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The stakes of religious fundraising: economic transition and religious resurgence in Irish Catholicism and Tibetan Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

What impacts does the transition from a land-based to predominantly cash-based economy have on the fundraising strategies of religious institutions? What new opportunities does it present and what moral debates and dilemmas does it prompt? What is at stake? This article explores these questions through examples from two very different contexts: the Irish Catholic Church in the nineteenth century and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in late twentieth century to early twenty-first century Amdo (northeast Tibet). In both cases, political and religious oppression, poverty, and crisis presaged periods of both religious resurgence and significant economic shift that had profound effects on religious funding models, as well as the debates they generated. By bringing these cases into dialogue, this article identifies common themes and patterns beyond the specificities of religious tradition and cultural milieu that usually frame analyses of religion and economy. Building on these insights, we suggest a framework for conceptualising religious fundraising that explains why it is often a site of contestation where ideas about religion and economy are (re)produced and played out, without assuming that religion and economy are separate ontological categories.

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Introduction

By the late nineteenth century, the Irish Catholic Church had undergone a period of significant revival, described by Emmet Larkin (1972) as a ‘devotional revolution,’ following the Great Irish Famine (1845–1850). Over a century later, in late twentieth-century Amdo (northeast Tibet), another religious resurgence was underway on the heels of the Great Leap Forward famine and religious repression during China’s high Maoist period (1958–1978). It included the revitalisation of an extensive network of Geluk monasteries, the Geluk being one of the main Tibetan Buddhist traditions. During their respective periods of renewal, the Irish Catholic Church and Amdo’s Geluk monasteries oversaw growing numbers of priests and monks,¹ and the proliferation of increasingly grand religious construction projects. Such expansion served as an index of revitalised faith among both the Irish and Tibetans, but it was also costly, and depended on both historical and new financing strategies and patronage networks that often proved controversial.

This article examines how these funding mechanisms and the debates and concerns that they prompted intersected with the broader context of a transition, in both cases, from predominantly land-based to cash-based economies. This transition presented both opportunities and challenges

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for the Church and monasteries – religious institutions that remained deeply embedded in Irish and Tibetan societies, respectively, despite the subsumption of Ireland and Tibet into ‘modern’ British Protestant and Chinese Communist states. Our discussion draws on Caple’s ethnographic research in Amdo conducted over the period 2008–2015, and Roddy’s archival research on nineteenth-century Irish Catholic Church financing. Despite the obvious differences in method, period, and historical and cultural milieu, we were inspired to collaborate after extensive conversations brought to light interesting parallels that pushed us to think beyond the usual frames of reference and specificities of our respective fields.

From the outset, we have been keen to avoid reproducing essentialist ideas about ‘Catholic’ or ‘Buddhist’ values and how they relate to economics, or more specifically capitalism.² We start from the assumption that the dynamics of religious fundraising evade any clear demarcation between religion and economy as ‘ontologically distinct entities’ (McLaughlin *et al.* 2020, p. 697);³ we also assume that there is no inherent tension in Catholic or Buddhist institutional engagements in broader processes of economic transition. As Osella and Rudnyckyj (2017, p. 8) point out, ‘the complexities, tensions, and heterogeneity of religious orthopraxy make it implausible to generalize about the orientations of specific religious traditions towards accumulation of wealth, consumption or capitalism as a whole.’ Instead, we bring into dialogue examples from our research to explore when and why religious fundraising can *become* a site of tension where ‘the economic’ is demarcated and perceived or experienced as problematic. What, we ask, is ultimately at stake?

We start by briefly outlining the historical backgrounds of our cases, focusing on analogous experiences of political and religious oppression, poverty, and crisis, which presaged significant economic shifts. These, we note, had profound and lasting effects on the funding models of both the Irish Catholic Church and Geluk monasteries. Having emphasised the significance of lay agency in propelling Church/monastic material expansion despite external and internal critiques of their accumulation of wealth, we go on to analyse in greater detail the more specific terms of debates surrounding particular fundraising mechanisms and the concerns and anxieties that they provoked. Along the way, we suggest a possible framework for conceptualising religious fundraising that avoids reifying religion and economy as categories, but also helps to explain why religious fundraising so frequently seems to become a site of contestation where ideas about religion and economy are (re)produced and play out.

Religious fundraising in Ireland and Tibet

Ireland’s post-famine ‘devotional revolution’ and Catholic Church financing

Ireland emerged from the Reformation as a still majority-Catholic country. Yet it was governed by a minority Protestant Irish elite from a Dublin parliament before the Act of Union with Britain in 1801 shifted rule to (also Protestant) Westminster. Until the advent of ‘Catholic Emancipation’ in 1829, Irish Catholics were barred from standing as parliamentarians, and subject to a range of other socially and economically limiting ‘Penal Laws’ designed to uphold Protestant ascendancy. This had correspondingly deleterious effects on religious practice: eighteenth-century Masses frequently had to be said outdoors at ‘Mass rocks’ (Fleming 2018), Catholic priests often lived a twilight, peripatetic existence, and there were no more than a couple of hundred nuns at the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite a (still growing) population of some 5.5 million people. Until the 1830s, Catholics were even obliged to pay a tithe to the established (Anglican) Church of Ireland.

Nonetheless, as application of the Penal Laws incrementally faded from the late eighteenth century onwards, the Irish Catholic Church began gradually building a new infrastructure for itself (Barr 2018, O’Connor 2018). Scholars have therefore argued that the nineteenth century was a period of pivotal importance in the history of the Irish Catholic Church: if the first half of the century was about reasserting a *presence*, including by training more religious personnel and building relatively plain places of worship often characterised as ‘barn churches,’ the second half has been

described in one historian's memorable phrase as a 'devotional revolution' when the Church asserted a *dominance*, manifested in greatly increased vocations and clerical discipline, stricter adherence to Roman orthodoxy in religious practice by the laity, and ever larger and more elaborate church buildings (Larkin 1972). While in 1850 there were 2500 priests in Ireland, or a ratio of 1:2100 of the Catholic population, the 1901 census recorded 3700 or 1:900 (Larkin 1972, pp. 626, 651). Proof of a mid-century watershed is further evidenced by Mass attendance data. While just 40% of those obliged to attend Mass weekly did so in the 1830s, by the end of the nineteenth century, rates were much higher and remained at almost 90% until as late as the 1970s (Miller 1975).

While Catholic Emancipation provided the legal foundation for the devotional revolution, it was the devastating potato famine of the late 1840s, and the consequent demographic upheaval through mass mortality and mass emigration, that Larkin and others have identified as the even more significant socio-economic context. The Famine deepened adherence to religion, but it also wiped out many of the very poorest, least practising Catholics, thus leaving the more bourgeois, already orthodox 'strong farmer' class as a larger proportion of the lay population (Larkin 1972, Hynes 1978). On a broader scale, the Famine also hastened a profound economic transition. Before, the bottom third of the population lived an almost entirely subsistence life centred on growing potatoes, and only a relatively small section of society had sustained links with the market. After the famine, wage labour and enormous emigrant remittances from the more than 4 million migrants who left Ireland in the decades after the Famine gave even the poorest in Ireland routine access to cash.

This economic transition had important repercussions for how the Catholic Church funded itself. Its medieval property had been confiscated during the Reformation. Before the Famine, clerical income was a mix of in-kind contributions of food, hospitality, and labour from the masses, cash from the better off, and, for some individual priests, the proceeds of farms that they privately leased from landlords (Murphy *et al.* 1965, Connolly 2001, pp. 69–74). The construction of chapels and other buildings was funded through subscriptions and house-to-house collections among the wealthy, weekly contributions from all but the poorest lay worshippers, charity sermons, and very occasionally gala dinners and fundraising trips abroad (Grimes 2009). In a wider context of rural unrest, where moral economic norms were often enforced by violent secret societies (Donnelly 2009), Catholic priests' capacity to exact money from their parishioners could be somewhat limited. Thus, while more laypeople had more cash after the Famine, the Church was conscious, from bitter experience, of not putting too great a squeeze on any one source, and fundraising modes were greatly diversified as a result. Regional differences often pertained, but the most common post-Famine fundraising techniques used by the clergy included: door-to-door and in-church collections, both in Ireland and among the diaspora; gambling in the form of large prize draws or lotteries attached to bazaars, again, with enormous input from the diaspora; payment of bi-annual dues and fees for sacramental rituals around life cycle events; newly-legal bequests and legacies; and dividends from Church investments, usually of larger legacies and the dowries of an exponentially growing population of nuns.

Use of these fundraising measures varied across Ireland, according to levels of diocesan oversight and the degree of entrepreneurial nous that individual parish priests and heads of religious orders showed. But, in a general sense, as the very visible growth of the church's infrastructure in the latter half of the nineteenth century shows, Catholic responses to wider post-Famine economic changes were quick, astute, and lucrative.

Revival, development, and reform of Geluk monastic economies in post-Mao Amdo

Tibetan Buddhism was profoundly shaped by the incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China in the 1950s and the transformations effected by radical socialist reforms followed by a transition to state capitalism.⁴ Before the 1950s, monasteries were powerful economic and political actors. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Geluk tradition had assumed religio-political dominance in Central Tibet under the Dalai Lamas and in the valleys and along major trade routes

in Amdo (Gruschke 2001, p.73), establishing itself through an extensive network of autonomous, but to an extent doctrinally, ritually, and administratively uniform monasteries (Sullivan 2021). The proportion of males who were monks was perhaps 20–30% in some places, if considerably lower elsewhere (Cagle 2019, p. 174 n.8).⁵ In Amdo, the pivotal historical moment came in 1958, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) responded to widespread Tibetan rebellion with a policy of ‘strike and reform’ (Weiner 2020, pp. 161–202). A military crackdown was followed by the arrest of 52,000 people, roughly 10% of the region’s Tibetan population (Weiner 2020, p. 187). Monasteries were disbanded, monastics were arrested or forcibly laicised, and monks and villagers were mobilised to destroy their monasteries and ‘speak bitterness’ against revered figures in struggle sessions that frequently involved physical violence, sometimes resulting in death.⁶ Meanwhile, rapid collectivisation of agricultural and pastoral production meant that China’s ‘Great Leap Forward’ famine hit this region severely. There was a brief hiatus between 1962 and 1966, but for most of the ensuing 20 years Tibetan Buddhism went underground or moved into exile until CCP policy on religion was relaxed in 1978.

The ensuing post-reform period has been one of tremendous change. Following de-collectivisation in the 1980s, Tibetans experienced a shift away from reliance on primarily farming or pastoralist livelihoods, and for a minority state employment, through integration into China’s so-called socialist market economy. This intensified with the state’s drive to open up its ‘western regions’ from 2000 and again after Tibetan unrest erupted across the plateau in 2008. The Chinese authorities responded to the wave of anti-state protest with a new kind of strike and reform: militarisation of Tibetan areas accompanied by accelerated development.⁷ Over the period 2008–2015, Caple witnessed the ‘modernisation’ of villages through state-led redevelopment, rapid urbanisation, and a highly visible increase in wealth disparities (see also Makley 2018).⁸ Even those still producing food for household consumption were increasingly reliant on cash to meet changing consumption habits and the rising costs of education, healthcare, and new consumer needs such as smartphones and house renovations. As elsewhere in Tibet, wage labour and small business contributed to a general increase in disposable incomes, but for most households the main source of cash was the harvesting and trade of ‘caterpillar fungus’ (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*), a medicinal mushroom commanding dizzying prices on the Chinese market by the early 2010s (its value has fluctuated since), and in certain villages the production and sale of religious arts and crafts.

These broader political and economic transformations had a major impact on Geluk Buddhist monastic economies in northeast Tibet. Prior to 1958, in addition to receiving funding from powerful and wealthy patrons, most Geluk monasteries had institutionalised patronage relationships with farming and herding communities (Cagle 2019, pp. 32–33). Many also owned land and livestock and generated revenue from rents and levies, trade, and interest-bearing loans of silver, grain, or animals.⁹ When Buddhism was revived in the 1980s, monasteries had been stripped of wealth and assets accumulated prior to the 1950s. A few received some state funding for reconstruction, but most relied on donations, materials, and labour offered by the public through a resuscitation of historical patronage networks (Kolås and Thowsen 2005, pp. 53–54, Cagle 2019, pp. 30–31, 69–71). In addition to rebuilding their physical fabric, monasteries needed regular income to fund their annual cycle of rituals and festivals, a major expense being ‘communal teas’ (*mang ja*), meals for monks when they gather for collective assemblies (up to 200 days p/a, but in most monasteries far less).¹⁰ Official Party-state policy prohibited alms collection and placed a requirement on monasteries to be self-supporting; these policies were later brought into law.¹¹ Nevertheless, as the number of monks increased,¹² offices for fundraising were re-established along historical lines. In the 1980s and 1990s, monastic officials travelled to patron communities, sometimes for several months each year, to garner necessities such as grain, butter, and meat (Cagle 2019, pp. 35–37).

By the turn of the millennium, various economic, moral, and political factors (to which we will return) were giving impetus to a diversification of funding. By 2009 most of the fifteen monasteries studied by Caple had collected cash contributions towards capital funds which they invested in businesses, although the extent of this varied (see Cagle 2019, pp. 41–51). As Matthew Miligan

shows in his contribution to this issue, capital investment as a mechanism of financing dates to early monastic Buddhism (see also Schopen 2004). Certain forms, notably moneylending, had precedent in pre-modern Tibetan monastic economies (Miller 1961, Mei 2001, Jansen 2018). But some monastic leaders were also quick to take advantage of new market opportunities and consumption habits, for example, establishing medical clinics and general stores for local monks and villagers, producing and packaging religious products with high profit margins (their added value being in their consecration and blessing), or, by 2012, seeking to cash in on the real estate boom by constructing and leasing buildings. A few received tourism-related revenue. By 2012, many monasteries were no longer facing the same challenges in meeting their annual costs and at some there was a visible boom in renovation and new construction. Some had started generating decent profits from their enterprises, but institutions and individuals were also receiving more income from the public. Some had extended their patronage networks, not into the diaspora as in the Irish case, but among the growing numbers of affluent urban Chinese interested in Tibetan Buddhism (Smyer Yü 2012, Caple 2020a). There had also been an upsurge in religious giving among local Tibetans as levels of disposable income increased (Caple 2022). By 2015, some wealthier households were spending the equivalent of tens of thousands of pounds on sponsoring a one-day event, while some communities were ploughing hundreds of thousands into temple building.

Criticism of Church/monastic wealth and its limits

In both Ireland and Tibet, religious fundraising had always involved navigation of potentially tricky moral territory. In the pre-Famine period in Ireland the Catholic Church's fundraising mechanisms were subject to Protestant critiques and limits; for example, legislation from Westminster made bequests to the Catholic Church difficult before the Charitable Bequests Act of 1844 finally allowed lay Catholics to include the Church and its clergy in their wills (Doyle and Roddy 2021). But the Catholic Church's fundraising also opened it to internal resistance from laypeople whose incomes were meagre and intermittent (Murphy et al. 1965, Bric 1983, Hynes 2008). So long as Catholic priests' own revenues were relatively low – pre-Famine parish priests being only about as well-off as their most prosperous parishioners, and curates rather poorer – such resistance could be contained (Connolly 2001, pp. 71–72). And so long as church buildings remained architecturally constrained and less obviously expensive, external allegations of hypocrisy, linked to Catholicism's explicitly anti-materialist stance, had little traction.

In Tibet, the need to generate income while maintaining the generalised trust or belief (*yid ches*) and faith (*dad pa*) of the laity was also a long-standing problematic for Buddhist hierarchs (see Jansen 2018). There is evidence of intermittent criticism of the dependency of monks on the wealth and labour of pious Tibetans among influential Tibetan Buddhist figures since the eleventh century (Caple 2019, p. 64), while popular tales of early twentieth-century bandit heroes indicate the existence of grassroots social critique of the political-economic status quo among Amdo Tibetans (Lama Jabb 2009). From the mid-nineteenth century, Tibetan Buddhism was subject to etic moral-political critique among Western observers for its perceived material excesses and wastefulness (Jacobson 2004, p. 58), in terms not dissimilar to subsequent Chinese Communist Party attacks. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests broad acceptance of the flow of wealth 'upwards' from laity to monastics, based on the ethics of the Buddhist practice of generosity, which is potentially most fruitful when oriented toward the virtuous. While monastic renunciates should ideally be exemplars of non-attachment in possession of no more than a robe and a bowl, the issue was not that they or their monasteries attracted wealth – that was a sign of their virtue – but how it was obtained (Jansen 2018) and used (Wood 2013, Caple 2020b, Jansen 2021).

The resurgence of the Catholic church and Geluk monasticism in the changed political and economic contexts of nineteenth-century Ireland and late twentieth-century Amdo gave new life to old critiques and produced new ones. In Ireland, the post-Famine expansion of the clergy's incomes, the consequent rise in their standards of living, and the extensive programme of increasingly

elaborate church-building that they embarked upon had the potential to give greater impetus to both internal and external critics. So too did the increased visibility of Catholic income generation given the new and diverse modes of raising money from the laity. In public, certainly, anti-clerical and anti-Catholic commentators revelled in labelling the priesthood as money-grubbing, avaricious, and/or obsessed with their own comfort and luxury and with building magnificent churches, to the exclusion of the welfare of the faithful. A longstanding literary trope of the 'greedy priest' was given new life in several seemingly popular publications at the turn of the century by the Catholic anti-clerical lawyer Michael McCarthy (1902 [1901]). Meanwhile, clerical profligacy on 'gaudy' churches 'at the expense of poor communities' was alleged by the otherwise sympathetic Co-operative Movement founder Horace Plunkett (1904, pp. 107–109). McCarthy's and Plunkett's interventions appeared to prompt a new trope for travelogue writers visiting Ireland. By the early twentieth century some variation on Catholic churches as 'towering edifices arising in the midst of hovels' had become commonplace (Brooks 1907, p. 77, Dowler Murphy 1910, p. 353, Ewart 1922, pp. 230–231).

In post-reform China, Chinese Communist Party discourse on 'normative Buddhism' emphasised 'frugality and self-sufficiency' (Cabezón 2008, p. 368n35), while state propaganda continued to attribute pre-modern Tibet's 'poverty' and 'backwardness' to an oppressive and wasteful 'theocratic' Tibetan Buddhist system, which remained an obstacle to modern progress (IOSC 2001).¹³ Meanwhile, criticisms of monastic excess found new voice among a secular Tibetan intellectual elite that had not existed in pre-Communist Tibet (Kapstein 2002, p. 110), its most influential members coming from Amdo. In the 1980s and 1990s, Tibetan authors penned anticlerical critiques of corrupt lamas and the blind faith of Tibetans (Robin 2008, pp. 149–152), one short story explicitly satirising excessive and coercive fundraising for monastic reconstruction among poor nomads (Tsering Döndrup 2019 [1988], pp. 17–23). In the late 1990s, a corps of Amdowa essayists emerged who launched more extreme attacks on the Buddhist establishment (Hartley 2002). By the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, social critique (albeit less radical) also extended among a public who decried a moral decline among monks perceived to be more focused on chasing money than on Buddhist practice, or who cracked jokes about monks' relative wealth (Caple 2020b, pp. 28–30; see also Makley 2007, pp. 275–280, Klepeis 2021). Some people, including monks, felt that monastic development had gone far enough; resources should instead be ploughed into social welfare initiatives such as education and healthcare for the poor (Caple 2020b, pp. 32–35).

Despite these criticisms, in both of our cases, an increase in cash income among the public was paralleled by an increase in donations flowing to the Church/monasteries and an upsurge in religious construction. During an interview in 2014, a retired official told Caple that families in one relatively wealthy village were 'begging the [local] monastery' for the chance to sponsor the annual prayer festival, Mönlam, a one-day event that he estimated would cost somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 yuan (then equivalent to approximately £14,300–£19,000).¹⁴ The idea that prospective sponsors were vying to spend such dizzying sums of money was not mere hyperbole. By summer 2012, a regional monastic centre with several hundred monks had started compiling waiting lists for sponsorship of two of its calendrical events; senior monks at some other monasteries also reported that more people were coming forward to make pledges. There was also a visible proliferation of building (temples, stupas, assembly halls). Moreover, the amounts were increasing as the 'standard' in cash gifts distributed to monks during communal teas, remunerations for religious services, and the scale of religious construction projects rose (Caple 2022). Similarly, the Irish Catholic laity, charged with paying dues and other monies to the priesthood, might easily have balked at supporting an elevated social status for men who preached to them the innate goodness of poverty, or at contributing to the construction of church and other religious buildings which so far eclipsed their own humble dwellings. But the reality, as many more fair-minded observers noted, was that they largely did not (Roz 1906, pp. 48–50). As Hoppen (1984, p. 231) notes, if anything, after the Famine 'the money rolled in more easily than before.'

In making, or defending against, charges of financial exploitation of the laity or material excess, a spotlight was thus often thrown on not just the financial priorities, but also the economic

understanding and customs of ordinary Irish Catholics and Tibetans. Previous conceptions, from both contemporaries and historians, of laypeople having been cajoled or coerced into giving their money to the Irish Catholic Church (Linton 1890, Lynd 1912, Larkin 1967, Inglis 1987) are too simplistic and deny the complex agency of the people of many social classes who gave money (Doyle and Roddy 2021). Even the harshest critics of supposedly over-elaborate Irish Catholic chapels might yet admit that they were of some kind of value, acknowledging that most laypeople bought into a transcendent ideal when they donated toward the erection of a new church. Commenting during a visit to Monaghan's Catholic cathedral, British journalist and literary critic R. A. Scott-James wrote of church-building in Catholic Ireland that this 'costly ideal, this economic disaster, pathetic as it is, is at least better than that blindness of materialism which erects money and luxury as its gods' (Scott-James 1910, p. 111). A more sympathetic interpretation was offered by French Catholic writer and critic L. Paul Dubois, who asserted that churches were 'the only luxuries which Ireland allows herself, and are glorious witnesses to the piety of her people' (Dubois 1922 [1908], pp. 477–478).

Access to ethnographic data gives us a more detailed picture of the complex range of factors involved in the upsurge of religious giving in northeast Tibet.¹⁵ Supporting the monastic community, for example by feeding monks and building temples, is a core lay Buddhist practice grounded in Buddhist teachings on generosity as virtuous action that will bear fruits for both self and others, in this life and the next, including wealth and status (see e.g. Shakbar Tsogdruk Rangdrol 2001, pp. 294, 296). But there were also influences more specific to the economic and political contexts of early twenty-first century Amdo, including the desire to do something 'good' with new found wealth as a way of balancing aspirations for prosperity and modernity with Tibetan and Buddhist values (and by extension of resisting assimilation); social pressure or competitiveness based on more immediate concerns over status and prestige; and heightened political tensions in and after 2008, which provoked fears about a return to the 'excesses' of the Maoist period and an increased sense of urgency in bolstering a distinct, often faith-based Tibetan identity. Even the most vociferous critics of monastic excess among Caple's Tibetan interlocutors acknowledged that those expending their (great or limited) wealth on monastic events or temple building *believed* that what they were doing was of benefit to themselves and others (altruism and self-interest are not dichotomous in Buddhist doctrine).

While there are no available data to suggest whether the increase in giving to the Irish Catholic Church was, as in Tibet, in part a moral response to economic transition, there are hints that a deeper form of economic understanding also often sat at the heart of financial transactions between priests and laypeople. For many ordinary Catholics, including the very poor, paying the priest for a particular purpose gave it additional meaning. As the Jesuit cleric Ernest Hull found, in Ireland, payment for Masses could be a crucial part of the bargain for those paying, as much as for those being paid. 'Once or twice,' the priest noted, 'I refused the stipend because I thought the people were too poor; they showed visible disappointment, valuing the Mass all the more because it had cost them something' (Hull 1909, pp. 19–20). This, like other rural Irish customs associated specifically with cash,¹⁶ denotes what may have seemed to some contemporaries an 'irrational' view, one that cleaved to a logic of value alternative to that of capitalism: Hull's interlocutors could have had their Masses for free, but *did not want to get them for free*, despite their poverty.

In short, while general critiques of Tibetan monastic and Catholic financing often hinted at or highlighted important power dynamics in the accumulation of wealth by religious institutions, it is important not to underestimate the significance and complexity of lay agency in propelling their material expansion. An increase in disposable cash income among the Irish and Tibetans translated into an increase in grassroots economic support for the Church and Buddhist monasteries, respectively, even among many who were critical (and we can assume that the 'pious' Irish public were no less wry in their social observations than the 'faithful masses' (*dad ldan gyi mang tshogs*) in Tibet). Nevertheless, both our Irish Catholic and Tibetan Buddhist examples show that criticism of fundraising practices clearly could sting and, in some cases, prompt a move away from or adaptation

of specific mechanisms. This could include long-standing institutionalised fundraising methods such as door-to-door or community collections, as well as newer strategies like Irish Catholic lotteries and innovative forms of monastic business.

Adaptation of funding strategies

In northeast Tibet, the major reform to monastic financing over the period 1980–2015 reported by institutional actors was a shift away from reliance on routine alms collections, which had been re-established in the 1980s despite their official prohibition in state policy.¹⁷ While there is evidence of some critique of alms collection in pre-1950s Tibetan religious discourse (Caple 2019, pp. 63–64), Berthe Jansen's (2018) study of monastic regulations suggests that 'well-organized, scheduled, and ordered visits on behalf of the monastery to solicit donations was usually both permitted and encouraged' (p. 129). By the early 2000s, however, this form of fundraising was being criticised among monks for placing a 'burden' on the public and involving an element of coercion. Such notions echoed Chinese Party-state discourse but primarily gained traction among Tibetans influenced by the discourse and practices of the Geluk establishment in exile in India, providing a major impetus to the diversification of monastic funding through business development. While lay patronage remained an important basis of support (and subsequently increased), a distinction was drawn between voluntary sponsorship and solicited donations, the latter officially prohibited or discouraged in many monasteries even if, in practice, the line between them was often fuzzy (Caple 2019, pp. 51–52).

This moral impetus to monastic economic reform was enmeshed with broader economic and social changes. For example, during the 1990s and into the 2000s, an increased prevalence of donations in cash rather than in kind led to greater reliance on the market; material necessities now had to be purchased. When combined with inflation, this meant that monastic officials needed to raise greater sums of cash each year at a time when costs of living were also increasing for the public. As well as creating practical difficulties, this compounded the perception of monastic alms collection as a burden. Moreover, monastic authorities wanted to distance themselves from reports and widespread rumours about the increasing prevalence of 'fake' (*rdzun ma*) or corrupt monks and lamas soliciting donations under false pretences, embezzling funds collected for temple building, or providing religious services they were not qualified to perform (Smyer Yü 2012, pp. 112–113, Caple 2019, pp. 61–64; Klepeis 2021, pp. 86–87). This was not just a problem for monastic reputations at the local level. Wider perceptions of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetans were also at stake as opportunists took advantage of the growing attraction to Tibetan Buddhism among urban, affluent Chinese. As Sinophone Tibetan blogger Caiwang Naoru (2009) put it, the spread of fake reincarnate lamas in China and Taiwan was producing 'hostility and hatred.'

In the Irish Catholic Church, a delicate balance was also required when it came to 'questing' or 'begging' tours by clergy. Mass emigration to Britain and North America, especially after the 1840s, created a large and relatively prosperous diaspora for Irish Catholic fundraisers to tap into. Hundreds of priests made months- and even years-long fundraising tours of American cities in particular, using public speeches, sermons, and door-to-door collecting in Irish-American neighbourhoods as their chief methods (Roddy 2012). These tours were lucrative, but also presented new challenges to Church authority. Instances of bogus Catholic priests and nuns collecting donations were often reported in newspapers (e.g. St Louis Globe-Democrat 1884, Nottinghamshire Guardian 1894, Fermanagh Herald 1904). Such reports could cause reputational damage to the institution as a whole, shining a negative light on both the volume of touring religious fundraisers – so large that conmen and women could use them as cover – and the lack of accountability inherent in asking for money for distant causes, even genuine ones. Unlike Tibetan monasteries, which attempted to address the issue by discouraging or prohibiting collections among their monks, Catholic collections continued. Catholic dioceses sometimes dealt with the problem by openly warning of fraudulent collectors in their midst in order to legitimise their own real ones

(Bishop of Liverpool 1881, 1886, 1888, Bishop of Salford 1899). Priests and bishops might also easily discourage any outside collectors, even legitimate ones, from entering their parishes and dioceses to fundraise on the pretext that the laity might see them as fakes (Roddy 2012). That, of course, kept resources in the diocese. In their efforts to deal with reputational threats, religious institutions might also attempt to turn them to their economic advantage: monks by asserting the relative virtue of their institutions (which would thus attract more funding) and priests and bishops by curbing competition from outside collectors.

As in the Tibetan case, it was not only the increasing prevalence of fraudsters that was seen as problematic by Irish Catholic authorities. Here too, fundraising mechanisms were re-evaluated in changing political and economic circumstances. Lotteries emerged as a significant new fundraising strategy employed by Catholic institutions and parishes in the 1860s.¹⁸ Tickets were usually priced at between three and six pennies (3d–6d), an amount in 1870 worth the equivalent of approximately £0.78–£1.57 in 2017.¹⁹ As such, they offered a valuable means of attracting small-sum donors both at home and abroad. Irish Catholic lotteries came under repeated attacks from anti-Catholic figures in Britain on the pretext of their being, by Protestant lights, immoral as well as in fact illegal under UK law, lotteries having been outlawed under Westminster legislation in 1826 (Raven 2016). Nonetheless they continued, and Catholic fundraisers became skilled at turning external criticism to their advantage; anti-Catholic attacks on lotteries seemed merely to encourage Catholic participation. Lottery organisers could reasonably point to a more lax Catholic moral code on such petty gambling, and hint that buying a ticket for a draw represented a strike against blatant bigotry. The ironic naming of a prize pony in one draw after an MP who had been vocally railing against Catholic lotteries provides one such example (*Freeman's Journal* 1870a, 1870b, 1871).

However, lotteries weakened as a fundraising tool for Catholics by the end of the nineteenth century. Fatigue with their ubiquity and diminishing returns may have been one reason. But it is notable that first in Irish America, and later in Ireland, bishops themselves began to discourage and even ban their use, increasingly seeing them as a potentially ‘demoralising’ or ostentatious way to raise money, against which there was pronounced ‘public sentiment’ (read, perhaps, Protestant sentiment) (Milwaukee Daily Sentinel 1891, Drogheda Argus 1904). Wider public debates about the evils of gambling, particularly as it spread among the working classes (McKibbin 1979), no doubt fed into a desire that the Catholic Church, despite a more relaxed attitude toward games of chance, not be damaged by association with an acknowledged social problem (Masterson 1917).

A final example from Tibet shows how mechanisms of financing adopted to enable a movement away from problematic funding modes could produce new debates and dilemmas. Even among the staunchest advocates of Tibetan monastic business development, there were concerns about the image that monks visibly engaging in commerce presented to a critical public, as well as the impact of such work on monks’ minds and conduct (would it lead to them disrobing?). Some argued that all monastic businesses should be run by monks, based on the belief that unlike profit-minded laypeople, monks would neither cheat customers nor embezzle monastery profits. Others advocated for the employment of laypeople to work in customer-facing businesses like shops, or for them to be leased out to generate income through rents (Caple 2019, pp. 99–105). Once again, we find an ongoing evaluation and reassessment of fundraising methods centred on reputational and institutional concerns rather than on any fundamental contradiction in religious institutional engagement in the contemporaneous economy. ‘What should we do,’ one senior monk asked Caple rhetorically, ‘if we are not going to ask for alms and if monks don’t do business?’ His answer was to take advantage of the local real estate boom: the monastery should construct buildings for business rental.

These examples illustrate the ongoing evaluation and adaptation of fundraising strategies by institutional actors as they balanced fundraising opportunities with reputational, institutional, and moral concerns in changing political and economic circumstances. In contexts where some kind of external or internal critique of financial acquisition by religious bodies was almost

inevitable, clergy and monks needed to continually re-evaluate how they raised money. Some criticisms could be deflected and business go on as usual, but as the economy changed around them in fundamental ways and as the economic engagement of their benefactors, large and small, consequently adapted, what had been unproblematic, guaranteed money-spinners could become, quite suddenly, more trouble than they were worth. Beyond pragmatism, reflection on the socio-economic effects of fundraising practices in societies where increases in disposable income were accompanied by 'new' social ills wrought by economic transition (growing inequalities, gambling, fraud) also operated to modify how feasible, valuable, and 'right' certain mechanisms were perceived to be.

While these observations reflect a much more ubiquitous, if understudied dimension of the moral politics of religious fundraising, there is an interesting parallel between our two particular cases. Early twenty-first century Geluk monasteries and the nineteenth-century Irish Catholic Church were under the respective governance of Chinese Communist and British Protestant regimes that had repressed Buddhism and Catholicism and were still considered ideologically hostile and restrictive or repressive in many respects. As the respective shifts away from lotteries and organised alms collection show, in such contexts state policies and laws might exert political pressure on religious institutions, but they have little moral force. In the case of lotteries, we have seen how they might even strengthen certain fundraising mechanisms when they are framed as a form of resistant agency. Even when a combination of factors did eventually move the Church and monasteries into a degree of alignment with the ethics espoused by Protestant and Chinese Communist authorities, in both cases religious specialists and donors were quick to articulate an economic morality alternative to that of the dominant moral-economic order in Britain and China.

Transactional thinking and moral community

A common theme surfacing in our respective research was genuine anxiety among Irish Catholics and Buddhist Tibetans about the expansion of commoditisation and increased dominance of transactional thinking in relations between religious institutions, religious specialists (monks, lamas, clergy, bishops), and their laities. To think through these anxieties without falling back on simplistic ideas about Buddhist or Catholic values and their relation to capitalism, we borrow from the framework developed by Parry and Bloch (1996) to problematise the 'revolutionary implications' ascribed to money in Western discourse.

Parry and Bloch draw a distinction between 'short-term individualistic transactions' and the 'long-term restorative cycles' that reproduce particular social and cosmic (or in our cases religious) orders. They argue that individualistic transactions are acceptable so long as they remain subordinate to the long-term order, and even morally positive if they serve its reproduction. Indeed, maintenance of the long-term order depends on the cycle of short-term exchanges that take place in the acquisitive and competitive worlds of commerce, wage labour or banditry (pp. 24–27). Hence in the Buddhist context, making money is not inappropriate per se; after all, protocapitalist economic expansion was 'intrinsic' to the historic spread of Buddhism and support of its monastics, and Buddhist texts are replete with stories of the virtues of creating wealth (Elverskog 2020, p. 54–55). Similarly, in the Catholic context, the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* might be critical of capitalist concentration of wealth in very few hands and of growing wealth inequalities (Hollis 1961; see also O'Neill 2013, p. 260), but it provides no moral interdiction on getting rich, as long as the wealth is not hoarded and is put to good use.²⁰

The short-term order becomes morally problematic, however, if its values and their pursuit compete with or otherwise cease to be subordinate to the reproduction of the long-term order. There is always a possibility that the short-term cycle of individualistic transactions will become an end in itself or, worse still, that individuals will become so caught up in it that they divert resources away from the long-term cycle or ignore its demands (Parry and Bloch 1996, pp. 27–28). It was precisely in contexts where the short-term cycle was perceived to be increasingly dominant, we suggest, that

anxieties about transactional thinking and its subversion of ‘proper’ religious-economic relations came to the fore in ideas and debates about religious financing in nineteenth-century Ireland and early twenty-first century Amdo.

An interesting point of comparison across our two cases is what seems to have been a general retreat from explicit price-setting for religious services in post-Famine Ireland and post-reform Tibet, even though Catholic and (at least some) Geluk authorities had shown a preference for fixing fees in earlier periods. In pre-famine Ireland, Catholic priests’ capacity to gather money from their parishioners for life cycle sacraments could be dampened by lay objections – sometimes manifested in anonymous threats against clergy – to what were seen as excessive demands. This led to clearer delineation of clerical fees by bishops, including the occasional production of diocesan ‘price lists’ for baptismal, marriage, and funeral payments (Donnelly 1978, pp. 172–173). Tibetan monastic guidelines written by the Seventh and Thirteenth Dalai Lamas in 1737 and 1888, respectively, show that at least some Geluk hierarchs in pre-1950s Tibet advocated for the fixing of fees for ritual services in similar terms (Jansen 2018, p. 131). In the words of the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708–1757), this was necessary to avoid ‘annoying laypeople, who then lose faith,’ though he also warned that monks should take only what a sponsor had intended to give and was able to afford, and no more (Jansen 2018, p.131).

Both Catholic Church and Geluk hierarchs had therefore expressed a similar rationale as to why price-setting might be desirable, namely, to ensure transparency in economic dealings with the laity so as not to upset or antagonise them. There was no ‘denial of the economy’ in Bourdieuan terms (Bourdieu 1998, pp. 92–123; see also Brumann *et al.* 2021, pp. 6–7), even if additional moral considerations came into play. The economic value of providing religious services was to remain ultimately subordinate to their religious ‘good’ and, crucially, to the longer cycle of patronage relations between laity and religious specialists and their institutions. While fixing prices might have served the reproduction of this longer cycle in the past by obviating conflict, in post-Famine Ireland and post-reform Amdo, where there was significant expansion of the market system, this no longer seems to have been the case.

The Synod of Thurles (1850) – the first national synod in Ireland since the 1640s – directly addressed the question of fees for sacramental rituals around life cycle events, dictating that priests should not withhold sacraments for lack of payment. Thus in post-Famine Ireland a process of private negotiation between priest and parishioner can be discerned. For example, an account book belonging to a West of Ireland parish priest for the end of the century suggests there was in practice a banding of fees for marriages and baptisms that may have depended on the wealth of the family involved: some paid £2 for a baptism and some £4, some paid £3 for a marriage, some £6 and so on (Ballaghderreen account book 1894–1904). Similar patterns can be observed elsewhere. They suggest that establishing broadly agreeable norms rather than set prices for such payments meant avoiding the appearance of a deterministic, transactional exchange, while also allowing parishioners the latitude to gift more if they so wished. Similarly, Caple found that there was in practice a going rate for religious services in twenty-first century Amdo; people had a sense of how much they should pay, depending on the skills, knowledge, and status of the provider(s) as well as the service(s) they required. Some even commented on how expensive monks had become in recent years. Nevertheless the setting of fixed prices was generally opposed on the grounds that this would undermine the normative basis and efficacy of the ritual relationship, which is predicated on faith.²¹

This apparent distancing of remunerations for religious services from the logics of market exchange in Ireland and Amdo might partly reflect an ‘interest in “disinterestedness”’ (Bourdieu 1998, p. 93) in the face of societal critiques. Both Geluk monasteries and the Irish Catholic Church were seeking to maintain their authority vis a vis a laity expecting a moral-economic relationship with clergy and monks that exceeded the (increasingly dominant) ideology of the market. However, some further examples from our cases point to more fundamental anxieties about and observations of how the dynamics of religious fundraising could shape relations between religious institutions, priests and monks, and the laity. Beyond reputational concerns, practices such as price-setting that

might contribute to the reduction of these relations to their short-term transactional dimension had implications for the long-term reproduction of the moral community upon which the ongoing formation of these institutions (and by extension their soteriological goals) depended.

The introduction of pew rents in the Catholic church in the mid-nineteenth century provides a very clear example of how a specific fundraising mechanism could provoke concerns over the increasing dominance of the short-term cycle threatening the integrity of the Church. The system of pew rents, whereby individuals, families, and even organisations could purchase the right to exclusive use of particular seats in their local church, was used widely in Protestant denominations to generate income. Its appropriateness and efficacy periodically attracted a good deal of discussion and debate in Catholic journals.²² A key argument against use of pew rents as a funding mechanism was the idea that they introduced a form of transactional thinking into church-laity relations that ran counter to both Catholic egalitarian ethics and the faith-based motivation or moral obligation that was central to lay support of the Church. If Mass-goers were required to pay a seat rent, so the argument went, they would pay it and no more. As one anonymous commentator in the British Catholic journal *The Rambler* put it in 1849:

... the moment the idea of buying and selling, even at the cheapest rate, is introduced into the Church, that moment we also introduce the maxims of trade, and give, not as much as we can afford, but as little as we are compelled, either by necessity or by decency, to give (*Rambler* 1849, p. 84).

Cases of pew rent disputes indicate that some parishioners ignored the rights that rents were meant to bestow and sat in the renter's designated seat. Some priests were also clearly loath to honour rents agreed by their predecessors, those rents being perhaps too visible a mark of inequality, whose financial benefits did not trump the social disquiet they could prompt. In many ways, such concerns echoed anxieties voiced in an earlier period by socially aware Protestant ministers in places like Glasgow (Brown 1987). But they were also framed in terms that explicitly set Catholic economic values apart from Protestant, and that emphasised gifting over commercial exchange as the most appropriate monetary basis on which clergy-laity relationships ought to be set.

In northeast Tibet, Caple commonly heard analogous, if more diffuse concerns voiced over the increasing dominance of transactional thinking in monastic-lay relations, embedded in a common perception that people's minds (*sems*) and values were changing as a result of state-led development. These concerns surfaced in various contexts (see Caple 2020a, pp.76–9, 2021),²³ but seemed to be felt most keenly in relation to the expansion of patronage networks among urban affluent Chinese. Historically, Chinese involvement in Tibetan Buddhism was largely at the elite level of political patronage (Jones 2011, p. 541, Smyer Yü 2012, p. 16), but from the 1990s unprecedented numbers of 'ordinary' Chinese developed an interest in Tibetan Buddhism. Scholars see economic marketisation as pivotal to both Tibetan Buddhism's appeal during a time of 'spiritual crisis' and to its competitive and commodifying dynamics (Jones 2011, Smyer Yü 2012, pp. 100–109, Osburg 2020). Dan Smyer Yü (2012) argues that Chinese almsgiving, the primary medium of Sino-Tibetan Buddhist exchange, creates 'purchasing power' in two senses: money buys access to Tibetan masters (pp. 121–122) and allows patrons to 'gain authority over ecclesiastical authority corresponding to their economic power' (p. 101). Although this presents a somewhat narrow view of a diverse and complex phenomenon (Caple 2020a), Tibetans were themselves often sceptical about and wary of Chinese sponsorship due to its perceived acquisitive as opposed to faith-based dynamics, as well as its association with the practices of 'fake' or dishonest monks and deleterious impact on monastic morality (p. 77; see also Smyer Yü 2012, pp. 113–114, Makley 2018, pp. 48–49). This was a negative model against which intra-Tibetan religious-economic practices and relations could be morally distinguished, even if it simultaneously resonated with emic critiques of the increasingly competitive dynamics of contemporaneous intra-Tibetan religious giving (Caple 2020a, pp. 76–78).

These examples show how the ethics of religious financing are often debated and articulated in relation to a moral 'Other.' In our cases, 'Protestant' and 'Chinese' values became representative of

the larger (capitalist) transactional order into which Irish Catholics and Tibetan Buddhists felt they were being subsumed and against which they often sought to define themselves. This does not mean that ‘distaste’ or discomfort with commercialism or commodification can be explained with reference to an essentialist reading of the values of particular cultures or religious traditions. Protestant and Chinese values were conflated with those of the short-term transactional order in specific historical circumstances, which saw Irish and Tibetan communities experiencing a ‘traumatic sense of breakneck modernisation, of rapid cultural transformation’ (Cleary 2004, p. 7) while marginalised within colonialist, expansionist (Protestant) British and Chinese modernities. This article has shown that Catholics and Buddhists were quick to capitalise on transactional thinking in their fundraising strategies (e.g. pew rents, monastic businesses). This was not seen as problematic as long as it did not threaten to override the longer cycle of relations between the Church or monasteries and their respective laities. But it became problematic when economic value was perceived as becoming the ‘paramount value’ (Robbins 2012; see also Graeber 2013), its realisation ‘the telos that encompasses other values’ (Lambek 2015, p. 226), whether on the part of the religious institution and/or religious specialists, on the part of the laity, or both.

This brings us to a final common problematic that we wish to note in our cases, namely the delicate negotiation of relations of ownership and how these might have shifted as a result of economic transition. The agency of the rich donor had always been built into both Catholic and Geluk fundraising systems. But the advent of a cash economy, and more importantly an increase in disposable income for a broader cohort of society, arguably extended this and changed its terms. We observe in both cases a shift from a politics of patronage predominantly based on political power (patronage by states and/or local political elites) to a politics of patronage embedded in a more individualistic economic ‘purchasing power.’ This was deeply problematic in its implications for reducing, even negating the value of religious-economic practices as supporting a longer-term cycle of value production. A pew renter might view themselves as owning a seat in the chapel but not as having any obligation to care for and support the church and its personnel. A Chinese sponsor wiring funds to a lama in Tibet might feel they have a claim on the time and spiritual power of that lama, but not necessarily feel any connection to or responsibility for Tibetan Buddhism as a socially embedded institution. Moreover, a Tibetan monk or reincarnate lama who receives large sums of cash from a patron in Beijing or Shanghai might gain considerable freedom from the relationships, obligations, and norms underpinning ‘the basic viability’ (Parry and Bloch 1996, p. 28) of his lay-monastic community in northeast Tibet as a long-term order (see also Klepeis 2021).

Conclusion

By bringing into dialogue examples of religious fundraising across time, space, and disciplines, this article has highlighted its stakes in the ongoing formation of religious institutions. For the nineteenth-century Irish Catholic Church and for Geluk monasteries in late-twentieth and early twenty-first-century Amdo, those stakes included but also extended beyond an immediate need for material support. In the examples examined in this article, contestation over the ethics of fundraising mechanisms, from alms collections and remunerations for religious services to lotteries, pew rents, and small business, rested to a significant extent on their potential impacts on relations between the Church/monasteries and their laities. This included their effects on institutional reputations but also – and perhaps more fundamentally – how they shaped the nature of everyday religious-economic interactions that in no small part (re)produced those relations. Institutional funding was thus a key ground upon which the moral communities underpinning those institutions were (re)produced and potentially undermined or transformed during periods of rapid modernisation.

The transition to an increasingly cash-based economy was both an obvious boon and a potential problem. It resulted in new funding opportunities and increased income for both the Irish Catholic Church and Geluk monasteries in Amdo despite external and internal critiques of their wealth and

material extravagance. At the same time, fluid and contingent ideas about how particular forms and modes of financing related to religious values, the social good, and ‘new’ societal ills could provoke reputational, institutional, and moral concerns, requiring the ongoing re-evaluation and sometimes adaptation or reform of Church and monastic financing. While some of the specific fundraising mechanisms adopted could be seen as a co-option or even a taming of capitalism for religious purposes, Tibetan Buddhists and Irish Catholics alike worried about the longer-term impacts of the perceived encroachment into clergy-lay relations of values and economic thinking that they associated with politically dominant religious (Protestant) or ethnic (Chinese) moral others.

As we have demonstrated, within these analogous circumstances religious-economic relations could arise that were quite different in scope and meaning, for both donors and recipients. However, it is striking how far the terms of moral discussions that surrounded religious fundraising in both cases chime with one another. To some extent this might reflect concerns and anxieties peculiar to the commonalities in institutional form and historical milieux of our cases.²⁴ Beyond those specificities, however, we have borrowed from Parry and Bloch (1996) to sketch out a more generally applicable framework for thinking about religious financing, which avoids treating religion and economy as reified categories. Religious fundraising, we suggest, can be seen as a form of practice that ideally works to articulate short- and long-term cycles of value production essential to the ongoing formation of religious institutions and communities. By paying greater attention to the contingencies of how and when this articulation breaks down, we gain fresh insights into the politics of value through which religious fundraising can become a site of tension where ideas about the values of particular religions or cultures and their relation to ‘the economic’ are (re)produced and played out.

Notes

1. In the Tibetan case, this was a characteristic of the first flush of revival in the 1980s. See note 12.
2. For a more extensive discussion of the religion and economy field, including references to scholarship that challenges such essentialist ideas, see our introduction to this issue.
3. On the continued prevalence of the problematic separation of religion and economy as ontological categories, see also Osella and Rudnyckij 2017.
4. We follow Spechler *et al.* (2017, pp. 5–7) in defining China as a state-capitalist country. We use the term ‘Tibet’ to refer to all Tibetan areas in the PRC, including Amdo and Kham, not just the Tibet Autonomous Region or Central Tibet.
5. Geluk monasticism has been predominantly a male preserve, much more so than other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. For statistics, see Schneider 2013, p. 51.
6. ‘Speaking bitterness’ (Ch. *suku*) was a key mass mobilisation technique employed by the Chinese Communist Party in its rise to power in China and during the mass campaigns of the Maoist period. People were coached in the – often highly theatrical – public voicing of grievances against the ‘tyrants’ (e.g. landlords) who had oppressed them. The aim was to engender class consciousness and sympathy among the ‘masses,’ and outrage and hostility toward ‘class enemies.’ For an overview, see Javed 2019. On speaking bitterness in Amdo, see Makley 2007, pp. 87–100, Weiner 2020, pp. 173–177; for first-hand accounts see Arjia Rinpoche 2010, pp. 33–34, Naktsang Nulo 2014, pp. 202–205.
7. On the 2008 unrest and subsequent Tibetan self-immolations, see the special issues of *China Perspectives* 2009 (3), *Cultural Anthropology* 2012 (April), and *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 2012 (December).
8. On village redevelopment see also Duoje Zhaxi 2019. On urbanisation see the double special issue ‘Education, Urbanization, and the Politics of Space on the Tibetan Plateau’ in *Asian Ethnicity* 50(4) and 51(1); see also Roche, Leibold, and Hillman 2020.
9. Paul Nietupski’s (2011) study of Labrang Monastery provides the most detailed historical account in English of a pre-modern monastic economy in northeast Tibet (see in particular pp. 82–92). On pre-modern Tibetan monastic rules and regulations relating to trade and business, see Jansen 2018, pp. 101–114.
10. As in premodern Tibet, each monastery has three distinct economic layers: the income and expenditures of the monastery as a ritual community; the wealth and properties of reincarnate lamas; and the livelihood and wealth of individual monks. In this article, we deal primarily with the first. On their interconnection see Caple 2019, p. 41.
11. For specifics, see Caple 2019, p. 53.

12. Although numbers never reached pre-1958 levels, the speed and scale of monastic repopulation in the 1980s was dramatic. There were no working monasteries at the end of the 1970s and most monks had died or married during the Maoist period. Available data suggests that by the end of the 1990s over 5% of males were monks in one of Caple's main field sites. At most monasteries numbers peaked in the 1990s and subsequently levelled off or dropped. For statistics see Caple 2019, pp. 24–25, 123–125.
13. On subsequent discursive shifts resulting from heritagization processes see Saxer 2014.
14. Based on the historical mid-market rates available at: <https://www.xe.com/currencytables/>.
15. For more detail on the factors summarised here, see Caple 2022.
16. Another example is 'luck's penny' where a seller returns a coin to the buyer, thereby 'shar[ing] a small symbolic amount of profit with the customer, keeping it in circulation, blunting the unlucky negative reciprocity inherent in capitalism' (Cashman 2016, p. 213).
17. For more detail on the issues summarised in this and the next paragraph, see Caple 2019, pp. 38–67.
18. While lotteries have not been similarly used as a Buddhist fundraising mechanism in Tibetan monasteries, they have been in Eastern Buddhist institutions. On lotteries in pre-modern Japanese Buddhist temples see Matthew Mitchell's contribution to this issue; on their introduction in Chinese Buddhist monasteries no later than the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Yang 1950.
19. Based on the National Archives 'Currency converter: 1270–2017'[online]. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>.
20. See also Andrew Short's article in this issue on attitudes toward investor capitalism in nineteenth-century America. While some Protestant leaders were occasionally highly critical, in the view of Protestant supporters of investor capitalism, '[i]nvestors and brokers who used their wealth for charity and benevolence, and were active in their churches, were not 'stockjobbers' or gamblers but respectable upright Protestants.'
21. In contrast, some (although by no means all) of Caple's interlocutors considered it appropriate, even preferable to establish price lists for butter lamps in temples as this would prevent any hint that temple caretakers were inflating prices (Caple 2021). Since butter is a commodity now generally bought on the market, there is a clearer relationship between cost and price, which might explain why fixing prices for butter lamps (a 'product') was seen differently from setting fees for services.
22. The use of pew rents in the Irish Catholic Church and their impacts will be addressed in detail in the monograph that Roddy is currently writing.
23. Though not necessarily the most obvious ones; in the case of monastic shops, for example, explicitly commercial transactions could take on the form of quasi-religious giving (Caple 2021).
24. We have borrowed loosely here from Osella and Rudnycky's (2017, p. 13) comments on the historical contingency of articulations between religion and market, which were inspired by Ruth Marshall's (2009) analysis of the dramatic rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

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