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Women Beyond Tea: Fostering Tibetan Women Leaders of Tomorrow

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**Women Beyond Tea:
Fostering Tibetan Women Leaders of Tomorrow**

By
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A Leadership Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership

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Abstract

Tibetan women leaders (TWLs) are a recent phenomenon within the Tibetan Exile Community. Before the 1950's, Tibetans did not typically see women as leaders in public life (Thonsur, 2003). Women first entered public life as leaders after China invaded Tibet in the late 1950's (Butler, 2003; Thonsur, 2003; McGranahan, 2010). The democratic reforms through the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the de facto government in exile for Tibetans, gave Tibetan women many rights and opportunities to develop their leadership capacity. However, women are still grossly underrepresented at the highest levels of leadership throughout the Tibetan Exile Community. To examine how the Tibetan Exile Community can cultivate leadership among the next generation of Tibetan women, this study conducted a survey of 42 young Tibetans and interviews with six established TWLs. The study found that TWLs possessed a particular set of skills that helped others identify them as leaders, faced immense challenges throughout their leadership journey, and implemented leadership strategies to help them persist as leaders. Day's (2001) leadership development theory and Maparyan's (2012) Womanist theory were used as theoretical frameworks to analyze and interpret the data.

Women Beyond Tea: Fostering Tibetan Women Leaders of Tomorrow

What does it mean to be a leader in a community? How does gender shape one's chances of success as a leader? How should a community prepare its next generation of women leaders to ensure their success? These are the questions that many aspiring Tibetan women leaders (TWLs) of today's Tibetan Exile Community, the diaspora community of Tibetans across the world, often encounter during their leadership journeys. Women are underrepresented in leadership positions around the world (Eagly & Carli, 2019), and this same trend follows in the Tibetan Exile Community (Tsering, 2012). Recognizing this challenge, I explored how the Tibetan Exile Community can intentionally cultivate leadership among the next generation of Tibetan women.

Reflexive Statement

The Tibetan Exile Community is a broad, multi-national group of people that are connected to one another through their cultural and historical ties to Tibet. I was born and raised in an Indian city with my immediate family, and I rarely interacted with Tibetans other than my extended family. It was not until I came to the United States in 1998 that I became fully immersed in the Tibetan Exile Community and started to develop my Tibetan identity.

I learned that the Tibetan Exile Community's ethos is rooted in a deep appreciation of Tibetan culture and compassion, and a strong, resilient spirit that has helped it build and maintain ties around the world. I learned that while most Tibetans in exile live in India, many now live in smaller communities across the world, in places like Minnesota. I discovered that these communities commonly have nonprofit organizations to preserve Tibetan culture. In larger communities, advocacy and political organizations are also likely to be found.

My experience as a community member, an active board member, and participant in local organizations (Lamton & Youth for Umaylam) within the Minnesota Tibetan community have

shaped the way I see community service, leadership and gender. My curiosity for studying Tibetan Women Leaders was sparked by the underrepresentation of women I witnessed within local Tibetan community boards. It prompted my desire to learn how we can help shape the next generation of leaders by learning from established TWLs. O’Leary (2017) wrote that “research may not be the answer to our problems, but it can supply some of the data necessary for us to begin to tackle challenges we all face” (p. 4). I believe that as a Tibetan, as a woman, and as a leader, it is my personal and professional duty to help improve the situation through this research so that my community can do better and be better for everyone.

With that thought in mind, I set out to explore ways I could fulfill my duty. I came to the Master’s of Arts in Organizational Leadership (MAOL) program to become a better equipped leader. Using my research opportunity in the program to study Tibetan women leaders was a great way to align both my personal interests and fulfill the program’s outcome of creating influential leaders. Through my research, I learned how I can continue developing my own leadership within the Tibetan community and how the community can also aid in that process.

That said, I brought my own individual questions and tensions to the study. In order to further make meaning of my experiences as well as address my own desire to better understand my trajectory as a Tibetan Woman Leader within the larger purpose of the study, I included myself as a participant in the study; I explain this decision and provide further detail about this approach in the method section of the paper.

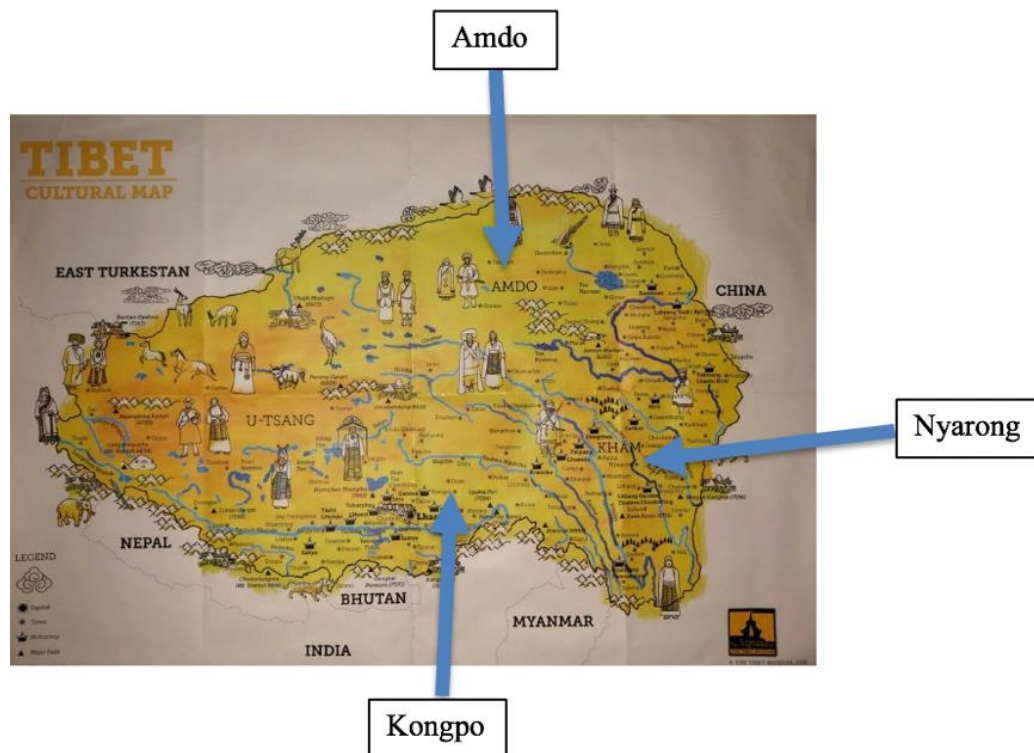
Background

In order to understand the current-day context for the study, one must understand the historical events that shape the Tibetan Exile Community today. Thus, in this section, I present the historical context related to my study and the problem I am studying through my research. In

this section, I identify three significant time periods: pre-1950, when Tibet was an independent and sovereign nation; during the 1950's, after China's invasion of Tibet; and post-1959, when many Tibetans rebuilt their lives outside of Tibet. Throughout this section, I address how women's leadership changed through these periods.

Figure 1

Tibet Cultural Map



Pre-1950 Tibet

Before China's occupation of Tibet, Tibetan women had considerable freedoms compared to women living in Tibet's neighboring countries (Thonsur, 2003). For example, they were able to deepen their religious practice by becoming nuns (Butler, 2003; Gyatso & Havnevik, 2005; Thonsur, 2003) and were a part of the largest community (~19,000 nuns living in 618 nunneries) of Buddhist nuns in the world (Butler, 2003). In addition to a monastic

education, some could also access private education until age 17 if they had the means and family support (Thonsur, 2003; Tseyang, 2008). They were seen as equals in most parts of Tibet and did not face harassment due to their gender (Thonsur, 2003).

Freedoms depended on women's social class and where they lived (Thonsur, 2003; Makley, 1997). Before 1959, most Tibetans lived in their own smaller communities and provinces (Butler, 2003). Every community had its distinct cultural practices and traditions, lifestyles, and access to wealth, so the freedoms women had in Tibet varied (Thonsur, 2003). For example, in some parts of the Amdo province (For Tibet cultural map (n.d.), please see Figure 1), husbands would be insulted if a wife sat in a group of men during meetings or discussions (Thonsur, 2003). However, women, specifically from the Kongpo area in southern Tibet (For Tibet cultural map (n.d.), please see Figure 1), followed a matriarchal system where women owned the family's property and were important (Thonsur, 2003). Women who came from a higher social class often performed less work than women who lived in farming and nomadic communities where women did both housework and animal husbandry tasks (Thonsur, 2003). Moreover, women who lived in pastoralist communities had more independence and decision-making power than those living in agricultural communities (Makley, 1997).

Regardless of these factors, Tibetan women, did not have the opportunities to cultivate their leadership because their primary responsibility was to get married and take care of the family, or join a nunnery (Thonsur, 2003; Tseyang, 2008). Even if women went to school and performed at the same levels as men, they were no formal pathways for women to continue their education or gain employment in the Tibetan government (Tseyang, 2008). Families would immediately withdraw their daughters once it was time for their daughters to marry regardless of their social class (Tseyang, 2008). Once women were married, they generally worked longer

hours than their husbands to take care of their families and household labor (Makley, 1997). There were a few cases of women holding leadership positions in their small communities; however, it occurred because an appropriate male leader was absent (Butler, 2003). Thus, women typically “did not take roles in public life in Tibet until the Chinese occupation” (Butler, 2003, p. 16).

Finally, Tibetans in pre-1959 Tibet often did not see or remember women leaders in Tibetan history (Martin, 2005; Thonsur, 2003; Uebach, 2005). Gyatso and Havnevik (2005) state that “women are rarely discussed in historical writing at all, except for the briefest mention of someone’s mother, or consort, who not infrequently is nameless or referred to only elliptically” (p. 8). One reason for the lack of documentation of Tibetan women’s history (McGranahan, 2010) may be that men wrote almost all historical records about Tibetan women (Gyatso and Havnevik, 2005).

Women Rising

As crisis hit the Tibetan plateau, resulting from China’s invasion of Tibet, women emerged as leaders out of necessity (Butler, 2003; Thonsur, 2003; McGranahan, 2010). Though the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) entered eastern Tibet as early as October 1950 (McGranahan, 2017), the capital of Lhasa did not fall until March 1959 (Butler, 2003) (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A). In Lhasa, increased tensions between the Tibetan people and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) pushed Tibetans (both men and women) to create anti-Chinese sentiment through grassroots protests as a way to shake off the CCP (Butler, 2003). Historians first documented women’s role in public life during these grassroots movements when they joined their male counterparts in shouting slogans against Chinese occupation. A few women, including Pamo Kusang, even took on leadership roles

where they single-handedly organized two protests and informally established the first Tibetan women's organization in Tibet (Butler, 2003); 3000 women attended the first protest on March 12, 1959, and 5,000-15,000 women attended the second protest on March 18, 1959. Moreover, the "Women's Uprising did generate not only a new model of female leadership (personified by Pamo Kusang) but also the possibility of creating leaders in a new way" (Butler, 2003, p. 84).

Tibetan women leaders felt called by the situation to take on these leadership roles to rebel against the CCP. Outside of the capital city, Tibetan leaders like Dorje Yudon organized and led rebellions to fight the Chinese (McGranahan, 2010). Dorje's husband encouraged her, the wife of a chieftain, to lead men from the Upper Nyarong area in Kham (For Tibet cultural map (n.d.), please see Figure 1) to battle the Chinese because of her unique position as both a woman and of chieftain status (McGranahan, 2010). She had a low-enough profile as a woman to organize in secret but high enough profile for people to take her ideas of a rebellion seriously. Dorje was able to not only fight with men but, more importantly, lead them into many big battlefronts in the Nyarong area (For Tibet cultural map (n.d.), please see Figure 1). When asked about her leadership role in the rebellion, Dorje said that Tibet's "circumstances led her to this position, at age twenty-five it was the first time she had to make such decisions" (McGranahan, 2010, p. 785). She also said that other women with similar situations had to lead their men into battle as well and that their minor revolts were a part of the greater struggle for Tibet (McGranahan, 2010). Thus, the emergence of women leaders during this era:

has often been described by both participants and commentators as 'spontaneous', a word which a number of social, spatial, political and personal factors came together in a situation of extreme crisis to produce a grouping of women whose role and makeup was unlike anything that had existed previously in Tibetan history (Butler, 2003, p. 84).

Coming into Exile

The 14th Dalai Lama built a de facto government in India in 1959 to fight for the Tibetan cause¹ while also establishing formal systems to support the Tibetans who followed him into exile. The 14th Dalai Lama (then the political and spiritual leader of Tibet) fled Tibet to seek safety and support from India and the International community (Von Bruck, 2003). Around 80,000 Tibetans left Tibet and “were a part of the initial exile” after His Holiness’s departure in 1959 and throughout that year (Frechette, 2007, p. 104). They arrived in India, where he had established the Tibetan government in exile (now known as the Central Tibetan Administration, or CTA) (Roemer, 2008). After coming into exile, the exile community and exile government became the same as they were both tied to the 14th Dalai Lama (Roemer, 2008), and exile Tibetans saw the CTA (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A) as the de facto government of Tibet (McConnell, 2013; Phuntso; 2003; Roemer, 2008) representing Tibetan refugees living around the world.

To modernize his government and people, the 14th Dalai Lama set out to create the constitution of Tibet in 1963 (Makley, 1997), thereby starting a democratic reform process that impacted both the exile government and the exile community (Phuntso, 2003). Tibetan women gained many political opportunities through these democratic reforms (Tsering, 2012). The government’s democratic reforms created the first infrastructure that would help cultivate the next generation of TWLs. For example, the constitution of Tibet, established in 1963, allowed women to vote, hold office, and have equal rights as men (Makley, 1997). Though there were initially no Tibetan women elected to the Tibetan parliament in Tibet’s history, the first Tibetan women joined the Parliament in exile just a year after the government created the constitution.

¹ Piatti (2017) describes the Tibetan cause as “efforts by the Tibetan people to regain their independent status or how Tibet existed prior to the invasion of the PLA in 1959” (p. 60)

Furthermore, Tibetan women benefited greatly from obtaining a modern education in exile. The Dalai Lama's government provided every Tibetan child free and open access to modern education (Rigzin, 2003; Tsering, 2012). Access to modern education has positively impacted many young women leaders by helping increase educational attainment and career opportunities (Tsering, 2012). For example, the literacy rate of Tibetans in exile in 1960 was close to 25 percent (including monks receiving a monastic education) (Rigzin, 2003), but by 2009 it had increased to 79.4 percent (CTA, 2010). In 2009, 71.4 percent of Tibetan women were literate as compared to 85.6 percent of Tibetan men (CTA, 2010). The 2009 data also showed that out of the 33,065 Tibetans who were working in India, 14,347 were women (CTA, 2010). These jobs ranged from teaching to working in the CTA to selling sweaters. However, all require skills that a modern education helped them achieve.

In summary, the Dalai Lama initiated many reforms that led to the development of Tibetan women and Tibetan women leaders. His administration gave women the ability to vote, be voted for, and be seen as equal in public life. Furthermore, his consistent efforts to provide every Tibetan child a modern education allowed many women, regardless of socio-economic or regional status, to be educated like never in Tibet's history. These key pieces helped women gain the knowledge, skills, and access to lead a public life and take charge of community-affairs. Thus, the Dalai Lama's foresight and reforms have been instrumental to all Tibetan women and Tibetan women's capacity to lead in the Tibetan Exile Community.

Still, despite the progress the community has made, TWLs remain underrepresented in leadership positions across the exile community. Highly transient Tibetan refugees living in India, Bhutan, and Nepal continue to seek opportunities to establish a home elsewhere.² The

² Note that this data might be very different today. However, the latest demographic survey was conducted by the CTA in early 2019 and these results had not been released at the time of this

Central Tibetan Administration's (CTA) demographic survey conducted in 2009 (2010) found that there were approximately 127,935 Tibetans living in exile, of which 94,203 lived in India, 13,514 lived in Nepal, and 11,112 lived in Canada and the United States of America. The Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota, the main community organization for Tibetans living in Minnesota, has three TWLs out of 12 as board members (TAFM, n.d.). Other Non-governmental organizations like the Tibetan Youth Congress, based in India, have one TWL out of five board members (TYC, n.d.) (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A). On the other hand, the number of women in Tibetan Parliament has increased from three (out of 17 seats) in the second parliament session to 11 (out of the 45 seats) in the current parliament session (Tibetan Parliament, 2018). The least amount of growth is in the judicial branch where there has never been a female Justice Commissioner or Chief Justice Commissioner since the establishment of the judicial branch in 1991 (CTA, n.d.). Women leaders at the highest level of political leadership are underrepresented, but an abundance of them can be found at lower levels of government (Tsering, 2012). This could be due to gender stereotypes (Tsering, 2012) or Tibetan exile community not seeing women as leaders (Thonsur, 2003).

Historically, Tibetan women's primary responsibility was to maintain their home and family life (Thonsur, 2003). They emerged as public leaders out of necessity as China invaded Tibet in 1959 (Butler, 2003; Thonsur, 2003; McGranahan, 2010). Again, despite the CTA's democratic reforms one big problem remains: Tibetan women leaders are still underrepresented in leadership positions throughout the Exile Community (Tsering, 2012) despite the political and

writing. Furthermore, there is no other authority or entity that has taken on such a task, so the CTA demographic survey (with its limited resources and structure) is the best way to see who is a participant of the Tibetan Exile Community.

educational reforms. Thus, the purpose of this research is to study how the Exile Tibetan Community can intentionally cultivate leadership among the next generation of Tibetan women.

Throughout the paper, I use Tibetan Exile Community, Tibetan community in exile, Tibetan community, exile community, and community interchangeably. The same is the case for Tibetan women leaders and women leaders unless specified otherwise.

Literature Review

To understand how the community can best cultivate leadership among Tibetan women, I first define the concept of leadership development as a process that increases the collective capacity of everyone to create change. Then, I provide insight on women in leadership positions around the world such as the current trends, common obstacles faced by women leaders, and strategies that help cultivate women's leadership. In addition, I analyze Hmong women leaders' leadership development process to better understand the needs of aspiring TWLs. Finally, I explore the current context Tibetan women must navigate in order to be leaders in the Tibetan exile community.

Defining Leadership

Leadership is a learned process that helps individuals create change. Leadership exists because "teams, organizations, and communities need people to step up and take charge" (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 1). Leaders exist to help solve today's problems by taking charge and creating positive change that will help make the world better (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). However, they cannot create change just by their sheer desire (Kouzes & Posner, 2012); they must acquire and execute "an observable pattern of practices and behaviors and a definable set of skills and abilities" (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 335) that will help them in their work.

Existing literature often focuses on developing a leader and not the process of leadership (McCauley-Smith, Williams, Gillon, Braganza, & Ward, 2013; Day, 2001). The general understanding is that leaders will transform organizations if they develop their skills. Thus, focusing on the leader helps organizations develop their human capital, but this does not translate to developing the social capital of the organization (Day, 2001). Human capital is created by “developing individual knowledge, skills, and abilities” (Day, 2001, p. 585) whereas social capital is created by “building networked relationships among individuals that enhance cooperation and resource exchange in creating organizational value” (Day, 2001, p. 585). By completely ignoring the environment the leader is in and their ability to create relationships with people to eventually bring change to the organization, one limits the collective capacity of the organization (Day, 2001). Thus, to effectively cultivate leadership, an organization must develop its human and social capital at the same time (Day, 2001). For the purpose of my study, I use Day’s (2001) definition of leadership development as “expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (p. 582). I explore Day’s theory of leadership development in the theoretical frameworks section.

Women in Leadership

Women are significantly underrepresented in top leadership positions across countries, contexts, and sectors. For example, the American Center for Progress’ (2018, November 20) fact sheet showed that women currently make up 50.8 percent of the US population and 47 percent of the US labor force. However, US women hold only 12.5 percent of the chief financial officer positions in Fortune 500 companies, account for only 16 percent of medical school deans, are 32 percent of full professors, and 30 percent of college presidents. In the US government in 2019, women represented 24 percent of the house and 23 percent of the senate. In Canada, a Catalyst

report (2018) showed that women made up 47.7 percent of the labor force in 2017 but the World Bank data showed that they held only 26 percent of the seats in the Canadian parliament.

According to Grant Thornton (2018), India has improved women's representation in business leadership within four years from 14 percent in 2014 to 20 percent in 2018. The World Economic Forum (2019, May 24) wrote "India was one of the first countries to have a female leader but more than five decades after Indira Gandhi became prime minister, women's participation remains stubbornly low." Currently, women occupy 78 of the 542 positions in the lower house of the Indian parliament (14.39 percent), which is lower than the global average of one in four parliamentary seats (25 percent) but is the highest percent of women in the Indian parliament (World Economic Forum, 2019, May 24). All in all, when data on labor force and leadership positions are compared, women in most countries are underrepresented in leadership positions.

Hymowitz and Schelhardt (in Balasubramanian & Lathabhavan, 2017) first introduced the "glass ceiling" metaphor about the corporate world in the United States in 1986. The metaphor described the limits and barriers women faced on their journey to rise to the top of an organization, eventually leading them to see, but not to attain a certain level (Balasubramanian & Lathabhavan, 2017). Furthermore, women leaders faced certain prejudices in their workplaces because of their gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011).

Role congruity theory of prejudice explains the impacts that women leaders faced when they were perceived by others to be incongruent with their gender and leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory proposed that "perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to two forms of prejudice: (a) perceiving women less favorably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles and (b) evaluating behavior that fulfills the

prescriptions of a leader role less favorably when it is enacted by a woman” (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 573). Eagly and Karau (2002) found that this prejudice led to less positive attitudes towards female leaders than male leaders, and it also made it especially difficult for women to become leaders or to be perceived as an effective leader. However, prejudice against women leaders can be lessened by changing the leader roles, gender roles or both (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2019) included these gender roles and stereotypes within their concept of “second-generation biases.” They wrote: “this bias erects powerful but subtle and often invisible barriers for women that arise from cultural assumptions and organizational structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently benefit men while putting women at a disadvantage” (Ibarra, Ely, Kolb, 2019, p. 44). Some of these barriers include a lack of role models for women, gendered career paths and gendered work, a lack of access to networks and sponsors, and the connection between masculinity and leadership (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2019). Not having many women leaders meant that young women lack diverse role models while working towards leadership positions themselves. Gendered career paths and gendered work reflect how workplaces are created inherently to fit men’s lifestyle, making it harder for women to succeed and be valued for their work (Eagly & Carli, 2019; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). One example of this is not being valued for the behind-the-scenes work, such as building a team and avoiding a crisis. However, men were valued for doing heroic acts in the workplace that were often displayed in front of everyone (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2019). Women’s lack of access to networks and sponsors also made it difficult for advancement in the workplace (Eagly & Carli, 2019; Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2019; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011).

The literature describes how both aspiring women leaders and organizations can cultivate leadership. One way is for women leaders to perform identity work rooted in their values, purpose, and self-knowledge, not in the gender biases that exist in culture and organizations (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). Similarly, Selzer, Howton, & Wallace (2017) find that all parts of women's identities (whether racial, ethnic, or etc.) must be engaged in order for women to feel truly themselves and feel supported as complete individuals. However, in order to perform this identity work, organizations must create supportive environments where women can engage in this process (Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). One way for organizations and aspiring women to simultaneously cultivate leadership is by creating women-only spaces where women are able to connect and co-create meaning to help navigate similar challenges (Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017). For example, having women leaders of color share how their intersectional identities have shaped their leadership journey can be powerful for younger women of color because it fosters connections and relationships with individuals who have similar experiences (Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017). This not only helps women find mentors and develop their networks, it also helps them feel connected and able to problem-solve similar challenges.

Hmong Women in Leadership

Though the literature on TWLs is scarce, the literature on Hmong women leaders is more developed and offers useful and relevant information. Hmong women share a similarity with Tibetan women in that they are both populations that came from parts of Asia and established themselves in host countries around the world, including the United States. The first Hmong refugees arrived in the United States in the late 1970's (Ngo & Lor, 2013), and the first large wave of Tibetans came as immigrants in early 1992 (Hess, 2006). Though both experiences are

not equivalent, they do share enough similarities to make research on Hmong women leaders instructive for this study. Hmong women leaders in the United States are excelling in areas of educational attainment, nonprofit leadership, and politics (Lor, 2013), but they had to “break through the cultural and glass ceiling to become positional and influential leaders in mainstream American society” (Moua & Riggs, 2012, p. 1)

Moua and Riggs (2012) studied nine Hmong women leaders from California and Minnesota and found that leaders faced three key barriers to leadership. First, leaders had to balance familial and leadership responsibilities (Lor, 2013; Moua & Riggs, 2012). Hmong women felt a pull between responsibilities as daughters and wives who maintained the home and responsibilities related to their leadership roles (Lor, 2013; Moua & Riggs, 2012). This balancing act made it difficult for them to care for themselves. Second, leaders had to reconcile the experience of living in two cultures which sometimes had different values and expectations of success (Moua & Riggs, 2012). Often times, it was due to the loss of the Hmong language and not having enough time to look for a partner or start a family that led women to feel that they were not following expectations of success for women in the Hmong community. However, they were finding success in the professional world and the mainstream society which added to their personal and leadership development. Though there were trade-offs, most leaders benefited from being bi-cultural. Third, leaders faced gender disparities in the Hmong culture (Lor, 2013; Moua & Riggs, 2012). A lot of these disparities manifested themselves in the form of a male-dominated leadership arena where women had to work hard to build trust in her personal relationships to show that she was a credible leader.

The literature also describes many factors that could have contributed to the success of Hmong women leaders in the United States. Some factors that positively impacted Hmong

women leaders' development and persistence included: the role of education, inner strength the woman possessed, importance of networking and support systems, and strong role models (Moua & Riggs, 2012). Moua & Riggs (2012) described inner strength as "having courage, taking risks, determination, persistence, passion, and confidence" (p. 14). Networking and being accessible described leaders as those who were visible, highly involved in activities during school and in the community. Finally, having support systems and role models played a critical role in the success of women's careers (Lor, 2013; Moua & Riggs, 2012). Lor (2013) further added that the next generation of Hmong women should get to know themselves, learn to make good decisions, and surround themselves with other Hmong women professionals.

Though Hmong women still battle barriers to leadership, they are in a much stronger position than before. There are systems of support for them like women's leadership programs, mentoring circles, and women's organizations (Hnub Tshiab, n.d.). Lor adds that the "establishment of various Hmong women professional organizations across various disciplines including business, law, academia, medicine, politics, and leadership are one symbolic indicators of the changes and evolving dynamics of the roles of many Hmong American women in the last three decades" (Lor, 2013).

Tibetan Exile Community

Even though Tibetan women were active members in the Tibet independence struggle, only individuals themselves and their local communities, not the broader nation's narrative, remember women leaders' contributions (McGranahan, 2010). This "cultural organizing of history in gendered ways affects not just how we record the past, but also how people live their lives in the present, including how people and communities make, remake, and give accounts of themselves" (McGranahan, 2010, p. 771). McGranahan (2010) posits that Tibetan women today

may not see themselves as having the potential to impact society significantly and may not seek those leadership roles because it was not the set precedent, and no one recognized women leaders' contributions. It is no wonder that women warriors like Dorje are not widely known about or connected to the broader narrative of Tibet. McGranahan (2010) finds that "men were presumed to be the makers and keepers of the history of this period" (p. 786), and women's histories will remain arrested in time until the conditions allow space for women's histories to be told.

The Importance of Tibetan Women's Association. The Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) was re-established out of the Dalai Lama's vision to engage all parts of exile society since escaping Tibet, namely Tibetan women (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A). His Holiness asked a few organizers of the 1959 women's uprising to revitalize the spirit of the group and carry on the work on behalf of the Tibet cause (Bonnet, 2012). Thus, "the initial idea for the TWA was that it would be a group of women supporting the Tibetan national activities" (Butler, 2003, p. 3). In 1984, the TWA was reactivated in Dharamsala, India (Bonnet, 2012; Gould, 2001) and gave TWLs a platform to stand on as they once again entered public life as they had done in the past.

As the TWA became more organized, its members went through a process of identity development, eventually to discover both what pragmatically worked to fit the needs of the TWA and what individual members needed to understand about themselves in relation to their work (Bonnet, 2012). What was once a group that led demonstrations evolved into a group engaged in social welfare work to aid the growing Tibetan exile community (Bonnet, 2012; Butler, 2003). As it increased collaborations with external organizations like the United Nations, the TWA began advocating for human rights as one of their organization's primary aims (Bonnet, 2012).

And during the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights, the TWA adopted and advocated for the idea that human rights are equivalent to women's rights; they still continue to advocate on behalf of Tibetan women living in Tibet.

Tsering (2012) shows that TWA is the only women-led organization currently in the exile community. It operates as a platform for TWLs to make a difference in their community while continuing to develop their leadership skills and identity (Butler, 2003). Through the programming and services offered by TWA, emerging young women leaders learn about human rights, women's rights, leadership and activism through their older counterparts (Bonnet, 2012) while also connecting to a network of role models that they can look up to. The number of women leaders that touch the organization every year make it a key resource for TWLs. Their work has even pushed the CTA to update their women's empowerment policy (CTA, 2017) with recommended changes to the policy. However, TWA's work primarily takes place in India, the location of its headquarters. And although regional chapters exist all around the world, they operate entirely through local, voluntary community participation (Butler, 2003).

Summary of Literature Review

Leadership development consists of both developing human capital and social capital. The glass ceiling impacts all women seeking leadership roles in organizations. Acting out of gender roles is one way to hit the glass ceiling or be treated negatively in the workplace. Women who do not have role models to look to may not seek out leadership or see themselves as leaders. The Hmong women leaders experienced barriers ranging from gender roles, difficulties balancing time, and expectations of success. Some strategies Hmong women leaders used to persist in leadership were education, understanding self, building inner strength, and building a support network for others and self.

Scholars have researched Tibetan historical, political, and spiritual contexts; however, the research on TWLs and Tibetan women is scant and inadequate. A gap in the literature about TWLs limits our understanding of their perspectives as leaders, as women, and as Tibetans. In order to foster more TWLs in the Tibetan Exile Community, we need to understand how intersectionality has impacted their leadership journey, and how recognizing it can help support future women leaders in the community.

Theoretical Framework

To guide the analysis of my data, I utilize the leadership development and womanist theoretical frameworks. First, I describe how Womanism provides insight on the relationship between intersectional identities and women leaders' experiences and why I use it to study Tibetan women. Second, I explore how leadership development theory can help cultivate women leaders within the community and why it is the best approach to do so.

Womanism

Womanism is a social change perspective that was first developed around the early 1980's to describe the lived experiences of Black women in the United States. The term "womanist" was first coined by Alice Walker in 1979 (Phillips, 2006). She describes womanists as black feminists or feminists of color who exhibit "willful, courageous, and outrageous behavior that is considered to be beyond the scope of societal norms" (Walker, 1983, xi). At the same time, a womanist is a universalist who is concerned with the survival of both men and women. Doing this allows "Black women with an opportunity to address gender oppression without directly attacking men" (Collins, 2001, p. 11), and ultimately trying to reconcile that relationship with the community (Collins, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, I use Maparyan's definition of womanism to analyze my data. Maparyan defines Womanism as

a social change perspective rooted in Black women's and other women of color's everyday experiences and everyday methods of problem-solving in everyday spaces, extended to the problem of ending all forms of oppression for all people, restoring balance between people and the environment/nature, and reconciling human life with the spiritual dimension (Phillips, 2006, xx).

Womanism states that to create a social or ecological transformation, womanists use 11 values to help create this change: self actualization, wellness, self-care, amity, harmony, and commonweal, reverence, balance, nurturance, inspiration, consciousness, memory, and love. For the purposes of this study, I describe self actualization, wellness, and self care.

Self-actualization is the understanding that in order for change of any kind to take place, a womanist must be the best version of themselves and sees the best version of others. Maparyan describes the preconditions for self-actualization as:

self-knowledge (which requires both exploration and introspection), self-love (which is fortified when people receive significant love and validation from others), freedom to explore, express, and create from the place of one's own vision or inner light (which is closely related to the quality of the educational system and people's access to it), and a baseline of physical health (Maparyan, 2012, p. 43).

She stated that when people know who they are, love themselves and feel loved by others, have access to explore their inner passions, and are physically healthy, they can participate as positive change agents who can create social transformation in their community and lives. However, the

increased amount of exposure to dehumanizing social contexts can limit a person's capacity for self actualization and their ability to change those contexts.

Wellness was described by Maparyan as a belief that all living beings can and should flourish to their full potential. Womanists strive to reach their full potential and want everyone else to do so as well. To do this, Womanists utilize the Standing In method to create social change in typically oppressive institutions by purposely staying in the organization and respectfully pushing the boundaries of confined ways of thinking (Maparyan, 2012). Maparyan (2012) wrote that these women "were standing up, whether quietly or boldly, as representatives and leaders of 'another world,' positioning themselves to invite others to it, rather than leaving, breaking off to found another, competing institution" (p. 70-71).

Self care is both a key value and method in Womanist thought because it has the power to rectify any imbalances in one's relationship to self, community, nature or the spiritual. This value originates from "a woman of color's history of overwork and exhaustion on the behalf of others, others who do not afford or even recognize the need for breaks and self-replenishment" (p. 44). It shows that womanists have the right to self care no matter their social identity(ies). If a womanist does not take care of herself, she will burn out which can lead to other issues. Furthermore, womanists recognize that caring for others is important but caring for oneself is equally important. Self-care practices include having adequate amounts of quiet time, monitoring emotional state, meditating regularly, engaging in healthy curiosity, and visualizing yourself and your life in optimal condition (Maparyan, 2012).

Why Womanism. Womanism helps describe what people can do to advance gender equality in very strong-knit racial or ethnic communities. The advantage of using womanist theory to analyze my data was to understand the complexity of TWLs' experiences as they are

impacted by both their cultural and gender identities. Tibetan women leaders are a recent phenomenon and even more important, women's identities are greatly shaped by their Tibetan identity and history. For example, the first documented Tibetan women leaders took power to fight for a nationalist cause, and many women still take on leadership roles to fight for the Tibetan cause. Thus, I use womanism to understand if and how Tibetan women leaders demonstrate womanist values in their work in the Tibetan Exile Community to navigate leadership challenges and persist as leaders.

Leadership Development

Day (2001) writes that the purpose of leadership development is to expand “the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (p. 582). Furthermore, there is a distinct difference between *leadership* development and *leader* development (Day, 2001). Instead of focusing on developing just a leader, a more complete way to develop leadership in an organization is to both develop leaders (human capital) and leadership (social capital) (Day, 2001).

Leader development assumes that leadership development occurs when individual leaders are developed. Leader developmentalists ask “how can I be a more effective leader” (Day, 2001, 605). Developing this requires intrapersonal skills like self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation. Self-awareness is composed of leaders being emotionally aware, having self-confidence, and an accurate self-image. Self-regulation consists of having self-control, being trustworthy, being able to take on personal responsibility, and be adaptable. Self-motivation describes a leader's ability to take initiative, be committed and be optimistic. When leaders develop intrapersonal skills, an organization is building their human capital because leaders are

gaining knowledge, building personal power, and promoting trustworthiness which can help them serve in any different organizational roles (Day, 2001).

In contrast, leadership development focuses on developing social resources accessed through relationships (Day, 2001). A leadership developmentalist asks “how can I participate productively in the leadership process” (Day, 2001, 605). Developing this could focus on interpersonal skills such as social awareness and social skills. Social awareness includes skills such as empathy, having a service orientation, and being politically aware of their environment. Social skills are composed of the ability to build bonds with others, have a team orientation, be a change catalyst, and be able to manage conflict. Learning these skills helps foster commitments, show mutual respect, and build trust. When developing these interpersonal skills, an organization is building its social capital because not only are these leaders equipped to be at their best to do the work of leadership, they also are aware of how to work with others to help realize the mission of the organization (Day, 2001).

Though distinct, both methods are key to cultivating change in an organization and the “preferred approach is to link leader development with leadership development such that the development of leadership transcends but does not replace the development of individual leaders” (Day, 2001, p. 605). This key distinction helps organizations better target and cultivate leadership within an organization but also emphasize relationships at the core of leadership (Day, 2001; Cullen-Lester, 2017).

Why Leadership Development Theory. Leadership Development theory helps us understand how individual leaders are connected to the larger community/organization. It states that to cultivate leadership, not only is it important for leaders to develop themselves, it is important to engage with the community so that you increase the collective capacity of the

community. In cultivating leadership amongst Tibetan women, it is key for the community to cultivate both a woman's intrapersonal and interpersonal skills as Tibetans live in a very tight-knit community that have had low numbers of women leaders in its past and present. This context may create barriers for Tibetan women who are ready to be leaders but may not know how to work under the current context so that they can be effective and enduring leaders.

Method

I conducted my research to understand how the next generation of Tibetan women can intentionally cultivate their leadership within the Tibetan Exile Community. This purpose informed my research design: a qualitative research study. Data collection was broken into two phases with two distinct methods. Phase One entailed surveying 42 Tibetan youth about their understanding of leadership and who they saw as Tibetan women leaders within the community. Phase Two entailed interviewing current TWLs, identified through Phase One, about their leadership journey and what they would recommend in developing the next generation of TWLs; this phase included an aspect of autoethnography (as described by Theoharis, 2007) as I was one of the subjects. Finally, I used a grounded theory approach to coding as detailed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and the Womanist and the leadership development theoretical framework throughout the data analysis process.

Phase One

In Phase One, I surveyed 42 Tibetan youth who lived in four countries to learn about how they define leadership, who they identify as women leaders in the Tibetan Exile Community, and what they believe needs to happen to cultivate the next generation of Tibetan women leaders (For Survey Questions, please see Appendix C). This phase informed the Phase Two of the study.

Data collection. I surveyed Tibetan youth aged 18-35 because that is the age range I would consider to be emerging leaders; they may not be in full-fledged leadership positions within the community, but they are gaining the expertise and experience to do so. I surveyed both young men and women because I wanted to know who was identified as a Tibetan woman leader by the whole community, which includes both genders. This is because I wanted to know about women who were leaders in the community as a whole, not just among other women. I selected four countries (Canada, India, Nepal, and the United States) since they hosted the majority of the Tibetan exile population per the Demographic survey conducted in 2009 (CTA, 2010). I asked five open-ended questions in English that helped me see what the emerging leaders in our community felt about the current state of Tibetan women's leadership. Finally, the survey was critical to my research because the respondents identified TWLs I should interview and helped me formulate the interview questions (For Interview Questions, please see Appendix G).

I used online surveys because they served as the best tool to obtain relevant perspectives on leadership and leaders while also reaching out to as many Tibetans within the Exile Community as possible. O'Leary (2017) stated, "surveys can: reach a large number of respondents; represent an even larger population; allow for comparisons; generate standardized, quantifiable, empirical data; generate qualitative data through the use of open-ended questions; be confidential and even anonymous." (p. 227). The Tibetan exile population live in different parts of the world. Thus, to get a good understanding of where the exile community stands on particular topics such as leadership and leaders, a survey was the best method to use for my study. This method offered a strong opportunity that I would obtain a diverse set of data as long as I had an adequate number of respondents and my survey questions were well-crafted.

Furthermore, my survey ensured that all information was completely anonymous so that my respondents could answer freely about the topic.

Participants. The 42 participants who responded submitted their demographic information through the second page of the online survey (Please see Tables 1-3). To participate, respondents met the following criteria: (1) they identified as part of the Tibetan Exile Community; (2) they currently live and have permanent addresses in one of four countries: Canada, India, Nepal and United States; and (3) their age ranged from 18-35. Tables 1-3 show that there was a strong representation of participants from the United States, a reasonable representation across age ranges that responded to the survey, and the heavy imbalance of female to male respondents, respectively.

Table 1

Survey Participants' Current Residence and Permanent Residence

	Current Residence	Permanent Residence
Canada	4	4
India	4	6
Nepal	1	1
United States	33	31

Table 2

Survey Participants' Age Range and Number of Participants

Survey Participant Age Range	Number of Participants
18-23	11
24-29	17
30-35	14

Table 3*Survey Participants' Gender and Number of Participants*

Survey Participant Gender	Number of Participants
Male	10
Female	31
Other (transgender)	1

Initially, I wanted to obtain 30 survey responses for my study, but I received 30 responses within a few days. Also, many responses were mostly blank (except for the demographic info), which I attributed to the design of my online survey (For Survey Questions, please see Appendix C); i.e., respondents had to navigate through four pages to answer all ten questions. Thus, to gain more complete responses, I obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board to reopen my survey and collect up to 60 responses.

Recruitment. To recruit participants for my survey, I circulated a flyer (For Recruitment Flyer, please see Appendix E) through my social media (Instagram and Facebook) and email networks. These were well-established methods to send important notifications across the Tibetan Exile Community so anyone in my network who was interested and met the criteria for the study could take the survey themselves or circulate it in their networks. In addition, I sent an email to Tibetan nonprofit organizations that are involved in the Tibetan community, asking them to forward the recruitment email I had created to their email list. This step was necessary to reach Tibetans outside my personal network. This helped diversify the pool of survey respondents.

Data analysis. I followed O'Leary's (2017) Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) process but used Strauss and Corbin's (1998) open coding procedure. First, I identified my biases and noted my general impressions of the raw data to help mediate my bias and obtain an overall

picture of the data, respectively (O’Leary, 2017). Second, I reduced my survey data by performing line-by-line analysis, creating in-vivo codes, and grouping codes into categories as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Third, I looked for patterns and relationships between the categories and created relevant themes using inductive reasoning (O’Leary, 2017). Last, I drew conclusions by using deductive reasoning to test theories and knowledge gained through literature. Through this process, I generated 30 codes that were organized into four categories and helped support one theme relevant to the study. I present these themes in the findings section.

I also used the data from the survey to inform the development of the interview questions (For Interview Questions, please see Appendix G) and individuals interviewed for Phase Two. For example, as there were four individuals with equal mentions but only two spaces for the 7th and 8th most mentioned participants, I selected the two individuals who would increase diversity (region and career level) among my interviewees.

I used Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) open coding procedure because I saw value in closely examining the data and using theoretical comparisons to generate distinct categories that reflect my data. Using open coding allowed me to let the data speak for itself (whether through one word, line, or paragraph) and through the participants’ own words (in-vivo codes).

Phase Two

In Phase Two, I conducted six semi-structured interviews (70-110 minutes) with current Tibetan women leaders identified most often through the survey. The interviews allowed me to collect the stories and strategies that current TWLs have used to become successful leaders in the Exile Community.

Data collection. I conducted qualitative interviews to obtain a deeper look into each individual's story of developing credibility and influence as leaders. I wanted to explore the obstacles they faced along their leadership journeys, the strategies that helped them gain success, and what the next generation of women needed to know to become successful TWLs. The interviews were all conducted in English with a few Tibetan phrases that I translated into English displayed in Appendix A. Other relevant questions ranged from asking them about their leadership journeys, their perspective on leadership in the Tibetan community, and how to help cultivate the next generation of TWLs (For Interview Questions, please see Appendix G).

Interviews gave the best platform for participants to share their stories and speak in-depth about their journeys. Kvale (2007) wrote that a “qualitative interview is a key venue for exploring the ways in which subjects experience and understand their world. It provides a unique access to the lived world of the subjects, who in their own words, describe their activities, experiences, and opinions” (p. 9). Since Tibetan tradition and contemporary literature do not well document Tibetan women's leadership, I wanted to hear directly from TWLs about their experiences and understanding of the topic. Furthermore, O'Leary (2017) describes the ability of interviews to draw out a participant's voice if conducted successfully. Thus, if I provided an open and safe space for participants to share personal information, I could conduct successful interviews and gain insightful data.

I conducted two interviews in person, three through phone, and one through the use of WhatsApp (a web messaging software). I scheduled an in-person meeting in a space they suggested and felt safe in with those who I could physically access. If I could not reach them in person, I used other means to connect with them, such as the phone or video conferencing software: Skype, Google Hangouts, or What's App. Although I listed Skype as the online video

conferencing software that I would use, I had to adapt to Skype's inability to allow smooth conversation and/or participants' request to use a different medium.

Participant identification and recruitment. After analyzing the data identified through the first phase of data collection, I looked to recruit eight TWLs mentioned most frequently in the surveys. Although I asked eight leaders for an interview, six committed to being interviewed, one did not respond to the recruitment email (For Participant Invitation Email, please see Appendix D), and another did not wish to participate. I included six TWLs in the study who were identified by a range of 2-12 survey respondents. Finally, after confirming their participation through email, I sent them informed consent forms (For Interview Consent Form, please see Appendix B). I asked to receive the signed consent before the interview date to ensure their understanding and approval to participate in my research.

Though unexpected, the survey respondents identified me as one of the TWLs (I tied for the fifth most mentioned leader in the data). This identification may be because those who I have a personal relationship with could have been the first individuals to respond to my survey until I reached the 60-responses cap. Through discussion with my thesis advisor, we decided to include my voice as a TWL, following the semi-autoethnographic process used by Theoharis (2007) in his study of school leaders. Specifically, I recruited a colleague to interview me using the same semi-scripted interview questions and procedures used with the other TWL participants. To protect the identity of all participants, as well as to ensure that I did not elevate or center my experience among the other participants in the study (Theoharis, 2007), I created pseudonyms for all participants including myself and discussed/identified all data through third-person throughout this paper (For Interview Participants' Pseudonym and Descriptors, please see Table 4). By doing this, I was able to examine this topic through a self-reflective lens and gain a deeper

understanding of myself in the process. In addition, I did not provide any information about leaders beyond what is provided in Table 4 to protect the leaders' identity. As the Tibetan Exile Community is a very small and tight-knit community with few women leaders, any additional information could make it easier to identify them. Thus, I only provide the interviewee's pseudonym and how survey respondents described these leaders.

Table 4

Interview Participants' Pseudonym and Descriptors

Interview Participant Pseudonym	Descriptors
Kunchen	Persistence, Confidence, Visionary
Ngawang	Role Model, Assertive, Effective Communicator
Ngodup	Courage, Empathy, Creativity
Palden	Breaking Barriers, Invested, Passion
Tashi	Inspirational, Consistently been at the front lines, and Expressing their Tibetan identity
Rinchen	Spirit of service, Caring, Strong-willed

Data analysis. To prepare for data analysis, I personally transcribed the interviews to create an accurate written record of the interviews. Once transcribed, I read through the entire set of transcripts thoroughly to check for errors before proceeding to code. I used the same combined method (described in Phase One) of O'Leary's (2017) QDA process and Strauss and Corbin's (1998) open coding procedure to analyze Phase Two data. Through this process, I generated 51 codes that were organized into ten categories and helped support three themes relevant to the study. I explore these themes in the findings section.

Through my data analysis, it became clear that my original research question (how the next generation of Tibetan women can intentionally cultivate leadership within the Tibetan Exile Community) contained assumptions not supported by my findings, specifically, that Tibetan

women were responsible and best positioned to cultivate leadership among themselves. In contrast, the data revealed the importance of both individual leaders and the community as a whole in developing TWLs. Thus, in consultation with my thesis advisor, I refined my research question to “how can the Tibetan Exile Community intentionally cultivate leadership within the next generation of Tibetan women” to remove the assumptions of my original question. This revision allows the full scope of strategies that both individuals and the broader community can implement to cultivate leadership among Tibetan women.

Validity

Creswell (2016) describes triangulation as “building evidence from different sources to establish the themes in a study” (p. 191). To ensure triangulation took place, and my findings were valid, I used 42 survey responses and six interview data to arrive at my conclusions. The multiple participants within each form of data collection method added to the validity of my findings.

Since I am studying my local community, I needed to minimize the impact that my experiences in the community might have on my data analysis. First, I followed the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) process to keep my bias in check by identifying all assumptions before analyzing data so that I can recognize if they start impacting my data analysis (O’Leary, 2017). Second, I selected the open coding method to reduce data because it helped minimize bias throughout this phase of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, in Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) discussion of garden characteristics and the analyst’s preferences, they write:

“if you hate or love any one of the preceding types of gardens, then the comparisons are likely to force you to confront reasons (biases) for your reactions. Making these types of

comparisons forces analysts to question their assumptions and to ask how these might be affecting their study” (p. 84).

Third, I wrote down my claims, and the evidence that supported those claims. Next, I tried to rule out if there were any alternative explanations for why I took note of those claims and findings; did my bias interfere in my analysis, or was this finding objective and an accurate reflection of the data I collected? Last, I reviewed my findings, and the data that supported them, several times with my thesis advisor. These practices were intended to minimize the impact of my bias in the final results.

Ethical Considerations

The two primary ethical considerations in the study were related to participant confidentiality and informed consent. In Phase One, I designed the survey so that all the responses were completely anonymous, and participants knew the details of the project in the informed consent language (For Survey Informed Consent Language, please see Appendix F) at the beginning of the survey (page 1). If individuals did not want to participate, they could leave without having completed any questions listed on pages 2-4. Finally, the survey did not collect identifying information such as a name or address.

In Phase Two, I designed interviews so that all interviewees remained confidential throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting process. I gave interviewees a digital copy of the consent form detailing the specifics of their participation in the study immediately after they confirmed their participation after receiving the recruitment email (For Participant Invitation Email, please see Appendix D). I asked them to connect with me if they had any questions about the consent form. All signed consent forms were uploaded digitally to a password-protected Google Drive folder immediately after return, and I destroyed all physical

copies. I did not begin the interviews until I received the signed consent forms and asked interviewees if they had any questions about the consent form. A pseudonym (For Interview Participants' Pseudonym and Descriptors, please see Table 4) was assigned to each participant in the study and used throughout the process: labeling audio, transcription, and analysis files. I stored the paper key listing the pseudonyms and interviewee names in a locked file cabinet. All Data and notes were de-identified and available to only my advisor and myself through a password-protected Google Drive folder that will be destroyed by June 1, 2020.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that are important to recognize. First, the design of my online survey made it difficult to gain complete responses. Though I recruited 60 participants, only 42 participants answered questions beyond the demographic information (page two of the survey). The gap in response may be because my survey had four pages: consent language on page one, demographic info on page two, and open-ended questions on pages three and four. Eighteen participants did not go beyond page two, and thus I did not count their information in my survey results. Their lack of stable internet access or change of heart about participating in the study could have impacted this. In retrospect, I should have limited the pages so that there would only be one-three pages in the survey.

Second, my recruitment strategy may have created an imbalance of respondents from the US. For example, I recruited 60 participants for the survey using my networks (social media and email), a Facebook group, and a few organizations (India and the US) to recruit participants. However, the majority of the participants were from the United States. One explanation could be that individuals who responded first to my survey were those from my networks; this imbalance was apparent as some individuals contacted me after I had closed the survey because they

wanted to participate. Thus, in retrospect, I should have broadened my recruitment strategy by emailing organizations/posting on Facebook groups first before alerting my personal networks.

Third, I created the survey to collect data from the countries with the largest populations of exile Tibetans: India, Nepal, the United States, and Canada, respectively. However, the distribution was imbalanced; mostly those living in the United States participated in the survey while most Exile Tibetans live in India. Furthermore, only one participant from Nepal responded, creating a gap of knowledge in my survey data. The interviews primarily focused on those working in North America. Thus, this imbalance may impact the relevance of my results to those living outside of the United States.

Last, as a basic qualitative research study, the sample size for both the survey (42 respondents) and interviews (six participants) was too small to make any generalizations about the community as a whole or TWLs.

Findings

After analyzing the data from both phases of the study, three themes emerged to describe how the Tibetan Exile Community can cultivate leadership within the next generation of Tibetan women. I identified these themes as Defining Leaders, Challenges to Leadership, and Leadership Strategies. The first theme details three characteristics that help identify leaders in the Tibetan Exile Community. The second theme describes four challenges the TWLs face in their leadership. The final theme includes strategies the TWLs use to build resilience and persist in their leadership. In this section, I describe each theme and its subthemes, and provide data that supports each.

Defining Leaders

Both survey participants and interview participants directly or indirectly mentioned the characteristics of leaders in the Tibetan community. All participants used their personal experiences as community members, leaders, or both to speak on the topic of leadership. Both sets of data helped identify three characteristics that help TWLs build credibility and influence in the community. I present these leadership characteristics in three categories: Speak Up, Communicate Effectively, and Passion for Community Work.

Speak Up. Several survey participants and interview participants spoke about the relationship between a leader's ability to act on their values and their recognition as leaders in the exile community. Leaders who were seen to have integrity and strong ethics which they acted upon helped them be recognized by others and themselves as leaders. The survey participants mentioned this category of codes 44 times throughout the survey data and contained codes such as honesty, integrity, ethical, fearless, and courage. These sub-codes showed that survey respondents placed great importance on leaders knowing their values and acting on those values regardless of the repercussions they could face. For example, one survey respondent wrote that leaders were "not afraid to confront others and stand up for their beliefs." Five out of the six TWLs also mentioned the importance of being fearless in their leadership. For these leaders, being fearless meant that they spoke their mind and were consistent with their values. Ngodup stated that even though she may be intimidated to speak her mind in certain settings where she is different or thinks differently, she still pushes herself to speak up. She stated:

There have been plenty of times where I have been quite intimidated to speak in especially Tibetan settings, Tibetan meetings, but I do because... I have a strong sense

that it is the right thing to do, you know that x or y is not right and or x or y is going the wrong way and I need to say something.

If a leader did not speak up in challenging settings, they may be seen as someone who compromises their own values and does not stand up for their beliefs, thereby losing their credibility. One reason why leaders may not act out of their values is if they want others to agree with them. Another survey respondent wrote from their own experience:

I feel free to say what I want to say. I appreciate when others listen and hopefully some things I say are helpful. But I don't want everyone to agree with me. That's not the reason why I speak. And sometimes, some 'leaders', it feels like that's the main reason why they speak.

Five TWLs viewed standing up for what they believed in not only important to maintain integrity but also to help bring change to the community. Kunchen talked about making decisions that "may not make you popular but that you know have positive impacts for the community in the long run." Just like Kunchen, Palden said that she stands up for her values despite the pressure to accept the status quo because of her level of self-awareness about her values and the assurance she gets by acting on those values. She stated:

you cannot just accept the status quo, especially if that status quo is only benefitting certain people and not benefiting others, right? So yeah, I'm not afraid, I feel like I have a strong sense of you know um.. self-assurance of like when I have a position on a certain issue and my reasons for it, I'm not afraid to stand up for it.

The importance of acting on values, especially when a TWL is the only one who thinks differently, allowed them to be (and be seen as) change agents in the community while also building credibility as a leader.

Communicate effectively. Most survey and interview participants recognized the relationship between strong communication skills and leadership characteristics. Leaders who possessed strong communication skills were better able to connect, communicate, and mobilize community members. This helped community members see them as leaders. The survey participants mentioned this category of data 55 times throughout and contained codes such as communication skills, listening, assertive, interactive, visionary, and confidence. All TWLs interviewed directly or indirectly spoke about the importance of possessing communication skills and how those skills helped build bonds between a community and themselves. Some communication skills mentioned through interview participants were public speaking, listening, ability to speak to diverse audiences, clarity in speech, and language skills. Both sets of data showed that communication skills could greatly help leaders connect to the community and gain credibility as a leader. For example, a survey respondent noted that communication skills become even more critical because they provide leaders with the ability to speak to a diverse range of people, such as different generations of Tibetans. They state, “I believe I am able to lead the youth and my peers due to my level of understanding and ability to communicate through different audiences”. For most TWLs, including Kalanga, communication skills were a strength that she possessed that allowed her to connect with others regardless of their age. She stated:

luckily I’m really good at working with people both younger than me, my peers, and older than me. And that’s helped me a lot because I’ve noticed that a lot of other people, they find it really difficult to actually talk to somebody who’s not their age and to be able to be understood and to be able to actually work.

She continued to say that being able to communicate with many different groups was extremely important because of the dispersed exile community structure. She stated:

So being able to communicate across generations and across diverse viewpoints is really, really important because as we, as the Tibetan community, go forward, there are more things that are different about us than similar, and that's just something that you have to deal with as a refugee community, especially a refugee community that is continuing to flee to different parts of the world.

These communication skills helped others want to connect with Tashi because of her friendly, approachable, and trustworthy demeanor. She stated:

I think there's also a quality of being friendly, being approachable, being likable, right? In order to establish that type of trust, people have to like you, right? I think it'll be difficult if a leader is someone who is unapproachable, someone who doesn't come off as friendly.

The data revealed that this dispersed exile structure made it more difficult for community members to communicate with one another, but they further highlights why leaders must have this ability. Not only are leaders building relationships with individual members, but they are in their way building community amongst those individuals as well.

For Kunchen, a common language was one of the most vital communication tool a leader could possess. Kunchen stated that language "enabled you to communicate. It's that simple...when you speak that particular language, there is a feeling of being included in a community of people who happen to speak that language, that mattered a lot."

She emphasized the need for the next generation of leaders to learn more languages so that they would be able to communicate and connect with more people and be more effective in their work. But in the Tibetan community, the common language TWLs encountered was most often

Tibetan, and a few TWLs like Palden talked about the negative aspect of a common language.

She stated:

When I would go to those [community] meetings, I would not speak in Tibetan. I would speak in English because I knew if I spoke in Tibetan, if I made mistakes...that's what they would be focused about as opposed to what I was actually trying to say. So I would rather speak in English and communicate by message and know that I'm talking about the issue at hand and not about how if I'm a good Tibetan or not, who doesn't know their shaesa (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A) or not, who doesn't know these words.

Palden found through her experience that when a leader does not speak Tibetan or speak it fluently, her effectiveness as a communicator can suffer greatly. Thus, she chooses to speak in English during those meetings despite knowing Tibetan.

Several survey respondents wrote that communication skills such as listening were necessary skills for leaders to possess; they helped leaders build both a connection with community members and an understanding of the change needed within the community. One respondent stated, "leaders need to be able to communicate with others. Communicate by listening to their community concerns and problems. They need to hear problems or concerns in their community and think of ways to assist the matter". The interview participants also emphasized this level of engagement was needed between a leader and community members. For example, Ngawang mentioned that her success in the public sphere was primarily due to her ability to communicate and engage with the community. She stated:

one of my strengths and the reason why I was able to really connect with the mass and be in the public eye for over a decade was... my successful communication skills, I would say. In being able to really hold an audience and to engage with an audience.

Both the youth in the exile community and TWLs recognized the importance of strong communication skills in leaders.

Passion for community work. Both the survey participants and interview participants recognized the relationship between passion for community-work and being seen as a leader in the Tibetan community. Leaders who were passionate about community-work and showed this passion through their active participation were most likely to be seen as leaders. The survey participants mentioned this category of codes 87 times and included subcodes such as active, passion, community-oriented, initiative, work ethic, commitment, and perseverance. Passion for community-work allowed leaders to show their concern for the Tibetan community and take an active role in contributing to it no matter the scope. One survey respondent wrote that they would consider anyone who was “leading any cause that benefits the larger Tibetan community” as a leader. In contrast, others specifically wrote that leaders “inspire others with their work for the Tibetan movement and the betterment of the Tibetan community.” This varying scope could mean that a leader was excelling as a professional in the mainstream society (which made Tibetans proud of their achievements) or be actively working in a Tibetan community organization. Regardless of the scope of the work, whether leaders were directly doing work in the community they live in or the broader Tibetan community, their actions helped Tibetan youth identify those individuals as leaders.

In addition to serving the community, another way to see the passion comes with how committed individuals were to community work and putting the community’s needs before

themselves. One survey respondent wrote, “more than hunger for power they look forward to the betterment of the society and work for the Tibetan cause” and another respondent wrote that leaders “put common aspirations and goals before themselves.” Three interview participants also talked about the importance of being community-oriented and thinking about what is best for the community. Kunchen talked about how community-oriented leaders lead. She stated:

A leader isn't just the one who speaks, but it's a person who really creates consensus, who listens, who works as hard or harder than anyone else around them, whatever they can sacrifice for the stated community goals.

Not only do leaders focus on building and meeting community goals, but their primary focus is also to do community work regardless of if they are seen as leaders or not. Palden spoke about how community members not seeing her as a leader does not bother her as her main priority is to do community work. She stated:

but one of the things that for me works is that I don't care if I'm seen as a leader or not.

It's about doing the work. So for me, I've just continued to do the work on things that I'm able to for the Tibetan community. I do it.

All leaders directly or indirectly spoke about their passions for community work through their journeys and confirmed the survey's findings. For example, Rinchen had a realization during our interview about her passion for community work. She stated, “my work is all around community, I've noticed. This makes me feel like maybe that's the direction I feel most passionate about” in regards to her future career aspirations. Additionally, Palden talked about the importance of keeping the community at the center of a leader's work. She stated, “the purpose of your work can't just be to advance yourself. That's the worst thing actually. You

might actually do more harm in the process than help.” Finally, Kunchen talked about how she made a decision to do community work for the rest of her life. She stated:

I’m born into this community and inherited this situation as we all have in this time, and I felt like we were given so many of the tools to do something. And in access to insights, access to the language, through exposure, through knowing people, and it has deeply affected what I have chosen to do and how to spend my life.

Kunchen’s passion was apparent in how she spoke about why she chose to get involved in the Tibetan community, and more importantly, why she continued her work. This passion had allowed community members to see her as a leader who not only was the second most mentioned from the survey results but also as someone who had “consistently been at the frontlines hustling for their projects” (survey participant). The time spent doing this community-work helped Tibetan youth see Kunchen and other TWLs as credible leaders who work for the community and have the people at heart.

Five TWLs mentioned that this passion for community work often stems from a leader’s desire to make the community better for everyone and to realize that everyone is interconnected. Palden spoke about how important it is for leaders to focus on the health of the greater community and to bring as many people up with you as possible. She stated:

if your success is only helping you as a person and maybe directly your immediate family, then it’s not helping the community in any way, right? You can have a good life but if you really want to be a community leader and try to make a difference, your success can’t be just about you. It has to be about everybody else and as much as possible try and bring as many people along with you.

She continued to say that everyone in the Tibetan community must help support one another.

We really need to develop a culture and way of doing things where we, especially as women in the community, are helping each other grow and glow, and you know to know that this is an advancement for all of us.

The data revealed that the ability to convey a leader's passion for community-work will help them establish credibility as a leader.

Challenges to Leadership

All TWLs interviewed spoke about the challenges they encountered as leaders in the Tibetan exile community. These challenges fit into four categories: Concept of Leadership, Gender Roles, Expectations of Success, and Lack of Representation of TWLs. These four challenges worked against Tibetan women leaders in different ways, and some were common amongst all leaders.

Concept of leadership. All interview participants shared that the Tibetan community defined leadership as occupying formal roles such as holding public office or being elected to lead an organization. Palden described how women were not seen as leaders because they do not occupy formal roles or titles but often participate in grassroots work. She stated that the community sees "people as leaders based on their position and the title that they have and less so on the work that is being done...if you look at who actually does the work... it's the women." She went on to state that women:

are the ones who are consistently showing up and doing the work, who are not recognized as leaders in our community but are really the glue, and the reason why certain things happen, and we achieve certain things in the community.

Thus, by limiting the definition of leadership to just those who hold titles, the community does not acknowledge the contribution of many people who do not have formal titles.

Furthermore, all TWLs interviewed agreed that most formal roles were held by older men in the community, thereby creating a perception of men as leaders. Kunchen stated that “if you look around, the most basic thing you can do is count the number of formal leadership roles there are and look at the gender balance [*sic*]”. Ngodup added that men often occupy leadership positions in organizations because they seek them out and are given to them by other men. She said:

I think the formal titles and roles very rarely go to women, or maybe also rarely women sought about as much as they are held. These positions are held by men, sought by men, or are given to men by other men.

Though only mentioned by Ngodup, she explored why there were fewer women in leadership roles and posited that it might be because there may be fewer women seeking out these roles. Both TWLs attributed people’s identification of leaders to narrowed perceptions of leadership and lack of experience with women leaders. Thus, most interview participants, all of whom had formal titles, were not seen or accepted as leaders at the beginning of their leadership journey because they did not fit the typical idea of a leader: someone with a title, an older person, and a male. Tashi said that her leadership and competency were challenged as soon as she came into a leadership role. She said:

My leadership was challenged. My... not even my leadership, but my competency, right? Whether I was competent or not. Whether I was junbo lagyi yoe ah (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A). Whether I was capable, right? Those things were questioned right off the bat when I came on.

Tashi further described her struggle to be accepted or seen as a leader. She stated:

it's like we're in this race together with men but we, we have a late start. Men have a head start...one of the most difficult things was just being, before being accepted, being seen.

All TWLs interviewed were discontent with the current way the Tibetan community defined leadership, and some offered their definitions of leadership. These definitions included service leadership, social leadership, thought leadership, or/and community-oriented leadership. However, there was not a consensus on how leadership should be redefined for the whole community. Four of the interview participants wanted to expand the concept of leadership to include leaders previously excluded through the current definition. Kunchen offered one such model:

My idea of leadership is very dispersed. It's a very dispersed model. It includes all the wonderful amalas (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A) who show up and cook and serve tea, and I don't know why it's always the amalas or the women who do it. That's not fair. It should be an equal opportunity service, but what they do in terms of organizing what actually happens at grassroots events to make it happen, that's really leadership. If they [women] all quit, none of these events would happen. It includes the young people who are organizing whatever it is that they happen to be doing. It includes all of the Tibetan language class teachers, it's very grassroots up, you know?

This revised model was in alignment with Palden's observation about women not being recognized for doing grassroots work and allowed people to see women (and other excluded groups) as leaders in the community. Ngodup added that she thought of leadership as those individuals who perform actions. Thus, anyone who was active in the community should be seen as a leader. She stated:

I think of leadership as just doing. So I think there are so many and this is the interesting thing is we, we have, I mean me too, leadership as in “the leader”: a person who has the title but I think of leadership as the doing.

Despite the differences in scope, the agreement among these three TWLs was that leadership should be grassroots-centered, which would make it community-centered in the Tibetan context. Regardless of the specific model, participants identified that the current concept of leadership excludes women and those without formal roles despite their contribution to the community and thus should be redefined.

Gender roles. All TWLs interviewed described the double standards they faced because they were women. Often, these gender roles showed up in both their lives in the Tibetan community and also when they were performing leadership roles, but TWLs experienced gender roles differently. Ngawang stated that the reason why these gender roles existed is because “it all comes down to a very patriarchal, a double standard society that we’re living in today.” Though only three TWLs directly mentioned patriarchy through the interviews, everyone spoke about the double standards they felt in the community.

These gender roles placed limitations on people and TWLs alike. Kunchen described her frustration with communities that try to limit the capacity of individuals and the collective due to existing gender roles in the social fabric. She stated:

it’s of particular interest to me cause I’m cis-gender in this lifetime, and I’ve personally experienced how people around the world, Tibetan society included, value people differently based on their gender identity. And it feels very illogical to do that. Why would you in any way want to limit your collective capacity?...It makes no sense.

She goes on to state that she had experiences where she was dismissed and not taken seriously because of her gender. She stated, “I can remember being in a room where I will suggest something very clearly, and it’s dismissed, and then a man will say the same thing, or something like 90 percent the same and it will be hailed as a great idea.” Rinchen also felt gender roles placed on her when she and her committee members discussed the attire they should wear for an event they were organizing. She said the two women out of the ten people were pushed to wear traditional Tibetan clothing and the men to wear western formal attire. She stated:

They all felt that you know women should wear chupas (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A), traditional chupas, and men should wear suits. And the reasoning was men looked better in suits and women looked better in chupas. And I thought to myself this is an event catered for Chinese students, why aren’t we all wearing suits because we don’t want to separate ourselves from them, but another person’s reasoning was because we want to showcase our Tibetan culture and identity...Ultimately what we ended up doing because I was adamant that we shouldn’t wear chupas on that day, like women alone shouldn’t wear chupas. They ended up saying do whatever you want so if you want to wear chupas, you wear chupa. If you want to wear a suit, then you wear a suit. That was only because I was like it doesn’t make sense...so we ended up wearing whatever and after that meeting, one of the peers, younger men, came to me and said, oh, I didn’t realize you were such a feminist.

Rinchen’s experience not only highlights that gender norms may be as subtle as clothing choice, but they also show that if anyone (especially a TWL) does not conform to those gender norms, community members may see them as outsiders. In this case, “a feminist.” She found it was used in a negative way through her experience and understanding of the conversation. Rinchen was

not communicating that she does not want to wear chupa [traditional Tibetan attire for women], more so that it was impractical to do so in that situation. The peer who called her a feminist made it a point to tell her that she was different from the rest of them because she did not agree with the traditional norm.

Tashi had also felt the expectations that come with gender roles while she was leading a board meeting. People expected her to serve tea because of her gender despite her responsibility to chair the meeting. She said:

my identity as a woman, the serving tea part *gyacha gya thampa* (100 percent) because I'm a woman in that space, in the space that I was in, there was no other, there was no other women there except for *bhoemay* (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A), and so literally *bhoemay* got up and they started serving tea and then they were like "Tashi dae sho nyamdo rokpa chigashow" (For a Glossary of Tibetan Terms, please see Appendix A). And I was like excuse me? I was like I'm literally chairing this meeting. I don't have time to be pouring tea. And I didn't mean that in that oh you know I don't need to do that. Literally I had a responsibility there, and that was not part of my responsibility. And that would be literally the only reason they asked me to come and help them is because I'm a woman.

Tashi felt conflicted and stressed because of the conflicting expectations of her gender and her leadership role. She simultaneously had to serve tea and lead the meeting. She goes on to say that these expectations originated from gender norms and that the community must get rid of them.

She stated:

Earlier I was talking about the whole pouring tea, right, that also burns down to like um.. gender norms, right? Getting rid of those things. Addressing that a lot of those things are socially created.

Despite the challenges each TWL shared, there was a consensus that things will change in the future. And some organizations were already creating inclusive spaces where people did not impose gender norms. Kunchen spoke about the increased level of respect between both genders with each generation. She said:

with each generation that I see coming up, the way the young women and men interact with each other, there's more and more respect, not less.

When asked what respect looked like, she emphasized the ability to create an inclusive space where everyone was valued equally and appreciated for what they brought with them. She stated:

[respect was] being able to listen to each other and give each other's opinions equal space and valuation. And the capacity to work with, literally work together in the same space... And sharing power without having to think about whether you're a woman, or whether you're a man. you're this or that, transgender... just working at the level of people's passion, interest, capacity, training and that you start to really maximize impact as a group, as a community.

Tashi spoke about how the youth will make Tibetan society better by reshaping the context that we currently live in. And for that to happen, Tibetan society should invest in youth. She said:

That the youth are the backbone of most revolutions around the world. We are the key.

We are the next generation. We are the ones that need to be.. that need to be invested in.

Furthermore, all TWLs agreed that we need everyone's participation to resolve the Tibetan cause. Ngawang stated:

we are at a critical moment in our history...no signs of improvement. Things are changing, changing in Tibet. I think our whole idea and notion of a freedom struggle should change based on the realities that confronts us. Diasporic community ever expanding, exile is losing its stronghold. Tibetans inside Tibet are moving on with their lives and so...the onus is so big for the younger generation, especially for the millennials like you

The data revealed that long-established gender roles negatively impacted TWLs, making it harder for TWLs to be seen outside the bounds of gender in order to flourish as leaders.

Expectations of success. Three TWLs described the relationship between their expectations of success and their persistence as a leader. Sometimes these expectations helped TWLs look and feel successful. For example, education was described by many survey respondents as a quality of a good leader. And all six leaders obtained at least a college degree if not more and were seen as well educated. However, sometimes these expectations hindered the community's view of successful TWLs. Kunchen shared that the expectation of success was perceived by the community as Tibetan women getting a quality education, finding a good job, getting married, buying a house, and having children. She stated that

there will be pressure to have a certain type of education, get a certain type of job, succeed economically whatever that means. It's such a different meaning to different people. Marriage, children, raising children, there's a lot of pressure, and I think every person, not just women, needs to really think about what matters to them and why they're feeling, where they're feeling the pressure from? Whose definitions are you being pressured to fit into?

Moreover, Kunchen spoke about how difficult it was for the Tibetan community to see that Tibetan women leaders were successful irrespective of marriage and motherhood. The idea that “if you’re a woman and you’re Tibetan, you’re not doing your duty by not having children.” With these expectations of success placed on women, it is no wonder why some TWLs are seen as unsuccessful because they are doing community-work but may not have time to further their education, pursue careers outside the community, or take care of a family. For example, Tashi spoke about how many young Tibetans are encouraged to not participate in the Tibetan freedom movement full-time as it takes away from solidifying a stable future for themselves. She stated:

I think the strongest one [indicator of leadership] is just being able to contribute full time to the movement. I think that’s something that is almost taboo um, a lot of young Tibetans that grow up in exile, we know we’re encouraged by our family and our parents, and to a certain extent I would say rightfully so, our parents want us to have what they didn’t have and often times that is higher education, that is access to opportunities, to make money, to be successful in certain ways. And so I think one thing is that we’re not encouraged to strive to work towards the Tibetan freedom movement

This expectation of success creates a barrier for those who want to contribute to the community full-time because it may cause them to have doubts or be seen as less successful if they choose that path. For some leaders, these expectations become internal struggles that leaders must go through to persist as leaders. Kunchen shared:

I hope your generation doesn’t feel that same pressure, and you don’t feel judged for having children or not having children. That all of these decisions are personal and equally valid. That would be a good change to see, that’s something I’ve dealt with personally. And I’m happy where I am.

Rinchen said that these expectations overwhelmed her to the point of her considering leaving community work. She shared:

There's so many expectations that at some point, you get so overwhelmed by the expectations and the stresses that you're just like I don't wanna do any of it. And you just get dejected, and you just don't wanna participate at all.

Participants showed that certain community expectations of success push TWLs to leave leadership roles. Still, ultimately, it is up to the leaders to assess for themselves what they consider to be their expectations of success.

Lack of representation. All TWLs interviewed were aware of the lack of representation of women leaders in decision-making bodies and recognized the importance of the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) for women's representation. The participants interviewed mentioned how they were either the only woman in a decision-making body like a leadership board for a community organization, or were one of a few women there. Ngodup stated that despite more women leaders entering leadership boards, the majority of our leaders are still men. She shared:

All of our major political leaders and figures all, most are men, even at the community level there'll be a Tibetan Women's Association so often, and this has changed too, but so often the main sort of president of the community, who's seen as like the pinnacle of leadership in X or Y settlement or place, it's almost always men.

She continued to state that a consequence of this lack of representation is that young women do not see themselves reflected in the Tibetan cause or community. She said:

I am one of a handful of although there are more and more, but a handful of women leaders for, in the political sphere who end up being... I'm a role model to them: young

women and others because they don't see themselves reflected in the movement in that way too often you know?

The lack of representation deeply frustrated all TWLs because the concept of women's empowerment has been a hot topic in the community yet there are no immediate actions to create any changes. Tashi stated:

For a while now, in recent times at least, we've been talking about the importance of gender equality, gender equity, women's empowerment, and I feel like there's a lot of talking happening, but we don't actually see a lot of representation.

Tashi continued by sharing that one way to address larger systems of oppression was to put more women leaders in positions of power. She said:

I think, often times if we talk about that, then we're gonna have to address much more like larger systems of oppression including patriarchy, misogyny, sexism but I think that should just be made a lot easier if more women are in power, right?

Despite all of the work that the community has done towards obtaining gender equality, the Tibetan Women's Association remained the only organization that continues to operate as a platform for Tibetan women to take on leadership roles year after year. For example, Rinchen said that the fact that TWA was a women-only board allowed the exile community to always at least have some women leaders in the public sphere at one time. She stated:

I personally think that we need to have those saved seats for women especially in leadership roles in all parts of the community and right now only the Tibetan Women's Association has a board full of women... it has the most women leaders and if you look in India, it's the same thing over there too. It's much worse, all of the other organizations are pretty much all men.

However, only two leaders mentioned having reserved seats for women because adding diversity to leadership was seen as a positive action. Rinchen stated:

I feel like because we're so new, I feel like we need to have more not tokenism necessarily but more specific positions added to each board to represent the women in the community to say that there are, that you can be a woman leader.

Furthermore, most TWLs agreed that the lack of representation of women leaders can only disappear once the community creates more inclusive spaces for women to take on those roles and be visible in front of the larger public. Palden shared:

I think visibility matters, acknowledgment matters but also as a community as well overall being able to see and want and create space for more women to take up those positions that are beyond their usual secretary or whatever.

A survey participant verified this sentiment and said “the younger generations need to actually see Women’s face, whether on the stage or posters. When it becomes our norm, girls won’t shy away from stepping up. They’ll feel comfortable in the public eye.” This data suggested that not only does a lack of representation negatively impact future leaders, but it also negatively impacts current leaders. And to combat this problem, more inclusive spaces must be built for women leaders and by women leaders so that Tibetan women can fully exercise their leadership potential and be visible to others.

Leadership Strategies

To minimize these leadership challenges, interview participants spoke about finding Self-awareness, Support, and Balance to help guide their work and their spirits. To continue their leadership in the Tibetan Exile Community and not burn out, participants suggested reflecting and establishing a strong sense of self-awareness that could help TWLs overcome leadership

challenges. Building a support network allowed them to get affirmation and motivation to continue leading. Lastly, finding a balance in life allowed TWLs not to sacrifice their personal life in the name of the work.

Self-awareness. Five TWLs identified that building a strong sense of self was extremely important in overcoming challenges. I define self-awareness as a deep understanding of yourself: your motivations, your goals, strengths, values, and worth. Ngawang spoke about her advice to the next generation of Tibetan women and stated, “be a very strong self first and then take responsibilities. Find your footing, find your ground. Know who you are. Know your inner strengths, and then only you will be resilient in all circumstances.” A similar message of self-awareness was echoed by Palden, who said that being a strong leader did not mean that the leader was the best in everything or had to pretend to be the best. She stated:

I think one of the things that maybe I possess as a leader is that I don't pretend that I'm the best in everything, and I know I'm not the best at everything. I don't have the answers, and there are always going to be people who are better than me in other things and in many other areas.

Both leaders mentioned above discussed the importance of knowing yourself entirely and being true to yourself to overcome the challenges they may arise during leadership.

Rinchen further added that this self-awareness should come with both a drive for curiosity and also acceptance of who a leader is. She said:

another thing is knowing that you're enough and accepting yourself for that and moving forward and continuously learning so that you know that if this is something that you want to pursue, you need to build your strengths and skill set in this specific category,

and saying that's, that's just it; that's reality and not having value judgment attached to that

Rinchen's message to Tibetan women was not to take others criticisms of you seriously and to continue to focus on accepting yourself and learning about how you can be a better leader.

Many TWLs described the work they did to achieve a certain level of self-awareness as partaking in regular reflection. Reflection explored what challenges TWLs were experiencing, why they were experiencing them, how TWLs felt about those challenges, and what they could do about the situation. For example, Tashi spoke about being self-aware and knowing what a leader must do in different situations. She shared:

a good leader also needs to be self-aware, right? That means you're able to step out of your own body and, and to look at look at what type of person you are through the eyes of another person. Being aware of your biases, being aware of um your privileges, being aware of your experiences and how that can inform people around you.

Tashi elaborated further and implied that good leaders are those who are self-aware enough to know when they need to step into their leadership and when to hold back. She posited:

just being aware of your own privileges, being aware of the type of space you take up, the amount of space you take up, when are the times where you need to take up more space, and when are the times that you need to make space, right?

Things like leadership challenges became less of a burden when a leader was able to reflect on what they expected of themselves and not how others would perceive them. Furthermore, TWLs with a strong sense of self found ways to resolve the issue at hand and not get disappointed by the negativity.

Support Network. All TWLs identified building a support network as the best way to overcome the challenges they faced as leaders in the Tibetan community. A support network may be anyone who is a family member, friend, co-worker, peer, or who has provided encouragement, validation, a sense of belonging, and respect. Palden found that “facing challenges and having failures, right, but done through continuous support from people around you and encouragement from people in your life... You are constantly able to move forward.” Ngodup further adds that she believes that she achieved success in her leadership because she was a part of a brilliant team who had worked with one another for 20+ years. She said, “I think that is probably key to my leadership all these years is that I’ve been a part of a brilliant team, you know?” One reason why this may be the case could be because though the challenges leaders face can be challenging, feeling supported by another person adds to that healing and triaging. Palden stated:

because of my passion I was very involved but [it] really was through the group work that we did that I was constantly able to grow and take on new responsibilities every time. And I always felt like the team wanted me to succeed and to do better so having that environment was very important.

Kunchen described that a support network is not only something a leader benefits from, but it is also something leaders can help build for others. She stated, “I think you get through all of the hard parts by having a strong sense of your own values and then having a strong community. It becomes much more doable with that support... mutual support.” She further added that “that’s why I think another thing good leaders do is develop a good community around them. Cause you are not gonna do anything well by yourself.” Both Palden and Kunchen agreed that people who build community around them acknowledge that they are all interconnected; one’s success lies in

everyone's success and vice versa. Thus, Palden advised that the next generation of TWLs must remember to support other members of the community just as they received that support. She said:

there are people, there's a community around you that supports you and pushes you. And so you hopefully, you're able to be that kind of person that can encourage others, be there for somebody else as well, right? and move along the journey that way.

The emerging TWLs should all be building their support network so that they can depend on their supporters to support them. For Kunchen, she had a "family that is rock solid and understands and then friends and colleagues and a whole community that is just there with the ideas of service and community education, gender equality." And with that, she felt that she could give her best to her leadership. For Ngodup, it was her spiritual and political advisors that may not have been the people she worked with daily but contributed their wisdom, experience and presence. She stated:

I mean now in my old age I would say you know having some good spiritual/political like advisors. People you can go to that are... not just your immediate cohorts who are in the fight with you but people who may have knowledge or wisdom and experience that you know it would be good to just bounce ideas off of, seek solace from, direction, guidance Palden credited a few people she met in college who started her on her leadership path.

Now, she believes that the community should try to give more opportunities to young people as a way to invite them to serve the community and support them in their development. She stated:

And it was the follow up really that changed everything because if I never heard back from any of them then I don't know what I would've done, maybe I would have pursued, maybe I wouldn't. But then the follow-up, like you know inviting me to meetings,

inviting me to do things, and again as a new student on campus, you're looking for places to get to know people as well, right? And if it's especially people who think alike, people who are passionate about similar issues and things like that, I did that and I think that's one of the things we need to do more of as a community too is to constantly invite more and more people and not make it more of an exclusive group thing. The more we can expand, include, attract more people, and then from the ones who show up, give opportunities to be more involved then to be responsible for more tasks. I ended up going to the first meeting and I immediately had a task when I left the meeting.

Palden emphasized the importance of connecting with young people just as someone had done with her. Rinchen spoke about the comfort she felt working on community projects with the same team for over seven years. She said:

We basically got together again saying hey there's a need in the community, what do we do? There were needs that I needed to fill and so I just kept taking that next step and I had really good people that I felt comfortable with along the way that essentially, we went together. It was a journey together from you know high school to college.

Rinchen talked about how she makes sure the rest of her coworkers are taken care of. She said:

I've purposely and if I've been a leader in the board... I've made it a point to make sure that they're developing as much as they can too whether it's males or females. And so I've written out letters of recommendation for medical school, for business school, I've written letters of recommendation for graduate school for people that are my peers or people that are a bit younger from me because they needed that from me. They wanted something to better themselves and they communicated that that's important to them, so I helped them in that capacity.

It is interesting to note that education was not explicitly mentioned through interviews except in the instance of preparing others for development like Rinchen, but that may be because the community already assumes leaders will have a college education as shown by the survey data.

A few leaders presented a new way of looking at support. They included finding value in their heritage, upbringing and community to find the support they needed to seek to overcome challenges. Ngodup said that her complex identity gives her a connection to other Tibetans no matter the differences between them. She said:

My identity, my everything is so complicated because of that history as the child of a political, someone who was exiled from the land he was born in, against his will. I think that's really important and that's I think what really binds us all together no matter what our difference in terms of upbringing

She further added that Tibetan history acts as a base and guide for her leadership work:

we all get so much of our strength and our kind of direction from our roots as Tibetans in the community whether in the institutions like TCV or you know whatever India or you know as a result of the leadership of His Holiness or that's, that is the base.

Finally, Tashi mentioned that her current workplace has a nurturing environment where everyone felt supported and loved, something not particularly done elsewhere. She said:

you can call me bias because I work for the organization but I feel like it's very clear you can see that [my organization], you can see that women are in positions of power.

Women are taking up leadership roles, and why is that, right? I think it has a lot to do with the fact that [my organization] provides platforms and spaces for women, young, Tibetan women to feel like they are of value that they can do something that they can

bring meaningful and positive change inside of Tibet but also in exile. To empower young Tibetans to feel like we can do so much more.

Thus, she and other TWLs described the importance of building inclusive spaces for women to flourish and feel valued.

Balance. Most TWLs identified finding balance in life as a significant way to increase the endurance of a leader. Some leaders have had to make personal sacrifices that they regret in retrospect because of the considerable personal cost attached. Instead, they wished that their younger selves had found a better way to balance the personal and political sides of themselves. Tibetans leaders are often engaged in political work, due to the nature of their personal and national history, but they can dictate how much they let their political sides impact them. Ngawang spoke about the stress she was under after her tireless efforts for the Tibetan cause led to no political change after four years of activism. She said:

to be able to sense a sense of helplessness around being unhappy with what's happening in Tibet but not being able to really find right channels to express their resentment. Uh, the helplessness, I think, it, you know, it really kind of rubs me the wrong way and there were moments when I really went into depression, sleepless nights, of course, insomniac, not able to eat. It kind of really impacted my health.

She explained further that she was so focused on creating political change for Tibet that she did not have time for anything else. She said:

I kept my studies on hold. It was crazy what I did and it was not healthy at all. I barely had enough time for my own personal life so I've had to really sacrifice that for myself but on the other hand, I can't do anymore because if I do, I'll just completely break down.

Ngawang only realized this personal cost after it was too late, and she had spent four years living with this imbalance. However, she tells the next generation of Tibetan women never to lose the balance between the personal and the political as it will feel healthier for them to have a purpose to work towards but also personal goals to keep you grounded. She said,

when you ask about the challenges, there isn't a single challenge, but I think to be very precise when you mix the personal and the political, it really will wear you down, and I wouldn't advise anyone to do that

If one is missing, the imbalance will make a TWL more vulnerable. In that way, both are needed to maintain a healthy balance. This balance may be at different levels depending on who you are and your personal values but having it will help you take on any challenges the Tibetan community throws at you.

Another balance that leaders spoke about was the balance of responsibilities in their leadership positions, at home, and in other areas. Rinchen spoke about the constant juggle she had to maintain in life. She explained:

so I had to kind of do that both the inside of the home things and the outside of the home things too. I've been really busy with just even trying to maintain that home side and then maintaining the community work that I do and on top of that, the extra stuff that I do on top of that too and also school.

Rinchen's constant battle to succeed in all aspects of her life made it difficult for her to slow down and take care of herself. She explained further: "I don't have personal mentoring relationships because it's just been really hard, I'll be honest, to try and do everything. I'm trying to do everything." And oftentimes, leaders felt that they had to make a choice between succeeding in community work, or personal life, or both. Ngodup explained that people should

move away from this way of thinking so that they see their efforts as a value-add, not an opportunity cost. She explained:

So hopefully that can give us some balance in life uh and how we approach the world. um.. so yeah. I think that it's completely possible. People don't have to feel like it's one or the other. Like you can be successful yourself and you can do so much for the community too. It doesn't have to come at the cost of something else.

Furthermore, she explained that building resiliency was one way people can continue their work in the community. Ngodup stated:

I think that all of that it is resilience is key. You want people to be around for a long time. You don't want what I've seen happen time after time. Which is a small group of people step up and take some leadership roles in the movement: TYC or TWA or in the community board or you name it. And then they're active and then some controversy breaks out and they get attacked and they're like embattled and then they are really good people who then are totally jaded, and they're done. They're not involved in the political struggle anymore.

Ngodup explained further, "those are the keys to longevity...so many people in the Tibet world and especially in the ugly politics that is, that can be the Tibetan world burn out or just get disheartened." Interestingly, every TWL directly or indirectly mentioned the negative impact the community's cutthroat environment had on Tibetan women's spirit and the importance of taking care of self to continue on this leadership journey. Ngodup mentioned one way to do self-care was by "taking care of your inner and spiritual self. To take care of your emotional and spiritual self as you do all of this work." She explained that to be resilient as a leader and to continue to do this work in the community, it was important for leaders to rejuvenate their spirits and

connect back to the bigger picture. Participants identified that balance was a key skill that leaders needed to master to continue on their leadership journey and build credibility as a leader.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of my research was to determine how the Tibetan community can intentionally cultivate leadership amongst the next generation of Tibetan women. Through data collected from 42 Tibetan youth and six TWLs, I identified three main themes: Defining Leaders, Challenges to Leadership, and Leadership Strategies. The data revealed that Tibetan youth identified leaders as those who speak up, act as changemakers of our community, possess strong communication skills that help them build connection and trust with others, and are passionate about (and active in doing) community-work. Leaders highlighted a limiting definition of leadership, gender roles, conflicting expectations of success, and a lack of representation of women leaders as the biggest challenges they encountered on their leadership journey. Leaders shared that being self-aware, building a strong support network, and finding balance in life allowed them to combat these challenges and to develop resiliency as leaders.

Discussion

To understand how the community can intentionally cultivate leadership among Tibetan women, I explore the challenges current TWLs face in relation to leadership, strategies aspiring TWLs can use to develop their leadership, and strategies the community can use to support aspiring leaders. More specifically, Womanism (Maparyan, 2012) sheds light on how TWLs are changing women's roles in the Tibetan Exile Community. Furthermore, leadership development theory (Day, 2001) helps identify a way to cultivate leadership in the Tibetan context by focusing on building both social and human capital. This study identifies recommendations for both aspiring TWLs and the community-at-large that are discussed in the next section.

Challenges to Leadership

My findings confirmed extant literature that found obstacles like gender roles, narrow concepts of leadership, and expectations of success often make it more difficult for women to attain top levels of leadership (Balasubramanian & Lathabhavan, 2017; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Lor, 2013; Moua & Riggs, 2012). Interview participants spoke about the overwhelming nature of the challenges they faced. Similar to Hmong women leaders, these barriers negatively impacted community members' view of their competence, led to microaggressions against women leaders, and took them on a path away from cultivating their leadership skills and experiences. For example, leaders like Tashi and Kunchen talked about the double standards that women faced daily and the repercussions that came with not meeting those standards. For Tashi's situation, she was expected to serve tea at the same time she was chairing a meeting- a great example of how gender roles actively inhibit TWLs' ability to develop their leadership. What could have been an opportunity for her to develop her leadership ended in her having to make the choice in front of everyone: she could choose to fit the gender role, or gain a new skill and face the repercussions. Moreover, Kunchen was not taken seriously when she actively participated in meetings.

Another impact of these challenges was that TWLs felt burnt out and wanted to leave leadership roles if they did not implement the leadership strategies discussed in the findings section. The literature on Hmong women leaders confirms this and says that women leaders often have to balance many different things on their shoulders (Moua & Riggs, 2012). Whether it is balancing responsibilities at home and in leadership roles that Rinchen speaks about or mixing personal and political work Ngawang speaks about, Tibetan women leaders often have to juggle many different contexts, expectations, responsibilities and microaggressions while staying

grounded. If they lose that ground, they may make sacrifices that negatively impact them whether physically or emotionally. Literature describes this as a feeling of gaining one thing but losing another (Moua & Riggs, 2012). For the community to effectively cultivate leadership among Tibetan women, these challenges must be addressed.

Strategies for Aspiring TWLs

To combat the challenges aspiring Tibetan women leaders may face, my findings and extant literature provide insight on the importance of Womanist values (self-actualization, wellness, and self-care) in this process. Undergoing a process of self-actualization helps aspiring Tibetan women leaders understand and maximize their potential as leaders. Leaders who use wellness to guide their work build communities with the best intentions for all. Practicing self-care allows leaders to endure as leaders. In sum, these three strategies help aspiring TWLs navigate through the challenging context of the Tibetan Exile Community.

Self-actualization. TWLs used self-actualization to become leaders in the community. Recall that self-actualization is the process of becoming the best version of oneself to maximize your capacity to create change. Self-knowledge is one precondition for reaching this state and was expressed in both my findings and through the literature reviewed. A lack of self-knowledge led TWLs to feel conflicted about their worthiness of a leadership position. However, an understanding of one's self made decisions to pursue things outside the bounds of the community's expectations of success or speaking up against the status quo possible because the perspective gained was larger than just themselves. For example, instead of Palden feeling afraid to act on her values, she saw the bigger picture of what could happen if she did not intervene. She gained self-assurance through her internal values and realized that if she did not stand up to the status quo, then certain people would continue to be treated unequally. Similar to my

findings, Among women leaders and other women leaders recognized the importance of learning about one's self and using that knowledge to develop inner strength and combat challenges (Ely, Kolb, & Ibarra, 2011; Moua & Riggs, 2012; Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017). This inner strength allows women to speak out and act on their values confidently so as to create change as leaders.

Another precondition for self-actualization was self-love, and it was displayed in both the experiences of TWLs and the literature explored. Maparyan (2012) wrote that self-love was being loved and validated; she stated that a person must have the right environment to flourish in before they can become full-fledged change agents in a community. This is evident in the stories of TWLs who mentioned the challenges they faced as leaders in the Tibetan context and the limitations that were put on their leadership potential, showcasing how the environment a person is placed in matters tremendously. More specifically, TWLs mentioned creating support networks for themselves and for others so that those who wanted the support to achieve self-actualization could work towards it. Similar to TWLs, extant literature highlighted the importance of having support systems for women on their leadership journey (Moua & Riggs, 2012; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). My findings and extant literature show that for aspiring Tibetan women to be leaders, they must self-actualize.

Wellness. TWLs used wellness as a way to guide their leadership work (Ely, Kolb, & Ibarra, 2011). Maparyan (2012) described wellness as a belief that all living beings can and should flourish to their full potential. TWLs also strived to reach their and the community's full potential. When each mentioned why they chose to do community-related work, they spoke about the betterment of the community and their privilege as those who have the resources, exposure and opportunities to do it.

One way TWLs built wellness in the community was by lifting up those who worked with them or were connected to them. Tibetan women leaders built communities around themselves where they could co-create a culture of care that placed the struggle of the Tibetan community at the core. Just as Tibetan women of the past used wellness to guide their grassroots work to protest against the Chinese occupation, interview participants did the same. Whether it was Rinchen helping her coworkers access academia, Ngawang running around all of India to protest China, Ngodup actively mentoring young women, or Kunchen consistently hustling to expand and impact Tibetan communities, TWLs' basis for doing this work was because they wanted a whole community of Tibetans to be better off than their past.

TWLs utilized this method for social change because they are in positions of power and are slowly changing the culture despite the challenges encountered. Rinchen's example of "standing in" during the meeting about event attire was important for all meeting attendees to work through because that double standard for clothing may not have been questioned before. Womanists believe that little battles like this gradually help change the larger context and rectify relationships amongst people. In this case, Rinchen could choose to wear whatever she thought she should wear per event guidelines and then the other meeting attendees realized that some women did not want to be told what to wear because of their gender. My research found that using wellness to guide their work allows TWLs to interact with, and create change in, the Tibetan community.

Self-care. TWLs used self-care to achieve balance in their lives and to endure as leaders. Both the literature and Womanist theory found that women tend to put others before themselves, and this tends to result in sacrificing the endurance of a leader. Similar to extant literature (Moua & Riggs, 2012) self-care was mentioned by TWLs as something that was important for leaders to

build their resilience. TWLs encountered barriers due to their gender and cultural identities. This placed pressure on TWLs to succeed while giving up or forgetting to take care of themselves, etc. For example, Ngawang mentioned how she did everything she could for the community, mixing the personal and the political, but that resulted in her not having time to focus on herself and her personal life, health, and goals. Ngodup mentioned how important it is that leaders build resilience through their self-care in order to sustain their leadership amidst negative criticism. In sum, interview participants mentioned the importance of taking care of themselves and attaining balance in their lives.

Leaders can take care of themselves by finding or creating strong support networks where they can feel validated and a sense of belonging (Moua & Riggs, 2012; Lor, 2013; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017). Leaders who were able to find balance and support in their lives like Palden, Kunchen, and Tashi talked about how energizing their support networks were for them. These support networks were made up of their family, friends, coworkers, and the organization culture they worked in. Hmong women leaders also created informal and professional spaces where they could support each other (Hnub Tshiab, n.d.; Lor, 2013; Moua & Riggs, 2012). All in all, TWLs must incorporate self-care practices as a part of their daily leadership practice for them to be enduring leaders in the community.

Strategies for the Community to Build and Support TWLs

To help the community cultivate leadership among Tibetan women, my findings suggest that communities must engage in building both human capital and social capital. For example, TWLs spoke about the importance of developing intrapersonal skills, such as self-knowledge, self-care, balance, communications, and speaking up, which would help them build themselves

as leaders. In addition, they also spoke about building interpersonal skills such as being service-oriented, team-oriented, and change catalysts.

Develop human capital. Human capital is the specific skills and behaviors individuals build to become better equipped as leaders, and TWLs spoke about the importance of developing their intrapersonal skills. They described the need to gain self-knowledge or an awareness of their values, expectations, or priorities as a way to better guide their leadership which aligns with literature (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). In turn, this self awareness helped them gain self confidence in the decisions they made, especially when those decisions were not popular among others. Furthermore, acting on these values consistently helped community members see them as trustworthy because they were clear about who they were, what they believed in, and why they did what they did (Day, 2001). For example, Ngodup described the importance of speaking up, despite feeling intimidated, in settings where she felt others were not doing the right thing. Her decision to act on her values became easy because she had done the self-development work necessary to know what she valued, what she will stand up for, and how to communicate those values to her team so that they make the right decision. Not only does this help her cultivate her leadership, it also helps her build her credibility as a leader. Thus, the community must target cultivating intrapersonal skills like self-awareness, trustworthiness, and commitment while at the same time building communication skills that can help convey a leader's message and build their credibility as a leader. Targeting both types of skills helps TWLs maximize their impact.

Develop social capital. Developing both intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills are key to cultivating leadership (Day, 2001), however, aspiring TWLs need a safe and inclusive space to perform that work (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). My findings also suggested the importance of social networks whether for personal support, to enhance the collective work of

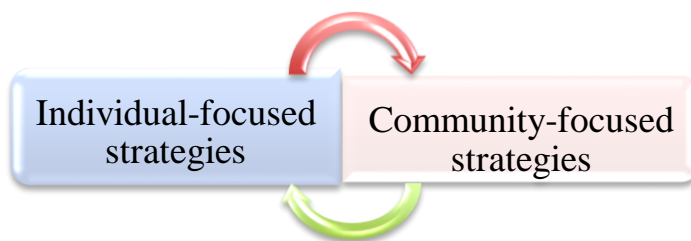
the organization, or for professional development. Tashi specifically credits her organization for providing a space where she could be herself without the labels and gender-related barriers that she would encounter at other places. This emphasis on creating social capital in an organization where individuals felt supported in who they were and how they can maximize their potential allowed for TWLs to re-energize themselves despite encountering those barriers in the larger community. Furthermore, Kunchen spoke about how respectful the next generation of men and women were to one another and how they work well together in organizations. This highlights the importance of creating social capital in organizations where everyone is involved in the work and feels like they can be their best selves to do that work.

Summary of Discussion

My analysis found that TWLs faced specific challenges that negatively impacted their ability to persist as leaders. Aspiring Tibetan women leaders can cultivate their leadership by using Womanist values to guide their leadership journey. The community must support the cultivation of both human capital and social capital to develop leadership among the next generation of Tibetan women.

Figure 2

Model for Leadership Development in the Tibetan Community



Recommendations & Implications

To decrease the barriers aspiring TWLs face when pursuing leadership and to increase the amount of women leaders in the Tibetan Exile Community, I looked towards the research on

Hmong women leaders, research on other women leaders, and my participants' responses to inform my recommendations. I noticed some patterns emerge through my analysis which helped me break down my recommendations into two types of focused strategies: individual and community. These two types of strategies have a synergy with one another and can help propel women's leadership development in the Tibetan Exile Community. All in all, I provide four strategies to cultivate leadership among Tibetan women and to foster the next generation of Tibetan women leaders.

Both the community and aspiring Tibetan women leaders must contribute towards cultivating leadership (For Leadership Development Model in the Tibetan Community, please see Figure 2). My recommendation for the next generation of Tibetan women is to seek out self-development opportunities to build their skill set and to do community work as the best way to develop their leadership. My recommendations for the Tibetan Exile Community are to create visibility of Tibetan women's contributions and to build inclusive spaces where women can develop their leadership. By following this method, we can potentially expand the number of role models for young women in the community and develop the proper tools TWLs need to handle potential challenges.

Recommendations for Aspiring TWLs

Aspiring Tibetan women leaders must prepare themselves to become and persist as leaders. My first recommendation is for them to seek out self-development opportunities to better understand themselves, cultivate key skills to help them in their leadership, and realize that leadership is an ongoing learning process. My second recommendation for aspiring TWLs is to do community-work to learn leadership and get connected to the community.

Seek out self-development. Aspiring TWLs should seek opportunities to cultivate strong communication and networking skills, discover their values and priorities, and develop a self-care regimen. Just as Hmong women leaders sought out professional and informal networks, Tibetan women leaders interviewed emphasized the importance of developing key leadership skills to do their work as leaders of their community. Moreover, young Tibetan women should seek out opportunities that are appropriate for them. Each leader developed their leadership skills by working within the community and seeking opportunities to become better leaders for the exile community. These opportunities can be provided through their own personal reflection, the community, or outside the community. For example, Tibetan women can develop themselves while they are working in the community, going to conferences to gain specific skills, leading efforts to build development spaces for others, and by taking intentional time to reflect by themselves. These skills could range from self-care practices to public speaking to conflict management. However, the main focus is that they are developing themselves as leaders, and they decide when and how to take on these opportunities. By thinking about self-development as a process where learning is continuous, women can work towards development at their own pace.

Do community work. Tibetan women should get involved in community work to start and continue the leadership process. Regardless of the challenges they experienced, all TWLs mentioned the importance of contributing to the community. Though there are times that these challenges become quite burdensome to them, they found value in doing the work because Tibet and Tibetans need their contribution. At the surface level, Tibetan women leaders are contributing to social change in our community by changing perceptions of what a modern Tibetan woman is and can do. However, at a deeper level, Tibetan women are building a new

vision of community that can increase the community's collective capacity, and it is a vision that keeps them engaged with the community. Thus, my recommendation is for Tibetan women to take that vision and start doing community work. This community work will help get new women connected to the community and the Tibetan movement, not to mention starting off their leadership career. For those already in leadership roles, continue to use the leadership strategies to minimize the challenges and persist in their leadership.

Recommendations for the Community Supporting Aspiring TWLs

The community must work together with aspiring leaders to cultivate leadership amongst the next generation of Tibetan women. My first recommendation for the community is to make more women visible in the community so that everyone does not feel that leadership is exclusive to just men. My second recommendation is to create inclusive spaces where women can be themselves and grow their leadership capacity.

Visibility of Tibetan women. Visibility is crucial for women to cultivate and exercise their leadership. Among women leaders described the importance of role models in the success of women's careers. All interview participants also noted that they were one of a few women leaders doing community work, thus, they had to experience all of the challenges that come with being an exception rather than the norm. Thus, to elevate and counter the discomfort that comes with being different and to help younger women connect to the idea of being leaders themselves (role model), I recommend that the Tibetan community leaders re-define who is seen as a leader in the community and where leadership takes place.

A few examples of how women leaders can be more visible might be through social media posts introducing TWLs and Tibetan women's history, bringing more Tibetan women into leadership positions in organizations, giving more opportunities to women to be in front of the

public, and providing formal and informal opportunities where TWLs can mentor younger generations. For example, highlighting the stories of battle of Dorje or Pema could inspire young women of today to see themselves in leadership roles within activism, grassroots work, or politics.

This increase in visibility can also counter the community's pre-existing notions of who leaders are and how women can participate in the leadership process. For example, acknowledging and highlighting both women who hold leadership roles and those who support the community from the back can help community members see women as active leaders of the community. This can provide diversity in the way women and their potential are seen by the community. Ultimately, individuals in the community may change their attitudes about their collective concept of leadership and gender roles once those definitions are broadened.

Inclusive spaces. My findings show that there was a clear call for more inclusive spaces to foster women leaders in the Tibetan community. This type of space could be both formal or informal spaces where women and men treat each other with kindness and respect, and support one another in their leadership journey. Not only will it provide Tibetan women a space to develop their curiosity, uncover their self-knowledge, access self-love, and gain important skills, this space will also take them away from the daily challenges they might encounter in the Tibetan leadership context. Butler (2003) shows that the TWA is creating that space for some women in India. Some TWLs have already pointed to a few other organizations or groups they have been a part of, and my study finds that every local exile community or organization needs to create this space.

This space would allow Tibetan women to learn key leadership skills through workshops, one-on-one mentoring opportunities, special job assignments, and group learning within women-only circles of support, the leadership boards, or within the whole organization.

Finally, my recommendation is for the community, its leaders, and the next generation of Tibetan women to be equally responsible for creating these inclusive spaces. The exile community should work towards providing young Tibetan women inclusive spaces where they may build themselves as leaders. Furthermore, young Tibetan women should seek out these spaces and cultivate their leadership. For example, Hmong women leaders have created professional and informal networks to support women and triage shared challenges. I believe that if both the community and the next generation of Tibetan women actively work towards cultivating leadership, we will foster more women leaders in the Tibetan Exile Community.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are multiple directions for future research. For example, in order to build on the findings of this study, it would be valuable to examine older Tibetan male leaders' attitudes towards women's leadership. In addition, a study about young women and how they would like to develop their leadership will be important. Finally, it would be strategic to study how CTA and other community organizations have developed leadership amongst Tibetan women and how that compares to my findings.

Conclusion

How does the Tibetan Exile Community intentionally cultivate leadership among Tibetan women? After surveying youth and interviewing TWLs, my findings revealed that leaders displayed three skills that helped them be recognized as leaders, encountered four leadership challenges that impede their work, and can execute three leadership strategies to address these

challenges. Ultimately, my findings suggest that the exile community must implement both a community-centered and individual-centered approach to leadership development in order to increase women's representation in leadership. However, this must be done in a consistent and intentional way that helps create social change in the community and brings diversity to the community's collective capacity.

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Appendix A Glossary of Tibetan Terms used in the Paper

Word	Meaning
Ama/Amala(s)	Mother(s)
Amdo	One of three Tibetan provinces
Bhoemay	Tibetan Women's Association
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration
Chupa(s)	Traditional Tibetan women's attire
Junbo lagyi yoe ah	Capable
Kongpo	City in the U-tsang province (southern Tibet)
Nyarong	City in the Kham province
PLA	People's Liberation Army
(R)TYC	(Regional) Tibetan Youth Congress
Shaesa	Formal Tibetan language
Tashi dae sho nyamdo rokpa chigashow	(come here, come help us)
TAFM	Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota
TCV	Tibetan Children's Village
TWA	Tibetan Women's Association
TWL(s)	Tibetan woman leader(s)

Appendix B Interview Consent Form

Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: Fostering Tibetan Women Leaders: Perceptions and Strategies

Researcher(s): Tenzin Nordon

You are invited to be a part of a research study. This study is called Fostering Tibetan Women Leaders: Perceptions and Strategies. The study is being conducted by Tenzin Nordon, a Masters' candidate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The advisor for this study is Sharon Radd, Ed.D. in the School of Business at St. Catherine University.

The purpose of this research is to understand how the next generation of Tibetan women can intentionally cultivate their leadership within the Tibetan Exile Community. This study is important because it will help add to the discussion on how to cultivate Tibetan women leaders. Approximately 6-8 people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to participate in this study because you were identified by Tibetans aged 18-35 as a Tibetan woman leader in the exile community.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in one 60-90-minute interview (in person or virtual) to discuss leadership in the exile community.

In total, this study will take approximately 60-90 minutes over 1 session.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw until April 1st, after which time withdrawal will no longer be possible. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There are no direct risks to you for participating in this research.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, this study will add to the literature that exists on Tibetan women leaders.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

I will take notes on the information you provide during the interview. The information that you provide in this study will also be audiotaped and transcribed. The audio files and transcription document will be saved under a pseudonym, so your name will not appear on the label of either file. All documents will be in a designated Google Drive folder. My Google Drive folder is password protected and will only be accessible by my research advisor and I. I will have a paper document that includes your name and the names of every participant in this study, and the pseudonyms that were used throughout this process. This document will be protected in a locked file cabinet. Only the research advisor and I will have access to these files while I work on this project. If any quotes are used from you, only your pseudonym will be displayed in writing or in a presentation, and this information will be used for educational purposes only. I will never use your name in any written or presentation content. I will erase all data collected for this study, including all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you, within six months of the conclusion of the study but no later than June 2020. Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any written reports or publications.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during the course of this research study I learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, I will inform you of these findings.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at Tenzin.Nordon@gmail.com. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Sharon Radd at siradd@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to being a part of the study and agree to be audiotaped.

My signature indicates that I have read this information and my questions have been answered. I also know that even after signing this form, I may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher(s).

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Parent, Legal Guardian, or Witness

Date

(if applicable, otherwise delete this line)

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix C Survey Questions

1. What is your age?
 - a. 18-23
 - b. 24-29
 - c. 30-36
2. Would you consider yourself a member of the Tibetan Exile Community?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (if you select this then it will take you to a thank you screen and exit you from the survey)
3. What is your gender
 - a. M
 - b. F
 - c. Other (please specify)
4. Where do you currently live?
 - a. Canada
 - b. India
 - c. Nepal
 - d. United States of America (USA)
 - e. Other (please specify)
5. Where is your permanent residence?
 - a. Canada
 - b. India
 - c. Nepal
 - d. United States of America (USA)
 - e. Other (please specify)
6. What qualities does someone display when they are a leader?
7. Do you feel you are a leader in the Tibetan Exile Community? Please explain.
8. Who do you see as female leaders in the Tibetan community in exile (up to 3 women leaders)?

Please include as much description and information as possible such as their full name, position, and workplace so I am able to contact them for Phase 2 of my research.
9. What are some leadership qualities you feel have made these female leaders successful? Please describe why?
10. How can we prepare the next generation of Tibetan women to be successful leaders in the exile community?

Appendix D Participant Invitation Email

Tashi Delek!

My name is Nordon from Minnesota. As you may know already, I am a current graduate student at St. Catherine University in the United States. I am doing my master's research on Tibetan women leaders, and I'm contacting you today because you have been identified as a woman leader in the Tibetan Exile Community through the first data collection phase of my research project. The purpose of my research is to explore how we can cultivate the next generation of Tibetan women leaders in the Exile Community. Thus, I need your help to inform me on this topic as you are a leader who has navigated her way to become a successful leader in our community.

To participate in my research project, I would like to interview you for 60-90 minutes in person or through Skype: an online video conferencing software. The information captured through the interview would be completely confidential and your participation in this project will also be confidential. Your participation in my research is extremely important as I am also a young Tibetan woman who is passionate about cultivating the next generation of women leaders in our community and wants to learn about what strategies leaders like you have used to become successful leaders in the Tibetan exile community.

Please do let me know if you would be interested in participating, and I can send you the consent form and schedule a time for us to meet when it is mutually convenient. If you have any questions, scheduling conflicts, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Best,
Nordon
MAOL Candidate
TNordon@stkate.edu

Appendix E Recruitment Flyer

TIBETAN WOMEN LEADERS SURVEY

WHO: Tibetan men and women aged 18-35
who live in Canada, India, Nepal and USA

WHEN: open January 10th

WHY: To understand how we can cultivate
the next generation of Tibetan women
leaders in the exile community

Survey Link:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycc4znz4>

Completely anonymous!

**Contact Tenzin Nordon at TNordon@stkate.edu for
more information or if you have any questions.**

Appendix F Survey Informed Consent Language

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a 18-35 year old Tibetan who can help shape the next generation of leaders in the exile community. This research project is being conducted by Tenzin Nordon, a member of the Tibetan Exile Community, under the supervision of Professor Sharon Radd, Ed.D., at St. Catherine University. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about young Tibetan's perspectives on and knowledge of Tibetan women leaders in the exile community. It will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

Your responses to this survey will be completely anonymous and results will be presented in a way that no one will be identifiable. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a password protected site and will only be accessible by my research advisor and I. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researchers, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project, please contact the researcher, Tenzin Nordon, at tnordon@stkate.edu, the project advisor, Dr. Sharon Radd, siradd@stkate.edu, or Institutional Reviewer Board Chair John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are indicating your consent to allow me to use your responses for the purpose of this research project.

Appendix G Interview Questions

1. You were identified as a leader in the Tibetan exile community through the first phase of this research project. Please tell me about your leadership journey and how you came to be in your current leadership role?
 - a. Sub question: How would you describe yourself as a leader in the Tibetan Exile Community? Please explain. How and why did you first get involved in the Tibetan exile community?
2. What leadership qualities do you possess? Do you feel those qualities were innate or were they developed?
 - a. Sub question: How has your upbringing helped you become a leader?
3. What challenges and contexts did you have to navigate to be seen as a Tibetan leader in the exile community? How did you build your credibility as a leader?
 - a. Sub question: What resources did you use to help you get where you are? Did you have mentors that helped you along the way? What role did attending conferences or workshops play in developing your leadership skills?
4. How does your Tibetan identity, upbringing, or culture impact your leadership?

SAY: Now we are going to shift our focus to developing the next generation of women leaders. The next questions seek your insights, observations and recommendations/advice on this topic.

5. What leadership qualities are important for the next generation of women leaders to possess? What are the best ways to cultivate those qualities?
6. What information is most important for young Tibetan women to know as they consider becoming a leader in the Tibetan exile community?