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THE (IN)VISIBLE HAND OF THE HOLY SEE

A research on the use of soft power by the Holy See in Dutch politics between 1903-1929

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Master Thesis: International Relations in Historical Perspective

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15 June 2023

Words: 14.385

Abstract

The thesis is about the influence of the Holy See on Dutch politics between 1903 and 1929. This is researched by answering the main question: to what extent did the Holy See use soft power to influence the political position of Dutch Catholics between 1903-1929? This question provides insight into the academic debate surrounding the concept of power by testing the conceptual clarification created by Joseph Nye through historical research. In addition, this research also provides depth to the historical debate surrounding the relationship between the Holy See and Dutch Catholic politicians. A link between the Holy See and Dutch politics between 1903-1929 is visible in the objectives of the Holy See, as defined in their encyclicals, and the reactionary actions of Catholic politicians in the Netherlands. This relationship is visible in Dutch newspapers, House of Representatives meetings, and political party programs. The research demonstrates the complexity of testing soft power against the backdrop of political realities. Soft power is difficult to differentiate from hard power in many cases, and the presence of soft power elements do not always guarantee political influence.

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List of Abbreviations

CHU	Christelijk-Historische Unie (Christian Historical Union)
HGSP	Hervormd-Gereformeerde Staatspartij (Reformed State Party)
IKP	Indisch Katholieke Partij (Catholic Party of the Indies)
KDC	Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (Catholic Documentation Centre)
RKSP	Rooms-Katholieke Staatspartij (Roman-Catholic State Party)
RKWV	Rooms-Katholiek Werkliedenverbond (Roman-Catholic Workers Union)
SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (Political Reformed Party)
B's	Benignity, Beauty, Brilliance

Introduction

Throughout the past few centuries, there has been one constant factor in the international political arena, even though it is not fundamentally a political organization. This constant factor is the power of the papacy, or as it is now called ‘the Holy See’. Both terms refer to the government of the Roman Catholic Church led by the reign of the Pope.¹ This solid position in international diplomacy is of great uniqueness and has regularly been the subject of dispute. No other religion in the world has the status of an independent international state, and not a single attempt to obtain this would find international acceptance.² How did the Holy See secure this position of international acceptance?

The current political position of the Holy See goes back to the sixth century but was heavily challenged during the Italian Unification (1848-1871). In 1870, when the unification was nearly finalized, Pope Pius IX refused to accept his new political position and the confiscation of ecclesiastical possessions by the new government. In response, he locked himself in the Vatican.³ The Lateran Treaties, signed on the 11th of February 1929, ended nearly sixty years of imprisonment by Pope Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI.⁴ In any case, this Vatican imprisonment had a great impact on the territorial power of the Holy See. The territory of the Holy See, formally known as the papal states, had been reduced to merely the Vatican and the Lateran palaces. However, whether the reach of its diplomatic territory and influence has been reduced during this Vatican imprisonment remains part of an academic debate. This research is meant to be a piece in this puzzle by providing an elaborate analysis of the diplomatic power of the Holy See during its imprisonment on the political position of Dutch Catholics between 1903 and 1929.

The 1870s marked a Catholic recovery in the Netherlands. This revival was initialized because there was a lack of group identity, and it was done by the re-installing of old catholic traditions descending from the Middle Ages. For instance, the pilgrimage tradition, the silent devotion in Amsterdam, and the reintroduction of ancient processions. These acts, according to

¹ “The Holy See,” Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary and Thesaurus, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/holy-see>, accessed on 11 November, 2022.

² Matthew N. Bathon, “The Atypical International Status of the Holy See,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* Vol. 34, no. 3 (May 2001): 598-599.

³ Kurt Martens, “The Position of the Holy See and Vatican City State in International Relations,” *University of Detroit Mercy Law Review* Vol. 83, no. 5 (2006): 732.

⁴ Albert C. O’Brien, “Benito Mussolini, Catholic Youth, and the Origins of the Lateran Treaties,” *Journal of Church and State* Vol. 23, no. 1 (1981): 129.

the Dutch historian P. Raedts, gave the Dutch Catholics a strong group identity.⁵ However, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century posed a major challenge to all religious communities in the Netherlands, whether they had a strong group identity or not. The rapid modernization and growing cities led to apostasy. Nevertheless, the Dutch Catholic community had found an effective way to develop alongside the modernization process without losing major support. Namely, through the proceedings of pastors and priests. For instance, pastor Hendrik Roes published books and periodicals about fertilizers and gardening to encourage young farmers to improve their methods to preserve and strengthen agriculture in his community. He did this so that young farmers did not have to migrate to cities for work and thus would leave the community, and potentially their faith.⁶ Another example is the way pastor Alphons Ariëns set up the Catholic labor movement, from which a widespread system of trade-unions emerged. He liked to see himself as the shepherd of a flock, by being a religious guide to modern political forces.⁷

A very politically active clergyman was priest Willem Hubert Nolens who, in 1910, became chair of the catholic faction within the Dutch parliament. He succeeded in creating a stable Catholic front, which gave rise to the creation of the Rooms-Katholieke Staatspartij (Roman Catholic State Party - RKSP), founded in 1926.⁸ A connection between the Holy See and, for instance, Nolens can very well be found since in 1904 he was granted the title of *cameriere segreti di spada e cappa* or roughly translated “Secret gentlemen of His Holiness” an honorable position provided by the pope.⁹ This occurrence shows that there was indeed a connection between Catholics in Dutch politics and the Holy See. However, the strength of this connection can be debated. This specific connection between the Dutch politics and the Holy See was tolerated by fellow (non-Catholic) Dutch politicians but that was not always the case. Exercising direct power proved to be rather a challenge for the Holy See when it came to the Netherlands. For example, in 1910 Pope Pius X (1903-1914) issued an anti-modernist Papal document called the *Borromeo Encyclical*. In this document, he showed his negative opinion

⁵Peter Raedts, “Katholieken op zoek naar een Nederlandse identiteit 1814-1898,” *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review Vol. 107*, no. 4 (1992): 724-725.

⁶ Jan Roes, *In de kerk geboren: het Nederlandse Katholicisme in anderhalve eeuw van herleving naar overleving* (Valkhof Pers: Nijmegen, 1994), 31-32.

⁷ Roes, *In de kerk geboren: het Nederlandse Katholicisme in anderhalve eeuw van herleving naar overleving*, 32-33.

⁸ “Nolens, W.H.” KRO-NCRV, accessed on 12 December, 2022, <https://kro-ncrv.nl/katholiek/encyclopedie/n/nolens-w-h>.

⁹ Dr. J.P. Gribling, *Willem Hubert Nolens 1860-1931: uit het leven van een Priester-Staatsman* (Van Gorcum: Assen, 1978), 16.

on modernism and Protestantism. Besides his outburst against the protestants, there was also a strong political message in it, urging Catholics to take a greater role in politics. He was not only referring to the situation in Italy but clearly to all Catholics.¹⁰ The encyclical evoked many negative reactions from non-Catholic politicians as well as Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands.¹¹ These examples show the clear presence of influence from the Holy See in Dutch politics. It does not show the effectiveness of this influence.

This research aims to fill this knowledge gap by answering the question: to what extent did the Holy See use soft power to influence the political position of Dutch Catholics between 1903-1929? The notion of ‘soft power’ will be further elaborated in the theoretical framework. The choice of the defined period (1903-1929) is related to the start of Pius X’s papacy (1903) and the founding of De Algemene bond van Rooms-Katholieke Kiesverenigingen (The General Union of Roman Catholic Electoral Associations) roughly about the same time, which marked the moment where the Catholic political party in the Netherlands took a solid shape.¹² In this shape, Catholic politicians can be examined as a group rather than fragments. The end of the researched period resulted from the end of the Vatican imprisonment in 1929.

Theoretical framework

The concept of power is part of an extensive academic debate. The political scientist Robert A. Dahl demonstrated that this debate consists mainly of two camps. Dahl claims that it is a dialogue between ‘conceptual theoreticians’ and ‘operationalists’. The conceptual theoreticians argue that there is no need for a clear-cut definition of power, but rather a standard measure to test the concept. Operationalists argue that the concept of power is packed with practical difficulties. And therefore, think that it is better to abandon the general concept of power and replace it with smaller concepts that fit specific research.¹³ This thesis touches upon the difficulties of power in academic research. Several scientists have attempted to capture conceptual clarity in the use of power. The one attempt that plays a significant part in this thesis is Joseph Nye’s ‘soft power’ theory.

¹⁰ J.P. de Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940* (Valkhof Pers: Voorburg, 1998), 211-212.

¹¹ Valk, de. *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 214-215.

¹² “Roomsch-Katholieke Staatspartij (RKSP),” Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, accessed on april 19, 2023, https://www.ru.nl/kdc/bladeren/archieven-thema/subpagina-archieven-thema/politiek/archieven_van/archieven_van/roomsch-katholieke/.

¹³ Robert A. Dahl, “The concept of power.” *Behavioral science Vol. 2*, no.3 (1957): 214.

The reason for this theoretical choice lies in the inability of the Holy See to express power through economic or military might, in other words, ‘hard power’.¹⁴ The German scholar Mariano Barbato would thus rather refer to the diplomatic power of the Holy See as limited in a way. He argues that the ability to force its rule by using power got lost with the capitulation of the last papal troops and the reduction of territory after the Italian unification in September 1870.¹⁵ This idea of limitation within the power of the Holy See is not widely acknowledged within the academic field. An opposing theory is provided by Jace Bartz, who claims that the Holy See is known for using soft power.¹⁶ This use of soft power does not make the Holy See powerless, it just changes the methods for maintaining and the visibility of power. The Vatican imprisonment and the inability to use physical force is the reason for the selection of the soft power theory in this research.

The notion of soft power is developed by the well-known political scientist Joseph Nye. In short, the definition of soft power entails “the power to set the political agenda and determine the framework of debate in a way that shapes others’ preferences.”¹⁷ Nye managed to create a clear foundation for the concept of soft power. The vital elements of soft power are cultural attractiveness, economic interdependence, and relational power with other countries.¹⁸ Jace Bartz argues that this soft power is the Holy See’s specialty since soft power rests on the credibility of a political entity. With a support base of more than 1 billion people and a history that goes back for centuries it is fair to say that this element is covered.¹⁹ Byrnes as well as Bartz, see a clear use of soft power namely through dialogue with other state actors, papal visits, the representation in international organizations like the UN, and a great amount of influence on its followers, both social and political.²⁰

The general thought behind the concept of soft power relies on the idea that it is free and has limited consequences, contrary to hard power. The concept of soft power is very close to liberalism because it emphasizes the possibility of cooperation. Democracies are therefore

¹⁴ Timothy A. Byrnes, “Sovereignty, Supranationalism, and Soft Power: The Holy See in International Relations,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs Vol. 15*, no. 4 (2017): 8.

¹⁵ Mariano Barbato, “A State, a Diplomat, and a Transnational Church: The Multi-layered Actorness of the Holy See,” *Perspectives: Review of International Affairs Vol. 21*, no. 2 (2013): 39.

¹⁶ Jace Bartz, “The Holy See: An Institution Like No Other,” *Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union Vol. 2022*, no. 4 (2022): 5.

¹⁷ Joseph S. Nye, “Soft power,” *Foreign Policy* No. 80 (1990), 166.

¹⁸ Nye, “Soft power,” 167-169.

¹⁹ Bartz, “The Holy See: An Institution Like No Other,” 5.

²⁰ Bartz, “The Holy See: An Institution Like No Other,” 5.

much more inclined to use soft power according to Joseph Nye.²¹ Alexander L. Vuving, a political scientist who complemented the theory by Nye, argued that a political entity must meet certain requirements when carrying out soft power. The first element is benignity, meaning that the political entity must show a certain level of generosity and kindness to be taken seriously. If a political entity comes across as selfish and aggressive people are unlikely to follow its lead. The second element is brilliance. This element implies that a political entity must have a way to prove its capability. In the case of the Holy See, this could refer to its capability to be a political actor for centuries, even in the most challenging times. The third element is beauty, not by its appearance but by its ability to create a community. Shared values, norms, causes, and visions are seen as beautiful.²² These three elements, referred to as the three B's, will recur regularly in the analysis. The three B's are a guide to help determine whether or not certain behavior fits within the soft power framework.

To specify the theory, IR scholar Kinsley Edney demonstrated how to detect soft power. According to Edney, soft power is particularly evident in foreign propaganda. In which the actor using soft power is mainly occupied with projecting a certain narrative to the outside world.²³ The narrative is often positive, because a positive narrative is more likely to attract an exemplify. A positive image of a particular power can create a virtuous interplay between the element's beauty, benignity, and brilliance. For example, a state actor may be very capable on the international stage through collaborations or representation in international organizations but lack the element of beauty because it does not have the sentiment of shared norms and values among its inhabitants. In this case, the state actor will have more difficulty in implementing soft power because the narrative it tries to convey may not be convincing enough. A positive narrative can be created through, for instance, cultural exchange projects, in which people get the opportunity to learn about things like language and religion or positive outlets in the foreign press.²⁴

The concept of soft power has been widely discussed in research on international relations topics. This happens in both a positive and negative way. Indeed, soft power is regularly challenged by scientists. These critiques often focus on three main points that seem to weaken

²¹ Maxime Gormichon, "Joseph Nye on Soft Power," E-international Relations, accessed on 23 November 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/03/08/joseph-nye-on-soft-power/>.

²² Alexander Vuving, "How Soft Power Works" (September 1, 2009), accessed on 23 November, 2022, 9-12, <https://dkiapcss.edu/Publications/Vuving%20How%20soft%20power%20works%20APSA%202009.pdf>.

²³ Kinsley Edney, "Soft Power and the Chinese Propaganda System," *Journal of Contemporary China Vol. 21*, no. 78 (2012), 902.

²⁴ Edney, "Soft Power and the Chinese Propaganda System," 904.

the theory. The first point is the measurability problem, soft power is often hard to prove. Second, the concepts have a lot of overlap with other theories making the soft power theory unoriginal. And third, ambiguity about the agent/structure of the concept. For instance, soft power can be used by many different actors like corporations or civil society groups, making the concept too broad.²⁵ These points of critique are deliberately part of this research. It is important to note that the concept of soft power has its limits.

Application of the concept

Throughout the thesis, analysis has been carried out on the same areas where the Holy See can apply soft power emerging from previous observations made in the academic debate. The first area is the use of papal encyclicals. An encyclical is a letter that is meant to give counsel to or shed light on points of doctrine that must be made more precise or that must be taught in more specific circumstances.²⁶ The American political scientist Federica Genovese did an extensive quantitative text analysis on papal encyclicals between 1958 and 2015. Through this analysis, she wanted to research whether the words in encyclicals could be linked to the political context. She aimed at revealing the link between the documents of the church and political events that took place at the same time as the publication of these documents. In her research, Genovese argued that political themes systematically emerge in the papal documents and that the timing of the more political encyclicals correlated with years in which international crises broke out.²⁷ Throughout her research Genovese stresses a few important matters. First, a religious institution can have a lot of impact on a voter's ideology. And second, religious leaders are more likely to raise issues when it will not cost them followers. This often boils down to relevant comments on topics that the followers are concerned with at that time.²⁸ Other political scientists that have studied soft power through encyclicals are the American scientists Ricardo A. Crespo and Christian C. Gregory. Crespo and Gregory argue that the pope uses encyclicals as an attempt to re-conceptualize the teachings and approaches of the church due to changing political environments.²⁹ According to them, encyclicals are an effective soft power tool. This is the case

²⁵ Umut Yukaruç, "A Critical Approach to Soft Power," *BEU SBE Derg Vol. 6, no. 2 (2017): 493*.

²⁶ F. G. Morrissey, "Encyclical." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 5, Gale (2003), 205-206.

²⁷ Federica Genovese, "Politics ex cathedra: Religious authority and the Pope in modern international relations," *Research and Politics Vol. 2, no. 4 (2015): 9*.

²⁸ Genovese, "Politics ex cathedra: Religious authority and the Pope in modern international relations," 3.

²⁹ Ricardo A Crespo and Christina C. Gregory, "The doctrine of mercy: moral authority, soft power, and the foreign policy of Pope Francis," *International Politics Vol. 57, no. 1 (2020), 121*.

because it allows the pope to invoke his moral authority without using any visible force.³⁰ In other words, twisting minds instead of twisting arms as Nye argued.³¹

A second important area of the Holy See to use soft power are the official relational ties between the Netherlands and the Holy See. Joseph Nye had already divided soft power into three main components: cultural attractiveness, economic interdependence, and relational power with other countries.³² Relational power can be a tricky component to explain since it does not mean that one of the two countries is stronger and can therefore exert pressure. Indeed, this would not fit within the framework of soft power. The political scientist Alexander Vuving interpreted relational power as a tool to show their benignity. Namely, a country can show its benevolence, peaceful disposition, and willingness to cooperate through relations with other countries.³³ The coin has two sides in this case. On the one hand, relational power only works if a country is willing to listen to others and compromise. On the other hand, it can be a very effective way to be part of the political agenda.³⁴ If a country shows goodwill and efficient cooperation then other countries might be willing to copy certain parts of their political movements. In the case of the Netherlands, this was carried out through envoys and people in high ecclesiastical positions, such as priests and cardinals.

Another important part of soft power is public diplomacy. However, the concept of public diplomacy is not always correctly understood according to Nye. A major fallacy is the parallelism between public diplomacy and propaganda. Public diplomacy must go beyond propaganda and merely public relations campaigns.³⁵ The ultimate goal of a political actor is to gain a permanent relationship with a state that is able to resist government interference. This is a long-term process that requires intensive building of cultural relationships.³⁶ Nye argues that public diplomacy exists of three dimensions. The first is daily communications, which contains both communication to the domestic and foreign press. The second dimension is strategic communication, which contains planned advertising of certain themes and policies. The third, and last dimension, is the development of lasting relationships with key individuals. This could

³⁰ Crespo and Gregory, "The doctrine of mercy: moral authority, soft power, and the foreign policy of Pope Francis," 129.

³¹ Gormichon, "Joseph Nye on Soft Power."

³² Joseph S. Nye, "Soft power," *Foreign Policy* No. 80 (1990), 167-169.

³³ Alexander Vuving, "How Soft Power Works" (September 1, 2009): 9-10.

³⁴ Vuving, "How Soft Power Works," 16.

³⁵ Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The annals of the American academy of political and social science* Vol. 616, no. 1 (2008): 101.

³⁶ Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 101.

be done through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, and conferences.³⁷ These dimensions of public diplomacy are tested to the context of the political reality in the Netherlands. So, the main elements to demonstrate soft power in this research are encyclicals, relational power dynamics through envoys and high-ranked clergymen, and public diplomacy.

Methodological framework

The research specifically about the Holy See's use of soft power, as shown above, provides an academic foundation for this thesis. Added to this is the historical situation of Dutch Catholics and their relationship with the Holy See. This part of the thesis is based on the research of a variety of Dutch historians. The Dutch historian who has done the most research on the subject is J.P. de Valk. He wrote the book *Roomser dan De Paus*, about the relations between Dutch Catholics and the Holy See. Another prominent historian on the subject is Vefie Poels, who wrote a comprehensive book about the Dutch Cardinal Willem van Rossum. Several other Dutch historians have also tackled the subject. However, the different works by Dutch historians are very historical and descriptive rather than analytical. A connection with international relations has not yet been made either.

In this thesis, several events that connected the Holy See to the Dutch political situation have been examined to analyze the political behavior of the Holy See. Against the backdrop of these events, Joseph Nye's notions on distinct soft power elements were tested. This equates to the three main elements: benignity, brilliance, and beauty. These elements are reflected in, for instance, portrayal in media or relational ties through envoys. The research has both a historical and an analytical side. Making it necessary to mention that there has been a strict selection on the occurrences and people that are included in the research. The time span of 1903-1929 is long enough for very extensive historical research. However, that is not the purpose of this research. The purpose is to test Joseph Nye's soft power theory to the diplomatic actions of the Holy See in Dutch politics.

The thesis is structured into three chapters. Every chapter focuses on a different pope within the given timeframe (1903-1929). The seated popes in this timeframe were: Pope Pius X (1903-1914), Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922), and Pope Pius XI (1922-1939). This structure allows comparison. Did the different popes have different approaches, or did the Holy See maintain a certain strategy? Each chapter answers the same sub-question: how did the seating Pope apply soft power in Dutch politics and what resources did he use to do so? The source

³⁷ Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 101-103.

materials used to answer this question are mainly papal documents publicly available through the Vatican. These documents reveal the objectives of the pope in question. Another important part of the source material is Dutch newspapers. Newspapers are known to affect voting behavior and political opinions among their readers. They play an essential role in shaping public knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.³⁸ This is the reason why newspapers are often used as source material in research on soft power. The examined newspapers are the Catholic newspapers: *De Tijd*, *De Maasbode*, *De Amstelbode*, and *Het Centrum*. All accessible on the Delpher database. These newspapers were selected to provide insight into public opinion about the Holy See among Dutch Catholics. For example, how were encyclicals received? And what consequences did these responses generate? Another part of the source material exists of documents from personal archives of Catholic politicians accessed at the Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (KDC - Catholic Documentation Centre). There were a number of prominent Catholic politicians who played an important role in the relationship between the Holy See and Dutch politics during this period. One of these, for example, was Willem Hubert Nolens. His archive at the KDC includes House of Representative meetings but also correspondence letters between him and the Pope. The chosen source material offered both historical depth and the opportunity for a soft power analysis.

³⁸ Alan D. Gerber, Dean Karlan, and Daniel Bergan, "Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* Vol. 1, no. 2 (2009), 35.

Chapter one: Pope Pius X

1.1 Restoring all thing in Christ

The first chapter of this thesis will revolve around the papacy of Pope Pius X and the political situation of Dutch Catholics between 1903 and 1914. The leading sub-question of this chapter is: how did Pope Pius X apply soft power in Dutch politics and what resources did he use to do so?

Catholicism in the Netherlands at the start of the 20th century is characterized by dichotomies and difficulties. Dutch historian J.P. de Valk referred to the Dutch Catholics as "the troublesome children of the Holy Father."³⁹ The 'children's' mischievous behavior is elaborated later on in the chapter. Firstly, who was this Holy Father? The Holy Father in question is Pope Pius X (1903-1914), formerly known as Guiseppe Melchiorre Sarto from Riese, a small town in northern Italy. A fair amount of turmoil in global Catholicism under Pius X could have already been predicted before he had even taken office. Giuseppe Sarto was nominated because he contrasted his, highly diplomatic, predecessor Pope Leo XIII. The contrast between the two popes lay in the political nature of Pope Leo XIII as opposed to the religious tenacity of Pope Pius X. The Swiss theologian Giovanni Luzzi argued that Pope Pius X's interest in resorting to the true faith was mostly due to his common background, internal tranquility, and pastoral simplicity.⁴⁰ The first official document revealing this new way of working by Pius X was titled *E Supremi*. The *E Supremi* was an encyclical. This first official encyclical gave a very clear display of his intentions as a pope. The introductory paragraphs focused mainly on his gratitude towards this new position and showcased the respect he had for his predecessor, while the rest of the document showed how he interpreted certain things differently than his predecessor.

The leading sentiment of the document is "Rinnovare tutte le cose in Cristo" translated to "Restoring all things in Christ".⁴¹ This quote was further explained in his work, in which he argued why the period in which he was attributed this position was full of dilemmas and dangers. And how the only thing saving them would be a restoration of true faith. A sentiment that shows in the following section:

³⁹Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 234.

⁴⁰ Giovanni Luzzi, "An Estimate of the Life and Work of Pius X," *Review & Expositor* Vol. 12, no. 1 (1915): 31-32.

⁴¹ Pius X. *E Supremi*, The Holy See, 4 October. 1903. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_04101903_e-supremi.html.

For it is not priests alone, but all the faithful without exception, who must concern themselves with the interests of God and souls - not, of course, according to their own views, but always under the direction and orders of the bishops; for to no one in the Church except you is it given to preside over, to teach, to "govern the Church of God which the Holy Ghost has placed you to rule."⁴²

With this encyclical, Pius X started his anti-modernist policy. The original plan was for the Catholic Church to be reunited around the world as one, with the Pope as the top and center of Catholicism. Pope Pius X did not tolerate modern views of Christianity. He, therefore, commissioned Cardinal Pietro Gasparri in 1904 to create a canon in which divine laws were determined.⁴³ Until then, violation of the doctrine would be heavily discussed because not everyone shared the same interpretation of the doctrine and sought the same punishment to be fitting. The single unified code of canon law provided the Catholics with clear guidance.⁴⁴ The canon law took a long time to write and was not finished until 1917, long after Pius X's papacy has ended. However, the value Pius X placed on the creation of the canon law gave insight into his view of leadership. Indeed, he saw the Catholic Church as something hierarchical. In the end, he was the one to decide the right interpretation and the eventual punishment. He also made it clear that divine laws were the foundation for every human being, and therefore above secular laws. This made his authority more important than secular authority.⁴⁵ How did the Dutch Catholics respond to this ambition? This is the question that guides the introduction paragraph of Pope Pius X back to the research.

1.2 Encyclicals as a power tool

To find out to what extent the encyclical influenced political decisions, it is important to know how it was received by the Catholic community in the Netherlands and how it might have influenced the general public opinion. The reaction within the Dutch Catholic press to the encyclical *E Supremi* varied. This can be seen in the published reactions by the different catholic newspapers. The Catholic newspaper *De Maasbode* gave an extensive reaction to the document

⁴² Pius X, *E Supremi*, The Holy See, 4 October. 1903.

⁴³ Karim Schelkens, John A. Dick, and Jurgen Mettepenningen. *Aggiornamento? : Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 75-76.

⁴⁴ Schelkens, Dick, and Mettepenningen. *Aggiornamento? : Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI*, 75-76.

⁴⁵ Schelkens, Dick, and Mettepenningen. *Aggiornamento? : Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI*, 75.

on 10 October 1903. *De Maasbode* felt that the encyclical is what they could expect from the document in the most positive sense. The motto "restoring all things in Christ" would serve as the immortal formula for Catholics in this modern era according to them. As they too argued that modernity had caused an anti-religious revolution that had bedeviled private and public life, the obedience of the individual and the community, the scientific and political field, and the overall domestic life. *De Maasbode* stated that "Pius X is a man of warm-hearted kindness and paternal endearment who came to bring salvation."⁴⁶ From these words, it can be concluded that readers of *De Maasbode* were encouraged to follow the message Pius X's encyclical conveyed. Words like Warm-hearted, kind, and endearment brings the analysis to the first of the three B's, benignity. By portraying the Pope as kind and warm-hearted, *De Maasbode* established the sentiment of benignity among its readers.

The rivaling weekly *De Tijd* reacted differently to the encyclical. Although it spoke of Pius X with great consideration, there was also a more critical tone. *De Tijd* responded to the encyclical by refuting the allegations Pius X had received from the socialist corner. The socialist press argued that the social issue that Leo XIII, Pius X's predecessor, considered of great importance was completely dismissed by Pius X because he only referred to it once.⁴⁷ *De Tijd* responded by saying that the social question is also important under Pius X. But that Pius X first focuses on inner purification of the Catholic people before there can be any social action. In addition, *De Tijd* stressed that the spiritual life and heavenly mission of the Catholic Church should not be confused with a Christian institution for social purposes.⁴⁸ The reaction of *De Tijd* to the encyclical and the method of Pope Pius X is critical. By admitting that Pope Pius X is indeed less modern and social than Leo XIII, *De Tijd* does not go completely against the allegations from the socialist corner. *De Tijd* does, however, argue that fruitful social efforts can only stem from pure and honest intentions, which are Pius X's prime goals.⁴⁹ *De Tijd* provided its readers with arguments to use in discussions. Readers of *De Tijd* could then guard themselves against comments on the modus operandi of Pius X. And again, the element of benignity is present in the reference to Pius X's 'pure' and 'honest' intentions.

⁴⁶ "Brief uit Rome," *De Maasbode*, 10 October, 1903. Accessed on Delpher, 08-03-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMKB04:000190848:mpeg21:p001>.

⁴⁷ "Reactie?" *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 6 January, 1904. Accessed on Delpher, 14-03-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010990679:mpeg21:p001>.

⁴⁸ *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, "Reactie?"

⁴⁹ *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, "Reactie?"

1.3 Political response to encyclicals

Because *De Tijd* and *De Maasbode* were both among the biggest Catholic newspapers in the Netherlands, it is very plausible that their articles impacted public opinion. Regardless of the effect it had on the public opinion, the encyclical had caused a stir amongst both Catholics and non-Catholics (visible in the socialist comments *De Tijd* responded to). Pope Pius X will no doubt have known that an encyclical would not go unmentioned. However, the form of the substantive commentary was not entirely in Pius X's hands. This fact does not make encyclicals any less usable as Soft Power tools, it just makes them less reliable because it is unclear how the words in the encyclical will be interpreted and reproduced. It is important to mention as a critical note in this research that newspaper editors take some of the power in this way.

However, did the objectives presented in the encyclical eventually influence certain choices within Dutch politics? It could be substantiated that certain parts of the encyclical were extracted and transformed into a national political goal for Dutch Catholics. For instance, Pius X wrote about a high demand for catholic schools to teach true Catholicism to ignorant people in his opinion by arguing the following:

How many there are who mimic Christ and abhor the Church and the Gospel more through ignorance than through badness of mind,” “For it is not true that the progress of knowledge extinguishes the faith; rather is it ignorance, and the more ignorance prevails the greater is the havoc wrought by incredulity. And this is why Christ commanded the Apostles: "Going forth teach all nations."⁵⁰

De Maasbode argued that there was a high demand for both more catholic primary schools and catholic press after interpreting these words.⁵¹ This perception was even more confirmed by the encyclical *Acerbo Nimis*, published in 1905. An encyclical that mainly focused on the teachings of the Christian doctrine.⁵² So in this case, Pope Pius X managed to add a certain political objective to the public debate without using force. Education was now on an urgent agenda for Dutch politics. This is a great example of using encyclicals as a soft power tool.

Education had been a sore topic in Dutch politics for decades at that point. Since the Education Act of 1857, only reading, writing, arithmetic, and the Dutch language were

⁵⁰ Pius X, *E Supremi*, The Holy See, 4 October. 1903.

⁵¹ *De Maasbode*, “Brief uit Rome.”

⁵² Pius X. *Acerbo Nimis*, The Holy See, 15 April. 1905. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_15041905_acerbo-nimis.html.

compulsory subjects of the school curriculum. Religion was no longer part of this program because the liberal side of politics felt that religion should be part of a moral upbringing. This upbringing had to be done at home and therefore no longer belonged to any of the guidelines of education.⁵³ This decision already evoked a lot of resistance at the time and remained an important part of discussion throughout the second half of the 19th century. A distinction was made from then on between regular education and education for children who were raised with a particular conviction. Catholic education belonged to the latter. The problem with religious education was the lack of funding from the state treasury. Catholic schools had to rely on charity and parental contribution.⁵⁴ Although step by step the Catholics managed to win successes in this area, by 1904 the battle was far from over.

The archive of the Catholic politician W.H. Nolens shows an intensification of the struggle for Catholic education from 1905 onwards. An important change in 1905 was the establishment of the Sint Radboudstichting (St Radboud Foundation). The ultimate end goal of this foundation was to establish a Catholic university in the Netherlands. *De Maasbode*, in an article from 5 August 1905, outlined in depth why there was a need for a Catholic university. The crux of their argument came down to a dissatisfaction amongst Dutch Catholics with the lack of Catholic professors at state universities which meant that many highly educated people had to put aside their faith for education. Later research found that the lack of good education among Catholics was the root of a much bigger problem. Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th century, Dutch Catholics were known for their high poverty and crime rates. Convictions for public drunkenness, brawls, and thefts were proportionally more common among Catholics than among any other group. The Dutch theologian and sociologist Erik Sengers argued that the fact that there was no higher Catholic education was one of the main problems since Catholics did not want to send their children to public schools. Indeed, there were very few opportunities for self-development for Catholic youth.⁵⁵ This set off a chain reaction. people got low-income jobs but were expected to have large families within the church community, leading to poverty. Thus, the establishment of a Catholic university could make a big difference to the Catholic community in the Netherlands at large.

⁵³ M. de Vroede, "Volksonderwijs en maatschappij in België en Nederland van de zeventiende tot het begin van de twintigste eeuw," *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* Vol. 92, no. 2 (1977): 197.

⁵⁴ Wilhelmus Johannes Gerardus Marie Gielen, *'Het wondere ambt': het rijkschooltoezicht en de toepassing van de lager-onderwijswet 1920 gedurende de jaren 1921 tot en met 1930*. (Nijmegen, 1984), 1.

⁵⁵ Erik Sengers, *Al zijn wij katholiek, wij zijn Nederlanders: Opkoms en verval van de katholieke kerk in Nederland sinds 1795 vanuit rational-choice perspectief* (Eburon: Utrecht, 2003), 120-121.

The foundation's first goal was to establish special professorships at existing universities. These professors, according to *de Maasbode*, had to fight "faithless science".⁵⁶ This mission is very much in line with Pius X's statements in *Acerbo Nimis* since paragraph 23 of the encyclical stated:

In the larger cities, and especially where universities, colleges, and secondary schools are located, let classes in religion be organized to instruct in the truths of faith and in the practice of Christian life the youths who attend the public schools from which all religious teaching is banned.⁵⁷

Is it a coincidence that the Catholic wing immediately initiated action? Would the Sint Radboudstichting have been on the agenda regardless? Be that as it may, the foundation took its duties seriously. They expanded Pius X's words by not only aiming for religious classes but for a Catholic university. They knew that it would take a lot of money to establish a university. Setting up a university amounted to a hundred thousand guilders as start-up capital. After a long calculation, *De Maasbode* concluded that even the cheapest university in the Netherlands, the University of Groningen, costs at least five hundred thousand guilders per year. The time and effort this project would cost was inevitable. Yet, the first stone had been laid. The founding act of the foundation was eventually signed by several members of the Dutch parliament such as Jacob van den Biesen, Petrus van der Does, and Walther van Waterschoot van der Gracht, making it a political effort.⁵⁸

Eventually, the school battle about financial equality and educational pacification would last until 1917. From 1917, it was possible at last to get government funding to establish a religious school.⁵⁹ It would take another six years before the Katholieke Universiteit van Nijmegen (Catholic University of Nijmegen), later Radboud University, opened its doors on 17 October 1923.⁶⁰ However, an Intensification of the struggle for Catholic education in the Netherlands after two encyclicals in which education is an important core issue may point to a

⁵⁶ "Ene Katholieke Universiteit," *De Maas- en Roerbode*, 05 August, 1905, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Archive: NOLE-172.

⁵⁷ Pius X. *Acerbo Nimis*, The Holy See, 15 April. 1905.

⁵⁸ De Maas- en Roerbode, "Ene Katholieke Universiteit."

⁵⁹ Sengers, *Al zijn wij katholiek, wij zijn Nederlanders: Opkoms en verval van de katholieke kerk in Nederland sinds 1795 vanuit rational-choice perspectief*, 100.

⁶⁰ "Geschiedenis van de Radboud Universiteit," *Radboud Universiteit*, accessed on 31-03-2023. <https://www.ru.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis/geschiedenis-van-de-radboud-universiteit>.

successful Soft Power action by Pope Pius X. In addition, it also shows intense persistence on the catholic side in Dutch politics.

1.4 A Dutch envoy

A direct relational link between Dutch politics and the Holy See is the envoyship of a Dutch diplomat in the Vatican. This option of envoyship has been the subject of much controversy within Dutch politics. The origin of this sore topic started during the unification process in Italy when the Papal state was at stake and a large-scale campaign was launched within the Vatican to rally international support. This campaign was set up by Pope Pius IX but would be carried out worldwide by bishops and Catholic media outlets. The campaign was not fully embraced by the Dutch bishops, this became clear through the critical remarks made by the Archbishop of Utrecht J. Zwijsen. Many bishops felt uncomfortable taking political risks that could be used against them. In doing so, many doubted the importance of a sovereign state for the holy cause. They deemed this fight to be worldly.⁶¹ This is a clear case of the mischievous behavior J.P. de Valk referred to. Nevertheless, it was carried out according to orders eventually leading to a large decrease of diplomatic support from the Dutch government. Non-Catholic politicians felt that this envoyship had become an easy channel for the Holy See to influence Dutch politics. The ultimate consequence was a withdrawal of the position of a Dutch envoy in the Holy See in 1871.⁶²

For Dutch Catholics, this issue kept lurking in the background until 1914, when W.H. Nolens, from the Catholic fraction, gave a lengthy speech listing reasons why the envoyship was also beneficial to non-Catholic members. He had hoped to convince them to withdraw the previous decision. One of his main arguments lay on the peaceful diplomacy of the Holy See, even in times of war. The Holy See was not concerned with success according to Nolens. It was about welfare and peace for all human society. Whatever spiritual forces had to be applied to achieve this. Although the foreign minister at that time, John Loudon, did not want to take up the offer directly he did not turn it down either. The discussion of whether or not a Dutch envoyship in the Holy See was needed was now officially reopened.⁶³ Resulting in a heated

⁶¹ Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 133-134.

⁶² Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 134.

⁶³ "Herstel van een Nederlandsch Gezantschap bij den Paus?" *De Maas- en Roerbode*, 22 December, 1914, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Archief NOLE-135.

battle between different parties. Although Nolens' speech had reopened the issue, there was a lot of resistance. Not all parties were convinced of good intentions. For instance, Samuel van Houten, a well-known liberal politician, noted in a letter on 18 May 1914 that Nolens' privileged position as chamberlain to the pope meant that he was not the right man to represent Dutch interests in such a matter. Indeed, van Houten pointed out that it could be little coincidence that, during Italy's participation in the war, the Vatican was trying to strengthen its influence elsewhere through envoys.⁶⁴ He was not explicit in naming bad intentions, but he did hint at his distrust with this statement.

In 1915, just after the death of Pope Pius X, Nolens' efforts were rewarded. He was allowed, in the name of the Cort van der Linden government, to go on a special mission to Rome to speak to Pope Benedict XV about possibly restoring the envoy. This mediation proved to be fruitful because on 19 June 1915, a law was passed establishing a temporary envoy. Even though it was not yet about a permanent position, the Catholics had made progress.⁶⁵ Such initiatives from within the Dutch government were rewarded by the popes to demonstrate that hard work paid off. Namely, in 1916 Nolens was granted yet another title on top of the title of *cameriere segreti di spada e cappa* he had obtained in 1904. He was now titled as the *Protonotarius Apostolicus* (papal notary) by Benedict XV. This title was the highest honorary position priests could receive from the pope.⁶⁶ These titles were of high value within the Catholic community. It is most likely that such rewards are an incentive to do certain things for the Pope. So in this case, there is the motivation of a positive reward rather than forced objectives. The Dutch envoy case shows two of the three B's, namely brilliance and benignity. The brilliance element was visible to all. The Holy See could steer people to carry out a large-scale campaign to rally international support and thus prove its political capability. The element of benignity was very visible within the catholic community. By rewarding commitment, the popes showed generosity.

⁶⁴ D.P.D. Fabius, "De Reis van Dr. Nolens," *Studiën en Schetsen: Op het Gebied van Staat en Maatschappij* Vol. 7, no. 4 (June 1915): 112-113.

⁶⁵ "Nolens, Willem Hubert (1860-1931)," Huygens Instituut, accessed on 1-04-2023, <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn1/nolens>.

⁶⁶ "Nolens, Willem Hubert (1860-1931)," Huygens Instituut, accessed on 1-04-2023, <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn1/nolens>.

1.5 Concluding

To conclude this chapter, the papacy of Pope Pius X showed different soft power tactics. One of the most visible tools of soft power by Pius X was the use of media. The encyclicals were possibly the impetus for an intensification of the school struggle in the Netherlands. This led to pacification and eventually the establishment of a Catholic university. Which are both within the line of Pius X's expectations. Another soft power tool deployed under the pontificate of Pius X was relational power. Through the use of an envoy, relational ties could be built between the Holy See and Dutch politics. You can tell that Pius X, and his successors, were in favor of the envoy by the rewards that were handed out to combative Catholics who fought for their cause. It can thus be concluded that Pius X used his soft power tools at hand in a fierce battle against consequences brought by modernity and the restoration of ecclesiastical values. This battle ended on 20 August 1914, when Pius X died. The time in which internal strife seemed to be the main issue was over for the Holy See.⁶⁷ His successor faced very different dilemmas. These dilemmas are outlined in the next chapter.

⁶⁷ Frank J. Coppa, *The Papacy in the Modern World: A Political History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 133.

Chapter two: Pope Benedict XV

2.1 Appealing for peace

The new pope was forced to deal with the destructive first world war and the aftermath it eventually generated. The Dutch Catholic community, meanwhile, formed a complicated group where, as encountered in the first chapter, discord and disobedience certainly occurred. These difficulties characterize the beginning of Benedict XV's papacy. This chapter shows to what extent Benedict XV succeeded in applying Soft Power in Dutch politics and what methods he used to do so.

How did they come to the selection of Pope Benedict XV? There was an explicit search for a pope who could give a suitable attitude within the context of the First World War. Giacomo Paolo Giambattista della Chiesa (1854-1922), the former archbishop of Bologna turned out to be the perfect candidate. The reason for his popularity was his extensive knowledge of law and diplomacy. Indeed, as the son of an Italian marquis, he had been more or less obliged to obtain a doctorate in law before he was allowed to focus on his ecclesiastical ambition. After his law studies, he began his clerical education, he eventually graduated from the Academy for Noble Ecclesiastics in Rome, the preparatory school for Vatican diplomats. His relationship with his predecessor was complicated, to say the least. Pius X and Giacomo della Chiesa did not get along well because Giacomo della Chiesa had been critical of the anti-modernist campaign launched by Pius X. Pope Pius X kept denying Giacomo della Chiesa a position as a cardinal as a reaction to this critical position, despite his perfect resume for the position.⁶⁸

Be that as it may, with his strict anti-modernism campaign Pius X had created a culture of fear within the Roman Curia. Many cardinals preferred a different approach by the new pope. They were also aware of the political situation they had to deal with. Europe had turned into a nest of alliances and hostilities, intertwined in a new and modern world war.⁶⁹ Dealing with the devastating first world war was now in the hands of Giacomo della Chiesa, who proceeded as Pope Benedict XV. Given the context, it was no surprise that Benedict XV was called 'the peace pope' after his papacy. During the first years of his papacy, his greatest mission had been to encourage peace. The Holy See was in a difficult position because it had already lost much of its hard power tools since 1870, with the capitulation of papal troops and territory. So, picking

⁶⁸ Coppa, *The Papacy in the Modern World: A Political History*, 135-136.

⁶⁹ Schelkens, Dick, and Mettepenningen. *Aggiornamento?: Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI*, 90.

a side in the first World War could potentially be disastrous. The inability to use Hard Power tools forced Benedict XV to use Soft Power tools, like encyclicals and envoys.⁷⁰

Pope Benedict XV published his first encyclical *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* on 1 November, 1914. In this encyclical, he mentioned how much he was horrified by the all-consuming war. He expressed several times that the nations that were slaughtering each other share the same father but seemed to be driven by grave evil. Although the majority of the message was addressed to warring people, there is a larger message present that is appointed to every human being. Indeed, Benedict XV in his encyclical highlighted where the problem lies in his view. He puts the root of all misery in the world at the denial of sincere brotherhood. Benedict XV detected a false conception of brotherhood amongst the fighting parties. This can be read in the following paragraph:

Never perhaps was there more talking about the brotherhood of men than there is today; in fact, men do not hesitate to proclaim that striving after brotherhood is one of the greatest gifts of modern civilization, ignoring the teaching of the Gospel, and setting aside the work of Christ and of his Church. But in reality, never was there less brotherly activity amongst men than at the present moment. Race hatred has reached its climax; peoples are more divided by jealousies than by frontiers; within one and the same nation, within the same city there rages the burning envy of class against class; and amongst individuals it is self-love which is the supreme law over-ruling everything.⁷¹

He then went on in explaining why brotherhood had lost in all of humanity by attributing it to a major flaw within the religion. Benedict XV, building on Pius X's concerns, stressed the need for Catholics to present a strong united front. Benedict XV saw a great evil in the division between the strict dogmatic Catholics and the more modern ones, and especially the strife that this split entailed. One is Catholic or one is not, according to Benedict XV.⁷² The best solution would lay in the obedience of the common believers to the people of higher rank within the church according to Benedict XV. These people, he said, were appointed as guardians and interpreters of the truth. All error and mutual unrest would disappear if people followed the

⁷⁰ Schelkens, Dick, and Mettepenningen. *Aggiornamento? : Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI*, 91.

⁷¹ Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, The Holy See, 1 November, 1914. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_01111914_ad-beatissimi-apostolorum.html.

⁷² Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*.

hierarchy within the church.⁷³ In other words, the pyramid of obedience would eventually lead to the pope. Obedience to the Holy See was an important part of Benedictus XV's first encyclical. The emotionally charged theme of the encyclical did not stop the pope from expressing his displeasure with the Vatican Imprisonment that had not been resolved by his predecessors. He even argued that the imprisonment was “in many ways very harmful to the peace of nations”.⁷⁴ With this encyclical, it was clear from the outset that the new pope held his position, as head of the church, in high esteem. He attached great value to authority within the church. Did this attitude affect his relations with Dutch Catholics?

2.2 Reaction to the encyclical

The dichotomy between Catholics was not unknown to the Dutch Catholic community. This could also be seen in the House of Representatives. It took decades before there was a single national Catholic alliance. Two issues played a major role in this. The first issue was the difference in dogmatism. On the one hand, there was the ultramontane group, which had following papal desires as its grand aim. This group was extremely dogmatic and put papal authority above national interest. Their views were characterized by conservatism to the bone. The other group consisted of liberal Catholics. They, obviously still underlain by a certain conservative attitude, were not quite as strict in their views. This group was far less concerned with papal authority. The second issue was the regional division between Catholic politicians. The majority of Catholics in Dutch politics came from the southern provinces of Noord-Brabant and Limburg. It is a misconception to think that 'The Catholic South' was having a strong united front since Catholics from different regions at the beginning of the 20th century were hardly willing to cooperate.⁷⁵

The, originally ultramontane, politician Herman Schaepman tried to create unity as early as 1896 by proposing the founding of De Algemene bond van Rooms-Katholieke Kiesverenigen (The General Union of Roman Catholic Electoral Associations), a unification of all the different Catholic groups in the House of Representatives. His efforts proved fruitful and resulted in the establishment of the association in 1904.⁷⁶ This was an expression of

⁷³ Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*.

⁷⁴ Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*.

⁷⁵ J. Bosmans, "Het onbehaaglijke vaderland. De katholieke staatkunde en de Staat der Nederlanden in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw," *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review Vol. 108*, no. 3 (1993), 425-426.

⁷⁶ "Rooms-Katholieke Staatspartij (RKSP)," Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, accessed on 19 April, 2023. https://www.ru.nl/kdc/bladeren/archieven-thema/subpagina-archieven-thema/politiek/archieven_van/archieven_van/roomsch-katholieke/.

interconnection on the outside. On the inside, however, not much had changed. Internally they were still divided. The fact that voting in the Netherlands was still done through the district system made the unification difficult as Noord-Brabant was not eager to participate in national initiatives since, with a high number of Catholic residents, they would find a majority anyway. This changed in 1917 when a constitutional amendment changed the voting system to a system of proportional representation. It was now necessary to have a good national program to be allowed to govern. Focusing only on regional interest would cause a minority in the House of Representatives.⁷⁷ However, unity was not yet achieved when Benedict XV took office in 1914. The fact that this theme was an important part of his first encyclical evoked reactions from various (religious) newspapers in the Netherlands. These reactions revealed the power that the Holy See could exercise over the Dutch Catholic press.

The first part of the encyclical, about the First World War, aroused less interest among the Dutch audience because the Netherlands was neutral. The second part, where Benedict XV addressed his followers on internal disputes resonated with the heavily divided Dutch Catholics. A good example is the reaction of the Catholic newspaper *De Tijd*, also shown in the previous chapter. *De Tijd* responded to the encyclical on 21 November 1914. The first part of the response dealt with the statements Benedict XV had made about the war in a cursory manner. From this, they concluded that the pope saw the rejection of faith and the dissolution of authority as the root of all misery. After this introduction, *De Tijd* turned to the part about mutual strife within the Catholic community. According to them, the pope has not only been sent to call the fighting nations to peace, but he had also come to call the faithful to order. *De Tijd* argued that "the children of the Church, too long to their great detriment, have wasted their best gifts in disputes among themselves".⁷⁸ *De Tijd* also claimed that they had disapproved of these mutual disputes for a long time.⁷⁹ This statement cannot have come as a surprise to loyal readers of *De Tijd*. In fact, the former editor-in-chief of *De Tijd*, P.J.H. Geurts, had been in a heated dispute with the editor-in-chief of *De Maasbode*, M.A. Thompson, in 1911.

The reason for the conflict was a letter to the Pope from Thompson. In it, Thompson had asked the pope to summon Geurts. *De Tijd* was said to be too modernist and liberal in tone. Since this incident was still under the reign of the stern Pope Pius X, Thompson had hoped for

⁷⁷ Bosmans, "Het onbehaaglijke vaderland. De katholieke staatkunde en de Staat der Nederlanden in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw," 426.

⁷⁸ "Roma locuta," *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 21 November, 1914. Accessed on Delpher, 24-04-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010548275:mpeg21:p001>.

⁷⁹ "Roma locuta," *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*.

praise for his actions. Unfortunately for Thompson, it all turned out differently than he had hoped. Both men were summoned and admonished by Agustinus Josephus Callier, the Bishop of Haarlem, even before Pius X had to interfere. Callier had ordered Geurts to tone down his modernist leanings and Thompson was criticized for his attack on individuals. In retrospect, Dutch historian J.P de Valk spoke of a great error of judgment on Thompson's part.⁸⁰ Indeed, in a plea to the pope, he would harm more than just Geurts. It would also hurt the Archbishop of Haarlem and Cardinal Willem van Rossum since they were the intermediaries. In addition, Callier and van Rossum thought it was a commercially strategic move by Thompson much to their dismay. Although this debacle forced Thompson to resign from *De Maasbode*, it did not stop him from launching a witch-hunt against modernism in the Netherlands through his new newspaper, called *Rome*.⁸¹

In 1914, after Benedict XV took office, Thompson made another major error of judgment, this time disastrous. He had claimed in the 28 November 1914 issue of his *Rome* magazine that the encyclical had given integralists like himself papal approval to fight deviations from the faith all the more energetically. This was the very last straw for the bishop of Roermond, Laurentius Schrijnen, among others. Pope Benedict XV disapproved of divisions among Catholics. A witch-hunt against modernists would undoubtedly be part of this disapproved division. Schrijnen had called the article “a perfidious distortion of the word of the Pope.”⁸² The plug was pulled from Thompson’s newspaper barely six months after this misstep. There is no consensus among Dutch historians whether Benedict XV made the final decision to end the newspaper or not. The biographers of the well-known priest Henri Poels, L.J. Rogier and N. de Rooy, claimed it was.⁸³ Historian J.P de Valk, on the other hand, argued that Thompson's article did not get beyond Cardinal Van Rossum.⁸⁴ Either way, the final decision was made from within the Holy See.

The fact that with Benedict XV taking office and his new encyclical, *De Tijd* placed great emphasis on obedience towards Rome could very well have been due to the allegations from the ultra-montane corner and even a fear of reprimands from the Holy See. Even though

⁸⁰ Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 245-247.

⁸¹ Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 245-248.

⁸² Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 264.

⁸³ L.J. Rogier and N. de Rooy, *In vrijheid Herboren* (Pax: 's-Gravenhage, 1953), 563.

⁸⁴ Valk, de., *Roomser dan de paus?: Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands Katholicisme, 1815-1940*, 265.

Geurts, partly due to Van Rossum's efforts, had just dodged the bullet, the editors were no doubt aware that they should not come into conflict with the Holy See. This fear is therefore reflected in the words "Roma locuta causa finita", meaning: Rome has spoken, the matter is decided.⁸⁵ The statement was made by *De Tijd* in combination with a detailed explanation of why Catholics needed to join forces and shed their mutual distrust.⁸⁶ The submissive attitude of *De Tijd* persisted. For instance, in an article from December 8, 1914, it suggested that Catholics should "respectfully and punctually comply" with the pope's wishes.⁸⁷

Thompson's downfall and the decision from *De Tijd* to provide its readers with a very safe response offer a clear example of the contrast between the outcomes of a newspaper that did conform to the Holy See's wishes and one that did not. This shows the extent to which the power of the Holy See could influence. It also complements the observation in the previous chapter that the editors of newspapers hold a certain amount of power. The earlier observation is not immediately invalidated. The Dutch Catholic newspapers have always been able to create their own content, hence the differences between the newspapers. Nevertheless, this observation does prove a form of power that shows the strength of the Holy See's position in Dutch media.

This case shows how complicated soft power can be in practice. But also, how thin the line is between hard power and soft power. If Soft power is about persuasion and conviction through setting a good and positive example as well as having relationships based on mutual respect and trust, how is it that the Holy See can ensure the downfall of a newspaper? This is more than conviction and benignity. This is the point where hard power and soft power meet. Newspapers, with their sincere responses to papal encyclicals are an excellent example of a Soft Power tool. However, when the newspapers can be shut down if this message does not meet the expectations of a certain power there appears to be more than soft power involved. But what were the Holy See's other options when it came to the problem Thompson had caused? Did the Pope have to accept the blows Thompson dealt to his fellow journalist? With the possibly resulting in a total lack of unity, which would completely weaken the element of beauty. Both options would have damaged Benedict XV's soft power strategy.

⁸⁵ "Roma locuta," *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*.

⁸⁶ "Roma locuta," *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*.

⁸⁷ "Verklaring. Rome, 1 December 1914." *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 08 December, 1914. Accessed on Delpher, 17-04-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010548292:mpeg21:p005>.

2.3 Missionary work as a political tool

One place where religion and politics were still intertwined during this period was in the colonies. In Indonesia in particular, missionary work was part of the political landscape. The Dutch government donated large sums of money for the construction of Catholic churches and even monthly salaries for certain clergymen. However, cooperation between the Catholics and the Dutch government failed when it came to the definition of mission areas. To maintain peace and strict control, the Dutch government, in collaboration with the local administration, divided the country into regions. Within these regions, there was a limit to the missionary work of certain religions. This division was enshrined in the Constitution of the Dutch East Indies under Article 123, translated to “The Christian teachers, priests, and missionaries must have a special permission, to be granted by or on behalf of the Governor-General, to perform their service work in a certain part of the Dutch East Indies.”⁸⁸ This law allowed the local administration the opportunity to assign regions to certain religions. The so-called “double mission”, where religious groups would cause turmoil would be avoided in this way.⁸⁹ However, Catholics struggled with this. Being able to preach their faith everywhere was one of the most important norms for Catholics. This, therefore, included establishing parishes and schools wherever they deemed it to be necessary. The fact that this was prevented in Indonesia by the government annoyed the Catholics.⁹⁰

Although this discontent had been around for much longer, it had never really reached a boiling point. This changed after 1918. Immediately after the war and during the interbellum, nationalism reigned supreme among the great powers. Added to this was the fact that the Western powers, partly for financial reasons, wanted to exploit their colonial territories. Although the Netherlands had remained neutral in the war, they could not neglect the colonies because the other powers continued their nationalistic politics at full speed. Missionary work was an important tool in the process of exploiting colonial territories. Indeed, missionary work could 'westernize' the territories culturally.⁹¹ The fact that the Catholic Church was tied to predestined mission areas was one thing, but being used for nationalistic interests was the last straw for the Holy See. That is one reason why 1918 marked a turning point in the strategy of the Holy See in missionary work.

⁸⁸ De Nederlandsch-Indische wetboeken. Artikel 123, 1890, hoofdstuk 7 Van de Godsdienst.

⁸⁹ Karel A. Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, 1808-1942: A Documented History* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003), 425.

⁹⁰ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, 1808-1942: A Documented History*, 425-426.

⁹¹ Vefie Poels, *De rode paus: Biografie van Willem van Rossum GSSR (1854-1932)* (Valkhof Pers: Nijmegen, 2021), 325.

An important figure in this tilt was the Dutch Cardinal Willem van Rossum. Despite his efforts, he is often overlooked in research into relations between the Holy See and Dutch politics. From 1896, the year in which van Rossum was appointed consultor of the Holy Office, until he died in 1932, his name was inseparably linked to The Holy See since he managed to work his way up to the position of cardinal.⁹² The reason for van Rossum to be heavily involved in the matter of missionary work was his new position in the Roman Curia. Van Rossum had achieved a major promotion under the pontificate of Benedict XV. He had been appointed prefect of the Propaganda Fide on 12 March 1918. The Propaganda Fide was a congregation of the Roman Curia responsible for everything related to the spread of the gospel. The navigation of Missionary work was a key element of his duties. In performing these duties, the Propaganda Fide had to take into account the Pope's wishes and the diplomatic demands of the state secretariat of the Holy See.⁹³ Van Rossum's assignment was to bring the control of missionary work back to Rome. He wanted missionary work to no longer be part of colonial politics.⁹⁴

Van Rossum's efforts were openly supported by Pope Benedict XV through an apostolic letter he brought out on 30 November 1919 called *Maximum Illud*. In this letter, Benedict XV summoned to requalify the evangelical mission. His rejection of the nationalist use of missionary work is evident from the following passage he wrote to the missionaries:

Remember that your duty is not the extension of a human realm, but of Christ's. And remember too that your goal is the acquisition of citizens for a heavenly fatherland, and not for an earthly one.⁹⁵

The letter was much more specific than people were used to from the Holy See. It was explicit about the misuse of missionary work for nationalist purposes and how this problem should be handled. Indeed, Benedict XV gave three orders. The first was a call to prayer to all his followers. The second order was to increase the number of missionaries. Benedict XV expressed this poetically by saying "The Lord's vineyard is without workers."⁹⁶ The third order was to collect and set up economic aid. Catholic schools, hospitals, and hostels could only

⁹² Vefie Poels, *De rode paus: Biografie van Willem van Rossum GSSR (1854-1932)*, 213.

⁹³ Poels, *De rode paus: Biografie van Willem van Rossum GSSR (1854-1932)*, 319-320.

⁹⁴ Poels, *De rode paus: Biografie van Willem van Rossum GSSR (1854-1932)*, 328.

⁹⁵ Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, The Holy See, 30 November, 1919. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xv_apl_19191130_maximum-illud.html.

⁹⁶ Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*.

survive with the necessary economic support.⁹⁷ This is an example of brilliance. Indeed, Benedict XV's diplomatic nature manifests itself here. The Holy See had to know how to position itself on the complicated world stage after the First World War. With focused and achievable plans, Benedict XV puts his followers to work. This letter is strategic and shows political capability.

For nationalist Catholics, this document was a major setback. In France, for instance, there was still a lot of nationalism among Catholics. Most of the French press therefore omitted passages on nationalism from their publications.⁹⁸ This shows the amount of influence the letter could potentially have. A clear manifestation of the use of soft power by persuasion through an apostolic letter was evident in the Dutch Indies. The political situation for Catholics in the Dutch Indies was somewhat similar to the political situation for Catholics in the Netherlands during the first two decades of the 20th century. Namely, there was a very limited sense of unity. The big difference was the lack of political opportunity for parties in the Dutch Indies until 1915. The political efforts of Ernest Douwes Dekker, an Indonesian activist critical of colonialism, had unleashed fears in the Netherlands about political consciousness and the accompanying drive for independence. This eventually caused a ban on political party formation in the Dutch East Indies that would last from 1913 until 1915. In preparation for the first official National Council elections in 1918, new parties started to emerge. One of these parties was the Indische Katholieke Partij (IKP) (Catholic Party of the Indies).⁹⁹ The party was founded by several men of Dutch descent including Louis Jean Marie Feber, Josef Schmutzer, and Paul Karthaus. The apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* was reflected in the party's program from the very beginning. For instance, the party had three leading positions on the segment about religion in their party program. The first position was a desire to repeal Article 123, which prevented the free spread of faith, from the government regulations. The second position was a demand for free missionary work, this is a practical result of the first demand. The third and final position was that the concordat concluded between the Dutch government and the Holy See should be maintained. This concordat had been agreed upon between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII in 1801 and extended to the Netherlands by William I in 1827. The concordat concluded that Catholicism should always be professed in complete freedom.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*.

⁹⁸ Poels, *De rode paus: Biografie van Willem van Rossum GSSR (1854-1932)*, 326.

⁹⁹ Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, 1808-1942: A Documented History*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ "Concept-program der Indische Katholieke Partij," *De Amstelbode*, 26 June, 1919. Accessed on Delpher, 04-05-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMSAA06:165647071:mpeg21:p00001>.

The creation and positions of the IKP show a clear case of successful soft power. Whether or not they succeeded in achieving all their goals is not important in this context. What does matter is the fact that the Holy See managed to set the IKP's political agenda through an apostolic letter. Joseph Nye argued that being able to set the agenda and structure the situations in world politics to get others to change in particular cases is just as important as always achieving the outcomes it prefers through force.¹⁰¹ In this case, the fact that Benedict XV saw the insights he shared in an apostolic letter translated directly into a political campaign speaks volumes about the exercise of soft power. It also demonstrates how far soft power can reach in the case of the Holy See. After all, this is colonial politics not just the domestic politics of the Netherlands.

2.4 Concluding

To answer the main question of this chapter: to what extent did Benedict XV succeed in applying soft power in the Netherlands and what methods did he use to do so? Benedict XV's methods were the same as those of Pius X. This will naturally be because they had to work with the same tools. His encyclicals and apostolic letters had to carry conviction, and they did. The emergence of the IKP was an example of the successful implementation of Soft Power. On the other hand, the downfall of Thompson's newspapers shows how complicated applying power can be and how thin the line between hard and soft power is. Overall, this chapter sheds light on the complications of applying the soft power theory by Nye. When do we speak of soft power? Is there a clear-cut conceptual framework or does it leave too much room for subjectivity?

The death of Pope Benedict XV on 22 January 1922 was unexpected. The bronchitis the sixty-eight-year-old pope had contracted a few weeks earlier turned out to be worse than people thought. This caused many tensions within the Holy See. Who was to replace him so suddenly?

¹⁰¹ Joseph S. Nye, "Soft power," *Foreign Policy* No. 80 (1990), 166.

Chapter three: Pope Pius XI

3.1 The restoration of the kingdom of Christ

The reason for tensions within the Holy See about the selection of the new pope rested on the widespread fear of revolution. In the case of Italy this could be either fascist or socialist.¹⁰² The new pope had to be able to face a big challenge. Was this fear of revolution also visible in the Netherlands? If so, did the Holy See play any part in tackling this issue? In this chapter, the amount of soft power Pope Pius XI was able to apply in Dutch politics was analyzed as well as the methods he used to do so.

It eventually took 14 rounds of voting before the new pope was chosen.¹⁰³ So, it was not a clear choice as to who the new pope should be at all. The new pope had only narrowly gained the majority of votes. The chosen candidate for the role of pontiff was Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti, born in 1857 in the town of Monza in northern Italy. His career within the church began with studies in theology at the seminary in Monza. Once ordained as a priest, he went on to study philosophy, ecclesiastical law, and theology at various universities. After a brilliant academic career, he was appointed doctor of the Ambrosian Library in Milan. He eventually got promoted to the position of vice-prefect of the Vatican Library in 1912. During the war, he came into contact with Benedict XV, they met regularly to discuss complicated issues surrounding the war. The close relationship with Benedict XV eventually earned him several important tasks. In 1918, for instance, he went to Lithuania and Poland as Papal Legate to rebuild and reorganize the Church in the region. These tasks brought him high regard. Achille Ratti was overall known as an intelligent and knowledgeable man.¹⁰⁴

Achille Ratti's choice of the papal name Pius XI created some expectations. It was thought that he chose this name because he wanted to continue the anti-modernist campaign of Pius X. An exact copy of the anti-modernist campaign remained absent. This was the case because Pius XI also saw many positive aspects to modernity such as scientific progress.¹⁰⁵ Pope Pius XI's personal strategy was evident in his first encyclical called *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, which he released on 23 December 1922. The encyclical begins with an elaborate

¹⁰² David I. Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe* (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3-5.

¹⁰³ Michael P. Riccards, *Faith and Leadership: The Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 372.

¹⁰⁴ Riccards, *Faith and Leadership: The Papacy and the Roman Catholic Church*, 370-371.

¹⁰⁵ Schelkens, Dick, and Mettepenningen. *Aggiornamento?: Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI*, 97.

introduction about the problems facing the modern world. According to Pius XI, these problems fueled war and caused people to live in a sense of constant armed peace, waiting for the next war to come. Brother turned against brother for the sole purpose of fulfilling worldly materialism. And to make matters worse, politicians were driven solely by a desire for power, rather than a desire for a better situation.¹⁰⁶

Pius XI argued that the denial of God was the biggest reason for this misery. This denial of God had led to many other fallacies like the blatant position towards marriage and the anti-religious sentiment at public schools.¹⁰⁷ The only way to solve this was the return to Christianity. Pius XI described this return as "the restoration of the kingdom of Christ". This mission is where the reference to Pius X, from which he took his name, originates. He took Pius X's motto, "restoring all things in Christ" and made it the foundation for his mission. He also, later on in the encyclical, explained his own approach towards modernism in the church. Pius XI argued that errors in the doctrine create great ambiguity.

This is particularly important in the case of youth, and especially those who aspire to the priesthood, so that in the almost universal confusion in which we live they at least, as the Apostle writes, will not be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive."¹⁰⁸

His approach towards modernism was fueled by his wish to gain more following. So, his aim seems to be to create clarity within the teachings of the religion but also to gain more followers. His mission reflected Benedict XV's desire to put a stop to unclarity and internal strife, and Pius X's mission to fight against modernity.

3.2 Protestant admiration

The new pope and his first encyclical were very well received in the Christian press in the Netherlands. Even so well that he received praise from the Protestant newspaper *De Amsterdammer*. The newspaper claimed that Pius XI's statements surrounding the war and the

¹⁰⁶ Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, The Holy See, 23 December, 1922. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19221223_ubi-arcano-dei-consilio.html.

¹⁰⁷ Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, The Holy See, 23 December, 1922.

¹⁰⁸ Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, The Holy See, 23 December, 1922.

cause of all the misery were in line with the Protestant views on the matter. This token of appreciation did not escape the Catholic press. *De Amstelbode*, *Het Centrum*, and *De Tijd* all published these statements under the headline ‘protestant appreciation’.¹⁰⁹

The generic soft power currency of beauty is particularly evident in this case. What the Protestant magazine emphasized is the common mission of bringing Christianity back into society. The political scientist Alexander Vuving explains that the component of beauty often lies in shared ideals, values, causes, or visions. An actor's perseverance to fulfill this mission or pursue relevant standards can also be a major soft power attraction.¹¹⁰ The power currency of beauty generates a sentiment of admiration. Meaning, that it is more likely for a political actor to be taken seriously and even be perceived as an example if the element of beauty is strongly present.¹¹¹ The element of beauty is, in the case of Pius XI and his first encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, generated through Pius XI's clarity of his goal and his persistent tone. It may not have won over hordes of Protestants to adhere to the pope. But it has at least ensured respect from an unexpected corner. Pius XI's strategy seemed to be about conveying a clear message. One which would be understood by all. This succeeded as even Protestants understood his message. So in this case, the element of beauty can be demonstrated. Yet the effectiveness of this element can be questioned.

3.3 Night of Kersten

It became even more clear under the Pontiff of Pius XI how deeply Dutch politics were connected to the Holy See. Indeed, in 1925, the Catholic fraction in the parliament got caught up in a major scandal that ended up being called “De Nacht van Kersten” (The Night of Kersten). The root of this political scandal was the unresolved envoyship issue. The first chapter had already dealt with the beginning of the issue of a Dutch envoy in the Holy See. The disagreement between those in favor of and those against a Dutch envoy had been paused for a while because a law was passed in 1915 that ensured the possibility of a temporary envoy. At the time, the law passed because of the diplomatic interest the Dutch government saw in the

¹⁰⁹ “Pers-Kroniek, Protestantsche Waardeering,” *Het Centrum*, 22 January, 1923, accessed on Delpher, 11-05-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010000939:mpeg21:p001>.; “Protestantsche Waardeering,” *De Tijd: Godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 18 January, 1923, accessed on Delpher, 11-05-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010530120:mpeg21:p001>.; “Uit de pers,” *De Amstelbode*, 19 January, 1923, accessed on Delpher, 11-05-2023, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMSAA06:165663015:mpeg21:p00001>.

¹¹⁰ Vuving, “How Soft Power Works,” 11.

¹¹¹ Vuving, “How Soft Power Works,” 12.

envoyship during the war. However, it was only a matter of time before this issue would arise again when peace had returned. The reason for its revival was the tilt in 1920 from a temporary envoy to a permanent one. The transition in 1920 was done quietly by Catholic parliament members. This happened with great discontent from the Orthodox Protestant party, the *Hervormd-Gereformeerde Staatspartij* (HGSP – Reformed State Party), but also from the Christian democratic party *Christelijk-Historische Unie* (CHU – Christian Historical Union), and the reformed protestant party *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (SGP – Political Reformed Party). The respect paid to Pius XI's first encyclical by the protestants was to no avail in this matter. Protestants were fiercely opposed to any interference in Dutch politics from the Holy See.¹¹² The liberal democrats and socialist party also changed their approach. In 1915 and 1920 they seemed to care less. But after 1920 they began to engage in the conflict, presumably just to challenge the Catholic fraction.¹¹³

The scandal started on the night of 10 November 1925. When during a meeting in the House of Representatives, the chairman of the SGP Henri van Kersten, presented an amendment requesting the abolition of the envoy in the Holy See. According to van Kersten, too much value was placed on the envoy because the Holy See itself considered it to be very important. He viewed the envoy only as a visible presence of the Holy See in Dutch politics, which was a huge potential danger, especially for Protestants.¹¹⁴ The Catholic politician Nolens' reaction to the amendment provoked further anger in the House of Representatives. Indeed, Nolens responded with "We will have to seriously consider whether we can give our vote to the Foreign Affairs budget if this amendment is adopted".¹¹⁵ The Protestant politician J.R. Snoeck Henkemans called this statement a big flaw in Dutch politics since it is nothing more than a threat.¹¹⁶ In the end, the amendment was adopted by 52 votes to 42, meaning that the entire position of a Dutch envoy in the Holy See was removed. The Prime Minister, Hendrikus Colijn responded in a slight panic, knowing that four Catholic ministers were going to resign that same day, leading to a political crisis. And so it did when the entire coalition collapsed shortly after the approval of the amendment. The political crisis was later known as "de Nacht van Kersten" referring to Henri Kersten who presented the amendment.¹¹⁷

¹¹² "Nacht van Kersten (1925)," Parlement.com, accessed on 12 April, 2023, https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrs61r8/nacht_van_kersten_1925.

¹¹³ "Nacht van Kersten (1925)," Parlement.com.

¹¹⁴ House of Representatives, Meeting minutes., 10 November, 1925, 242-244.

¹¹⁵ House of Representatives. Meeting minutes., 242-244.

¹¹⁶ House of Representatives. Meeting minutes., 242-244.

¹¹⁷ "Nacht van Kersten (1925)," Parlement.com.

Things remained unsettled in Dutch politics for a long time. The subject was often brought up, even after the formation of the new cabinet. For instance, in a parliamentary meeting on 8 April 1926, the prominent Liberal Pieter Rink spoke of "The Sword of Damocles." A bomb that could burst at any moment.¹¹⁸ Had Kersten not proposed this amendment, how long would this secret deal linger on? And what is left of a fair democracy if ministers can force their agenda through secret agreements? What can be drawn from this is that there was an exercise of power from the Holy See. There was either a great fear among the Dutch Catholics of disappointing the Holy See or a mutual agreement that was difficult to break. The fact that, because of such an incident, four ministers were willing to give up their high-ranking positions in politics gives enough evidence of the powerful position of the Holy See. However, this new development, regardless of how hard it was fought against, did mean a change in soft power tactics for the Holy See. The relational power component had been disposed of. In addition, it can be concluded that there was no persuasion through soft power among the Dutch Protestants. No matter how much the components of beauty through insistence on a particular mission and willingness to cooperate through a diplomatic link were present, it was to no avail. The Protestants successfully managed to push back the power of the Holy See in Dutch politics. This event reflects the limits of soft power. Admiration can only do so much. When asking the question, is this a display of soft power? The answer would be both yes and no. As Joseph Nye explained, soft power is the ability to get preferred outcomes through the co-option means of agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction. Although the Holy See did not manage to do so amongst the Protestant community, it did amongst the Catholic community. It is a clear case of agenda-setting without using hard force.¹¹⁹

3.4 Public Diplomacy

Since the end of the First World War and the eruption of the Russian Revolution, Europe became the battleground of several ideological forces. A leading ideological force was socialism. Pius XI had no tolerance for socialism and with a good reason. The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 brought about a major fall of Christianity in Russia because of the hostile regime towards religion. The Holy See could simply not sit around and wait for this hostility to come to knock on their door. Other examples of hostility towards Catholicism from several parts of Europe showed how fragile the Catholic Church proved to be at this time. In Austria, for example, an

¹¹⁸ House of Representatives, Meeting minutes., 8 April 1926, 96.

¹¹⁹ House of Representatives, Meeting minutes., 8 April 1926, 96.

average of 30,000 people a year left the Catholic Church due to socialist beliefs.¹²⁰ The Canadian historian Peter C. Kent argued that Pope Pius XI's initial response to the threat of socialism was the promotion of Catholic action. Catholic action aimed to anchor Catholic life in society. Which should ensure that Catholicism is separate from political movements. An example of this action was the establishment of catholic businessmen's associations, youth groups, or trades unions.¹²¹

The introduction of the thesis already mentioned the importance of public diplomacy. Pius XI's strategy against the emerged socialism corresponds strongly to the last dimension of public diplomacy, namely the lasting relationships with key individuals. Pius XI encouraged his followers to establish cultural associations, groups, and unions. The Catholic ethos was embedded in these organizations without the constant use of propaganda. Implementing public diplomacy strategies must have been easier for the Holy See than for many other state actors. The reason for this is its dual role in the world. This dual role is that of secular power and that of a religion. Since the Catholic religion was already part of Dutch culture, it was easier to use it for a public diplomacy campaign. Catholic youth groups, business associations, and trade unions arose even without the obvious efforts of the Holy See.

A Catholic trade union existed in the Netherlands from 1909. This was a trade union under the name *Rooms-Katholiek Vakbureau te Amsterdam* (Roman Catholic Trade bureau in Amsterdam). Besides the trade union, there were also community organizations organized by the different dioceses. The community organizations united people with the same social aims. Trade unions and community organizations differed only slightly from each other, which made them regularly get on each other's nerves so to say, ultimately leading to conflict and confusion. This changed after 1 January 1925, when they merged under the name of *Rooms-Katholiek Werkliedenverbond* (RKWV - Roman Catholic Workers Union).¹²² This union's primary mission was the defense of the rights of Catholic workers. Yet there was a two-fold intention. The second aim of the union was to promote the Catholic faith. This task was fulfilled by the so-called spiritual advisers. One of the most prominent spiritual advisers was Johannes

¹²⁰ Jonathan Luxmoore and Jolanta Babiuch, "The Catholic Church and Communism, 1789-1989," *Religion, State & Society* Vol. 27, no. 3-4 (1999): 304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/096374999106502>.

¹²¹ Peter C. Kent, "A Tale of Two Popes: Pius XI, Pius XII and the Rome-Berlin Axis," *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 23, no. 4 (1988): 591. <https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/1297315817/fulltextPDF/AE6DA72AF7ED4237PQ/1?accountid=14772&parentSessionId=OpDgC5mJH7HDQC2Eqdp6dm3UjboVGK3pjHWS%2B8TRYjI%3D>.

¹²² "Nederlands Katholiek Vakverbond (en voorlopers)," Huygens Instituut, accessed on 17 May, 2023, https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/socialezekerheid/instellingen_en_personen/show_long/NedKatholiekVakverbond.

Gerardus van Schaik. Van Schaik was a parish priest with an impressive career within the Catholic Church. He aimed to form and educate workers in the spirit of the church.¹²³ This union represented a good example of what Pope Pius XI must have intended. It offered a counterpart to socialist unions, due to the deeply intertwined Catholic nature of the union. This union also provides a good example of the embodiment of the soft power public diplomacy principle from Joseph Nye. Through a union, cultural relationships were established with individuals. These relationships could eventually withstand the resistance that socialism might offer.

3.5 Concluding

To answer the main question of this chapter: to what extent did Pope Pius XI use soft power in Dutch politics and what methods did he use? Pope Pius XI often showed an effective use of soft power in Dutch politics between 1922-1929. He gained admiration from protestants through mutual beliefs. It was also under his pontiff that four Dutch Catholic ministers sacrificed their careers for the envoyship issue. The element of public diplomacy was well executed through Catholic unions. However, soft power is not always effective enough. This can be seen in the inability to change the minds of the Dutch protestant politicians when it came to the envoyship battle.

The papacy of Pius XI marks the end of the Vatican imprisonment as well as the end of this thesis. On 11 February 1929, a treaty was signed at the Lateran Palace in Rome between the Holy See and the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Vatican City was now autonomous and separate from the Italian government. This ultimately changed the power dynamics of the Holy See.

¹²³ “Schaik, Johannes Gerardus van,” Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland, accessed on 17 may, 2023, <https://socialhistory.org/bwsa/biografie/schaik>.

Conclusion

This research shows a clear implementation of soft power by the Holy See present in Dutch politics between 1903 and 1929. To reach to this conclusion, several things have been examined. Firstly, the aim of all three different popes. What did they want to achieve and what means did they use to do so? Linked to this is the situation of Dutch Catholics. How did the Holy See's wishes resonate with the goals of Catholic politicians? Finally, Joseph Nye's soft power theory was tested in the context of the Holy See in Dutch politics between 1903 and 1929. Was there a particular soft power strategy and what were the strengths and limitations of this strategy?

The three popes each had their own vision of what their papacy should look like. They distinguished themselves from each other in the degree of dogmatism and the execution of their mission. Pope Pius X's pontificate, for instance, represented an anti-modernist campaign. Through a code of laws, he laid down the only interpretation one could have of the Christian doctrine. Pius X opposed modernity throughout his papacy. In contrast, his successor Pope Benedict XV had very different problems to deal with. Because Benedict XV was pope during the First World War, his policy revolved around creating peace. He sought to achieve this by creating unity rather than creating internal strife through a witch-hunt against modernists. Indeed, under the pontificate of Benedict XV, witch-hunting became off-limits. An example of the execution of his objectives was the anti-modernist M.A. Thompson who had to stop his newspaper at the demand of the Holy See because he lashed out at other Catholics. Benedict XV's successor, Pope Pius XI, continued the fight against the breakdown of the brotherhood but also reverted to the fear of modernism. In the case of Pius XI, this was primarily because he feared misunderstanding of the religion. Ambiguity could lead to apostasy in his eyes. Either way, there is a difference in their mission. Yet between 1904 and 1929, similarities can also be seen between the popes. For instance, all three popes held the church hierarchy in high regard. In addition, the fight for more Catholic education was an important mission for all three popes.

The limited position of the three popes during the Vatican imprisonment forced them to use similar soft power tools. The research shows that parallels could be drawn between the encyclicals and Dutch Catholics' positions within politics. Encyclicals proved to be a widely used tool to convey their vision. Dutch Catholics were willing to put a lot of effort into realizing the wishes presented by popes in their encyclicals. For instance, the establishment of a Catholic university or the establishment of the IKP, which had eventually adopted literal views from the apostolic Letter to their party program.

The three B's: benignity, beauty, and brilliance appear several times in the research and attempt to show how soft power can manifest itself. Starting with benignity. Chapter one has showed that both *De Maasbode* and *De Tijd* described Pope Pius X as kind, warm-hearted, pure, and honest. Both newspapers established a public opinion, at least among their readers, that Pius X was a man of good and honest nature. This perception of benignity from the Holy See was further confirmed by the envoy issue, in which the endless efforts of W.H. Nolens were rewarded with the honorary title of *Protonotarius Apostolicus* by Pope Benedict XV. The element of beauty has been emulated by all three popes. A clear trend is the constant mission to create unity among the Catholic community. Shared causes, norms, and values were essential. An example where the element of beauty proceeded beyond its own followers was after Pius XI's first encyclical, which generated praise from the Protestant corner. The element of brilliance was also examined in the research. This element was visible in the diplomatic choices made by the Holy See. For instance, the strengthening of the Propaganda Fide by Pope Benedict XV, and the following apostolic letter. Another example of political capability was shown by Pope Pius XI, who stressed the use of Catholic action as a counter-reaction to socialism.

The analysis proved fruitful when it came to the three B's. However, the theory's shortcomings also became apparent. The case of chief editor M.A. Thompson's downfall is an example of a shortcoming in the theory because it demonstrates the unclarity of the line between soft and hard power. Foreign newspapers can be used as a soft power tool. But how soft is this power if editors can lose their jobs because of indifference? Another example was the clear demonstration of the soft power element of beauty within the protestant press regarding the first encyclical of Pius XI. The Protestant politicians dealt a heavy blow to Catholic politicians in that very same year in which they expressed admiration for the pope. This shows that soft power can fall short very quickly. So, the extent of soft power use does not differ much between the different popes. They used the same resources to succeed. However, soft power proved to be an unstable and unclear source of power at times.

The problem is, how is soft power measurable if even when all elements are present it is not powerful enough to generate actual influence? This conclusion adds nuance to Joseph Nye's theory. Nye attempted to grasp conceptual clearance with his definition of soft power. However, this research proved that the concept of soft power is deficient in explaining certain dynamics between two political actors because the concept is not clear-cut. This brings the analysis back to the criticisms of soft power outlined in the introduction, which boil down to the problem of measurability, unoriginality, and ambiguity about the structure of the concept. This research hooks into this by showing that ambiguity can quickly arise in the conceptual

application. However, Nye's concept does still provide a basis for conceptual progress. For example, the three B's outlined by Alexander Vuying is a good example of conceptual progress since this addition to the theory offered clarity and greater usability Nye's theory deserves to be made clearer and more comprehensive. especially since it does seem to describe many areas of the Holy See's international influence.

This research also added to the historiographical field by providing analytical depth and new examples of interconnection between Dutch politics and the Holy See. For example, it has drawn a connection between the apostolic letter from Pius XI and the founding of the IKP. In addition, this research has contributed to historiography by taking a critical look at the power relations between the Holy See and Dutch Catholic politicians. The limitations of this research, however, lie in the chosen narratives and people. Due to both the length of the research and the inaccessibility of certain source material in the Vatican archives choices were made regarding events and people. This led to missing narratives. Further research could solve this shortcoming. A follow-up study could elaborate on the larger storylines like the school battle or the envoy issue by including more sources and narratives. This could allow a pattern of power use between the Holy See and Dutch politics to emerge. Such a pattern can contribute to Nye's theory. Why are such relationships an example of soft power and what components of soft power theory need to be revised?

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