church has two important implications for religious-state collaboration. First, the empirical chapters demonstrated that the Orthodox Church largely dominates church-state collaboration in Russia, and that collaboration has rewarded the Church generously. The Orthodox Church has received, among so many resources, free heating, building subsidies, tax-exempt status to import cigarettes and export vodka, authority over the curriculum of public schools,

and influence to decide where non-Orthodox religious buildings will be constructed.

Second, considering Orthodoxy's position of power and influence—former President Putin described the Church as being responsible for Russian statehood, the defender of the nation, and the spiritual identity of the country¹⁷—local government officials are often in a position of seeking alliances with the Church rather than the other way around. An Orthodox and state collaborative relationship persists and remains hierarchical and asymmetrical, however, the Church remains in the authoritative position and often receives a larger payoff. In fact, even in the Tatarstan, which is an ethnic minority and predominately Muslim republic, the local state is extremely attentive to the Orthodox minority. An imam from Kazan implied that it is far easier for the local Orthodox bishop to get an audience with President Shaimiev than for the head of the Board of Muslims for the Republic of Tatarstan.¹⁸ An advisor to the Shaimiev administration confirmed this sentiment, explaining that the Tatar President is very sensitive to issues of religious tolerance and does not want to give the impression of favoring Islam and suppressing Orthodoxy.¹⁹ As a result, local political elites go to greater lengths to accommodate the local Orthodox population.

Differences Among Religious Group

Thus far, the discussion has focused primarily on the differences in collaboration between Russia and China; however, the comparative project also permits us to draw some concluding observations about the nature of cooperation among different religious communities. For instance, which religious groups have carved out the closest relationship with those in power? And which religions are

¹⁷ See “Russian Orthodox Church to work for Russian Identity,” remarks by Prime Minister Putin, Moscow, Interfax, February 2, 2009. Reprinted on Johnston’s Russia List, JRL 2009-23-02.

¹⁸ Interview with imam from the Board of Muslims in the Republic of Tatarstan, April 15, 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

¹⁹ Interview with advisor to President Shaimiev, April 16, 2006, Kazan, Tatarstan.

excluded from collaborative exchanges?

The empirical chapters lend some support to the arguments that resource endowments and cultural ties shape and constrain religious and state interaction. In chapter 4 there is ample evidence of religious-state interaction centering on material concerns. Indeed, it is often a conscious strategy of many religious leaders to provide material resources as bargaining chips to improve their standing with those in power. Chapter 5 further demonstrated that church-state cooperation is more likely among religious groups with “native ties,” such as the Russian Orthodox Church or Buddhist temples. Thus, religious communities that are considered to be native or integral parts of Russian and Chinese culture are more able to establish cooperative relations with the local state than “foreign” religions.

The chapters reveal that in terms of both material and non-material bargaining, religious communities with native ties have a comparative advantage in shaping certain cooperative arrangements. Recall some of the collaborative arrangements presented in chapter 4, including the Buddhist temple in the financial district of Shanghai, the Kul-Sharif mosque in the Kazan, and the *Il'inskaja Sloboda* boulevard lined with Orthodox churches in Nizhny Novgorod. In each of these cases, the religious groups' cultural status as “native” helped facilitate cooperation. In Tatarstan, Muslim-state cooperation is possible because there is an established demand for Islamic tourism in the republic. A similar argument could be applied to religious groups with native ties in Shanghai. Although the city has a long tradition of religious pluralism, Buddhist and Taoist temples largely capture the tourist market.²⁰ Monks and priests from historic Buddhist and Taoist temples, including the Jade Buddha,

²⁰ To be clear, chapter 4 also presented two examples of church-state collaboration with non-native religious communities, including the She Shan Catholic Basilica and the Songjiang Mosque. In this chapter I suggested that these cases are exceptional and collaboration is only possible because of the historic buildings of each occupy. As of August 2007, no other Catholic or Muslim religious building in Shanghai municipality was part of a collaborative tourist arrangement.

Jing'An Monastery and the Taoist City God's Temple, all made it clear that their temples cater primarily to tourists and non-believers.²¹ Religious practitioners may visit the temples to consult with the monks and priests, but they rarely use these "tourist temples" as places of worship.

This observation takes us back, once again, to the risks of collaboration on the side of political elites. When local officials and bureaucrats reach out to religious communities that are considered endemic within local culture the risks are considerably lower and the potential payoffs likely greater. It is often expedient to justify religious and local-state collaboration in terms of supporting "local culture" when the religious community has native ties. Moreover, religious groups with "native ties" generally represent a significant proportion of the local religious marketplace, making the collaborative arrangement all the more attractive. It is no coincidence that the politicians in Nizhny Novgorod often invite Orthodox priests to bless their campaign rallies, where the majority of the population identifies as Orthodox.

However, the economic resources and cultural capital explanations fall short in predicting all types of church-state cooperation. For example, across China the most indigenous or "native" religious communities are often popular or folk religions that are not one of the five official (and legal) religions and have no state protection. Moreover, the empirical chapters provided ample evidence that cooperation is also open to religious communities with limited resource bases and to those groups that are considered alien. To explain these findings, it is necessary to return to an argument that appeared repeatedly throughout this dissertation: collaborative exchanges are

²¹ In fact, to the Jade Buddha monastery has two ticketing systems, which charges a more expensive price for tourist. Interview with monk at *Jing'An* Buddhist Monetary, May 2007. Interview with monk from Jade Buddha Monastery, August 2007, Interview with Taoist priest from City God's Temple, May 2007.

relationships of inter-dependence. Following this argument, church-state cooperation occurs not only because religious communities are “resource rich” and have “native ties,” but also because the resources they offer are considered valuable by the local state.

Recognizing that collaborative exchanges foster interdependent relationships gives us leverage in explaining why some local bureaucrats are willing to cooperate with marginalized and even illegal religious groups. In chapter 4, for instance, I presented two instances of religious-state collaboration with unregistered and illegal religious groups in China. One example based in a largely industrialized district of Shanghai observed local officials inviting the investment of Christian bosses to their district and then conveniently overlooking the crosses that adorned the newly built factories. A second example observed local cadres also welcoming cooperative arrangements with the underground Catholic Church because they operated a much-needed clinic for the mentally ill. These cases confirmed the interdependent nature of church-state cooperation, and reinforced the argument that cooperation is available to even marginalized religious communities, so long as these groups bring resources that are valuable to the local state. Collaborative arrangements are open to both “resource rich” and “resource poor” religious groups, as well as to religions with “native” and “non-native” ties.

What stands out from the cooperative arrangements—and where the propositions have some predictive leverage—is in explaining the magnitude of payoffs between native and non-native religious groups. Religious groups with native ties tend to make out quite well from cooperative exchanges. For instance, since the early 1990s the Orthodox Church has benefited enormously from its relationship with the state. Although the “benefits” received by Buddhists in China are not as lucrative as those received by the Russian Orthodox Church, they also have been the beneficiaries

of interest-free loans, access to land, state-funded restoration of temples and monasteries, and free tuition and entrance to local universities for MBA degrees.

All of this points to important differences in dynamics of cooperation between native and non-native religious communities. Cooperation for native religions tends to center on receiving rewards from the local state. In contrast, cooperation for foreign religious communities often centers on what these groups have to offer. Non-native religious groups in both Russia and China—e.g., Protestants and Catholics, which are considered to be the most threatening to the Orthodox Church and the most alien in China—tend to be involved in bargaining relationships that place them on the supply-side of collaboration. Their role is often about providing public goods and welfare services, and they do so out of self-preservation.

To summarize: all religious groups must have something to offer the local state; however, non-native religious communities often have to offer more, and generally receive less in exchange than religious groups with native ties. Thus, religious groups with native ties are clearly gaining the most from religious-state collaborations and making the best “bargains.” This is not to suggest that so-called foreign religious groups are necessarily losing from collaboration, but rather that their payoffs are considerably attenuated and, as a result, the relationship is more asymmetric.

Winners, losers and those in the middle

Recognizing the importance of payoffs between native and non-native religious communities leads to a final set of issues. If native religions are gaining the most and foreign religions the least from collaboration, where do we situate religious communities that fall in between, such as Islam in Russia and China, which has a long-tradition in both countries but is not considered to be a native religion? The

answer is complex, but their relative standing and potential bargains largely reflects how they court those in power.

There are two mosques in Changchun and seven in Shanghai that serve the local Hui population and other Muslim minority groups living within the cities. During interviews, I asked religious leaders at each of the mosques to compare their relations with local government officials to the relations their religious neighbors have with the state. The responses overwhelming revealed a similar hierarchy: Buddhists and Taoists have the closest relations, Protestants and Catholics have the most tense relations, and Muslims (at least in Changchun and Shanghai) are somewhere in the middle. To help maintain this middle position and improve relations, one imam in Shanghai explained that the mosques try not to attract attention because local state officials reward stability, and peacefulness indicates harmony.²² Other religious leaders explained that they also try to take advantage of their ethnic minority status to secure resources from the state. For instance, Islam is the only official religion in China that is associated with ethnic minority groups. As a result, when a mosque needs funding for a new roof or seeks permission to expand, religious leaders also court the state by playing upon their rights as minority constituents of the state. As an ethnic minority they are eligible for certain state assistance and, therefore, can articulate demands in ways that suggest that support for the mosque is also support for minority development—something that the center looks upon favorably and local cadres can include in reports to their superiors.²³

In Nizhny Novgorod, the Muslim community is also an ethnic minority with deep ties to the region; however, their relationship to those in power is quite different.

²² Interview with imam Y in Huxi district, August 2007, Shanghai.

²³ Wang (2009) also makes the argument that Muslims can use their ethnic minority status to secure resources from the state. This argument is also consistent with Hillman's (2004) study of a Hui hamlet in southwest China, in which a minority community reinvents itself through a merger of religious and ethnic identity.

Rather than keeping a low profile, the Muslim community has been one of the most vociferous critics of the local government, particularly of the local state's close alliance with the Orthodox Church. Among numerous examples, it was the local Board of Muslims who criticized the free heating for Orthodox churches and requested equal treatment for other religious groups; it was the Muslim community who protested the "Merry Christmas" posters hung across the city at taxpayer expense and requested that all religious holidays be equally recognized; it was the Muslim community who threatened to publish a "black list" of candidates during the 2006 local elections; and it was the Muslims who suggested that a course on the "Foundations of Tatar Culture" be offered as an alternative to the proposed "Foundations of Orthodox Culture" course in public schools.

Dissent has also come at a cost. The Tatar-Muslim community has been largely left out of the collaborative exchanges in Nizhny Novgorod. As one imam explained, the local government does nothing to directly harm us, but they also do nothing to help us.²⁴ This statement echoes an earlier argument about how collaborative arrangements allow the state to reward loyalty and punish those who are disloyal through quiet forms of repression, such as excluding religious groups from state subsidies. Consequently, excluded religious groups are marginalized and subsequently weakened because of reduced access to state resources. Tatar-Muslims are conscious that their criticism of the local state has come at the cost; however, they have also implemented various measures to ensure that their criticism cannot be interpreted as fundamentalism or Wahhabism. For instance, there are three mosques in Nizhny Novgorod and to prevent accusations that some mosques are "more radical" than others, the Religious Board of Muslims has introduced a rotating schedule for

²⁴ Interview with Damir-hazrat Muhetdinov, Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

imams.²⁵ Umar-khazrat Idrisov, the chairman of the Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, explained that each of the imams has a slightly different style, and some are more aggressive and outspoken than others. As a result, a rotating schedule has been introduced so that each Friday, imams lead prayers at a different mosque. The implication, of course, is that no mosque will be seen as a pocket of extremism and that local Muslims will have exposure to a range of self-moderating styles.

The position of Islam and its relationship to those in power is increasingly more complicated in Tatarstan. The majority of the population is Tatar-Muslim, and the republic is considered the historic homeland of Islam in Russia; however, the Tatar community has not established a religious monopoly like the Orthodoxy Church has in other regions. This is because the local government has gone to great lengths to promote religious tolerance and encourage religious pluralism. As a result, the local state has been very cautious about creating the appearance of favoritism in its relationships with religious groups, especially with regards to Islam, in order to avoid encouraging Islamic radicalism, an image that would jeopardize the republic's autonomy from Moscow.

Put another way, the politics of religion in Tatarstan largely resembles what Robert Putnam writes of as a “two-level game.”²⁶ As a minority and Muslim region in Russia, local government officials are managing the local religious marketplace—ensuring that all religious communities have access to those in power and that Islam remains moderate—while simultaneously negotiating their position with the center. To facilitate this two-level game, local officials have created a bureaucratic office to manage religious affairs in Tatarstan, the Council of Religious Matters for the Cabinet

²⁵ Interview with Umar-khazrat Idrisov, Chairman of the Religious Board of Muslims for the Nizhny Novgorod Region, March 2006, Nizhny Novgorod.

²⁶ On two-level games see Putnam (1988).

of the Republic of Tatarstan (Совет по делам религий при кабинете министров республики татарстан). The function of the Council for Religious Matters differs from other bureaucratic organs in charge of managing religious groups. For instance, the office is divided into various departments: Islamic Affairs; Russian Orthodoxy; New Religious Movements, Catholicism and Protestantism; and Legal Concerns. Furthermore, each department serves as an intermediary between the different religious groups and the Shaimiev administration. Thus, rather than managing and monitoring religious activities, the various departments function as advocates for the religious groups and therefore discourage any one religion from capturing the state.

The Limits of Collaboration

A central argument appearing throughout this thesis is at the local level, the interests of religious and state actors are aligning, and as a result both sides are pursuing active collaborative relations instead of conflict. The empirical findings presented from the two countries and four cases provide ample support for this argument. Nevertheless, religious and local state collaboration is not the norm for all religious communities nor for all regions. Russia and China are extremely diverse and plural countries and although cooperation is possible in some areas there is a considerable amount of conflict in others.

It is of course extremely difficult to study the diverse underground religious groups in China, and virtually impossible to make generalizations with any confidence about these groups operating in the shadows. However, interviews with members of some underground house churches revealed that they want nothing to do with the state or with the state-sanctioned TSPM churches—they simply wanted to be left alone. Yet with regard to associational life, to be “left alone” within an authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regime is a conscious deviation from normal policy. As a result,

many religious groups that pursue paths of autonomy from the state face increased scrutiny and repression. It has not been uncommon for pastors from underground house churches to have been in and out of prison and on the run from authorities for several years, and even the lay practitioners to be nervous about raids by the public security forces on their small prayer groups. Thus, for many who are part of the underground religious community, the state and TSPM churches are agents of repression, and cooperation is out of the question, akin to religious profanation.

Religious and local state collaboration is also unlikely to develop in border regions with large minority populations and in areas where religious beliefs align with minority groups. In these areas, the suspicions associated with religious communities and ethnic groups—as potential hotbeds for instability, and the promotion of self-determination and secession—overshadow any potential payoffs gained from cooperation for the local state. Moreover, in these politically charged regions there is often greater oversight by central authorities, and local officials are often placed in these areas because of their demonstrated loyalty. Thus, local state officials are less likely to engage in cooperative interactions with religious communities, and more likely to follow the costly and coercive strategies of engagement dictated from above. In particular, religious and local-state collaboration is unexpected in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Xinjiang, where Islam overlaps with ethnic minority identity, and minority groups are pushing for greater autonomy, if not outright secession, from the center.²⁷ Collaborative exchanges are also unlikely in Tibet, where in spite of greater religious freedom in China, the aftermath of the summer 2008 protests indicate that local officials are continuing to embrace a repressive model of religious management²⁸—a model that includes forced denunciations of the Dalai Lama,

²⁷ On the Uighur minority resistance in Xinjiang, China, see, e.g. Bovingdon (2002).

²⁸ In the summer 2008, Tibetan monks used the anniversary of the Dalai Lama's flight into exile (March 10, 1959) to organize peaceful demonstrations calling for greater religious freedoms in Tibet.

mandatory participation by Tibetan monks in patriotic education campaigns, and tight controls on religious expression.

This leads to a more general point. Religious and local-state cooperation can be further constrained by the center. In the early 1990s when the religious marketplace was largely unregulated, many new religious movements flooded into Russia. Among these groups were practitioners of Scientology. In Nizhny Novgorod, Scientologists registered with the local bureaucracies and were able to establish quite a large following within a few short years, including many staff members from the provincial administration.²⁹ Part of their strategy was to invest heavily into local universities, including providing reading rooms and much-needed computer and laboratory equipment. Converts were also encouraged to devote their businesses to the expansion of Scientology. For instance, Alexander Kulikov, the director of the Zemlyn (Earthling) Chemical established a “Hubbard College” on the plant’s facilities and encouraged his employees to attend courses.³⁰ Other business ventures included a large, pyramid-shaped shopping complex adjacent to the central train station, where employees were required to attend (and pay for) seminars on dianetics or risk being fired.³¹

Scientology flourished in Nizhny Novgorod until the end of the decade when religious freedoms, especially for new religious movements, were tightened and the Orthodox Church began to use its influence with central authorities to pressure its religious competition.³² In 1998, the Ministry of Internal Affairs released materials stating, “The Church of Scientology is one of the many varied satanic sects which

The demonstrations quickly became violent when ordinary Tibetans joined the monks in protest and began attacking non-Tibetans and their property.

²⁹ Dvorkin (1998).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Interview with former employee, February 2005, Nizhny Novgorod. See also, Kuznetsov (1996).

³² Dolgov (1999).

have a distinctly criminal tendency and which actively use psychotropic substances in order to acquire control over the personality of adepts.”³³ The central denunciation of Scientology sent a clear message to regional political elites; although a majority of Scientology associations were legally registered, they would no longer be welcome in Russia. Consequently, local governments began refusing to renew the re-registration of Scientology groups. Although the Nizhny Scientologist communist had established almost a decade of positive relations with the local state, they were nonetheless refused re-registration. In fact, the local administration even initiated a campaign against Scientology, warning residents of their cult-like activities and recommending that all municipal agencies and academic institutions break ties with the group.³⁴

The transformation of relations—from cooperative to conflictual—in Nizhny illustrates two lessons. One is that religious and local-state relations are extremely fluid. A cooperative alliance can rapidly become conflictual and vice-versa. The second is that the center remains a key player in the bargaining games and may intervene to redefine the parameters of religious expression.

Falun gong

The centralized mass-campaign denouncing the Falun gong offers a final test for the thesis. To recall from chapter 2, Falun gong (法轮功) or Falundafa (法轮大法), is a spiritual movement led by Master Li Hongzhi that emerged in the early nineties on the outskirts of Changchun.³⁵ The Falun gong movement synthesizes

³³ “Scientology: Pseudo-Church, Pseudo-Science, Pseudo-Truth,” *Gorodovoi* (Kirov), April 3, 1998.

³⁴ “Results of re-registration in Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod administration recommends non-cooperation with several religious associations,” *Sobornost*, March 6, 2001. Other religious associations that were denounced included: Jehovah's Witnesses, the Association of the Holy Spirit for Unification of World Christianity (“Moonies”), the Great White Brotherhood Yusmalos (White brotherhood of the followers of Marina Tsvigun), Reiki Kadutsei (“Intergalactic Center of the Hierarchy of Light”), the organization “Living Stream” (also known as “Witnesses of Lee,” “Witnesses of Witness Lee”), and various forms of the so-called “True Orthodox Church.”

³⁵ Falun gong mean “Practice of the Law Wheel” and Falundafa translates as the “Great Way of the

Buddhist and Taoist philosophy with mysticism and *qigong* (气功).³⁶ Among teachings of Master Li is the belief that meditation cultivates truth and benevolence among practitioners, and that a believer can find the “true meaning of life” and even cultivate supernatural powers by practicing Falun gong.³⁷ The violent crackdown on Falun gong raises an important question for this dissertation: why was the Falun gong spiritual movement suppressed while other unofficial religious communities have since been able to establish cooperative relations with those in power?

To evaluate this question, it is instructive to revisit the rise of Falun gong. Qigong movements that blend mysticism, shadowboxing and mediation, such as Falun gong, have a long history in China, and often with considerable state-support. In the 1950s, for instance, the Communist Party promoted qigong practices as holistic and inexpensive alternatives to Western medicine. In the post-Mao period, qigong again experienced a popular revival with similar government support.³⁸ Perhaps in part because mysticism has frequently been associated with qigong activities, it was surprising that a National Qigong Chinese Research Association was founded in the mid-eighties to “scientifically” study how such practices could provide relief for the already overburdened healthcare system.

Here it is important to recognize that before the crackdown, Falun gong and other qigong associations were operating with considerably more transparency than most underground religious movements. The founder of Falun gong cultivated alliances with those in power, the organization joined the National Qigong

Law Wheel.” These names are used interchangeably.

³⁶ Qigong is a traditional Chinese practice that combines breathing exercises, meditation and mysticism in order to improve spiritual and physical well-being. On qigong practices and beliefs, see, e.g. Chen (1995; 2003); Palmer (2007).

³⁷ Quoted from the Falun gong official website, available at <http://www.falundafa.org/eng/intro.html>, [last accessed May 6, 2008].

³⁸ David Ownby (2005) estimates that in the mid-nineties number of qigong practitioners ranged between 60 and 200 million.

Association, Master Li went on a lecture tour sponsored by the national association, smaller Falun gong groups registered their activities with various local bureaucracies, and draws on “ancient” Chinese spiritual traditions.³⁹ Falun gong would seem, therefore, to be a likely candidate for religious-state cooperation—it was transparent, registered, courting the state, and considered to have deep “native ties” to China. Moreover, its diverse and dense networks could serve as attractive resources for local officials to exploit. However, as the movement grew its relationship to those in power began to change. Rather than courting the state, Falun gong practitioners took a more confrontational approach to power.

In a recent study of the Falun gong movement, David Palmer explains that between 1998 and 1999 Falun gong supporters became increasingly militant, organizing over twenty protests in front of government offices and media outlets.⁴⁰ The protests were largely in response to editorials that were critical of the teaching of Falun gong, referring to its leader as little more than a charlatan, comparing the organization to the Boxer Rebellion and concluding that it would bring harm to the nation.⁴¹ Angered by the editorials, demonstrators picketed media outlets and government offices demanding apologies. According to Palmer, the targeted government offices and newspapers either ignored the protestors or quickly issued apologies to pacify them.⁴² The combination of having their demands met and the absence of official deterrence seemed to embolden Falun gong tactics. At dawn on April 25, 1999, roughly ten thousand Falun gong practitioners sat in silent mediation

³⁹ It is worth mentioning that qigong is not considered one of the five official religions; therefore, qigong groups, like Falun gong, registered under a variety of alternative affiliations, including: medical organizations, martial arts organizations, youth leagues, sports clubs, etc. (Palmer 2007: 189). On the registration and spread of Falun Gong, see, e.g. Leung (2002); Ownby (2003). On strong links between Falun gong and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) see Ownby (2003).

⁴⁰ Palmer (2007: 256).

⁴¹ He (1999); Eckholm (2001); Palmer (2007).

⁴² Palmer (2007: 256).

outside of *Zhongnanhai*—the private compound for the top leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

Following the protest, the Party made it clear that any cooperation with Falun gong would not be tolerated. The state's response was swift and ruthless. Falun gong was denounced as an “evil cult,” a profound threat to social stability, and citizens (especially Party members) were warned to not take part in its beliefs and activities. Those who refused to renounce the spiritual group were fired from their jobs, had their housing confiscated by the state, sent to labor camps, and at the extremes even killed.⁴³

The *Zhongnanhai* protests shifted the political dynamic in such a way as to make religious-state cooperation impossible in the years following. For instance, the location of the demonstration—at the doorstep of the Party—signaled that Falun gong was organized and willing to take political risks in order to achieve its aims. The timing of the protests—close to the eve of the ten-year anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre—also escalated tensions in the capital and fueled suspicions of Falun gong's anti-regime sentiments. Finally, the scale of the protests—over 10,000 participants from all regions and from different social-strata—seemed to take both the Party and public security forces by surprise.⁴⁴ These factors taken together transformed Falun gong from a spiritual qigong movement to an enemy of the state. The protests in many ways sealed the fate of the organization—it was the wrong place and the wrong time to push for greater rights—and even if religious-state cooperation was once possible at the local level, it ceased for some time after the protests.

One final issue arises with respect to the rise and fall of Falun gong. The state campaign has served as both a warning and example of political learning for other

⁴³ Palmer (2007).

⁴⁴ On the failure of the Party and PSB to anticipate the Falun Gong protests, see, e.g. Shue (2001); Hu (2003); Kipnis (2000); Chen (2003).

unofficial religious communities. For instance, one of the founding “uncles” of the underground China Gospel Fellowship House Church (中华福音团契) explained that Falun gong has been an example of how not to engage the state. The China Gospel Fellowship shares many similarities with Falun gong, including extensive networks, over one million members, and strong mobilization capacity. One of the church leaders explained that a single phone call could activate the dense networks and cell groups to bring thousands, even tens of thousands, to Beijing in 48 hours. The uncle stressed, however, that such an act is much too political and would only end badly for the church. There are effective ways to encourage greater religious freedom and to build the church in China, but mobilizing in Tiananmen Square is not one of them.⁴⁵

Implications

This project set out to enhance our understanding of how regimes in transition (and with different levels of political and economic liberalization) deal with growing religiosity within their borders, and just as importantly, how religious groups shape politics in a period of fundamental change. For specialists of Russia and China this project brings a much-needed cultural dimension to the study of contemporary politics. There is no comparative study of religion and politics in countries undergoing transitions from state-socialism—or, for that matter, from other forms of authoritarian rule. The fact is that much of the literature on contemporary Russian and Chinese politics privileges the political and economic dimensions of reform at the expense of cultural actors. When cultural dimensions are included, culture tends to take center-stage in the narrative while economic and political actors drop out. Scholarship on both of these countries has also remained largely secular, leaving the

⁴⁵ Interview with one of the founding “uncles” of the China Gospel Fellowship, October 11, 2006, Beijing.

role of religious actors both understudied and under theorized. The few works that do explore aspects of the growing religiosity tend to focus on only religions that are either particularly powerful or extremely contentious, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, Falun gong, and the Protestant house church movements in China. Moreover, these studies do not look at multiple sites within the state, and more generally overlook the political economic dimension of religious-state relations. Such a focus belies the multi-religious reality of both countries, and provides only a narrow, and arguably skewed, perspective of religious and state interaction.

This project addresses these shortcomings by studying multiple cultural actors, placing them into the context of political and economic change, what different degrees of authoritarianism means for church-state relations, and addressing the comparative impact of religion on the political futures of Russia and China. This shift in focus is important because by overlooking the intersection of culture and politics during this period of political and economic flux, we leave ourselves ill-prepared to explain how religious groups are influenced by the course of political change and how, in turn, such groups shape the course of politics. This thesis, therefore, contributes a critical cultural component to contemporary Russian and Chinese studies, and in the process bridges two major, but usually competing approaches in political science—cultural analysis and political economy.

It is also my hope that this comparative endeavor will serve as a bridge between areas specialists and the larger comparative politics community, and that this study will also encourage more conversations between students of Russian and Chinese politics and culture, who have much to gain from greater interaction with each other.

Readers less interested in the politics of Russia and China will find that throughout the chapters a number of theoretical arguments and findings that contribute

to larger debates in comparative politics. This thesis adds to the extensive scholarship on central-local relations by illustrating the autonomy of local state actors, their uneven implementation of central policies, and identifying the creative strategies that local bureaucrats adopt to facilitate cooperation with religious communities. For instance, political elites rename subsidies given to various religious communities as assistance for “local culture” and protection of cultural relics in order to navigate around central policies that mandate a strict separation of church and state.

This project also enhances our understanding of the political and economic power of non-state actors, and demonstrates that religious groups, too, have stakes, are organized and mobilized, and seek to engage state actors, just as the state has an interest in courting and managing them. Thus, in spite of the common assumption that religious actors are “irrational” and only concerned with supernatural forces, this project demonstrates that religious actors in Russia and China are becoming increasingly important political and economic players.

At the same time, the study provides a new testing ground for debates in political science that consider religious diversity as a cause for instability by providing the symbols and moral justification for violence.⁴⁶ By contrast, this thesis highlights religiously plural societies, where religious dynamics take place in variable regime contexts, yet religion is often a source of cooperation and not of conflict.

This project further attempts to advance our understanding of the theoretical links between religion and politics. While it is widely recognized that the two interact, there is very little work that specifies in a systematic way how these interactions take place, and their consequences for the political influence of religious communities and the stability, legitimacy, and economic vitality of both local governments and

⁴⁶ For example, Lijphart’s (1977) model of consociational model of democracy was developed to maintain stability in (religiously) plural societies. Juergensmeyer (2003) documents the global rise of religious violence and alliance between religion and terror.

authoritarian regimes.⁴⁷

Another contribution that emerges from this study is the continued importance of the state. Many have observed that the state has generally been in retreat during the past two decades as a result of a diminished role in the economy and organization of society, i.e., long gone are the days of the Young Pioneers and state-dominated bee keepers' associations. However, this project speaks to a larger question of state-civil society dynamics in liberalizing authoritarian regimes. Even as both countries distance themselves from their communist pasts, neither the Russian nor Chinese state has in practice been entirely willing to relinquish its control over all forms of associational life. There is still a desire to influence and control all entities, such as religious communities, that organize citizens, take in funds, make ideological claims, and feature an identifiable leadership. Religious groups are also a critical concern of the state because of their emphasis on values not necessarily shared by the regime, and their ability to provide alternative sources of authority.

This study, along with other recent work on civil society also helps us rethink, if not amend, our understanding of the relationship between associational groups and power. For instance, this project demonstrated that associational groups are both less independent and more supportive of the regime than generally assumed. This finding is important because scholars of democracy, for instance, argue that religious groups are important members of civil society whose purpose is to act as a check on those in power. Civil society's strength comes from the fact that it can serve as an important mediator between citizens and the state, and that it can create important focal points around which the disenfranchised can mobilize against shared grievances.⁴⁸ Along

⁴⁷ Some notable exceptions include the literature on liberation theology and the role of the Catholic church in communist Poland; see also Diamond et al (2005); Wittenberg (2006); Rueschemeyer, Stevens & Stevens (1992).

⁴⁸ Diamond (1992).

similar lines, scholars, (and presidents!) of the post-communist region such as Václav Havel, laud faith-based groups for their ability to protect society from political chaos, and chip away at the power of the powerful in authoritarian settings. Yet, this project has provided strong evidence that religious communities do not inherently function as pockets of dissent, nor are they nascent democrats stimulating political participation and socializing democratic norms. Instead, under certain conditions they may also choose to forge active collaborative relations with those in power, which ultimately tends to reinforce the policies of the regime. Thus, rather than functioning as a force for destabilization and political change, the expansion of religious associational life has reinforced the authority of regime incumbents.

This finding is significant because it speaks to larger issues of regime durability and regime change in authoritarian settings, and suggests that we cannot hastily assume that religious communities, as members of civil society, provide a counter to those in power. While many have optimistically looked to civil society organizations as agents of collective empowerment in authoritarian settings, the study of comparative authoritarianism also suggests that these types of political regimes are adaptive and remarkably resilient to political change. By way of example, the Soviet Union persisted for over seventy years, and after its collapse Russia only briefly flirted with “democracy” before rejoining the club of authoritarians. China is also approaching its sixtieth anniversary and there are no signs that regime collapse is on the horizon. Thus, we must be cautious when granting too much agency to religious groups as agents of political change, especially when they are up against such stubborn and long-lived opponents.

As Vikie Langor writes, “it is certainly true that these [civil society] organizations can call attention to and sometimes limit the depredations of authoritarian rule by publicizing abuses such as torture of political prisoners and

limitation on free speech. They can also help lay the foundations of a democratic culture by disseminating values essential to democracy, include respect for human rights and the rule of law. Beyond these contributions, however, lies the Herculean task of replacing current authoritarian regimes with democratic ones.”⁴⁹ Groups seeking to challenge authoritarian rule require broad support and extensive coalitions that take decades to build. However, the very nature of religion often puts religious groups in competition with others, making inter-religious cooperation difficult in plural settings. Moreover, when religious groups do play a role in encouraging political change, these religions generally represent large majorities that have been able to ally with other non-religious associations. Recall, for example, that the Solidarity movement in communist era Poland was comprised of more than just the Catholic Church, but over the decades grew to include coalitions of intellectuals, workers, farmers, students, and teachers. In other words, the Polish Catholic Church functioned as a shelter allowing dissidents to organize, but by no means was the Church the sole player.

Therefore, this study contributes to literature recognizing the constraints placed on liberalizing authoritarian systems and the ways evening seemingly challenging factors, such as a robust associational life, do not presently pose significant threats to those in power. For the most part, religious groups in Russia and China have steered clear of oppositional politics. One might argue, and correctly so, that in China a religious group speaking out in favor of political change would risk political disfavor and immediate repression. The repression directed at Falun gong demonstrates the limits and consequences of politicization. However, even in Russia where there is greater space for oppositional politics, religious groups have still not mobilized against the regime.

⁴⁹ Langhor (2004: 200).

Although Tatar Muslims do have a contentious relationship with the local state in Nizhny Novgorod, this does not mean that the Tatar community necessarily seeks to challenge the regime. In Russia, Islam is a minority religion whose followers are also ethnic minorities. Even if followers of Islam secretly harbored desires to overthrow the center, their dual-minority status presents a significant barrier for Tatar-Muslim's ability to serve as a "bridging" organization to other oppositional groups.

The Orthodox Church provides another important example of why we should be cautious of viewing religious groups as agents of political change and democratization. The Russia Orthodox Church has both the strength and independence necessary to challenge the state, yet has not pushed for democratization or even for reform. In fact, the Church often acts as a defender of the Kremlin and a critic of the West, leading some to re-name it the "Kremlin's Ministry for the Salvation of Souls."⁵⁰ Moreover, when priests are critical of the Kremlin and its policies, the Church internally punishes their behavior. For example, one priest who spoke out against the 2005 conviction and imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorovsky (the former head of YUKOS Oil) was defrocked for "disciplinary" reasons. Other outspoken priests have met similar internal sanctions. Mansur Mirovalev notes, the "Bishop Diomid of Chukotka, who lambasted Alexy II's alleged subservience to the Kremlin, found himself demoted to the rank of a monk last year."⁵¹ In 1997, a church Council excommunicated Father Gleb Yakunin, a priest and former lawmaker, "after he headed a government commission that concluded that most top clerics, including Patriarch Alexy and his future successor Kirill, were KGB informers."⁵² The Council later accused Father Yakunin of treason and of working for U.S. intelligence. As these examples suggest, religious communities in liberalizing authoritarian regimes

⁵⁰ Mirovalev (2009).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

significantly vary in their goals and strategies. They also operate under different time horizons. In contemporary Russia and China, as opposed to strugglers against communism in the past, religious communities assume that the current regime is here to stay. As a result, religious groups build alliances with those in power, and choose to serve as its defenders rather than critics.

Thus, instead of viewing religious groups as agents of political change, the findings of this project add to recent scholarship on associational life in the Middle East that takes a “less sanguine view of civil society.”⁵³ For instance, in *Barriers to Democracy*, Amaney Jamal challenges the conventional assumptions about the relationship between democracy and civil society in her study of associational life in Palestine. She argues that civil society is not always a force for democratization, but instead reproduces elements of the political context in which it exists. In democratic regimes, which are usually the focus of social scientists, civil society may in fact improve the health of democratic institutions. However, within authoritarian systems such as Palestine, and as this project confirms within a liberalizing Russia and China, associational life reproduces the tendencies of the regime. Authoritarian states shape and penetrate civil society in ways that democratic regimes do not. The state is a monopoly and can just as easily choose to crush associational groups well as allow them to function and flourish in ways that can benefit regime incumbents. As a result, the function of civil society often reflects—and even strengthens—the institutional context within which it exists.⁵⁴ In liberalizing authoritarian regimes, therefore, associational groups can reinforce the political status quo.

This conclusion leads us to a final set of issues introduced by this study. If the revival of religious associational life is not a sign of impending crisis, constraint on

⁵³ Wiktorowicz (2000: 43; 2001).

⁵⁴ Jamal (2007: 20).

those in power, or Trojan horse for greater liberalization, are cooperative relations between religious and local-state actors stable and likely to endure?

It is a precarious business to predict the future of political regimes, particularly two that have experienced such fundamental change in recent decades and embody characteristics of both democratic and authoritarian life. Nevertheless, one can image three competing scenarios that would affect religious and local-state cooperation.

The first scenario reflects the status quo. One of the distinctive characteristics of liberalizing authoritarian regimes is that change is often slow and incremental. Gradual reforms allow for selective liberalization (or even de-liberalization), and are therefore unlikely to disrupt the current cooperative arrangements. Thus, so long as Russia and China remain in the “political gray zone” situated between democracy and dictatorship the current alliances between religious and local-state actors are likely to continue.⁵⁵

However, the absence of significant political change is not to suggest that religious groups will become the handmaidens of the state nor that their interests and goals always align with those in power. Rather, what I wish to argue is that in the current political climate, where there is limited space for associational life to function and regime incumbents appear to have a solid monopoly on power, religious groups will continue to find it in their best interest to align with the powerful and resourceful—the state. Thus, so long as religious communities continue to link their futures to the state, change is unlikely to occur.

This scenario dovetails with an argument made by Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens in *Capitalist Development & Democracy*.⁵⁶ The authors maintain that the relationship between religious

⁵⁵ Carothers (2002).

⁵⁶ Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992).

associational life and the state is crucial in predicating the long-term chances of democratization. More specifically, they find that religious groups with strong ties to the state, such as officially sanctioned Lutheran and Catholic churches, function as conduits for the ruling-class hegemony and regime status quo; whereas, religious communities that are able to distance themselves from those in power serve as “strong breeding grounds for democratic movements.”⁵⁷

It is also worth mentioning that regime incumbents also have a stake in maintaining the status quo. Just as cooperative relations secure the future for religious groups, cooperative relations have also paid off quite handsomely for local governments. For example, religious groups free-up state resources by providing important goods and welfare services; religious leaders endorse state policies and politicians; they may even offer significant financial opportunities for those in power. Considering these advantages, there are few reasons why political elites would encourage change. Moreover, one could also imagine a scenario in which the financial crisis of 2008-09 trickles down and the frequency of religious-state collaboration would increase. In other words, when faced with growing economic constraints, local government officials may attempt to extend their reach into religious groups in order to maximize economic interests and govern more efficiently.

A second scenario that would redefine the nature of religious and local-state interaction involves greater liberalization. In such an event, Russian and Chinese political elites would credibly embrace liberalizing reforms and begin to plot their course out of the “political gray zone” toward democratic rule. Political changes would be dramatic, including the establishment of an independent judiciary and rule of law, increased freedoms of expression and association, as well as significant autonomy for the development of civil society and opposition. In such an optimistic outcome,

⁵⁷ Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992: 275).

religious groups would be able to function independently of the state, and, as a result, religious-state collaboration would likely decline because it would be less crucial for their survival.

A third, more plausible and pessimistic, scenario is that the current regimes will return to their more authoritarian roots. Restrictions on associational life will increase, and religious groups will become increasingly dependent on regime incumbents. One could imagine the process of de-liberalization playing-out slightly differently in Russia than in China. For instance, it would be unlikely that the Kremlin would challenge or repress the Orthodox Church. Instead, it could take steps to re-institute the Church to its pre-revolutionary status as a “state church.” A nationalized Orthodox Church would not only be easier for the regime to manipulate and control than an independent church, but it would also lend moral legitimacy to those in power. Indeed, there is some evidence that this third scenario is the direction Russia is headed. In July 2009, for example, the United Russia party (Единая Россия) announced that all future draft laws introduced in the Duma (parliament) will also be reviewed by Patriarch Kirill for modification. According to Alesksei Malashenko, the ruling party is not only trying to share responsibility for future unpopular decisions with the Russian Orthodox Church, but is also seeking to enhance its reputation among citizens. Malashenko writes, “United Russia desperately lacks something despite its triumphs in elections throughout the country and the overwhelming majority in the lower house of the parliament. And what might it be? It lacks society's respect. It lacks recognition as a genuine political party and not just an organization founded and pampered by the Kremlin.”⁵⁸

One could also imagine that the re-institutionalization of a state church might

⁵⁸ Malashenko (2009).

also lead to a decline in religious pluralism, where non-Orthodox religious communities would face mounting marginalization. It is unlikely, however, that such marginalization would encourage non-Orthodox religious groups to join forces and challenge the Orthodox-center monopoly on power. Nancy Bermeo and Philip Nord have argued that the contours of associational life are not fixed and that organizational groups do not necessarily have thick linkages between them.⁵⁹ In fact, hostility is often present. This point seems particularly appropriate in understanding the dynamics among religious associational groups, where Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Catholics and Protestants would most likely continue to view each other as “competitors” instead of “compatriots.”

In China, de-liberalization would also likely result in greater restrictions on religious associational life and dependency of the five official religions on the regime. However, rather than institutionalizing one religious group as a “national religion” as in the hypothetical case of Orthodoxy in Russia, control over the five official religions would be relatively uniform, with no group establishing a monopoly. Greater restrictions on religious activities do not necessarily mean that the regime would openly use violence to manage religious groups. One of the important lessons of the Cultural Revolution was that religious beliefs driven underground tend to grow stronger, create martyrs and become more difficult for the state to control.⁶⁰ As a consequence, an outright assault on religion would be counterproductive to the larger goal of making religion serve the state. Thus, similar to Russia, we would observe quiet forms of repressions, such as increased restrictions on religious expression and marginalization, as opposed to violence.

I would further argue that even if China embarks on a path of de-liberalization,

⁵⁹ Bermeo and Nord (2000).

⁶⁰ On the problems of using repression to manage religious groups in the communist world, see, e.g. Zhong (1998).

a mass-campaign similar to the assault on Falun gong but directed at the underground Protestant house churches is unlikely. Protestant house churches not only have a wider international network that could place external pressure on the regime, but a growing number of house church participants are young, urban, educated, and part of the emerging middle-class—a demographic the regime wants to maintain as an ally. This is certainly the case with the unregistered Hill of Golgotha Church of Beijing, which rents a conference hall in a luxury hotel each week for religious services. It is a vibrant and youthful congregation that uses the Internet to promote their beliefs and social service projects.⁶¹ As one observer wrote of the congregation, “Almost everyone in the room is scarcely a day over 30. Most look as if they are in their early twenties. They are fashionably dressed—girls with high-heeled boots, men sporting trendy knitted hats. This is Friday night Bible class in Beijing. And it is a weekend venue of choice for growing numbers of well-off middle-class city sophisticates.”⁶² Thus, while de-liberalization may result in greater restrictions on religious freedom, it is unlikely that the state would risk disenfranchising a growing segment of the middle-class with the use of violence.

Among these three scenarios, the most plausible outcome in both countries is the continuation of politics as usual. Russia and China seem quite content to allow a limited space for associational life to develop, local elites benefit from extracting valuable resources from religious groups, and religious communities have more to gain by aligning with those in power than opposing it. Moreover, both Russia and China appear to be very comfortable in the “political gray zone” as liberalizing authoritarian regimes. To be sure, political change will take place in the coming years, but it will continue to be incremental. Selective liberalization may be followed by

⁶¹ Information about the Hill of Golgotha Church can be found at <http://www.swchurch.cn/> [last accessed March 28, 2009].

⁶² Macartney (2009).

periods of de-liberalization as Russia and China carry on “crossing the river by feeling for stones.”⁶³

⁶³ Deng Xiaoping was famous for describing China’s process of liberalization as “crossing the river by feeling for stones” (摸着石头过河).

APPENDIX
PROPOSTIONS

Proposition 1—Alliances for support. Local elites have strong incentives to reach out to a diverse body of constituents in order to expand coalitions of support. Political elites are more likely to interact with and support religious groups that exercise a religious monopoly in a region than religious groups that represent a minority.

Proposition 2—Alliances for survival. Religious groups will seek to align themselves with the state when the government is less politically accountable to citizens. As regimes liberalize and become more politically accountable, through elections or other measures, religious groups will seek independence from the state.

Proposition 3—Religious competition. In areas of diverse religiosity, religious groups court the local state to secure certain advantages, such as a facilitated registration process, the ability to shut out the “religious competition” or establish a “spiritual monopoly,” and in return they may mobilize support for a candidate or support for a government and its policy.

Proposition 4—Economic resources. Religious groups are supported, tolerated or even cooperate with the local state when they provide public goods for the community and extra revenue for those in power.

Proposition 5—Cultural capital. The local state is more supportive and willing to cooperate with religious organizations that are considered “culturally authentic” or “native religions” rather than “foreign religions.”

REFERENCES

- Ad Apostolorum Principis Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on "Communism and the Church in China," given June 29, 1958, available at:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061958_ad-apostolorum-principis_en.html [last accessed February 3, 2009].
- Ahern, Emily Martin. Chinese Ritual and Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Albrecht, Holger. "How Can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt." Democratization 12, no. 3 (2005): 378-397.
- Albrecht, Holger and Oliver Schlumberger. "'Waiting for Godot': Regime Change Without Democratization in the Middle East" International Political Science Review 25, no. 4 (2004): 371-392.
- Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba. The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Anholt, Simon. Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Armes, Keith. "Chekists In Cassocks: The Orthodox Church and the KGB." Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization I, vol. 4 (Autumn 1994): 72-83.
- Arrow, Kenneth J. Social Choice and Individual Values. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951.
- Article 300: The Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, 1999: reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 32, no. 5 (September-October 1999) 46-50.
- Ashiwa, Yoshiko and David Wank. Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Bacon, Edward. "The Church and Civil Society in Russia," in Russian Civil Society: A Critical Assessment, eds. Alfred B. Evans Jr., Laura A. Henry, and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 110-125.
- Baskakov, Nikolai. "Controversial Question: Are 'Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture' Needed in the Schools?" Pravda severa, December 20, 2002, reprinted on <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/> [last accessed April 1, 2009].

- Becker, Garry S. The Economic Approach to Human Behavior, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Beissinger, Mark R. Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Bellah, Robert and Phillip E. Hammond. Varieties of Civil Religion. New York: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Berger, Peter. The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Berger, Peter. The Sacred Canopy. New York: Anchor, 1967.
- Berman, Sheri. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." World Politics 49 (1997): 401-29.
- Bermeo, Nancy and Philip Nord eds. Civil Society Before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.
- Bernhard, Michael. "Civil Society After the First Transition: Dilemmas of Post-Communist Democratization in Poland and Beyond." Communist and Post-Communist Studies 29, no. 3 (1996).
- Boltz, Judith Magee. "In Homage to T'ien-Fei." Journal of the American Oriental Society 106, vol. 1 (1986): 211-32.
- Bourdeaux, Michael. "Religion Revives in All Its Variety: Russia's Regions Today." Religion, State & Society 28, vol. 1 (2000): 9-21.
- Bourdeaux, Michael. Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990.
- Bovingdon, Gardner. "The Not-So-Silent Majority: Uyghur Resistance to Han Rule in Xinjiang." Modern China 28, no. 1 (2002): 38-78.
- Brady, Henry E. and David Collier eds. Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004.
- Brodsgaard, Kjeld Erik "Institutional Reform and the Bianzhi System in China." The China Quarterly 170 (June 2002): 361-86.
- Brook, Timothy and B. Michael Frolic, eds. Civil Society in China. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997.

- Brown, Deborah A. "The Role of Religion in Promotion Democracy in the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong," in ed. Beatrice Leung. Church and State in 21st century Asia. Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong, 1996, 79-143.
- Bruce, Steve. God is Dead: Secularization in the West. Oxford UK: Blackwell, 2002.
- Brumberg, Daniel. "The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy." Journal of Democracy 13, no. 4 (October 2002).
- Buchanan, James M. and Gordon Tullock. The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974.
- Bukharaev, Ravil, Farida Zabirov and Airat Sitdikov. "Kazan Kremlin: The White, Fairy-tale Palace on the Volga River." World Heritage Review 28 (2000): 52-63.
- Bunce, Valerie and Maria Csanádi. "Uncertainty in the Transition: Post-communism in Hungary." East European Politics & Societies 7, no. 2 (1993): 240-275.
- Bunce, Valerie. "The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era: The Rise and Fall of Corporatism." British Journal of Political Science 13 (1983): 129-158.
- Bunce, Valerie. Subversive Institutions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Bunce, Valerie. Do New Leaders Make a Difference? Executive Succession and Public Policy under Capitalism and Socialism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Burawoy, Michael and Katherine Verdery, eds. Uncertain Transitions: Ethnographies of Change in the Post Socialist World. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
- Burdo, M. and S.B. Filatov, eds. Sovremennaja religioznaja zhizn' rossii: opyt sistematcheskogo opisaniija Tom IV [Contemporary Religious Life in Russia Volume IV], Moskva: Logos, 2005.
- Burdo, M. and S.B. Filatov, eds., Sovremennaja religioznaja zhizn' rossii: opyt sistematcheskogo opisaniija Tom I [Contemporary Religious Life in Russia Volume I], Moskva: Logos, 2005.
- Burdo, M. and S.B. Filatov, eds., Sovremennaja religioznaja zhizn' rossii: opyt sistematcheskogo opisaniija Tom II [Contemporary Religious Life in Russia

Volume II], Moskva: Logos, 2005.

Burdo, M. and S.B. Filatov eds., Sovremennaja religioznaja zhizn' rossii: opyt sistematcheskogo opisaniija Tom III [Contemporary Religious Life in Russia Volume III], Moskva: Logos, 2005.

Burdo, M. and S.B. Filatov, eds., Atlas Sovremennaja religioznaja zhizn' rossii: opyt sistematcheskogo opisaniija Tom I [Atlas of Contemporary Religious Life in Russia Volume I], Moskva: Keston Institutue, 2005.

Burdo, M. and S.B. Filatov, eds., Atlas Sovremennaja religioznaja zhizn' rossii: opyt sistematcheskogo opisaniija Tom II [Atlas of Contemporary Religious Life in Russia Volume II], Moskva: Keston Institutue, 2005.

Cao, Nanlai. "Boss Christians: The Business of Religion and the 'Wenzhou Model' of Christian Revival." The China Journal 59 (January 2008).

Carothers, Thomas. "The End of the Transitions Paradigm." Journal of Democracy 13, no. 1 (January 2002): 5-21.

Casanova, Jose. Public Religions in the Modern World. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Cavendish, James C. "Christian Base Communities and the Building of Democracy: Brazil and Chile," in ed. William H. Swatos, Jr. Religion and Democracy in Latin America. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1995.

Chan, Anita. "Revolution or Corporatism? Workers and Trade Unions in Post-Mao China," The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 29, (1993): 31-61.

Chan, Kim-Kwong, and Alan Hunter. "Religion and Society in Mainland China in the 1990s." Issues & Studies 30, no. 8 (1994): 52-68.

Chang, Leslie T. Factory Girls: From Village to City in a Changing China. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2008.

Chao, Emily. "The Maoist Shaman and the Madman." Cultural Anthropology 14, no. 4 (1999): 505-35.

Chau, Adam Yuet. Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Chau, Adam Yuet. "The Politics of Legitimation and the Revival of Popular Religion in Shaanbei, North-Central China." Modern China 31 (2005): 236-78.

- Chau, Adam Yuet. "Popular Religion in Shaanbei, North-Central China." Journal of Chinese Religions 31 (2003): 39-79.
- Chaves, Mark. "On the Rational Choice Approach to Religion." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 34, no. 1 (1995): 98-104.
- Chen, Cheng and Rudra Sil. "Bringing Legitimacy Back In: The State of the State in" A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, Massachusetts, August 28, 2002.
- Chen, Cunfu and Huang Tianhai. "The Emergence of a New Type of Christians in China Today." Review of Religious Research 46, no. 2 (December 2004): 183-200.
- Chen, Cunfu. "Impact of China's Economic Development on Christian Communities in Zhejiang Province," in Zhuanxingqi de Zhongguo Jidujiao--Zhejiang Jidujiao ge'an yanjiu [Chinese Christianity in Transformation--Case Studies of Christian Communities in Zhejiang Province] Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2005, 135-65.
- Chen, Nancy N. "Healing Sects and Anti-Cult Campaigns." The China Quarterly 174 (June 2003): 513-14.
- Chen, Nancy N. "Urban Spaces and Experiences of Qigong" in ed. Debra S. Davis Urban Spaces in Contemporary China. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995.
- Chen, Nancy N. Breathing Spaces. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Chernyshova, Daria. "The Kremlin and the Church: Historic Ties." Moscow News December 6, 2007, available at: <http://www.MN.ru> [last accessed April 1, 2009].
- Collier, David and Ruth B. Collier. "Inducements vs. Constraints." American Political Science Review 1979.
- Colton, Timothy and Michael McFaul. "Are Russians Undemocratic?" Post-Soviet Affairs 18, no. 2 (April-June 2002).
- Colton, Timothy J. Yeltsin: A Life. New York: Basic Books, 2008.
- Crawshaw, Steve and Vesna Peric-Zimonjic. "Orthodox church tells Milosevic to hand over presidency to rival" The Independent UK, Friday, September 29, 2000, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/orthodox-church-tells->

- [milosevic-to-hand-over-presidency-to-rival-699599.html](#) [last accessed, May 28, 2009].
- Cristi, Marcela. From civil to political religion: the intersection of culture, religion and politics. Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001.
- Curtis, Michael. Verdict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime. London: Arcade Publishing, 2003.
- de Tocqueville, Alexis. Democracy in America. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, trans., eds., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- De Waal, Thomas. "Who runs the Soviet Church? The Russian Orthodox Church has survived Communism, the Patriarch is the politician's best friend, but who co-opted whom?" The Times Literary Supplement (UK), May 1, 2009.
- Dean, Kenneth. "Ritual and Space: Civil Society or Popular Religion." Civil Society in China. eds. Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic. Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1997, 172-92.
- Dean, Kenneth. Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Debardeleben, Joan. "The Development of Federalism in Russia" in Peter J. Stavrakis, Joan DeBardeleben, Larry Black, Jodi Koehn Beyond the Monolith. Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson International Center Press, 1997: 35-56.
- Delury, John. "'Harmonious' in China." Policy Review 148 (April-May 2008): 38-44.
- Devlet, Nadir. "The Djadid Movement and Institutions of Islamic Education in the Volga-Ural Region," in the Proceeding of the International Symposium on Islamic Civilisation in the Volga-Ural Region, Kazan, 8-11 June 2001, Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2004: 65-76.
- Diamond, Larry, Marc F. Plattner, and Philip J. Costopoulos, eds. World Religions and Democracy. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Diamond, Larry. "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered." American Behavioral Scientist 35, No. 4/5 (March-June 1992): 483.
- Diamond, Larry. "Toward Democratic Consolidation." Journal of Democracy 5 (July 1994).
- Diamond, Larry. Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation. Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Dimitrov, Martin. "Popular Accountability and Autocratic Resilience: Evidence from Single-Party Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe and China." A paper presented at the Cornell University, Department of Government, PSAC Seminar, April 24, 2009.

Document No. 3 – Circular on Stepping Up Control over the Catholic Church to Meet the New Situation (February 17, 1989) released by the Central Offices of the Communist Party and the State Council, reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government* 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 49-55.

Document 6 - A Circular on Some Problems Concerning the Further Improvement of Work on Religion (February 5, 1991), reprinted in *Chinese Law and Government*, vol. 33(2), March/April 2000, pp. 56-63.

Dolgov, Anna. "Moscow Scientology Center Raided." The Associated Press, February 26, 1999.

Dubas, Agata. "The new Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia to continue the alliance of church and state." Center for Eastern Studies Commentary Issue 20, February 09, 2009, available at: <http://osw.waw.pl> [last accessed April 8, 2009].

Dvorkin, Alexander. "'A Presentation on the Situation in Russia: Scientology in Russia.'" Spirituality in East & West 11 (1998).

Eckholm, Erik. "The Chinese Professor Who Started a Ruckus." New York Times February 5, 2001.

Elliott, Mark, and Sheryl Corrado. "The 1997 Russian Law on Religion: The Impact on Protestants." Religion, State & Society 27, no.1 (1999): 109-34.

Elridge, Philip J. Non-Governmental Organization and Democratic Participation in Indonesia. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Esman, Milton J. and Norman T. Uphoff. Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Evans, Peter, ed. State-Society Synergy: Government and Social Capital in Development. Berkeley: International and Area Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1997.

Fa, Liang. "Fojiao yu shehuizhuyi jingshen wenming jianshe" [Buddhism and the Construction of Spiritual Civilization of Socialism] Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu

[Contemporary Religious Studies] 30 (1998): 9-10.

- Fan, Lizhu. "The Cult of the Silkworm Mother as a Core of Local Community Religion in a North China Village: Field Study in Zhiwuying, Baoding, Hebei." The China Quarterly 174 (2003).
- Fandong Hui-Dao-Men jianjie [An Introduction to the Reactionary Sects and Societies] Beijing: Qunzhong Chubanshe 1985, reprinted in Chinese Sociology and Anthropology 21, (Fall 1988-Summer 1989): 49-84.
- Federalnyi Zakon 'O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniakh' [Federal law No 135-FZ] September 26, 1997.
- Filatov, S.B. and R.N Lunkin. "Statistika rossijskoj religioznosti: magija cifr i neodnoznachnaja real'nost'" [Russian Religious Statistics], Sociologija religii (2005): 2-45.
- Filatov, S.B. Religija i obshhestvo: ocherki religioznoj zhizni sovremennoj rossii [Religion and Society]. Moskva: Letnij sad, 2002.
- Filatov, Sergei, ed. Religija i Obshestova [Religion and Society]. Moskva: Letnij sad, 2002.
- Filatov, Sergei. "Sects and New Religious Movements in Post-Soviet Russia." Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia. Eds. John Jr. Witte and Michael Bourdeaux. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999, 162-84.
- Fish, M. Steven. "Islam and Authoritarianism" World Politics 55, no. 1 (2002).
- Foster, Kenneth W. "Associations in the Embrace of an Authoritarian State: State Domination of Society." Comparative International Development 35, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 84-109.
- Frolic, B. Michael. "State-led Civil Society." in eds. Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic, Civil Society in China. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, 46-67.
- Fujian wenhua gailan. [An Overview of Fujian culture] Fujian: Fujian Shifan daxue (1994).
- Gandhi, Jennifer and Adam Przeworski. "Cooperation, Cooptation and Rebellion Under Dictatorship." Economics and Politics 18, no. 1 (2006): 1-26.
- Gerring, John. Case Study Research: Principles and Practices. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

- Ghandi, Jennifer. Political Institutions Under Dictatorship. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Ghandi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar. "Elections Under Authoritarianism." Annual Review of Political Science 12 (2009): 403-22.
- Ge, Zhuang. "Qianxi xiejiao" [An Interpretation of the Cults]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 28 (1997): 33-37.
- Geddes, Barbara. "Authoritarian Breakdown: Empirical Test of a Game Theoretic Argument." Presented at Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association, Atlanta, GA 1999.
- Geddes, Barbara. "Party Creation as an Autocratic Survival Strategy." Unpublished paper presented at a conference on Dictatorships: Their Governance and Social Consequences at Princeton University, April 25-26, 2008, available at: <http://www.princeton.edu/~piirs/Dictatorships042508/> [last accessed June 23, 2009].
- Gill, Anthony J. Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Gill, Anthony. "Religion and Comparative Politics." Annual Review of Political Science 4 (2001): 117-38.
- Gill, Anthony. "Religion and Democracy in South America" in eds. Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox. Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective. New York: Cambridge University Press, 195-224.
- Gill, Anthony. The Political Origins of Religious Liberty. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Gladney, Dru C. Making Majorities. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Goodman, Bryna. Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Goodman, David S.G., and Gerald Segal, eds. China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade and Regionalism. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Graney, Kate. "Making Russia Multicultural: Kazan at its Millennium and Beyond." Problems of Post-Communism 54, no. 6 (November-December 2007).
- Gries, Peter Hays. "Narratives to Live By: The Century of Humiliation and Chinese National Identity Today," in eds. Lionel M. Jensen and Timothy B. Weston.

- China's Transformation. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 112-129.
- Gries, Peter Hays. "Nationalism, Indignation and China's Japan Policy." SAIS Review, vol. XXV no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2005): 105-114.
- Gudkov, Lev. "Russia—A Society in Transition?" Telos (Summer 2001).
- Hale, Henry E. "The Parade of Sovereignties: Testing Theories of Secession in the Soviet Setting." British Journal of Political Science 30, No. 1 (Jan., 2000): 31-56.
- Hardin, Russell. One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Harrell, Steven and Elizabeth J. Perry. "Syncretic Sects in Chinese Society: An Introduction." Modern China 8, no. 3 (1982): 283-303.
- Havel, Václav, John Keane and Steven Lukes. The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1990.
- He, Zuoxiu. "Science and Technology for Youth." April 19, 1999, reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 32, no. 5 (September-October 1999): 95-98.
- Hillman, Ben. "The Rise of the Community in Rural China: Village Politics, Cultural Identity and Religious Revival in a Hui Hamlet." The China Journal 51 (January 2004): 53-73.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." eds. Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. The Invention of Tradition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 1-14.
- Homer, Lauren and Lawrence Uzzel. "Soul Wars: The Problem and Promise of Proselytism in Russia," Emory Law Review 12, no. 2 (1998).
- Homer, Lauren B., and Lawrence Uzzel. "Federal and Provincial Religious Freedom Laws in Russia." in eds. John Jr. Whitte and Michael Bourdeaux. Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999, 284-320.
- Horowitz, Donald L. A Democratic South Africa? Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Howard, Mark. The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

- Hu, Ping. "The Falun gong Phenomenon." China Rights Forum 4 (2003).
- Huang, Xianian. "Dangdai yichuan dacheng fojiao yu zhongguo luyou" [The Change in the Function of Chinese Buddhism Tourism]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 59 (2005): 5-13.
- Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Voodoo Economics?: Reviewing the Rational Choice Approach to Religion." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 34 (1995): 76-88.
- Iannaccone, Lawrence R. "Rational Choice: Framework for the Scientific Study of Religion," in ed. Lawrence A. Young. Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Jamal, Amaney. Barriers to Democracy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Jia, Hao, and Zhimin Lin, eds. Changing Central-Local Relations in China: Reform and State Capacity. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994.
- Jin, Bp. Aloysius Luxian, SJ. "400 Years of Catholicism in Shanghai: A pastoral letter issued at Christmas 2007." translated by Michael J. Sloboda, M.M. and reprinted in Tripod 28, no. 149 (Spring 2008).
- Jing, Jun. The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Jintian tianzhujiao shanghaiqu. [Catholic Church in Shanghai Today]. Shanghai: Shanghaishi xinwen chubanju, 2000.
- Jowitt, Ken. The New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. Terror in the Mind of God. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Kaariainen, Kimmo. Religion in Russia After The Collapse of Communism. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998.
- Kahn, Jeff. "The Parade of Sovereignties: Establishing the Vocabulary of the New Russian Federalism." Post-Soviet Affairs 16, no. 1 (2000): 58-88.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Katzenstein, Peter J. Small States in World Markets. Ithaca: Cornell University Press,

1985.

- Keogh, Dermot, ed. Church and Politics in Latin American, London: MacMillian, 1990.
- Kertzer, David I. Ritual, Politics and Power. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Kindopp, Jason and Carol Lee Hamrin, eds. God and Ceasar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.
- Kindopp, Jason. "Fragmented yet Defiant: Protestant Resilience under Chinese Communist Party Rule," in eds. Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin. God and Ceasar in China, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004, 122-145.
- Kinossian, Nadir V. "The Politics of the City Image: The Resurrection of the Kul-Sharif Mosque in the Kazan Kremlin (1995-2005)." Architectural Theory Review 13, no. 2 (August 2008): 188-205.
- Kipnis, Andrew. "The Flourishing of Religion in Post-Mao China and the Anthropological Category of Religion." The Australian Journal of Anthropology 12, no.1 (2001): 32-46.
- Kirill, Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad. "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Third millennium." A speech reprinted in Ecumenical Review 52, no. 3 (2000).
- Kirkow, Peter. Russia's Provinces. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Kitschelt, Herbert and Steven I. Wilkinson, eds. Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Kitschelt, Herbert. "Linkages between Citizens and Politics in Democratic Politics." Comparative Political Studies 33, no 6-7 (2000): 845-79.
- Knox, Zoe. Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism. London: Routledge Curzon, 2005.
- Kolymagin, Boris. "Controversy over religion in schools: Law of God in Schools." Vremia MN. February 1, 2003.
- Kuznetsov, Oleg. "Sectarian Revolution." Zavtra [Tomorrow] no. 49, December 10, 1996.

- Lai, Hongyi. "Religious Revival in China." EAI Background Brief, National University of Singapore 108 (2001).
- Lam, Anthony (Lin Ruiqi). "Gaigekaifeng yilai zongjiao fangdichan luoshi zhengce jianping" [A Review of Catholic Real Estate Issues in China] Tripod 26, no. 140 (Spring 2006).
- Lambert, Tony. "Counting Christians in China: A Cautionary Report." International Bulletin of Missionary Research 27, no. 1 (2003).
- Langohr, Vickie. "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics." Comparative Politics 36, no. 2 (2004): 181-204.
- Lechner, F.I. "The case against secularism: a rebuttal." Social Forces 69, no. 4 (1991): 1103-1119.
- Lee, Ching Kwan. "Pathways of labour insurgency," in eds. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden. Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance, 2nd edition, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, 71-92.
- Lemarchand, Rene. "Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa: Competing Solidarities in Nation Building." American Political Science Review 66, no. 1 (1972): 68-90.
- Leung, Beatrice. "China and Falun gong: Party and Society Relations in the Modern Era." Journal of Contemporary China 11, no.33 (2002): 761-84.
- Levison, Lev. "Local Law as a Means of Destroying Federal Law?" Religion and Law 1, no.4 (1996).
- Levy, Richard. "Corruption, Economic Crime and Social Transformation since the Reform: Debate in China." Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs 33 (1995).
- Li, Lijiang and Kevin O'Brien. "Villagers and Popular Resistance in Contemporary China." Modern China 22, no. 1 (1996): 28-61.
- Li, Jinxin. "Guanche dangde zongjiao zhengce, weihe zuguo tongyi he minzu tuanjie" [Adhering to the Party's Religious Policy, Maintaining the Unification of the Motherland and the Ethnic Cohesion]. Dangdai zongjiaoyanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 27 (1997): 5-9.
- Li, Lulu. Mazu xinyang [The Folk Belief of Mazu]. Taipei: Han yang, 1995.
- Li, Pingye. "90 Niandia zhongguo zongjiao fazhan zhuangkuang baogao [A Report on

- the Development of Religion in China in the 1990s] Journal of Christian Culture 2 (1999): 201-222.
- Li, Si-ming, and Wing-shing Tang, eds. China's Regions, Polity and Economy: A Study of Spatial Transformation in the Post-Reform Era. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000.
- Lieberthal, Kenneth G. "Introduction: The 'Fragmented Authoritarianism' Model and Its Limitations," in Lieberthal and David M. Lampton, eds., Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision Making in Post-Mao China Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Lijphart, Arend. Democracy in Plural Societies. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Link, Perry. "Corruption and Indignation: Windows into Popular Chinese Views of Right and Wrong," for the project "Tocqueville on China," A Project of the American Enterprise Institute, 2008, available at: <http://www.aei.org/research/Tocqueville/projectID.29/default.asp>, [last accessed, August 13, 2008.]
- Linz, Juan J. "The Religious Use of Politics and/or the Political Use of Religion: Ersatz Ideology versus Ersatz Religion," in eds. Hans Maier and Jodi Bruhn. Totalitarianism and Political Religions. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. "Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction." in eds. S.M. Lipset and S. Rokkan. Party Systems and Voter Allignements. New York: Free Press, 1967.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics. second edition, London: Heinemann, 1983.
- Liu, Allen. "The Politics of Corruption in the PRC." American Political Science Review 77, no. 3 (1983): 602-23.
- Liu, Jian, Luo Weihong, Yan Kejia. "Jidujiaotudexinyangyusingwei – Shanghai jidujiaoxintu qingquang diaocha wenjuanfenxi" [The Belief and Behaviors of Protestants: A Survey on the Protestants in Shanghai]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 36 (1999): 3-8.
- Liu, Peng. "Church and State Relations in China: Characteristics and Trends." Journal of Contemporary China 5, no. 11 (1996): 69-79.
- Lorentzen, Peter. "Regularized Rioting: The Strategic Toleration of Public Protest in

- China,” University of California, Berkeley, unpublished manuscript, June 2, 2008.
- Luo, Weihong. “Wuyi shenyi huodonghui bu hui fazhangchenwei zinzongjiao?” [Will the Activities of Witches and Wizards Grow into New Religions?]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 27 (1997): 28-32.
- Luo, Zhufeng, ed. Religion under Socialism in China. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1991.
- Lust-Okar, Ellen. “Elections Under Authoritarianism.” Democratization 13, no. 3 (2006): 456-71.
- Lyons, Thomas P. "Regional Inequality." in eds. Y.M. Yeung and David K.Y. Chu. Fujian: A Coastal Province in Transition and Transformation. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2000.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince. New York: Bantam Classics, [1532] 1984.
- MacInnis, Donald E. Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989.
- Madsen, Richard. "Catholic Conflict and Cooperation in the People's Republic of China." in eds. Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin. God and Ceasar in China. Washington D.C., 2004, 93-106.
- Magagna, Victor V. “Representing Efficiency: Corporatism and Democratic Theory.” The Review of Politics 50, no. 3 (Summer, 1988): 420-444.
- Maglaoni, Beatriz. “Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule.” Comparative Political Studies 41, no. 4-5 (January 2008): 715-741.
- Mainwaring, Scott. The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.
- Malashenko, A. and S. Filatov. Religija i globalizacija na prostorah evrazii [Religion and Globalization across Eurasia], Moskva: Moskovskij centr karnegi, 2005.
- Malashenko, A. “Politicization of Patriarch: United Russia Enlisted the Services of Patriarch Kirill I.” Nezavisimaya Gazeta NN 139-140, July 10-11, 2009.
- Manion, Melanie. “The Behavior of Middlemen in the Cadre Retirement Policy Process.” in eds. Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton. Bureaucracy, Politics and Decision Making in Post-Mao China. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 216-244.

- Marsh, Christopher and Paul Froese. "The State of Freedom in Russia: A Regional Analysis of Freedom of Religion, Media and Markets." Religion, State & Society 32, no. 2 (2004): 137-49.
- Martin, David. A General Theory of Secularization. Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1978.
- Martin, David. On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
- Mertha, Andrew. "“Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0’: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process” China Quarterly (forthcoming).
- Mertha, Andrew. China’s Water Warriors. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Method for the Annual Inspection of Places of Religious Activity (released July 29, 1996), The Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council. reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 71-74.
- Milner, Helen V. Interests, Institutions and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Mirovalev, Mansur. "Russian Orthodox Church a growing political force," Moscow (AP), April 4, 2009, reprinted on JRL April 9, 2009.
- Mitrokhin, L.N. "Filosofia religii: novoye perspektivy." [The Philosophy of Religion in New Perspective] Voprosy filosofii 8 (2003): 18-36.
- Moen, Matthew C. and Lowell S Gustafson eds. The Religious Challenge to the State: Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.
- Moiseenko, Andrei and Tatiana Pavlova. "Will the Bible Become a School Textbook?" Komsomolskaia Pravda. November 19, 2002.
- Montgomery, John D. Bureaucrats and People: Grassroots Participation in Third World Development. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. fourth edition, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.
- Muharirova, Aliy. "Kandidaty—psevdomulsul'mane." [Candidates—Pseudo-Muslims] Medina 2, no. 15, issue 1427 (February-March 2006): 4.
- Muhetdinov, D.V. Azan nad Volgoj. [Azan on the Volga] Nizhnij Novgorod: Izdatel'stvovo Nizhegorodskogo islamskogo medrese «Mahinur», 2005.

- Nielsen, Niels. Revolutions in Eastern Europe: The Religious Roots. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.
- Notice No. 39: On Various Issues Regarding Identifying and Banning of Cultic Organizations, The Ministry of Public Security of The People's Republic of China, (2000); reprinted in "Religion and Public Security in China, 1999-2002," Chinese Law and Government 36, no. 2 (2003).
- Nyitray, Vivian-Lee. "Becoming the Empress of Heaven." in eds. B. Moon and E. Benard. Goddesses Who Rule. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 166-80.
- O svobode sovesti i religioznykh organizatsiakh [On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organization], Vedomosti SSSR 41, Item No 813 (1990).
- O'Brien, Kevin J. "Chinese People's Congresses and Legislative Embeddedness: Understanding Early Organizational Development." Comparative Political Studies 27 (April 1994): 80-107.
- O'Brien, Kevin. "Rightful Resistance." World Politics 49, no. 1 (1996): 31-55.
- O'Brien, Kevin and Linjiang Li. Rightful Resistance in Rural China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Oakes, Tim. "China's Provincial Identities: Reviving Regionalism and Reinventing "Chineseness." The Journal of Asian Studies 59, no. 3 (2000): 667-92.
- Oi, Jean C. "Fiscal Reform and the Economic Foundations of Local State Corporatism in China." World Politics 45, no. 1 (Oct., 1992): 99-126.
- Oi, Jean C. "Market Reforms and Corruption in Rural China." Studies in Comparative Communism 22, no. 2-3 (1989).
- Olson, Mancur. The Logic of Collective Action. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Order No. 144: Regulations on the Supervision of the Religious Activities of Foreigners in China, The State Council, January 1994. Reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 64-68.
- Order No. 145: Regulation Regarding the Management of Place of Religious Activities, The State Council, January 1994. Reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 64-68.

- Otterman, Sharon. "Islam: Governing Under Shari'a." Council of Foreign Relations. March 14, 2005, available at: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8034/#15> [last accessed March 18, 2009].
- Overmyer, Daniel L. ed. Religion in China Today. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Overmyer, Daniel L. Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Ownby, David. "Chinese Millenarian Traditions: The Formative Age." The American Historical Review 104, no.5 (1999): 1513-30.
- Ownby, David. "The Falun gong in the New World." European Journal of East Asian Studies 2, no. 2 (September 2003): 304.
- Palmer, David A. Qigong Fever: Body, Science, and Utopia in China. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Parsons, Talcott. The Social System. Glencoe: Free Press, 1951.
- Pas, Julian F., ed. The Turning of the Tide: Religion in China Today. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Patton, Michael Quinn. Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. 2nd ed. Newbury Park: Sage, 1990.
- Pavlikova, Olga. "Uniformity of Curricula in Question." Gazeta [Magazine], October 4, 2007.
- Paxton, Robert O. Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
- Perry, Elizabeth J. "Taipings and Triads: The Role of Religion in Inter-Rebel Relations." In eds. Janos M. Bak and Gerhard Benecke. Religion and Rural Revolt. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982, 342-71.
- Perry, Elizabeth J. "Popular Protest in China: Playing by the Rules." A paper prepared for the conference sponsored by the Pardee Center of Boston University on "Three Decades of Reform and Opening: Where China is headed?" December 8, 2008.
- Perry, Elizabeth J. and Mark Selden, eds. Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance. 2nd Edition ed. New York: Routledge, 2003.

- Perry, Elizabeth J., and Stevan Harrell. "Syncretic Sects in Chinese Society: An Introduction." Modern China 8 (1982): 283-303.
- Petro, Nicolai. "The Novgorod Region: A Russian Success Story." Post-Soviet Affairs 15, no. 3 (1999): 235-61.
- Pfaff, Steven and Guobin Yang. "Double-edged rituals and the symbolic resources of collective action: Political commemorations and the mobilization of protest in 1989." Theory and Society 30 (2001): 539-589.
- Philo, Chris and Gerry Kearns. "Culture, History, Capital." in eds. Gerry Kearns and Chris Philos. Selling Places: The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993.
- Philpott, Daniel. "The Catholic Wave," in eds. Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Philip J. Costopoulos. World Religions and Democracy. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Piattoni, Simona ed. Clientelism, Interests and Democratic Representation. The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Pontusson, Jonas. "Labor, Corporatism, and Industrial Policy: The Swedish Case in Comparative Perspective." Comparative Politics 23 (January 1991): 163-179.
- Poon, Shuk Wah. "Refashioning Festival in Republican Guangzhou." Modern China 30, no. 2 (2004): 199-227.
- Potter, Pitman B. "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China." The China Quarterly 174 (2003): 317-37.
- Powell, David. "The Effectiveness of Soviet Anti-Religious Propaganda." The Public Opinion Quarterly 31, no. 3 (Autumn 1967): 366-380.
- Presidential Decree President RT, "O Kontseptsii sohraneniya, razvitiya i ispolzovaniya ansambliya Kazanskogo Kreml." [On the concept of preservation, development and use of the ensemble of the Kazan Kremlin], November 13, 1995.
- Przeworski, Adam. "The Game of Transition," in Scott Mainwaring et al eds., Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.
- Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level

- Games." International Organization 42 (Summer 1988): 427-460.
- Putnam, Robert D. Making Democracy Work, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui changwu weiyuanhui guanyu quid xiejiao zushi, fanfan he chengzhi xiejiao huodong de jue ding, October 30 1999 ["Decision of the NPC Standing Committee on Outlawing heretical organization and guarding against and punishing heretical activities] reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 32, no. 5 (September-October 1999): 46-50.
- Ramet, Sabrina Petra. Adaptation and Transformation in Communist and Post-Communist Eras. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Ramet, Sabrina Petra. Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Registration Procedures for Venues for Religious Activities, the State Council (released May 1, 1994), reprinted in Chinese Law and Government 33, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 69-70.
- Rosberg, James H. "Roads to the Rule of Law: The Emergence of an Independent Judiciary in Contemporary Egypt." PhD Dissertation, Political Science, MIT, 1995.
- Rubinstein, Murray A. "Medium/Message in Taiwan Mazu-Cult Centers: Using Time, Space, and Word to Foster Island-Wide Spiritual Consciousness and Local, Regional, and National Forms of Institutional Identity." In eds. Paul R. Katz and Murray A. Rubinstein. Religion and the Formation of Taiwanese Identities. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 181-218.
- Rubinstein, Murray A. "The Revival of the Mazu Cult and of Taiwanese Pilgrimage to Fujian." Harvard Studies on Taiwan Papers of the Taiwan Studies Workshop (1995).
- Ruble, Blair A., Jodi Koehn, and Nancy E. Popson, eds. Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyne Huber Stevens & John D. Stevens. Capitalist Development & Democracy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Samarina, Aleksandra. "Jesus and United Russia: The Party of Power Interprets the Bible." Nezavisimaya Gazeta January 21, 2009.
- Sangren, Steven P. "History and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy: The Ma Tsu Cult of

- Taiwan." Comparative Studies in Society and History 30, no. 4 (1988): 674-97.
- Sangren, Steven P. "Power and Transcendence in the Ma Tsu Pilgrimages of Taiwan." American Ethnologist 20, no.3 (1993): 564-82.
- Savadove, Bill. "Buddhism Put to the Service of Tourism; Local Officials Seek to Convert History of Sacred Putuoshan Island into Hard Cash." South China Morning Post February 19 2005.
- Schirmer, Dietmar. "Closing the Nationalism: Nationalism and Statism in 19th and 20th Century Germany." in eds. Seima Godfrey and Frank Unger. The Shifting Foundations of Modern Nation-States: Realignment of Belonging. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Schmitt, Karl. "Church and State in Mexico: A Corporatist Relationship." The Americas 40, no. 3 (Jan., 1984): 349-376.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. "Sectors in Modern Capitalism: Modes of Governance and Variations in Performance." in eds. Renato Brunettao and Carl Dell' Aringa. Labor Relations and Economic Performance. New York: New York University Press, 1990, 3-39.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. "Still the Century of Corporatism?" Review of Politics 36, no. 1 (January 1974): 93-94.
- "Scientology: Pseudo-Church, Pseudo-Science, Pseudo-Truth." Gorodovoi (Kirov) [The Policeman]. April 3, 1998.
- Scott, James C. "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia." American Political Science Review 66, no. 1 (1972): 91-113.
- Scott, James C. Weapons of the Weak New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Seiwert, Hubert. Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003.
- Senjutkina, O. N. "Jarmaroch'naja mechet' — centr obshhenija musul'man Rossii," [Yarmaka Mosque – the center Russian of Muslim Society] Medina al'-Islam No. 9 (June 2005).
- Senjutkina, O. N. "Pervyj s'ezd musul'man Rossii—k 100-letiju provedenija," [The First Congress of Muslims in Russia – for the 100 year anniversary.] Nizhny Novgorod: Izd-vo NIM «Mahinur», 2005.
- Seul, Jefferey R. "'Ours is the Way of God': Religion, Identity, and Intergroups

- Conflict." Journal of Peace Research 36 (1999).
- Seymour, James D., and Eugen Wehrli. "Religion in China." Chinese Sociology and Anthropology 26, no.3 (1994): 3-59.
- Shahar, Meir, and Robert P. Weller, eds. Unruly Gods: Divinity and Society in China. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1996.
- Shanghai zongjiao zhi [Shanghai religious gazetteer]. Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2001.
- Shek, Richard. "Sectarian Eschatology and Violence." In eds. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell. Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture. New York: State University of New York, 1990, 87-114.
- Shue, Vivienne. "State Legitimization in China: The challenge of popular religion." A paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual meeting, San Francisco, CA 2001.
- Shue, Vivienne. The Reach of the State: Sketches of the Chinese Body Politic. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Sil, Rudra and Cheng Chen. "State Legitimacy and the (In)significance of Democracy in Post-Communist Russia." Europe-Asia Studies 56, no. 3 (May 2004): 347-368.
- Silber, Laura. "Serb Regime Rebuked By Church; Bishops' Letter Seen As Blow to Milosevic." The Washington Post. May 29, 1992.
- Smith, Christian. Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Solnick, Steven L. "The Political Economy of Russian Federalism" Problems of Post-Communism 43, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 1996): 13-26.
- Solnick, Steven. "Will Russia Survive? Center and Periphery in the Russian Federation." in eds. B.R. Rubin and J. Snyder. Post-Soviet Political Order New York: Routledge, 1998, 58-80.
- Solnik, Steven L. "The Political Economy of Russian Federalism: A Framework for Analysis." Problems of Post-Communism 43, no. 8 (1996): 13-25.
- Spence, Jonathan D. God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan. Norton, 1996.

- Spiegel, Mickey, ed. China: State Control of Religion. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997.
- Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Stark, Rodney, and William Sims Bainbridge. The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- Steen, Anton and Vladimir Gel'man. Elite and Democratic Development in Russia. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Stoner-Weiss, Kathryn. "Central Weaknesses and Provincial Autonomy: Observations on the Devolution Process in Russia." Post-Soviet Affairs 15, no. 1 (1999): 87-106.
- Stoner-Weiss, Kathryn. Local Heroes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Sukhonina, Julia. "Vodka pretkovenija" [The Vodka Stumbling Block]. Kommersant №9, January 20, 2006.
- Swidler, Ann. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." American Sociological Review 51, no. 2 (April 1986): 273-286.
- Szyoni, Michael. "The Virgin and the Chinese State: The Cult of Wang Yulan and the Politics of Local Identity on Jinmen (Quemoy)." Journal of Ritual Studies 19, 2005.
- Tarrow, Sidney. "Expanding Paired Comparison: A Modest Proposal." American Political Science Association – Comparative Politics Newsletter (Summer 2004).
- Tarrow, Sidney. "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Towards a Theory of Practice." Comparative Political Studies forthcoming.
- Ter Haar, B.J. The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1992.
- Tischner, Jozef. The Spirit of Solidarity. Trans. Marek B. Zalenski. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982.
- Treisman, Daniel S. "Russia's Ethnic Revival: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Post-Communist Order." World Politics 49, no. 2 (1997): 212-49.
- Treisman, Daniel S. After the Deluge. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press,

1999.

- Tsai, Lily L. Accountability Without Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Tsebelis, George. Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Tu, Weiming. "The Quest for Meaning: Religion in the People's Republic of China." in ed. Peter L. Berger. The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics. Washington, D.C.: The Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999, 85-101.
- Tu, Wei-ming. "Introduction: Cultural Perspectives." Daedalus 122, no. 2 (Spring 1993).
- Uzzell, Lawrence A. "Letter from Moscow." First Things 79 (1998): 17-19.
- Walder, Andrew. "The Decline of Communist Power." Theory and Society 23 (1994): 297-323.
- Wang Jianping. "Struggle for the Rights: Revival of Islam in China" A paper presented at the seminar of Near East Studies, Cornell University, April 13, 2009.
- Wang, Mingming. "Flower of the State, Grasses of the People: Years Rites and Aesthetics of Power in Quanzhou Southeast China." PhD Dissertation, Anthropology, University of London, 1993.
- Wang, Shaoguang. "Central-Local Fiscal Politics in China." in eds. Hao Jia and Zhimin Lin. Changing Central-Local Relations in China: Reform and State Capacity. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994, 911-112.
- Wang, Xu. "Mutual Empowerment of State and Society: Its Nature, Conditions, Mechanisms and Limits." Comparative Politics (January 1999): 231-249.
- Wang, Zhaoguo. "Notification from Wang Zhaoguo Regarding the Essence of the Central Government Document on Handling the Falun gong Issue." The People's Daily, overseas edition, July 24, 1999, p. 2.
- Ware, Timothy. The Orthodox Church. 4th edition, Suffolk, England, 1997.
- Warner, Carolyn M. Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

- Watson, James L. "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ("Empress of Heaven") Along the South China Coast, 960-1960." In eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski. Popular Culture in Late Imperial China. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 292-324.
- Webster, Paul. "Religious Revival: Buddhism is big business in China." Canadian Business. December 8, 2008.
- Weeden, Lisa. Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Weisman, Paul. "Chinese Catholics caught between Churches." USA Today, Hong Kong, April 5, 2005.
- Wiest, Jean-Paul. "Setting Roots: The Catholic Church in China to 1949." In eds. Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin. God and Caesar in China. Washington D.C, 2004. 77-92.
- Wiktorowicz, Quintan. The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and State Power in Jordan. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Wilkinson, Steven I. Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Witte, John Jr. and Michael Bourdeaux. Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Soul. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Wittenberg, Jason. Crucibles of Political Loyalty. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Wood, James E. "Public Religion vis-à-vis the Prophetic Role of Religion." in eds. William H. Swatos, Jr. and James K. Welman, Jr. The Power of Religious Publics. Westport: Prager, 1999, 33-51.
- Wu, Chong. "Interpreting a Call for 'Harmonious Society.'" The China Daily, August 03, 2005, p. 3.
- Wu, Yakui, 2000, "Zhujiatia de zongjiao – Jiantanzongjiaohudong changsuode luyou jingguan gongneng" [Religions in Zhu Jia Jiao – The Role of Religious Places in Tourism and Sight-Seeing]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 41 (2000): 20-24.
- Wu, Y.T. "My Recognition of the Communist Party." Tian Feng [Heavenly Wind] (1958).

- Xiao, Hongyan. "Falun gong and the Ideological Crisis of the Communist Party," Journal of East Asia. (Spring-Summer 2001).
- Xu, Hongbao. 1990, "Gaigekaifang xingshixiadesongjiangtianzhujiao" [The Catholic Church of Songjiang In the Opening Era]. Dangdai zongjiaoyanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 4 (1990): 1-7.
- Yang, C.K. Religion in Chinese Society. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.
- Yang, Fenggang. "Between Secularist Ideology and Desecularizing Reality: The Birth and Growth of Research in Communist China." Sociology of Religion 65, no.2 (Summer 2004): 101-119.
- Yang, Fenggang. "The Red, Black and Gray Markets of Religion in China." Sociological Quarterly 47 (2006): 93-112.
- Yang, Fenggang. "Lost in the Market, Saved at McDonald's: Conversion to Christianity in Urban China." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 44, no. 4 (2005): 423-441.
- Yang, Hoping. Xiandai yen kan Mazu [A contemporary look at Mazu]. Taipei: Youshi wenhua, 1997.
- Yang, Mayfair. "Goddess across the Taiwan Straits: Matrifocal Ritual Space, Nation-State, and Satellite Television Footprints." Public Culture 16, no.2 (2004).
- Yang, Mayfair. "Spatial Struggles: Postcolonial Complex, State Disenchantment, and Popular Reappropriations of Space in Rural Southeast China." The Journal of Asian Studies 63, no. 3 (2004): 719-55.
- Yeung, Y.M. "Meizhou Bay as a Growth Center." In eds. Y.M. Yeung and David K.Y. Chu. Fujian: A Costal Province in Transition and Transformation. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2000.
- Ying Fuk-tsang. Dangdai zongguo zhengjiao guanli [Church and State Relations in Contemporary China] Xianggang: jiandaoshenxueyuan, 1999.
- Young, Lawrence Alfred. Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment, New York, NY: Routledge, 1997.
- Yu, Wangge. 1994, "Yifa dui zongjiaoshiwu jinxing guanli zhewojian" [My View On Administrating Religious Affairs By Law]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 15 (1994): 1-3.

- Zachem Nizhnemu katolicheskij monastyr'? ["Why does Nizhny need a Catholic Monastery?"] Golos veterana [Voice of the Veteran], No. 7 (126) February 19-25, 2004, p. 15.
- Zakon o svobode veroispovedenii [On Freedom of Religion]; Vedomosti RSFSR, Issue No. 21, Item No 267-1, 240 (1990).
- Zartman, William. 1998. "Opposition as Support of the State" in Adeed Dawisha and William Zartman eds. Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State. London, New York: Croom Helm, 61-87.
- Zhang, Wu. "What Makes Local Government Work and What Makes Peasants Rebellious?" Ph.D. Dissertation, Government, Cornell University, 2008.
- Zheng, Yongnian. Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Zhong, Guofa. "Shilun jiji yindao zongjiao yu shehuizhuyi xiangguaying dechuangxinxiyi" [On the Importance of the Compatibility of Religions and Socialist Society]. Dangdai zongjiao yanjiu [Contemporary Religious Studies] 31 (1998): 10-16.
- Zhonggong Zhangyang Guanyu Woguo Shehui Zhuyo Shiqi Zongjiao Wenti De Jiben Zhengce [Document 19, The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period]. Reprinted in Feiqing Yuebao 10 (April 1983).
- Zhongyang bangongting diaocha zu guanyu luoshi dang de zongjiao zhengce yi youguan wenti de diaocha baogao." [Survey Report Concerning the Implementation of the Party's Policies and Religion and Relevant Issues (December 10, 1985)], examined and approved by the Committee on Legal Work of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Reprinted in Zhonghua renmin gongheguo falu quan shu [The Complete laws and regulations of the People's Republic of China] vol. 10: Civil Law, Zhongguo minzhu fazhi chubanshe (Beijing: China Democratic Legal System Printing House, 1994) pp. 1099-1101.
- Zolotov, Andre Jr. "The Church's New Teaching: The Russian Orthodox Church Affirms Values of Freedom and Human Rights." Russia Profile. June 30, 2008.