



# Research on the Localized Catholicism Game Anthropology in the Border Between Yunnan and Tibet — Taking the Funeral Ceremony of Tibetan Catholics in Cizhong Village in Northwest Yunnan as an Example

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**Abstract:** Funeral of Tibetan Catholics implies a rich social meaning, and its culture in the ethnic minority areas in Tibet has a long history and significant characteristics. Through the investigation of funeral of Tibetan Catholics in this area and relevant factors on the basis of on-site systematic observation of Tibetan Catholics activities, the local funeral of Tibetan Catholics culture is the object of analysis. Combined with game anthropology and symbolic anthropology, the theory of interpretive anthropology has been discussed in more detail, and the social and cultural concepts and connotations contained in it have been deeply interpreted, deepening the understanding of the cultural characteristics, connotations and meanings of funeral activities, and revealing the social culture hiding behind them.

**Keywords:** northwest yunnan, catholics, funeral ceremony, localization, game theory, funeral

## 1. Introduction

The game theory and its related concepts will be adopted to observe and analyze funeral activities, and funeral activities should be presented as comprehensively as possible from the perspective of anthropology, which is also an attempt to introduce game theory tools into the study of social anthropology, which is named "Game anthropology" by us.

The choice of the funeral place, the way to hold the funeral (the change of the host of the ceremony), the change of the status of the believer, the way of sending relatives by female parishioners, etc. are all a game of cultural competition between different sides.

Starting from the perspective of Anthropology and on the basis of field investigation, the game anthropology proposed in this paper explains the funeral ceremony of Tibetan Catholics in Cizhong village, Northwest Yunnan, and compares the process of cultural similarities and differences through the technique of "deep description".

## 2. Discussion of the cultural connotation of the funeral ceremony from the perspective of game theory

### 2.1 Change of the funeral place

According to the information provided by priest Ma of the Catholic Church in Cizhong village, in recent years, seven Catholics in Cizhong village have passed away, and only one family (No. L5) set the place of funeral operation in the church, while other families held the funeral in their own homes. So what was the reason for people's choice of that location? According to the priest, -this mainly depended on the distance from each family to the church, here we establish a simple complete information game to verify whether the priest's statement is correct.

First of all, the two sides of the game are family members of the deceased and the priest. There are two game strategies: Strategy A: home-cemetery, Strategy B: church→cemetery.

The income of family members is:  $b$  (basic income for the funeral)  $C$  (extra expenditure obtained through physical strength paid due to distance),  $d_1$  (income from the Catholic faith)

The income of the priest is:  $b$  (basic income obtained by helping the believers complete the funeral) -  $C$  (the loss caused by the believers' "violating" three principles of Catholicism in the funeral ceremony) +  $d_2$  (the income obtained by the priest from the Catholic faith)

According to the priest, in Cizhong village, people lived in a scattered way. For instance, believers living across the river or on the hillside had to cross the river or down the mountain to carry the coffin to the church, and then carried it to the cemetery on the mountain. L5 was different, which was close to the church.

According to the formula, the income of family members is:  $b$  (basic income the funeral) -  $C$  (extra expenditure obtained

from physical strength paid due to distance) + d1 (income from their Catholic faith).

So, for believers living across the river or on the hillside, the implementation of strategy B will result in C to be relatively large (extra expenditure obtained from physical strength paid due to distance), and the final benefit is less than that of strategy A, which is the reason why family members chose strategy A.

For example, for believers living across the river or on the hillside, implementing strategy B will result in C (extra expenditure obtained from physical strength paid due to distance) = 5 units, d1 (income gained by believers from completing their Catholic faith) is 3 units, and b (basic income from funeral) = 10 units, therefore, the final benefit =  $10 - 5 + 3 = 8$  units.

For believers living across the river or on the hillside, implementing strategy a will result in C (extra expenditure obtained from physical strength paid due to distance) = 2 units, d1 (income from completing Catholic faith) is 3 units, and b (basic income from the funeral) = 10 units, therefore, the final benefit =  $10 - 2 + 3 = 11$  units.

The income of strategy A is greater than that of strategy B, therefore, strategy A (home → cemetery) is chosen.

However, there is a counterexample here, namely, the L5 family, which pose doubts about the "distance theory":

(a) The L5 family is not the closest, but strategy B (cemetery → home) is selected

(b) Regardless of the distance, almost every believer will insist on going to church. Why people find it too far when holding a funeral? From this perspective, distance is not the reason why people choose not to go to church for funerals.

When it comes to (b), the first is that the expenditure (C1) on walking to church is far less than the payment (C2) from funeral ceremony to church. The second is that if you don't go to church, as a believer, the basic income (b) is 0.

There are also two strategies: going to the church and not going to church. Obviously, there is a critical condition. As long as the expenditure (C1) of walking to church is less than the basic income (b), you will choose to go to church. If not, the expenditure will be 0 and the income will be 0. Obviously, when it comes to critical conditions, the distance factor should be taken into consideration, and the "distance theory" cannot be overturned.

As for the behavior of L5 in (a), many villagers pointed out that he was shy, and had comparatively bad interpersonal relationship with villagers, and he rarely participated in other activities in the village. Before his death, he took the initiative to ask for a funeral in the church.

It should be noticed here that choosing strategy B (Church → cemetery) will lead to C = 0 (extra expenditure obtained from physical strength paid due to distance) because he had died, while according to the Christian concept of life and death, d1 (believers will gain a lot from completing their Catholic faith) = 20 units, however, this still can't overturn the distance theory.

## 2.2 Explanation of priest's choice of behaviors

We have never provided a good explanation for the priest's strategy, which in fact reflects a strategy of the localization of Catholic culture.

Here, because the priest can only be carried out after family members have made a choice (choose strategy a or strategy B), it is actually a sequential game of the priest's behavior mode.

Family members choose strategy A (home → cemetery). If this is supported by priest, the priest's income will be: b (income from believers completing religious ceremonies) - C (loss from some religious ceremony changes). If b=2, C=1, the income will be 1; If the priest doesn't support it, the profit will be 0 (Figure 1).

Family members choose strategy B (Church → cemetery). If this is supported by the priest, the priest's income is: B (the income of believers completing religious ceremonies), if B = 2, the income is 2; If the priest doesn't support it, the profit is 0 (Figure 2).

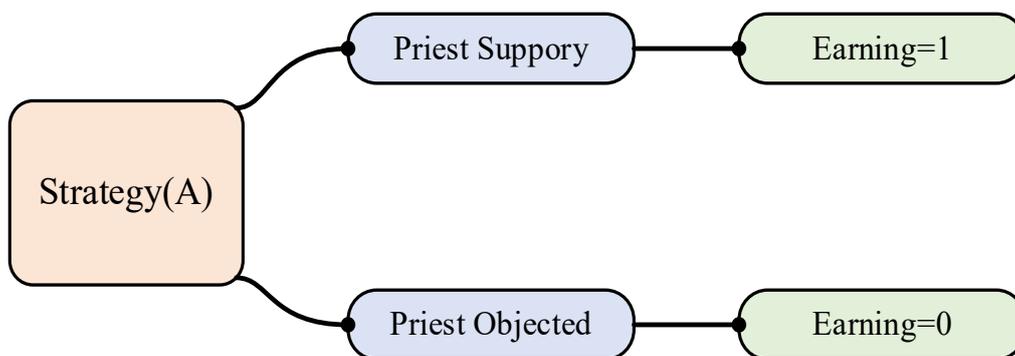


Figure 1. Income Matrix of Strategy A

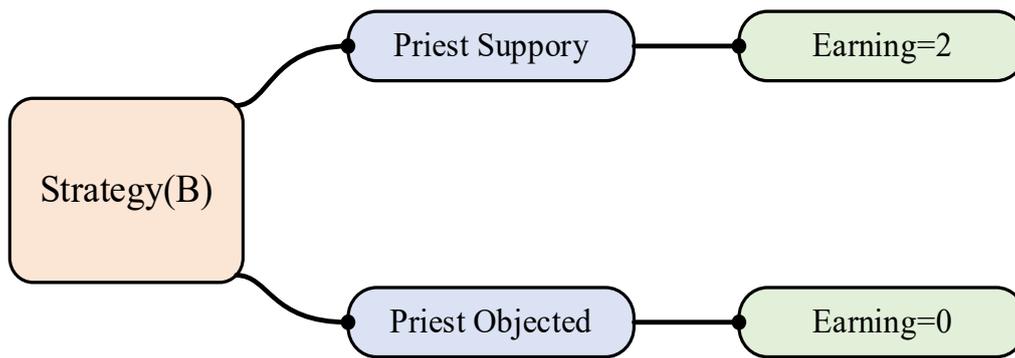


Figure 2. Income Matrix of Strategy B

There are two game balances, "Strategy A - support" and "strategy B - support", therefore, for priests, regardless of what choices do their families make, priest support is the optimum strategy, which is also an advantageous strategy of Catholic localization. It is believed that there are many communication strategies in the process of learning Catholic from the West and spreading to the East, and only the optimal strategy can be preserved in the process of evolution.

### 3. Conclusion

From the practical perspective, cultural analysis is not a science that seeks fixed laws like that in experimental science, but an explanatory science in the sense of exploration and is more of an interpretation and analysis of mysterious social expressions. Characteristics and explanation of funeral ceremony of Tibetan Catholics belong to the research category of anthropology, and investigation and analysis of such researches can well show this kind of research.

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