

Storytelling and Networking on Tibet: Relationships between narratives, framing and networks within  
and between two oppositional issue networks

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**Abstract**

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This study is centered on issues of storytelling, persuasion, and politics on websites: how stories are made accessible on the web and how these stories are asserted as truths. This study analyzes these issues through researching shared and contested online narratives in two competing issue networks concerning Tibet, Tibetan refugees and the Tibet Movement: an issue network in support of the Tibet Movement and an issue network based in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that generates English language propaganda in support of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) policies regarding the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan refugee relations. This dissertation project combines hyperlink network analysis (HNA) and website narrative analysis to analyze these two issue networks and the relationship between each issue network's narratives, framing strategies, network characteristics and linking practices. The results of this study will shed light on how narratives and frames are shared, contested and countered across and between issue networks and how narrative practices of persuasion are used to establish hyperlink network ties that construct web networks with specific political functions.

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## **Dedication**

To my dad, whom I miss every day

And to my mom, who reminds me that he's always with me in spirit.



## Chapter One: Introduction

Theorists, such as Benford and Snow (2000), have long emphasized the importance of strategically framing political and/or social issues to generate successful social movement recruitment and mobilization: to persuade an audience to support an issue and take action on an issue. At the heart of these framing tasks and processes is the adoption of narratives that *resonate* with an intended audience.

Variations in the degree of narrative resonance are dependent upon whether the narratives are viewed as salient to the intended audience, providing an emotional, historical, cultural and/or social connection between the potential activist and the issue (Bennett and Toft 2009; Bennet 2003; Castells 2009; Steinberg 1998) and whether the narratives are viewed as credible and verifiable to the intended audience (Benford and Snow 2000). Moreover, these framing tasks and processes are a part of an important group identity-construction project that build bridges between individuals within a social movement or amongst organizations engaging in social movement collaboration (Steinberg 1998; Wiktorowicz 2004; Poulson 2005; Mische 2008, 2003).

Likewise, this identity construction process can also establish divisions between those sharing the same framing of these social movement narratives and those that do not. This is particularly salient for social movements engaged with a politically powerful and antagonistic “other”, or countermovement. Here, social movements engage with an opposition in competitive framing processes, known as a *framing contest*, for the purpose of mobilizing their target audience as well as legitimating their own “macrolevel cultural mandate” (McCaffrey and Keys 2000, 42). In this way, they encourage members and targeted recruitment pools to act while simultaneously attempting to maintain or assert their narrative dominance in the cultural status quo. A social movement’s framing processes and countermovement’s counterframing processes also shape one another: each identify the other’s frames and vilify and debunk these frames as false, while attempting to also engage in damage control over their own frames that have been under attack. In this sense, framing practices are not just shaped by the multitude of voices that share

the same political identity and goals, but also by the voices of those standing in opposition to these goals and identities.

These identity construction processes, in which social movement frames are adopted and maintained and in which counterframes are vilified and contested, are one of the primary functions of social movement networks, known as a *socialization function* (Passy 2003). When a potential recruit engages one or more members within a social movement network, they encounter the network's narratives and frames, which are used in an attempt to resonate with the individual and encourage them to adopt these same frames as part of the individual's own political identity (Passy 2003). In turn, these networks also have a *structural-connection function* that provides opportunities for the recruit to engage in political action and a *decision-shaping function* that persuades a recruit to take advantage of these political opportunities (Passy 2003). In this way, social movement networks make up the social relations in which frames can be accessed, advanced, and used for mobilization.

This research reviews the interconnected relationships between networks, narratives, frames and counterframing through an analysis of narratives and their use in framing tasks and processes that occur on websites located within and between two opposing issue networks<sup>1</sup>. The first issue network is a social movement issue network focused on politics supporting the Tibet Movement. This network consist of websites that support Tibetan refugees and Tibetan self-determination in Tibet, whether self-determination is exercised through establishing an independent Tibet or developing greater political, cultural and social autonomy for Tibetans while remaining within the PRC's border (what from here on I will refer to as the Tibet Movement issue network or Tibet Movement network). The second issue network is made up of CCP propaganda websites engaged in extensive, persuasive, counterframing practices against Tibet Movement frames. This issue network consists of websites using primarily CCP propaganda content or content that does not deviate from propaganda narratives and frames that support

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<sup>1</sup> Issue networks are online networks of websites, interconnected by hyperlinks, and focused on a specific political or social issue (Rogers 2004).

the PRC's official position against "separatist movements," like the Tibet Movement (which from here on I will call the CCP propaganda issue network or CCP propaganda network). These two networks will be analyzed using a combination of narrative analysis, which reviews the narrative and framing strategies of a selection of archived websites to review how these strategies attempt to resonate with a web user, or a target audience,<sup>2</sup> and using hyperlink network analysis, which will measure the issue network's levels of centrality as well as the centrality measurements of each site within the issue network.

This research will demonstrate that the Tibet Movement issue network is a network consisting of interconnected multiple stakeholders and a handful of network authorities and brokers that engage in a diverse array of narrative, framing and linking strategies that are dependent upon the goals and interests of each individual site. This network consists of one or two clear-cut gatekeepers and brokers that attempt to assert a specific narrative framework that can filter throughout the network and beyond and establishes the relational context in which we find a shared toolbox of historical and human rights narratives and framing strategies. These framing strategies have multiple purposes: 1) to counter CCP frames on history and human rights, 2) to persuade and mobilize web users to take specific actions in support of the Tibet Movement, 3) to increase the salience of frames for a diverse range of web users that are not affected by Tibet or the PRC, and 4) to engage in a frame dispute within the network regarding the overarching political goal of the Tibet Movement. In turn, each site's use of different framing and narrative strategies establish the context in which the function of each website's hyperlinks can be determined. Through contextualizing the function of links per site, this research demonstrates that the Tibet Movement's

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<sup>2</sup> There are a range of potential web users or target audience members that these sites attempt to recruit or persuade, often attempting to speak to multiple audiences at once. This was the case with the Central Tibetan Administration, which provided information and news that would be of interest to an international array of English-language audiences as well as Tibetan refugees. The websites studied using narrative analysis all targeted an English-language audience, with some sites recruiting or persuading web users from a specific country, such as organizations focused on activities and politics related to Tibet in Australia and Canada. Other sites, particularly those representing activist organizations, also hinted at their target audience when requesting a web user to take part in activist campaigns in specific countries, such as the United States and England. Therefore, many of these archived sites were speaking to what has been often characterized as a "Western" audience. In this sense, as an American, I am representative of one of the target audiences of these archived websites and the narrative analysis is conducted from this perspective (more on narrative analysis, researcher subjectivity, and reliability and validity in the "Research Methods Rationale" section of this chapter).

linking practices establish networks that engage in socialization functions of political identity construction to attempt to increase resonance between a site's frames and their web user's cultural worldview and structural-connection functions that provide political action opportunities for their web users. In this way, these interrelated narrative, framing and linking practices and the structural shape of the network's relationships are indicative of the issue network's politics as a social movement: it is a network engaged in asserting its narrative framework into the global discourse about Tibet, countering oppositional frames to this discourse, and encouraging those who encounter this discourse to support their goals and mobilize to take action and become an integrated member of the social movement network.

Likewise, this research will demonstrate that the CCP propaganda issue network is a homogenous network consisting of only a few separate stakeholders with only minimal differences in centrality measurements in authority and brokerage between sites in the network. These stakeholders engage in a limited number of narratives, framing, and linking strategies to engage in asserting a set of counterframes to the Tibet Movement's frames, built through selecting from a shared toolbox of historical and human rights narratives primarily provided by the PRC's central government. This research will demonstrate that CCP propaganda network sites engage in a limited number of framing strategies, focused primarily on 1) countering Tibet Movement frames, 2) maintaining a high degree of narrative consistency across the network, 3) using strategic transformation framing processes to reinvent the cultural meaning of human rights frames for the target audience, 4) encouraging web users to travel to Tibet as a tourist, and 5) to discourage a web user from engaging in any political action in support of Tibet. This framing strategy sets up a context in which each site established hyperlinking practices that only engaged in socialization functions: sites attempt to encourage web users to identify with CCP frames through providing the web user with limited encounters to other sites, which results in CCP frames appearing as highly consistent, harms the Tibet Movement's frame credibility, and strongly discourages the web user to engage in politics related to Tibet. In this way, these interrelated narrative, framing and linking practices and the structural shape of the network's relationships are indicative of the issue network's political function as a

propaganda tool: it is a network engaged in asserting its narrative framework into the global discourse about Tibet, encouraging those living outside of China to travel to Tibet and discouraging those who have not done so from participating in Tibet Movement-related political activities.

By focusing on narratives and framing within and between these issue networks, this project acknowledges the need to contextualize social movement narrative and framing strategies on websites in the following ways: 1) as occurring within a context of intricate and shifting social relationships established through hyperlink connections and shared narrative artifacts (e.g. copied text, images, and videos), and 2) as occurring in a framing contest<sup>3</sup> context with an opposition's issue network, which is also established through a process of strategic linking and framing practices that places pressure on a social movement to produce and promote counterframes. In turn, these narratives and framing strategies also contextualize the function of hyperlink relationships found within the issue network itself through providing the social, cultural, and narrative context in which each website's individual hyperlinking strategies are embedded. Through contextualizing narratives and frames in their macro-social structures (as expressed by hyperlink networks) and contextualizing individual hyperlinking practices in their narrative and framing contexts, we can tease apart the interconnected relationships between narrative, framing, and linking practices within each issue network, see how these practices are shaped by stakeholders within a network as well as due to narrative and framing pressures from an opposition's network, compare how these two issue networks differ in these practices, and what these differences can tell us about the politics of each issue network.

In these ways, this research is an investigation of storytelling, persuasion and politics in the Tibet Movement and in CCP propaganda: it describes how these stories are made accessible on the Web and how they are asserted as truths to their web audience. To this end, this research contributes to the field of social movements through demonstrating the importance of 1) considering narrative and framing practices

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<sup>3</sup> As noted earlier in the introduction, a framing contest is the name for the process of framing and re-framing that occurs when a social movement and counter movement engage in attacking and rebutting attacks about their frames (Benford and Snow 2000).

and strategic linking practices at the micro-level of individual websites when analyzing a social movement's hyperlink networks and the relations between network members, 2) considering the role of counterframing processes inside and outside of social movements when reviewing the narrative, framing and linking practices of a social movement and the macro-network structures they produce, and 3) demonstrating that social movement hyperlink networks carry out many of the same functions as social movement networks of individuals (in this case, socialization and structural-connection functions). Likewise, this research contributes to studies on Tibet and China, such as John Powers' (2004) research on Tibetan refugees, Chinese propaganda, and Western scholarship about Tibetan history, propaganda, and politics, through adding a social movement theory perspective that focuses on the role of narratives, framing strategies, and network relationships amongst stakeholders concerned with Tibet.

## **Literature Review**

What follows is a discussion of the theoretical and empirical literature that outlines the conceptual framework of this study. The conceptual framework is based upon two premises, which, in the most simplistic terms, can be summarized in the following way: narratives matter and networks matter. Narratives are powerful: they can evoke emotions and shape identities, the political perceptions of an audience or web user. If a narrative is framed in a way that resonates with a web user's ideals and values, then these narratives can mobilize a web user to take political and financial actions that support political causes that may not be inherently central to the web user's own daily life or personal experiences. Networks matter in that they are the social relational structures in which narratives take place. Networks, whether made up of relations that interact and communicate face to face or established via information and communication technologies, like the internet and mobile phones, provide structures of opportunities for social movements and marginalized communities to challenge the narratives of powerful oppositional stakeholders (such as governments) and to connect to a broader array of potential political recruits. In this way, narratives and networks are inherently intertwined in a process of power: the potential for a narrative to be powerful enough to persuade an intended audience depends upon strategically choosing frames that

make cultural and ideological sense to their audience as well as exposing the narrative to the audience through moving the narrative across networks.

Below, this conceptual framework of the narrative-network relationship is teased out through an analysis of several areas of literature. The first section reviews framing theory in social movement literature. The second section analyzes the theoretical relationship between networks, frames, and narratives in social movements, including the process of power in narrative-network relationships and whether online network relationships provide marginalized communities greater political opportunities. Following these sections, I then discuss the website network context that will be under investigation for the rest of this study and the relationship between networks, narratives and frames in this particular online context.

### **Framing and Narratives in Social Movements**

It is crucial to understand how frames are important for generating and sustaining interest in a social movement and the role that narratives play in the production of social movement frames. The Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda issue networks share a concern for the same historical events, politics, communities and identities—the same narrative building blocks— but frame these narrative pieces in radically different ways. That these narratives are produced for English-speaking websites suggest that their intended web users are members of the Tibetan refugee and international community who speak English as a first language (which includes the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand—many of which are powerful players in global economic, media, and political networks) or as a second language (which includes the citizens of many nations from around the world). Therefore, understanding how narratives function in social movements at a theoretical level can highlight why certain types of narrative choices are made in each network and their intended function in relation to a social movement's anticipation of an audience's interests, identities and desires. Furthermore, framing theory has a long history and useful toolbox of terminology with which to better understand the strategic

processes that take place when telling narratives to a target audience and how these narratives are framed and reframed within and between issue networks.

At the forefront of framing theory are researchers, David Snow and Robert Benford, who have focused on the significant importance of framing as a process of producing representations of political issues and identities for the purpose of shaping local, national, or global community perceptions. Snow and Benford's works have delineated a key set of useful terms and their definitions for better understanding framing, their characteristics, processes, and power in social movement organization and success. First, social movements have to engage in *three core framing tasks*: 1) *diagnostic*, 2) *prognostic*, and 3) *motivational* (Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). These three tasks are used to focus blame or responsibility for a problem (diagnostic), articulate a proposed solution to a problem (prognostic), and provide a rationale for taking action to solve the problem (motivational) (Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). These tasks shape social movements and function to foster agreement across actors and to facilitate political action (Benford and Snow 2000).

Frames are also constructed through three other processes: *discursive processes* that occur in dialogue between movement members, *strategic processes* (also called *frame alignment processes* (Snow et al. 1986) directed towards recruitment, mobilization and acquiring resources, and *contested processes*, developed during periods of tension between actors within a movement or with an opposition. Of these processes, I will attend to strategic processes and contested processes as these are more critical for understanding the websites within the two issue networks and discursive processes between movement members is outside of the scope of this research.

Strategic framing processes are goal directed, and consist of four types: 1) *bridging*, 2) *amplification*, 3) *extension*, and 4) *transformation* (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988). Bridging processes are those that link between two frames that are ideologically compatible but unconnected, such as women's rights frames and labor movement frames (Benford and Snow 2000).



These processes allow a social movement to connect to recruitment pools of other social movements regardless of whether these pools are already mobilized or not mobilized (Benford and Snow 2000). Frame amplification strategies are “the idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs” (Benford and Snow 2000, 624). Here, social movements tap into their own frames and embellish or amplify those that appear congruent to the values and narratives in play in a targeted audience’s own culture. Snow and Benford note that this strategy can be an effective one for a social movement trying to reach audiences who may not be directly affected by the movement’s success (Benford and Snow 2000). Frame extension processes are those that include new interests or goals that are beyond the primary interests of those who will directly benefit from the success of the movement (Benford and Snow 2000). While this strategy can connect to recruitment pools that are beyond the scope of the movement’s adherents, this strategy also has the potential to harm the movement through potentially alienating or offending its own primary adherents (Benford and Snow 2000). Last, frame transformation processes are those that occur when a movement reinvents the meaning of a frame already in play in the targeted audience’s culture (Benford and Snow 2000).

In terms of contested processes, *counterframing*, *frame disputes*, and *dialectic between frames and events*, only counterframing and frame disputes will receive attention here as they are most prevalent in the two issue networks. Counterframing refers to framing that occurs amongst opponents, or those engaged in a framing contest (the process of framing and re-framing that occurs when a social movement and counter movement engage in attacking and rebutting attacks about their frames) (Benford and Snow 2000).

The types of counterframing practices that occur in these contests are well defined by McCaffrey and Key’s (2000) journal article on counterframing in debates about abortion. McCaffrey and Keys delineate three types of counterframing strategies, *frame debunking*, *frame saving*, and *polarization-vilification* (McCaffrey and Keys 2000). Frame debunking strategies are “efforts of SMOs to advance their own ideology by discrediting competing ideologies” (McCaffrey and Keys 2000, 44). Here, social

movement organizations (SMO) publicly critique and discredit the opposition's frame, in turn, preserving their own social movement's framing of a political issue. Frame saving "denotes SMO efforts to rescue a frame that has been challenged or denounced" (McCaffrey and Keys 2000, 44). This is similar to frame debunking in that the purpose of the strategy is to preserve one's own frame from attacks. However, unlike frame debunking, which explicitly attacks the opposition's frame, this strategy focuses instead on preserving and strengthening the SMO's own frames from the opposition's attempt to discredit and attack these frames. Polarization-vilification is a commonly used strategy that attempts to create a distinct dichotomy between the social movement organization and a vilified and malevolent opponent (McCaffrey and Keys 2000). This has the effect of creating distinct boundaries between the social movement and the opposition, constructing narratives that formulate a reality of "good" (the SMO) versus "evil" (the opposition). Each of these counterframing strategies indicate that social movements acknowledge and react to an opposition's frames and are constantly adjusting strategies and having to develop a strategic response to those with power outside of their own social movement.

Frame disputes are another types of contested practice, but unlike counterframing, which occurs between a social movement (or SMO) and an opponent, frame disputes occur internally within the social movement itself (Benford and Snow 2000). These framing practices occur when there is disagreement within the movement about diagnostic or prognostic frames (Benford and Snow 2000). In these disputes, movements argue over either the specific location of blame or the proposed goals of a movement. Frame disputes also occur regarding frame resonance (Benford and Snow 2000). These disagreements regard what frames are best for mobilizing large number of potential recruits.

In regards to the above broad array of framing processes and tasks, Benford and Snow (2000) also state that frames have variable features that determine how successful they are in their scope, influence, and capacity to mobilize. These variables are the 1) problem identification/locus of attribution, 2) levels of flexibility/rigidity/inclusivity/exclusivity, 3) variation and interpretive scope, and 4) resonance (Benford and Snow 2000). Each of these variables affect the range of potential recruitment

pools that can be reached, their potential effectiveness when engaging with these recruitment pools, and the ability for certain frames to develop into *master frames*<sup>4</sup>, frames broad enough in scope and flexibility to be used across movements as a type of cultural and political narrative toolkit (Benford and Snow 2000). For example, if there are multiple problems identified within a social movement frame (problem identification), then the frame can address multiple social groups; likewise, if a frame has high levels of inclusivity in terms of the narrative themes that it contains, then the more ideas it can incorporate and more likely it can turn into a master frame (Benford and Snow 2000).

Of these variables, however, the most important in terms of mobilizing potential recruits is *resonance*. Snow and Benford's (1988) emphasize the importance of using frames to shape perceptions in a way that resonates with its intended audience. If framing resonance is successful, a social movement organization has the ability to thrive, enhance membership, and gain support and much needed resources. If an organization is unsuccessful at constructing a political vision or identity that resonates with the public, then the organization is likely to fail or, at best, have minimal success.

The degree with which a frame can resonate with its targeted audience is dependent upon two factors: the *credibility* of the frame and the *salience* of the frame with the audience (Benford and Snow 2000). A social movement's frame's credibility is reliant on *frame consistency*, *empirical credibility*, and *perceived credibility* (Benford and Snow 2000). Thus, a frame must appear consistent and without contradictions within (and outside) of the social movement, it must appear to be empirically verifiable in the world, and those articulating the frame must also appear to be credible authorities. The level of salience that a frame may have is also dependent on a series of interdependent factors: the *centrality* of a frame, the *experiential commensurability* of a frame, and *narrative fidelity* (cultural resonance) of the frame (Benford and Snow 2000). For frames to successfully mobilize a population, they must appear to speak to the values and beliefs that are of central concern for the audience, they should be consistent with

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<sup>4</sup> Social movements and social movement organizations can have their own movement-specific sets of master frames. For chapters two, three, four and five, any usage of the term "master frame" will refer to movement specific master frames unless otherwise specified.

the everyday experiences of the audience, and they should have *cultural resonance*, speaking to the cultural myths, ideologies and narratives of the target audience (Benford and Snow 2000). If the problems identified in these frames are less central to a targeted audience's everyday experiences, then the greater the need to promote a frame's cultural resonance or centrality.

Another aspect of Snow and Benford's (1998) framing theory is their conceptualization of framing processes as occurring as a top-down process, where certain political or social frames are produced by gatekeepers and then disseminated through media (such as print, video, or the internet). While gatekeeping is crucial to understanding Snow and Benford's framing concepts in terms of the a frame's potential to enhance recruitment and conduct successful mobilization activities, Gamson (1992) moves framing from the domain of the social movement leadership into the hands of grassroots participants engaging in dialogue. Using a social psychological approach, with an emphasis on human agency, Gamson (1992) constructs a theoretical perspective on framing that views these processes from a micro-level of analysis: interpreting framing processes as a negotiation of meaning amongst potential social movement participants rather than a broadcasting of frames from gatekeepers to potential recruits. Here, Gamson (1992) and Snow and Benford (1998) demonstrate that framing processes and tasks can occur at the macro and micro level: they can be broadcast from above or can be negotiated from below.

Thus, framing theory can help us to better understand how narratives are used in social movement persuasion and recruitment practices through adopting narratives that are salient for both the social movement and the target audience. Framing theory also helps us understand how strategically adopting and adapting these narratives using framing tasks and strategic framing processes shape a targeted audience's political identity and reality and can motivate them to act. Furthermore, it is evident that framing can occur through powerful gatekeepers, as well as negotiated and ongoing amongst individuals in a social movement. I now turn to literature that describes the interplay between narratives, networks, and new technology. Through this branch of literature we can better understand the role of networks in social movements, the importance of narratives, how narratives and framing are understood in network

contexts, and the potential impact that online networks may have in providing social movements greater opportunities to promote and distribute their master narratives and master frames to alter politics.

### **Narratives, Networks, and New Technology**

If framing is important to understand the cultural and emotional heart of politics of persuasion and mobilization that occur in social movements, then a network approach to social movement studies can illuminate the role that relationships between two or more parties play in the spread, maintenance, contestation, and negotiation of social movement frames and narratives. In studies using a network approach, one can analyze the micro-networks of individuals that lead to an individual making specific choices and behaviors that support a social movement as well as study the macro-networks between social movement organizations as they establish coalitions, collaborations, and other large-scale inter-organizational social structures (Diani 2003). As Mario Diani (2003) noted in his introductory chapter in *Social Movements and Networks*, understanding networks in these two different relational contexts not only provides an understanding of the micro and macro social structures of movements, one that can be empirically identified and quantifiably measured, but can also direct our gaze to the centrality of culture (as expressed through shared narratives, discourse, and ideologies) in establishing new social connections and maintaining older ones.

For example, Florence Passy's (2003) study of two Swiss political organizations demonstrates how networks are interactive sets of relations that connect individuals to a social movement organization through these interactive meaning making social structures. Here, networks have three specific functions in relation to social movement recruitment: socialization functions, structural-connection functions, and decision-shaping functions (Passy 2003). The socialization function establishes the initial disposition in an individual to participate through allowing the latent political consciousness of an individual to identify with a cause through interaction with others of similar values in their social network (Passy 2003). In this sense, the socialization function provides an interactive space in which a potential recruit encounters the cultural and narrative framework of the movement organization and its members and, through

interaction in the network, engages in a political identity-construction process that strengthens their identification with the organization's cause. The structural-connection function moves the participant from identification with a movement and its goals to connecting the individual to movement opportunities for action (Passy 2003). This second function provides the political opportunity to a potential recruit: it makes political opportunities accessible. The third function, decision-shaping, are when the social ties of an individual motivate the person to actually take part in a specific movement activity (Passy 2003). This third function indicates another interactive aspect of the individual network that helps the recruit to make the final decision to take action. Therefore, Passy (2003) illustrates just how understanding social network ties can determine the likelihood of whether an individual is likely to be recruited into a movement and to take action once recruited. Furthermore, Passy (2003) sets forth a series of conditions that must be met before an individual decision can be reached to take action: a set of interactive relations that encourage a shared set of cultural values and cultural identity along with providing a recruit with access to political opportunities.

Anne Mische's (2008, 2003) work on Brazilian youth activist networks also demonstrates the importance of taking a network approach to social movement research. Mische (2008, 2003), like Passy, understands network relations as interactive meaning making structures that can provide insight into how individuals and organizations can collaborate on specific political issues even when they do not share the same expressed social goals. Taking both a micro level and macro level approach in her investigation of social network structures, Mische (2003) investigates how the process of framing occurs through talk, or interactive dialogue as activists move within and between different social networks. In this approach, Mische (2003) is able to account for the adjustments that occur in the way activists talk to specific audiences. Through this study that combines rich ethnographic data, interviews, and empirical data on the structure of activist networks and activist career trajectories, she is able to describe a set of core conversational mechanisms contingent upon the shifting experiences of networks relations (Mische 2003). Here, Mische (2003) focuses on better understanding the cultural mechanisms, here produced in

conversation between individual movement actors, that establish the roles and relations found in individual social movement networks.

Manuel Castells' (2009), *Communication Power*, has investigated the relationship between narratives, networks, and social movements in relation to processes of political power, including the possible impact that information and communication technology (ICT) networks may play in potentially levelling the political playing field in a way that favors social movements. Castells' (2009) macro-level studies of global networks (such as transnational financial and media networks) provide a detailed view of how these processes can occur to establish successful (dominant) social movement narratives. Castells (2009) situates power as a process: a series of interactions between the various nodes in social and technological networks. Castells (2009) links macro-network structures of large-scale global networks to the micro-neurological networks found in the human mind. These neurological networks are what produce emotions, which rely on communication protocols of language that use frames and narratives to attach certain values to a political issue that can invoke these emotions in others (Castells, 2009). Thus, the power of media, financial, and political networks relies on their ability to both produce messages that resonate with local frames and narratives that evoke specific forms of emotion in the populace, as well as manage and define the types of frames and narratives that are used in mediated communication and adapted at the local level. In other words, the network power of large governments, corporations, and NGOs relies upon their ability to use value-laden messages that resonate with local audiences and their cultural contexts.

Frames, and the narratives that use these frames, are of particular importance for the study of narrative-network relationships. Meaning-making processes (such as narrative creation, development and dissemination) are important for effective social changes to occur; social movements or marginalized communities desiring political change against a more politically powerful other, must "reprogram" (Castells, 2009) communication networks, altering the frames and symbolic meaning presented in messages of the status quo. In other words, social movements must create new value messages that make

the public think and feel differently about an issue (Castells 2009, 412). These new values can then be disseminated via communication networks of mass communication and, what Castells (2009) calls, *mass self-communication* (the producer-as-user communications style of digital networks). The mass self-communication of the internet can help social movements and marginalized communities, like refugees, to find pathways to mass media networks that block (or are disinterested) by the concerns of the marginalized community. Castells (2009, 413) states, “The greater the autonomy of the communication subjects vis-à-vis the controllers of societal communication modes, the higher the chances are for the introduction of messages challenging dominant values and interests in communication networks”. In other words, new information technologies have provided greater opportunities for social movements to present their alternative messages to the public; however, according to Castells (2009), what is crucial for a movement’s message to take hold is the resonance of the way sets of values– and the emotions attributed to those values– are framed in the messages, and the necessity of connecting, or finding ways to present one’s messages to media, financial and/or political networks in the global society. Here, Castells (2009) views the Internet is an important communication space amongst a network of relations. The internet is a means to disperse messages and have greater accessibility to new audiences and a tool for developing new network relationships: not only networks of online organizations, but also financial and mass media networks as well.<sup>5</sup> It is through establishing successful cross-network relationships that a social movement will have the greatest success.

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<sup>5</sup> I believe that this aspect of Castells’ (2009) framework highlights what has set Tibetan refugee communities apart from other refugee groups in terms of international popularity and carrying a relatively high degree of narrative and political power (in the sense of having international government leaders meet with refugee government officials and the Dalai Lama). The Tibetan refugee community has also made relationships with celebrity networks, academic networks, and international religious networks. While the internet has certainly played an important role in helping to disperse Tibetan refugee political views and generate financial support for the refugee community, the celebrity of the Dalai Lama, the mass mediated presentation of celebrity supporters such as Richard Gere, Harrison Ford, and Adam Yauch, popular academics in Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, such as Robert Thurman, and converted Buddhist practitioners studying under Tibetan refugee religious leaders, have also played a prominent role in popularizing Tibetan refugee politics and interests in American popular culture.



### **Taking Narrative, Network and Framing Concepts to Website Networks**

As theories of networks and culture have been applied to studies on internet activism, scholars have investigated how the web is being used as a tool for mediating these frames and shaping audience perceptions about a political or social organization, issue, or identity. Furthermore, community narratives have also been cited as an important source for understanding how stories can shape the construction of social movement Web networks and establish certain organizations as online narrative gatekeepers. In Bennett, Foot and Xenos' (2011) comparison of Fair Trade issue networks in the US and UK, the authors suggested that narrative conflicts within an issue network tend to correlate with a more centralized, rather than decentralized, network of sites. In these centralized networks, there are one or several dominant organizational websites that attempt to maintain a dominant narrative (Bennett, Foot and Xenos 2011). Moreover, narratives in the network that focused on the importance of political participation led to website producers providing greater opportunities for a web user to engage in political participation (Bennett, Foot and Xenos 2011). Thus, the narratives used on issue networks can impact the choices web producers make when establishing physical links to different sites.

If we attempt to focus on the processes that occur between narratives, frames and networks within a context of interconnected websites, we find ourselves focused on a social network made up of an array of organizational and individual actors, each represented by a single website. Each of these actors carry out narrative and framing processes in a network of relations constructed via hyperlinks. Each hyperlink can be viewed as an *inherently social and strategic act* (Jackson 1997) embedded within a web producer's culture, history and personal agenda (Park and Thelwall 2003; Park 2003). In the case of Tibet Movement websites, there is a clear connection between an organization or actor's online social network, as represented via hyperlinks, and their offline social network. Several Tibet Movement organization websites contain board members listed as staff or board members at other organizations and this board

member data showed that some members have direct links at the leadership level to multiple organizations<sup>6</sup> (see network map 1).

For social movement actors using websites, hyperlink networks are the online relations within which a social movement's narratives flow to their membership and potential recruits: they are the relational context in which narratives and framing tasks and processes are found. Moreover, as will be shown in chapter four, these hyperlinks are established in each website's own storytelling process. Each of these hyperlinks is an online artifact, whose specific function is framed by the narratives and frames of the website. In this way, hyperlinks are the tools that establish specific network functions such as socialization and structural-connection functions (Passy 2003). Thus, hyperlinks are the artifacts that signify an ongoing context of relations in which website narratives and framing strategies take place and, in turn, website narratives and framing strategies are the context in which hyperlinks are established, often with a clear purpose, as will be seen in the following four chapters.

## **Research Questions**

The following three research questions predominantly concern uncovering, comparing and contrasting the cultural, historical and political narratives within each network and between each network and examining how these narratives are used to frame a web producer's political, social or cultural agenda. These questions also investigate the relationship between narratives and framing choices and a website's outlink choices as well as the overarching relationship between an issue network's hyperlink network structure and narrative structure. The research questions have been divided into three areas of inquiry: narrative themes, frames, and network-narrative relationships and are followed by data collection

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Lodi Gyari, who was a special envoy to the Dalai Lama from 1990-2012, has interpersonal connections to several different organizations in the network, through his role as Speaker to the Central Tibetan Administration Parliament (1979-1982) (ICT 2014b), his role as Chairman of the Conservancy for Tibetan Arts and Culture (CTAC 2009a), Executive Chair of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT 2009e), and founding editor of Tibetan Review in 1967 (Tibetan Review 2009). Other examples are Tenzin Dorjee, who was listed as Executive Director at Students for a Free Tibet (SFT 2011m) and as a member of the International Tibet Network's Steering Committee (ITN 2009a), and Dolkar Lhamo Kirti, who is listed as a member of the 14th Tibetan Parliament-in-exile (Central Tibetan Administration 2010), President of the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA 2011a) and Treasurer of Tibetan Nun's Project (Tibetan Nuns Project 2011).

questions. These questions will examine the narratives found within a single site and will compare and contrast the use of narratives between sites and contextualize these narrative choices within the hyperlink structures of the two issue networks and contextualize individual hyperlinks within frames and narratives choices. In turn, the combination of data of narratives, frames and networks will point to how these relationships reflect the types of politics found in each issue network.

Narrative theme questions ask what kinds of historical and human rights narratives were found on websites within each issue network. While websites were observed showing a broader range of narratives in the network, including themes of environmentalism, analysis of data was limited to a selection of themes on history and human rights as a discussion of other themes fall beyond the scope of this research. Questions about narrative frames examine how individuals, groups or organizations adopt and adapt particular framing tasks and strategies to achieve specific political or organizational goals. The final set of questions on narrative and network relationships examines when narratives and frames are shared or contested within and between issue networks, whether there are relationships between a website producer's narrative choices and hyperlink choices, and whether there are relationships between the structural characteristics of the network and the narratives and framing strategies found in the network. These set of questions contextualize the narratives themes and frames found on each website in its relational context, while also contextualizing hyperlink choices in the context of a site's meaning-making practices. Answers to these questions will illuminate the relationship between narrative, framing and hyperlinking choices that web producers make and how the culmination of these practices in the network, establish issue networks that reflect the characteristics of each network's form of political engagement.

The three sets of research and data collection questions are as follows:

#### *Narrative Themes*

1. What narratives are found on websites in the Tibet Movement issue network and the CCP Propaganda issue network?
  - a. What historical and/or political events do they describe? (ex. Tibetan Uprising, Chinese occupation, earthquakes)

- b. What human rights stories do they describe?

#### *Narrative Frames*

2. How are these narratives used to frame the current status of Tibet, Tibetan refugees and/or other political and/or historical events and issues pertaining to Tibet and China, and (in the case of the Tibet Movement issue network) align the Tibet Movement with the values of someone visiting these websites and persuade the web user to support the Tibet Movement or (in the case of the CCP Propaganda issue network) persuade a web user to agree/support CCP narratives and frames?
  - a. How are narratives of Tibet's history used in specific framing tasks and processes?
  - b. How are narratives of human rights in Tibet in specific framing tasks and processes?

#### *Narrative and Hyperlink Relationships*

3. What are the relationships between a site's narrative choices and hyperlink choices?
  - a. Are the narrative themes and/or frames of a site shared with narrative themes and/or frames found on other Web sites within the issue network and/or within the opposition's issue network? In what ways? In what ways are they distinct?
  - b. Do sites with shared narratives and frames or contested narratives and frames link directly to each other within an issue network? If so, where does the link originate, where does it transmit, and for what purpose?
  - c. Do sites engaged in a framing contest directly link to the opposition in the other issue network? If so, where does the link originate, where does it transmit, and for what purpose?
  - d. Is there a correlation between a network's overall relational structure(s) and their narrative and framing strategies?

In what follows is a description of the methods of data collection and analysis that were used to answer each question.

### **Research Methods**

This study began with a hyperlink network analysis using the Rogers' (2009) IssueCrawler tool to generate hyperlink data on two issue networks: the Tibet Movement network and the CCP propaganda network. This initial IssueCrawler HNA served as a foundation for selecting the website samples that would make up the archived dataset for the narrative analysis portion of this research project. Once websites were selected for narrative analysis to answer the three sets of research questions, HTTrack<sup>7</sup> was set up to archive the selected websites that would run concurrent with the IssueCrawler tool to capture the

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<sup>7</sup> HTTrack is an open source web archiving software that can be found at <http://www.httrack.com/>.

hyperlink network data of both issue networks. After several trial runs with HTTrack and IssueCrawler, it was discovered that it would take HTTrack at least one week to capture the depth of data desired for the narrative analysis. Therefore, two IssueCrawlers were run during the time of the archival process: one at the beginning of the week and one at the end of the week of the HTTrack archive run. In this way, the final HNAs provided depth to the narrative analysis by illustrating the structural context in which the narratives occur over a period of one week.

In what follows is a description of hyperlink network analysis and narrative analysis methods, the rationale for their usage in this study, methods of data collection, the results of data collection, and the methods of data analysis. Any alterations made in methods or data collection while these processes were ongoing are also discussed as well as providing the rationale for why these changes were made.

## **Research Methods Rationale**

### *Hyperlink Network Analysis*

HNA developed out of social network analysis (SNA), a quantitative method used to map social structures at the individual and organizational level. As mentioned in the literature review, analyzing hyperlinks via HNA usually signifies a researcher's assumption that linking is an inherently social and strategic act (Jackson, 1997) that is embedded within a web producer's culture, history and personal agenda (Park, 2003; Park and Thelwall, 2003). In this way, a link indicates a social connection between the actors represented by each website. Examining the hyperlink networking structures of websites provides insights to the characteristics of relations between websites (and the organizations they represent) within a network of websites and how strategic web design choices affect a user's experience of a site and the type of information that is accessible from a site (Jackson, 1997). Therefore, many HNA studies have focused on the hyperlink network structures of specific organizations or social movements, such as social activist or political websites and blogs, to uncover strategic political connections held between organizations (Tremayne et al. 2006; Garrido and Halavais 2003; Rogers 2000). Other HNA

studies analyze the potential of the web as a social equalizer that restructures levels of authoritative information (Rogers 2004).

Outside of understanding hyperlink network ties, HNA has also been used to set boundaries around data for undertaking qualitative methods of research and developing samples. Howard (2002) combines qualitative ethnographic methods with quantitative social network analysis to propose a method of network ethnography, which he suggests is useful for studying organizations or collaborative social networks that consist of members (be they individuals or other organizations) from disparate parts of the globe that communicate using new communication technologies. Howard (2002) developed and applied this method in his study of political hypermedia organizations. He analyzes the benefits of ethnography's production of rich descriptions that highlight the use of narratives, the co-construction of community symbols and ritual, while assessing ethnography's problems as a method for studying new media, particularly when one's subject matter is found predominantly online (Howard 2002). The processes of sampling in an online environment with unknown or continuously changing boundaries and the lack of knowledge about an independent computer user's social context are aspects of online research that hinder traditional forms of ethnographic research (Howard 2002). Likewise, social network analysis, while providing a macro-scale context of relationships between organizations and individuals, is unsuitable for analyzing qualitative research questions regarding meaning, identity and the use of narratives in a social network; therefore, a secondary method is needed (Howard 2002).

Howard's (2002) methodological solution of network ethnography uses social network analysis as a means for generating purposive samples and field sites, providing the overarching social context in which observation, interviews, and other ethnographic methods can be conducted. He outlines four benefits of researching hypermedia organizations via network ethnography: 1) field selection can be based upon important nodes in the social network where interaction occurs amongst participants, 2) researchers have greater control in their management of sample bias, 3) the dynamics between the two methods can help develop questions for inquiry and identify field sites and participant samples of

importance, and 4) it allows the researcher to track changes in network structure and ideas over time (Howard 2002).

Other researchers have also applied methods of network analysis in combination with other methods to further investigate the relationship between macro-structures and micro-cultural processes and productions. Bennett, Foot and Xenos (2011) use hyperlink network analysis to compare two Fair Trade issue networks through the use of IssueCrawler. The results of the crawler mapped the structural properties of the two different networks, which were then compared to the prevailing narratives of each network that had previously been generated through rich descriptions (Bennett, Foot and Xenos 2011). These descriptions were developed through analyzing the narratives found on Fair Trade websites and conversations with Fair Trade activists and experts (Bennett, Foot and Xenos 2011). Finally, the researchers conducted a content analysis of a selection of sites within the network (Bennett, Foot and Xenos 2011). In this way, methods of network analysis are used to select samples for other methods like content analysis, much like Howard's (2002) use of SNA for ethnographic field site selection. However, unlike Howard (2002), Bennett, Foot and Xenos (2011) used qualitative methods rather than HNA to identify the seed sites that would be used to generate the HNA.

This project adapted Howard's (2002) suggestion of using SNA to select a sample of field sites from the web and used HNA in conjunction with a secondary method of analysis (narrative analysis). Therefore, the HNA conducted in this study—in the form of IssueCrawler-derived data—provided a selection of sites from which a sample was selected for archiving and narrative analysis. The HNA also provided a structural view of the relationships within the issue networks. Unlike Bennett, Foot and Xenos (2011), HNA was used first, as a method for creating a website sample, and then second, as a contextualizing factor that helped to answer the third set of research questions on narrative and hyperlink relationships; thus, situating the narrative analysis within the relationship structures between the websites in the issue network. Therefore, the HNA provides a macro-view of the certain types of organizations that are prevalent in the network, the strength of their relationship with other organizations in the network, and

whether a specific type of organization or cluster of organizations demonstrates a high level of authority in the network or acts as a broker in the network. The HNA also answered questions on narrative and hyperlink relationships, showing co-link relationships within each issue network as well as the relationship between narratives and a site's status as an authority, or broker based on measures of in-degree, out-degree, and node betweenness centrality of a site in the network.

### *Narrative Analysis*

The primary method for analyzing each site's content and their application of hyperlinks on specific website pages was narrative analysis, which was used to answer all three sets of research questions. As a method, narrative analysis is extremely useful for answering certain kinds of questions that focus on complex, subjective meaning-making processes, especially those questions that center on identity (which is of relevance to the research questions on Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda issue network narratives). In particular, narrative analysis can help us to understand how people deal with disruptions to their identity (Riessman 1993) and the experiences, of what Webster and Mertova (2007) call, "critical events", for the purpose of making sense of subjective experiences and give them meaning within the totality of a life story or worldview. Narrative analysis can also uncover how people (and organizations) interpret social reality in ways that empower, or disempower, certain individuals or groups (Moisander and Eriksson 2006).

There are several challenges in relation to using narrative analysis. First is the challenge of defining a narrative and whether a researcher will take a Russian formalist or French Structuralist approach based on temporal or causal sequencing (Riessman 1993), or whether a researcher will analyze a text or discourse as narrative in a way that is unbounded by temporal or causal sequencing (Riessman 1993). Second, the epistemological underpinnings of narrative analysis generally take subjectivity as rule of thumb and view any reading, analysis and retelling of narratives as subjective works. All narratives are representations and studies of narratives are likewise representations, therefore, as Riessman (1993, 8) states, "we cannot give voice" (an often-stated anthropological goal) but "hear voices to record and



interpret". This leads to two separate challenges: 1) demonstrating a researcher's validity and reliability in their results as multiple interpretations of a narrative are possible (Riessman 1993; Webster and Mertova 2007) and 2) the need to place a narrative in context as a narrative's meaning can alter depending on changes in the social, cultural and temporal context in which a narrative takes place (Riessman 1993).

Regarding reliability and validity, Webster and Mertova (2007) state that due to the process of representation inherent to the research process, multiple interpretations of a narrative may be valid and validity is best determined when a narrative is grounded in the collected data. They suggest using measurements such as access, honesty, verisimilitude, authenticity, familiarity, transferability and economy when determining the validity and reliability of results when conducting narrative analyses on critical events (Webster and Mertova 2007, 93--102). These measurements concern the relationship between the researcher and participants, the availability of data to participants and the research community, and maintaining self-awareness as a researcher, including the assumptions and perceptions one has when entering the field.

In terms of the challenge of contextualizing narratives, ethnographic work has demonstrated that the context in which the story takes place may alter the way the story is told (Riessman 1993). For example, Mische's (2003, 2008) work on Brazilian youth activist networks situated narratives within a context of social networks between individuals and their respective social movement organizations. Through following her participants as they moved from one youth group context into another, she was able to see how they adapted their messages for a specific audience in order to build successful collaborative relationships (Mische 2003; 2008). Malkki's (1995) study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania highlighted how the identity of refugees altered depending on the geographic and social context of the narrator. And Bek-Pedersen and Montgomery's (2006) interviews with adolescent Middle Eastern refugees in Denmark, described how the context of the family (whether violence was present in the family) affected the ways adolescents described violence in the homeland and their ability to establish positive social relations with other citizens in their host country.

In narratives told through mediated communication, the context in which the narratives are written, heard, seen or read still plays an important role. Moisander and Eriksson (2006) analyze corporate documents of Nokia to analyze how corporations tell stories about employees, consumers, and users of their products. Here, narratives were contextualized within the complex set of power relations that take place within a corporation, between corporations, and relationships with consumers (Moisander and Eriksson 2006). In the case of message forums, Busch (2011) considers how Buddhist narratives shape and legitimate certain forms of social and technological controls that places limits to Buddhist identity and establishes specific forms of Buddhist orthodoxy. Here, religious narratives transformed these forms of control into religious beliefs and practices. Moreover, Foot, Warnick and Schneider's (2005) study on website memorials after 9/11 compared the functions and characteristics of memorializing on individual and organization/institution Web sites. The authors found that the type of producer creating the narratives only accounted slightly for the types of practices found on each site (Foot, Warnick and Schneider 2005). Thus, while offline narrative practices of memorialization were distinct to their specific types of producers (individual vs. organization), online, these narrative practices converged, suggesting that the web provides a different social context in which narrative types and functions may work in a different way from their offline counterparts. Bennett, Foot and Xenos' (2011) work on narratives and networks (discussed above) also demonstrate the importance of computer-mediated contexts, where they contextualized online narratives in a context of website relations, or perhaps in this case, narratives contextualized the network relations of the websites.

To answer these methodological challenges, this study first took a broad approach to defining narratives, adopting both French Structuralist/Russian formalist views of narratives that describe a sequence of events that retell past experiences, such as a historical narrative, (Barthes 1977; Franzosi 1998; Riessman 1993) and a topic-centered view of narratives that occur around a specific theme, such as stories collected, categorized, and connected under a specific human rights theme. Identifying narratives through a French Structuralist and Russian Formalist approach highlights the agency of the teller of the

story in determining which events she will choose to tell: the narrator is a crucial part of the narrative and can decide the direction of the plot outside of the various elements that make up the whole story (Riessman 1993). In this sense, Structuralist and Formalist views highlight the importance of the context of the storyteller and their potential intentions in selecting elements in the process of storytelling. Likewise, topic-centered narratives, which are less bounded by a beginning, middle and end, are also useful for understanding how a storyteller may link events in a narrative based upon a theme, not based upon a sequence of events that occur with a specific set of actors (Riessman 1993).

Second, this research recognized that the spatial and temporal characteristics of issue networks and the individual websites within networks contain specific challenges in terms of how one goes about contextualizing narratives in order to conduct a reliable and valid narrative analysis. Websites are often in a constant state of production. Websites of organizations, like the ones generated through the HNA of Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda network sites, are frequently updated, use content from other sites, and are collaborative projects in which all those involved in its production may not be in face-to-face contact with one another. Websites are also situated within a network of relations between other websites: relations established through linking between non-profit organizations, blogs, transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and refugee community groups. These links may also change throughout a specific time period making the possibility of mapping certain social relations to narrative types extremely difficult. In other words, the day one does the HNA and finds a set of website relationships does not mean that by the time one does a narrative analysis on one of the sites that these sites are still engaged in a social relationship represented via hyperlinks. Furthermore, when conducting a narrative analysis on a site (a lengthy process) a researcher could be viewing one part of the site while other pages are concurrently being updated and changed, perhaps completely altering the website's narratives.

This study attempted to resolve challenges of reliability, validity, and context through archiving websites and any pages outlinked to an individual website within a specific date range during which time

network data would be collected via IssueCrawler. This created a series of “snapshots” of websites and hyperlink network relationships that allowed this researcher to review the data when needed, as well as collecting a dataset that could be available to other researchers or interested individuals to test the results of the narrative analysis. Archiving multiple sites within a short date range also allowed for narrative comparison at a fixed time period. Therefore, narratives produced on these sites could be viewed as they existed at approximately the same date and time and can be situated within the hyperlink networks that existed at the time the archive was created.

Finally, this study acknowledges that the epistemological foundation of narrative analysis requires that a researcher establish validity and reliability through acknowledging her own subjectivity and role in the representation of the narratives found on these sites. On archived sites, I, the web user, made my own subjective decisions as to which narratives I encountered first, second, and third. I also attempted to maintain self-awareness about my own assumptions, perceptions and reactions as I encountered narratives in the archive through writing out my own reactions to the narratives that I encountered throughout my narrative analysis memos. In this way, I attempted to remain aware that my representation of the narratives and framing strategies on these sites are also a reflection of my historical, cultural and political context as a white, educated, American woman in her thirties. In this sense, I am one of the many possible target audiences that these sites are attempting to recruit and persuade.

In summation, narrative analysis has become a useful tool for researchers interested in questions about identity and other forms of subjective meaning-making. In particular, narrative analysis can illuminate how people interpret their social reality to empower, or disempower, individuals, groups, organizations, governments, or even, themselves. The epistemological foundation of narrative analysis creates certain challenges in terms of reliability and validity that can be managed through archiving narrative and HNA datasets through tools such as HTTrack and IssueCrawler, as well as maintaining awareness and reflection about the researcher’s own subjective role in representing narratives. In the case of studying narratives online, there is the necessity to contextualize a narrative text as a part of a website’s

own narrative and range of narratives that it hosts, as well as to contextualize the narrative within the network of website relations. In this way, I was able to contextualize online narratives within a network of relationships with other online actors.

### **Methods and Results of Data Collection**

The first data collected and analyzed were the results of the initial IssueCrawler HNA, which provided a selection of sites from which a sample was selected for narrative analysis. Preliminary URLs were selected for use in the IssueCrawler application for the purpose of establishing the two issue networks through HNA. Preliminary URLs were selected according to guidelines on the IssueCrawler's "Instructions of Use" (Govcom.org), which suggests that URLs be selected from links pages listed on a site that is deemed important to the network or having a good overview of various websites that concern a specific issue. The Tibet Movement issue network URLs were adopted from Tibet Online's (tibet.org) links page entitled "Tibet Web Sites" (Tibet Online 2010b). This site was chosen as a space for choosing preliminary URLs due to its stated goal to "counteract the disadvantages Tibetans face in their struggle against the vast resources of the Chinese government. We level the playing field by leveraging the Internet's ability to harness international grassroots support for Tibet's survival" (Tibet Online, 2010). Tibet Online (2010) accomplishes this aim through functioning as a URL repository, constructing and hosting Tibet-related websites, and teaching technical literacy to Tibetan government-in-exile administration staff. URLs were selected from Tibet Online's "Tibet Web Sites" page as the URLs lead to a wide variety of major organizations run by Tibetan refugees, international NGOs, and American and European non-profit organizations that support the development of culture and education within the exile community (Tibet Online, 2010b). To create this issue network, a total of twenty-two sites were used in the IssueCrawler (see table 1), which included sites such as, *Voice of Tibet* (vot.org), Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (tchrd.org), Tibet Fund (tibetfund.org), and Free Tibet (freetibet.org).

The URLs to develop the CCP propaganda issue network derived from two websites' URL lists: China Tibet Online (eng.tibet.cn) (previously known as China-Tibet Information Center) and the *People's*

*Daily's* China Tibet Online (chinatibet.people.com.cn). These two sites were selected as they were the top two sites in English on Tibet found during a Google search on China's Google search engine (google.cn) conducted on March 15, 2010. Google.cn filters many sites made by Tibetan refugees from their results list leaving CCP-supported sites to dominate the first page of results.<sup>8</sup>

China Tibet Online is an English-language website disseminating news occurring within the TAR as well as information on Tibetan culture, politics, travel, religion, sports and lifestyle. From the "News" tab on this website were fourteen "Hot links" leading to websites on Tibet and China (China Tibet Information Center 2010a). These "Hot link" sites included the *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, TibetCulture.net (en.tibetculture.net), *China's Tibet* (en.tibetmagazine.net), China Human Rights (chinahumanrights.org), *Xinhua News's* "Focus on Tibet" (chinaview.cn/Tibet) and Tibet Human Rights (en.tibet328.cn). From these "Hot links", only seven were about Tibet or expressly dealt with Tibetan issues and one of these links, *Xinhua News's* Focus on Tibet, was defunct. Therefore, from this site, five websites were chosen as preliminary URLs.

The *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, the second site from which URLs were gathered for the IssueCrawler, is produced by the *People's Daily*, a newspaper in China that publishes in multiple international languages and whose senior staff are appointed by Central Propaganda Department (Brady 2008). Like China Tibet Online, the *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online also informs the user about Tibetan news, religion, culture, travel, economy and politics within the TAR. This site listed links about Tibet at the very bottom of their homepage in a section entitled, "Website Links" (People's Daily 2011a). Three URLs out of the seven listed at the bottom of the website's homepage were selected as two URLs had already been selected from the China Tibet Online (i.e. Tibet Human Rights and TibetCulture.net), one URL was defunct and one URL lead to the large news site, *People's Daily Online*

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<sup>8</sup> Google.com and Google.hk (Google's Hong Kong search engine) are unfiltered and Tibetan refugee sites dominated the results of a 2011 search using keywords such as "Tibet" and "Tibet and China". By October 21, 2010, Google China's search engine (google.com.cn) only hosted an image of the Google.cn logo and search form, which upon clicking, redirected all users to google.hk when a user clicks on the image.

(english.people.com.cn), which was not specifically focused on Tibet. The websites chosen were the China Tibet Tourism Bureau (www.xzta.gov.cn/yww), China Tibet Online (eng.tibet.cn), and *China Tibet News* (english.chinatibetnews.com). In sum, a total of nine sites about Tibet were chosen as preliminary URLs for the IssueCrawler (see table 1).

The IssueCrawler was left at default settings according to govcom.org's (2010) instructions for locating an issue network. Crawler privilege starting points—a setting that allows a user to retain URL starting points in the results after one iteration (Govcom.org, 2010)—remained off. The setting for iterations by method, iterations being the two-step process the crawler takes to view which two starting points have an out-link in common (Govcom.org, 2010), was set to two, meaning that this two-step process happened twice. The co-link analysis was also conducted by page (which allows for an analysis by page of a site rather than by the networks between site homepages) to provide greater specificity and depth to the crawl rather than creating a network map that only considers homepages of a site during the crawl (Govcom.org, 2010). Crawl depth was set to two, which limited the crawler to only generating URLs in a network that are within the page of the URL listed and those URLs listed one page deep from the listed URL (Govcom.org, 2010). The ceilings for the crawl were left at default settings allowing only 500 URLs crawled per host, 40,000 URLs to be crawled per iteration, and only 100 co-linked by pages returned per iteration. These settings were kept at default levels to set practical limits to the time needed to conduct the crawl. The co-link analysis limit of 100 pages were also kept low as the sample required only the top 100 sites to be listed since the sample size for the narrative analysis was to consist of a small, diverse selection of websites in the network and did not intend to be an exhaustive selection of all sites in the network.

While the IssueCrawler can perform a snowball and inter-actor link analysis, these two types of hyperlink network analyses were not used to collect and analyze HNA data. First, a snowball analysis only captures the preliminary URLs selected as starting points for the crawl and saves the URL's outlinks (Govcom.org, 2010). Therefore, the snowball analysis only shows one iteration from the preliminary

URLs rather than the two-step iteration process that occurs in a co-link analysis. This means that each website shown in a co-link HNA will have had at least two inlinks from other sites in the network whereas a snowball analysis only requires a site to have one link from another site in the network to be included in the HNA data. Requiring two links for network data is beneficial for finding sites that are central to the issue network in terms of frequency of inlinks from other sites in the network as it would exclude sites that are only linked once from another site. For example, a snowball analysis conducted on the Tibetan refugee URL starting points created a network map that included Facebook (facebook.com), *New York Times* (nytimes.com) and the U.S. Department of State (state.gov). While outlinks to these sites occur, these sites often do not represent central actors supporting Tibetan refugees and Tibetan politics. A co-link analysis on the same starting points generates network data that tends to be more focused on the specific issue under investigation (in this case, Tibet) and hence make up the issue network of Tibet. In simpler terms, as govcom.org (2010b) states, co-link analysis shows what websites “are doing” an issue.

When comparing a co-link analysis to an inter-actor analysis, depth is the primary factor. A co-link analysis allows for greater depth into the websites that make up an issue network than an inter-actor analysis. While a co-link analysis will generate a network consisting of sites that may be of greater importance than the URL starting points, an inter-actor analysis only shows inter-linking between the starting points (govcom.org, 2010a). Therefore, an inter-actor analysis may exclude sites that receive more frequent inlinks from the network than the sites selected as starting points. If many sites that are central to the issue network (in terms of their frequency of being linked to other sites in the network, including the preliminary URLs) are excluded from the data, then any attempt to situate a website within the context of relations of an issue network would only be partial, at best.

After analyzing the results of the two IssueCrawler runs, thirty-eight sites were selected for archiving (see table 2). Eight of those sites were in the CCP propaganda network, and thirty sites were from the Tibet Movement network. The small number of sites selected from the CCP network reflects the



low number of sites generated from the initial HNA results and, of these sites, the small number of sites that were in English.

After the sites were selected, I conducted a test run of both HTTrack—an open source web archiving software—and IssueCrawler. The IssueCrawler ran on 1/15/2011 and the HTTrack archive software ran for one week between 1/14/2011 and 1/21/2011. The IssueCrawler ceilings were set at 1000, 50,000, and 500 for the Tibet Movement and CCP IssueCrawler runs. When using HTTrack, I attempted to strike a balance between a desire to mirror as much of an entire site as possible within less than a week long period of time, while not overloading a website's server. This involved limiting HTTrack's connection speeds and active number of connections allowed.

After seven days of the HTTrack's run, certain site data was still not transferred to the archive and many of the CCP propaganda network sites had stopped transferring and had been blocked or cancelled by the servers (e.g. China Xinjiang, Tibet Human Rights, and TibetCulture.net). Furthermore, this complicated the use of the IssueCrawler data, which was all collected within one day: six days before the end of the archive process. In order to make adjustments to HTTrack's connection speeds and to review the quality of the data collected, I then briefly reviewed the collected sites and many of the primary pages found on the site.

A second test was conducted, this time of just the IssueCrawler, which ran on 2/5/11/ in order to see the percentage of difference between the two IssueCrawlers conducted at two separate dates within a month's period of time (the 2/5/2011 data was compared to the 1/15/2011 data). I found that enough archival data would be collected within the week long period that would comfortably compliment the data from the two issue crawls. Comparisons of the Tibet Movement IssueCrawlers on 2/5/2011 and 1/15/2011 showed an average percent difference between the page rank of each site as less than 5.032%.

As the percentage difference between the network data was so low between data collected at the beginning and end of a three week period, I conducted a final data collection run of the HTTrack and

IssueCrawler data. The IssueCrawler for both networks was set up on 2/7/2011 and ran on 2/8/2011 and 2/16/2011. The IssueCrawler ceilings were set to 1000, 50,000 and 500. These ceilings were set high in order to collect as much information as possible about the networks. The site, Guchusum ([guchusum.org](http://guchusum.org)), was not collected using HTTrack as this site was no longer available by the time of the crawl and archive period. There were also some issues with some of the websites in the archive, including the archive of Tibet Fund, which did not collect data from the entirety of the site with many images missing. It was decided that there was enough materials on the front page with which to conduct some analysis. Furthermore, it was discovered at a later date that the web design stylesheets (css) for some websites also did not transfer to the archive.<sup>9</sup> For a final list of the thirty-seven websites archived for this project, please review table 2.

It was also discovered that several CCP propaganda sites that had been chosen for the sample set due to their location in the CCP propaganda issue network at the time of the first crawl, were no longer within the network, such as China Tibet Travel Bureau and PressClubofTibet.org ([presscluboftibet.org](http://presscluboftibet.org)). As a preliminary analysis of these sites all appeared to show that the narrative themes and frames did not deviate from those found on the other archived sites, and as most of the CCP propaganda network content appeared to come from artifacts that had been copied and pasted on other major sites found throughout the network, it was considered acceptable to keep and analyze this content. Furthermore, while the Tibet Movement network had only a small amount of change in the network between the first and second crawl (approximately 5% difference), the CCP Propaganda issue network had changed dramatically from February 8<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>. For example, sites such as Show China ([en.showchina.org](http://en.showchina.org)), China Xinjiang ([chinaxinjiang.cn](http://chinaxinjiang.cn)) and Women of China ([womenofchina.cn](http://womenofchina.cn)) were only found in the issue network data from February 16<sup>th</sup>. After reviewing the CCP propaganda archival data, it was found that the archive

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<sup>9</sup> This occurred for International Campaign for Tibet ([savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org)), Free Tibet ([freetiebt.org](http://freetiebt.org)), Australia Tibet Council ([atc.org.au](http://atc.org.au)), and International Tibet Network ([tibetnetwork.org](http://tibetnetwork.org)). The lack of these site's stylesheets in the archive became evident once the original websites transferred their content to a Wordpress (<http://wordpress.com/>) format. The archive's failed attempts to retrieve each the stylesheets from these sites means that the archive still retains the content (e.g. text, images, hyperlinks), but not the formal web design (e.g. background colors and images, some banner images, font type).

collected content, such as articles that had been posted up through the 16<sup>th</sup> of February. Furthermore, hyperlinks were also located in the archive that transmitted to sites only found in the IssueCrawler network data on February 16<sup>th</sup><sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the IssueCrawler data from the 16<sup>th</sup> was considered the primary context from which to situate the content of these sites for both the Tibet Movement issue network (see network map 2) and the CCP propaganda issue network (see network map 3).

### **Methods of Data Analysis: HNA and Narrative Analysis**

After archiving the sample, I conducted a deep reading of the narratives found on each site and created rich memos for each narrative reading. As noted above, a broad definition of narrative would be used in terms of collecting data on narratives. This definition would recognize narratives through a structural-functional approach (Riessman 1993), such as a written text that tells a story about a refugee's journey from Tibet to India, as well as topic-centered narratives that link events by theme, such as stories or images of religious oppression.

While conducting a deep reading of the texts on each site, I generated thick descriptions of each site's narratives. These thick descriptions included descriptions of the written text, images, other multimedia, and any notable hyperlinks that link to pages located on external sites (for example, links from news articles found on another website, or links to sites considered as important resources for the web user), as well as information regarding the organization, governing body, online community or individual claiming authorship of the site, the website's stated goals and the basic structure of the website. After completing the memos, I condensed and organized the data into categories of narrative types and into categories of framing tasks and strategies types as defined in the framing literature. These data helped develop cross-site comparisons within a network and between networks.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in the archive, Tibet Human Rights transmits a link to China Xinjiang (Tibet Human Rights 2011e). Likewise, the front pages of Women of China and China Human Rights (also archived via direct external links established on Tibet Human Rights) linked to China Xinjiang (Women of China 2011; CSHRS 2011). Without these links having already been established, China Xinjiang would not have appeared in the CCP propaganda issue network, as was evident in the network data from February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 when co-linking to China Xinjiang within the network had not yet have occurred.

In regards to the HNA data collected, I used the software program, Netminer, to create spring maps of the two networks and to measure the centrality of the whole network, or the degree centralization index score,<sup>11</sup> as well as the centrality of each site within the network based on in-degree, out-degree, and node betweenness. Whereas measures of in-degree centrality can indicate authorities or gatekeepers in the network, actors of high prestige that receive links from a large number of unique URLs in the networks, measurements of out-degree and node betweenness centrality indicate brokers in the network, websites that bridge between large numbers of unique URLs. In this sense, a website can act as an intermediary that as web user must pass through to move from one site to another. Through analyzing a site's centrality in the network (both in, out, and betweenness centrality) we can view how a site may be influential in the network, the direction of influence in the network, and the level of prestige or authority of a site in the network. For example, a site that transmits large number of outlinks to other sites, but does not receive any inlinks, may be influential in terms of their ability to direct a user to almost any site in the network. A site that only receives inlinks from large numbers of sites in the network, but does not transmit outlinks, may have a high degree of influence in the network as a "narrative expert", but is not able to influence how a user is directed to other sites within the network concerning the same issues. In another case, a site may have a high degree of centrality receiving a large number of inlinks and transmitting large numbers of outlinks between a variety of other authoritative and influential sites in the network. In this sense, a site would be an influential broker: a useful bridge for a web user interested in learning more about the Tibet Movement.

After measuring each site's level of centrality in the network and the centrality score of each network I was able to situate each site and its level of centrality within the network in relation to its specific connections to others in the network. In combination with the IssueCrawler data, which provided the web pages in which a specific link was found, I was also able to review where a site received and

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<sup>11</sup> The degree centralization index score measures the degree of inequality in a social network as a percentage of a perfect star network of the same size: the higher the percentage of the degree of centralization, the greater the level of inequality in the network.

transmitting links in order to provide even more context to how URLs are being used within a site. For example, a website may appear to receive a large number of inlinks from another website in the network data, but upon reviewing the archiving, it is found that all of these links that the site received were via a paid advertisement that the website paid another site to host throughout their site. In this case, a site may appear to have a strong relationship with another organization, and yet may not actually be called out by the organization as being an important resource (i.e. it could just be reflecting the purchase of web space). After the archived sites were reviewed according to the structural position in the network, then I re-reviewed the narrative data and primary data archive to see how narratives and networks may relate to one another in terms of the choices that a web producer makes when creating a linkage to a site.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, narrative analysis and hyperlink network analysis were the two primary methods of this study and were conducted separately, and in conjunction, to answer the research questions above. These two methods were chosen for their complimentary nature, in that narrative analysis provided a great deal of depth into understanding the content of the data collected, while HNA provided the breadth needed to understand the structural context in which this narrative data was located.

### **Why Study Tibet: The Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda framing contest as a case study**

In a practical sense, one of the strengths of studying the Tibet Movement, CCP propaganda, and the Tibet-China conflict is the immensity of English-language Web sites that claim to depict the Chinese, Tibetan, and Western point of view. These include the websites of the Tibetan diaspora, social movement websites in India, United States, and Europe supporting a resolution guaranteeing a free or more autonomous Tibet within the PRC, and the CCP-run PRC government and its affiliated (or closely regulated) news, information and tourism sites. As these sites are in English, one can assume that they have been created with the intention of having an international audience, and/or predominantly English-speaking audience. These websites combined provide a broad view of the different organization types, individuals, and political positions involved in the Tibet Movement.

The ongoing framing contest that has occurred between Tibet Movement organizations and CCP propaganda also has unique qualities for understanding the dynamics between narratives of history, human rights and movement identity, online social movement networks, and perception-shaping framing processes. While the PRC's CCP government holds the greatest amount of global political and military power in comparison to the Tibet Movement and its allies, it could be argued that it holds the least amount of power when it comes to asserting and maintaining narrative dominance in the United States, Europe and Australia. The CCP is well aware of the Tibet Movement's narrative dominance in these countries and is trying to take advantage of new communication technologies in order to alter the understanding of Tibet outside of China. Furthermore, the impact of the Tibet Movement's narrative dominance may be mitigated by, or losing ground to, constraints placed upon these nations in terms of economic dependence on the PRC and the increase in Chinese workers and students moving abroad, who still retain strong homeland ties (including political allegiances). Therefore, the issue of Tibet is an opportunity to examine relations between narratives, frames and online networks within a context of global political, economic, and social change.

## **Organization of Chapters**

As noted in the introduction, this research reviews the interconnected relationships between networks, narratives, frames and counterframing through an analysis of history and human rights narratives and their use in framing tasks and processes that occur on websites located within and between the Tibet Movement issue network and the CCP propaganda issue network. These two networks will be analyzed using a combination of narrative analysis of a selection of archived websites and hyperlink network analysis that will measure the issue network's levels of centrality as well as the centrality measurements of each site within the issue network.

This research will demonstrate that the Tibet Movement issue network is a network consisting of interconnected multiple stakeholders. These stakeholders consist of a handful of network authorities and brokers that borrow from a shared toolbox of historical and human rights narratives and framing strategies

designed to counter CCP frames on history and human rights, to persuade and mobilize web users to support Tibet Movement organizations and goals, to increase their frame's salience and credibility and hence raise their frames' resonance, and to occasionally engage in a frame dispute within the Tibet Movement. In turn, each site's narratives and frames, which occur in a context of relations between site actors, contextualize the hyperlinking practices found on each site. These hyperlink practices engage in establishing a network of sites that engage in socialization functions of political identity construction and attempts at increasing their frame's resonance and structural-connection functions that provide political opportunities for web users. In this way, these interrelated narrative, framing and linking practices and the structural shape of the network's relationships are indicative of the issue network's politics as a social movement: it is a network engaged in asserting its narrative framework into the global discourse about Tibet, countering oppositional frames to this discourse, and encouraging those who encounter this discourse to support their goals and mobilize to take action.

Alternatively, this research will demonstrate that the CCP propaganda issue network is a homogenous network where stakeholders are only minimally different in centrality and are nearly equivalent in influence and ability to connect a web user between two unconnected sites. These stakeholders engage in a limited number of narrative, framing, and linking strategies to counter Tibet Movement's frames. These strategies are focused primarily on countering Tibet Movement frames, attempting to resonate with a web user through maintaining a high degree of narrative consistency and attempting to transform human rights frames, encouraging a web user to travel to Tibet, and discouraging a web user from engaging in political actions on Tibet. These strategies establish a context in which hyperlinks engage only in socialization functions. In this way, narrative, framing and linking practices and the structural shape of the network's relationships are indicative of the issue network's political function as a propaganda tool, engaged in asserting its counterframes into the global discourse about Tibet and discouraging political activities.

This dissertation makes the above argument through the following three data chapters. Chapter two, “The Tibet Movement Issue Network,” is dedicated to describing the frames and narratives found in the Tibet Movement and how these narratives and frames are reflective of the nature of the Tibet Movement network, including the types of stakeholders involved and their politics. Chapter three, “The CCP Propaganda Issue Network,” is dedicated to describing the narratives and frames of the CCP propaganda network and how these strategies reflect the politics of the network as a propaganda tool. Chapter four, “Network and Narrative Relationships,” focuses on quantitative and qualitative data about the characteristics and levels of centrality found in the two issue networks and the context in which links were found. This chapter also discusses how these links function on websites to establish socialization and structural-connection networks. This chapter concludes with a comparison of the two issue networks and how the data reflect the differences in politics between the two networks. Chapter five, the conclusion chapter of this dissertation, draws general overarching conclusions comparing the narrative, framing and linking practices of each issue network in relation to the characteristics of both issue networks as well as insights into the theoretical advantage of approaching narrative, framing and network relationships as an interrelated set of social and cultural contexts. This chapter concludes with some insights regarding the benefit of mixed methods and an epilogue on current events in Tibet since the creation of the website archive and what the results of this study highlight about these events.



## **Chapter Two: The Tibet Movement issue network**

Tibet is a human rights issue as well as a civil and political rights issue. But there's something else too - Tibet has a precious culture based on principles of wisdom and compassion. This culture addresses what we lack in the world today; a very real sense of inter-connectedness. We need to protect it for the Tibetan people, but also for ourselves and our children.

- Richard Gere, Chair of the Board of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT 2009b)

Tibet is an occupied country. This is the most important fact to remember when working for Tibetan freedom. We are not simply working for human rights or religious freedom in Tibet, we are working to free a nation from a [sic] illegal and brutal foreign occupation...When we say "Free Tibet" we don't just mean, "Make things better in Tibet." We mean "Free the nation of Tibet from Chinese occupation. (SFT 2011k)

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the following research questions: 1) what narratives are found on websites in the Tibet Movement issue network and 2) how are these narratives used to frame the current status of Tibet, Tibetan refugees and/or other political and/or historical events and issues pertaining to Tibet and China, and align the Tibet Movement with the values of someone visiting these websites and persuade the web user to support the Tibet Movement? In order to answer these research questions, this chapter will describe and analyze narratives about Tibet's history and human rights as found on the archived Tibet Movement issue network websites.

This chapter will demonstrate that in general, Tibet Movement websites have a relatively consistent master narrative and framing strategies when it comes to the telling and retelling of Tibet's history and human rights. First, I will analyze how narratives on Tibet's history are used to engage in a framing contest against PRC historical propaganda in order to assert that Tibet is an occupied independent nation and not—as CCP propaganda would suggest—a part of China since the Yuan Dynasty (or Mongolian Empire). These historical narratives are often deployed in frame saving and frame debunking strategies that attempt to resonate with the web user through questioning the empirical and perceived credibility of CCP historical narratives. I will then demonstrate that the focus on frame saving and frame debunking processes shifts once the historical narrative of Tibet turns to the event of the People's

Liberation Army (PLA) entering the Tibetan Plateau in 1949-50. Here, Tibet Movement frames focus more on polarization-vilification strategies in the history of Tibet's occupation, which in turn contextualizes the framing of narratives about human rights in Tibet.

This chapter will then focus on narratives about contemporary human rights in Tibet, including potential human rights violations that occurred after the PLA's 1949-50 entry into Tibet. In this section, I will demonstrate how these narratives continue to engage in polarization-vilification framing strategies that depict Chinese actors as deceitful and brutal actors victimizing an inherently peaceful Tibetan people. I will also demonstrate how a broad array of human rights narratives make up core diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks that articulate blame, solutions, and calls or rationale for mobilization. I will also demonstrate how these frames engage in other strategic processes, such as frame amplification and frame extension processes, which heighten the narrative fidelity of the frames, and hence, heighten the salience of the frames for a non-Tibetan audience.

Third, this chapter will demonstrate that while there is a great deal of consistency amongst the Tibet movement's core narratives and master frames, there is narrative contention amongst some activist organizations in the network in relation to the future political status of Tibet: whether Tibet should be an independent nation (often called by its Tibetan term, *rangzen*) or provided with greater autonomy within the PRC (the Middle Way Approach). This frame dispute amongst some Tibet Movement organizations have led to these entities developing distinct prognostic frames regarding the future status of Tibet and whether the target audience should view the Tibet Movement as a nationalist movement or a human rights movement in order to maximize mobilization and its effects.

This chapter concludes by suggesting that while the Tibet Movement issue network occasionally engaged in frame disputes, there was a large amount of narrative and framing consistency for the purpose of engaging in a framing contest with the PRC, while also attempting to recruit and mobilize supporters visiting the Tibet Movement issue network. This level of narrative and framing consistency, with room

for variety and diversity, reflects the political nature of a transnational social movement that consists of a wide range of Tibetan and non-Tibetan stakeholders and their attempts to recruit from members of the international community that may have no personal or physical connection to Tibet and therefore require a narrative framework that covers a broad range of issues that may resonate with a wider range of social groups, their values and beliefs. These narrative and framing strategies also reflect the types of hyperlinking strategies in the network in which connections are made to large activist and Tibetan government stakeholders that attempt to generate and maintain an overarching master narrative throughout the network, while also engaging in linking strategies that attempt to heighten online mobilization of Tibet Movement activists and attempt to discredit CCP propaganda frames.

### **Historical Storytelling: Framing contests and contextualizing present day Tibet**

Tibet's history is often cited either in detail, or in passing, on Tibet Movement network sites to assert that Tibet's current political status is an occupied country. Detailed histories of Tibet were found on several influential activist websites in the Tibet Movement issue network, including Students for a Free Tibet ([www.studentsforafreetibet.org](http://www.studentsforafreetibet.org)), Free Tibet ([freetibet.org](http://freetibet.org)), International Campaign for Tibet ([savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org)), and Tibetan Youth Congress ([tibetanyouthcongress.org](http://tibetanyouthcongress.org)). Site producers used a diverse range of methods to construct these historical themes, such as the development of detailed chronological timelines, historical descriptions about the Tibetan flag, visual artifacts (e.g. images of Tibetan passports and money), and hosting excerpts and full text documents of academic reports, articles, and essays about Tibetan history. The most notable academic full texts and/or excerpts that were used on these websites were Robert Thurman's (1988a) "An Outline of Tibetan Culture"<sup>12</sup>, Michael C. van Walt van Praag's (1988b) "The Legal Status of Tibet"<sup>13</sup>, van Walt van Praag's (1993) "When Was Tibet Not Tibet?"<sup>14</sup>, and

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<sup>12</sup> Found on the "Tibetan Culture" pages of International Campaign for Tibet (Thurman 1988b) and the Office of Tibet, New York, USA ([tibetoffice.org](http://tibetoffice.org)) (Thurman 1988c).

<sup>13</sup> Found on International Campaign for Tibet (van Walt van Praag 1988a).

<sup>14</sup> Found on the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library ([ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html](http://ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html)) in a 1993 re-publication (Van Walt van Praag 1993) and in The Office of Tibet, New York, USA's "Historical Overview" (Van Walt van Praag 1989). Students for a Free Tibet also adopts some of the content of this text, but appears to have made several major revisions, therefore, materials from their "Tibetan History" have been cited as authored by Students for a Free Tibet (SFT 2011).

Dulaney, Cusack, and van Walt van Praag's (1998) Tibet Justice Center report, "The Case Concerning Tibet"<sup>15</sup>. These materials all constructed a history of Tibet that is designed to prove Tibetan independence prior to the PLA's arrival in 1949 and to disprove CCP claims that there was an unbroken line of Chinese dynasties that ruled Tibet since the Yuan Dynasty. Van Walt van Praag's histories were also written with the intention of building an international law case for Tibet to be considered an occupied independent country (Dulaney, Cusack, and Van Walt van Praag 1998; Van Walt van Praag 1993; 1988b).

Detailed historical accounts of Tibet's history prior to 1949, found on Free Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, Tibet Justice Center ([tibetjustice.org](http://tibetjustice.org)), Tibetan Youth Congress, and International Campaign for Tibet, focused on describing the priest-patron relationship in Tibet and the nuances in its power dynamic during the Mongolian, Ming and Qing Dynasties. These sites also detailed the independence activities of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the history of the PLA invasion in 1950 and the 1959 Tibetan Uprising. International Campaign for Tibet and other activist and government-related sites, such as the Central Tibetan Administration ([tibet.net](http://tibet.net)), the Office of Tibet, New York, USA ([tibetoffice.org](http://tibetoffice.org)), and Canada Tibet Committee ([tibet.ca](http://tibet.ca)) also provided more detailed historical accounts of Sino-Tibetan dialogue and the exile community's interactions with the UN since the Dalai Lama's exile (Central Tibetan Administration 2009a; CTC 2011c; ICT 2009d; Office of Tibet 2011). In general, sites that did discuss the details of Tibet's history kept to a similar script, although there were some exceptions to this. For example, the Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture ([tibetanculture.org](http://tibetanculture.org)) described Tibet as the center of a "Buddhist civilization" that included Bhutan, Mongolia, and Nepal (CTAC 2009d).

What follows is a description of some of the most prominent historical narratives found on the archived Tibet Movement websites. These include the Imperial Age or Yarlung Dynasty, the nature of the priest-patron relationship during the Mongolian and Manchurian empires, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's rule of Tibet, and the PLA invasion and 1959 Tibetan Uprising. I will demonstrate how these narratives

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<sup>15</sup> Found on Tibet Justice Center (Dulaney, Cusack, and Van Walt van Praag 1998) and used as one of multiple pieces of content placed together on Canada Tibet Committee's "Current Status of Tibet" web page (CTC 2011c).

are used to frame Tibet as an independent nation currently under PRC occupation. In this way, Tibet Movement sites are using strategic frame saving and frame debunking strategies to directly or indirectly counter CCP frames that depict Tibet as a historical part of China's borders since the Yuan Dynasty. In this way, Tibet Movement sites seek to decrease the resonance of the CCP's historical narrative framework through questioning the empirical and perceived credibility of CCP historical narratives. This section will also demonstrate how narratives of the 1949-50 PLA invasion to the 1959 uprising (modern Tibetan history) shift to a focus on polarization-vilification frame alignment processes that depict the PLA as militant, invading antagonists brutalizing the inherently peaceful Tibetan protagonists, which in turn historically contextualized the human rights narratives found on the majority of the archived Tibet Movement websites.

### **Tibet's Imperial Age: Independence before the Mongolian Empire**

While most of the historical narratives archived on Tibet Movement issue network sites did not spend as much time and detail on Tibetan history prior to the Mongolian Empire (sometimes called the "Imperial Age" or "Yarlung Dynasty"), those that did contain Imperial Age narratives used these narratives for the purpose of framing Tibet as an independent state that the Chinese Tang Dynasty had viewed as an equal (or greater) political power. Framing Tibet's early history in this way contrasted with PRC histories that emphasized Tibet's early intimate connection to China established through kinship ties made through Songtsen Gampo and Princess Wencheng's marital alliance (more on this in chapter three). In this way, Tibet Movement sites appear to be using frame saving strategies, such as focusing on the pillar inscription that marked the formal China-Tibet peace treaty in 821 and minimizing the importance and details of Songtsen Gampo and Princess Wencheng's marriage, except to note that she was one of two Buddhist princesses that the Tibetan king had married.

For example, International Campaign for Tibet's, "History of Tibet Before the Chinese Invasion of 1949", states that the "Imperial Age" is the first period where the region of Tibet was united by a ruler and functioned as an independent state (Van Walt van Praag 1988a). The text states that there "is no

serious dispute over the existence of Tibetans an independent state during this period” (Van Walt van Praag 1988a). Likewise, Students for a Free Tibet’s “History of Tibet” begins Tibetan history with the Yarlung Dynasty of 127 BCE and Songtsen Gampo’s unification of Tibet in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (SFT 2011), claiming that China officially recognized the geographical boundaries of a separate, unified, Tibetan nation (SFT 2011). The web page states,

Tibet was one of the mightiest powers of Asia for the three centuries that followed, as a pillar inscription at the foot of the Potala Palace in Lhasa and Chinese Tang histories of the period confirm. A formal peace treaty concluded between China and Tibet in 821/823 demarcated the borders between the two countries and ensured that, "Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet and Chinese shall be happy in China. (SFT 2011)

Furthermore, Free Tibet’s lengthy web page, “Key Events in Tibetan History,” also describes China and Tibet as separate nations at war and minimizes the importance of the marriage alliance between Tibet and China with the simple statement, “Tibet made marriage alliances with Nepal and after some initial conflict, China” (Free Tibet 2009d). Following this are several entries of dates that highlight war and political relationship between Tibet and China. Free Tibet states that Songtsen Gampo captured Chang’an, the Tang capital, and was paid tribute: an act that would indicate that Tibet was of greater militaristic power than the Tang Dynasty (Free Tibet 2009d). After establishing that the Tibetan King, Trisong Detsen, established Buddhism as the official religion, Free Tibet then states that Princess Wencheng and the Nepalese Princess, Bhrikuti (both married to Songtsen Gampo), brought Buddhism to the Tibetan aristocracy (Free Tibet 2009d). This is the only point in the timeline that Princess Wencheng is mentioned and it only occurs in conjunction with her Nepalese counterpart. In this way, Free Tibet uses frame saving strategies that emphasize the military and political power of Tibet during this historical period and minimizes the importance of Wencheng. This is in contrast with CCP narratives (as will be seen in chapter three) that depict Tibet and China as equivalent military powers (the Tibetans are often depicted as impressed with the sophistication of Tang culture) and emphasize the union between Princess Wencheng and Songtsen Gampo as a *loving* marriage that symbolizes the unique and ancient kinship ties between Hans and Tibetans. Furthermore, Free Tibet, through minimizing Princess Wencheng’s religious

influence, is implicitly challenging the CCP's narrative emphasis on Princess Wencheng as the primary instigator of Buddhism in Tibet.

These three web page examples demonstrate how Tibet Movement narratives are used to frame Tibet as an independent nation and to implicitly challenge CCP narratives about Tibet's early history. In these ways, Tibet Movement sites engage in frame saving alignment processes that attempt to rescue Tibet Movement narratives that frame Tibet as an independent nation from CCP propaganda that frames Tibet as having early kinship ties based in love and friendship with Han Chinese during the Imperial Age.

Other web texts use narratives about Tibet's Imperial age in frame debunking strategies to explicitly expose and discredit Chinese frames about the Imperial Age. One example of this is Lhadon Tethong's (2004) "China's Favorite Propaganda on Tibet...and Why It's Wrong." This text's sole purpose is to discredit CCP historical and human rights claims for the purpose of informing activists and potential supporters. In this text, Tethong argues that Princess Wencheng and Songtsen Gampo's marriage should not be seen as the official union of Tibetan and Han ethnicities since Wencheng was the junior wife of Songtsen Gampo and therefore of lesser status than his other wife, the Nepalese princess Bhrikuti (Tethong 2004). Tethong also suggests that China, having confronted the reality that this piece of historical propaganda actually promotes China as having once been politically subordinate to Nepal, has begun to decrease its focus on Gampo and Wencheng's marriage (Tethong 2004).<sup>16</sup> Here, Tethong challenges CCP's framing of the Gampo-Wencheng union as symbolic of close kinship and cultural ties between Tibetans and Han Chinese: she challenges the empirical credibility of the CCP frame as historically inaccurate and challenges the perceived credibility of CCP propaganda authors (and their disseminators) through suggesting that China has acknowledged the problems in their frame consistency (the contradiction between emphasizing the Gampo-Wencheng union while promoting China's ancient

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<sup>16</sup> The archived websites in the CCP propaganda issue network did not indicate that Tethong's claims were true, (in fact, there was a great deal of emphasis placed on the Wencheng-Gampo union, as will be seen in chapter three). However, this is a direct attempt made by the author to discredit CCP frames through challenging the frame's credibility.

and continuous historical rule over Tibet). In this way, the Tethong text is both saving Tibetan independence frames from the challenged created by competing CCP frames as well as explicitly debunking the CCP narratives and framing strategies that were found on CCP issue network sites.

In the next section, I explore narratives related to the Mongolian and Manchurian Empires and the Tibet Movement descriptions of the priest-patron relationship during these periods. This next section further explores how Tibet Movement websites use historical narratives to engage in similar frame debunking and frame saving strategies to compete with CCP historical claims.

### **The Mongolian and Manchurian Empires: Subjugation versus the priest-patron relationship**

While less space is spent on narratives about the Imperial Age, Tibet Movement websites that published histories of Tibet spent more energy in developing narratives about Tibet's relationship and political status during the Yuan and Qing Dynasties. These narratives focused primarily on detailing the political nuances and power dynamic of the priest-patron relationship between Tibet and Mongolian rulers during the Yuan Dynasty, how Tibetans view the relationship between Tibet and Manchurian rulers during the Qing Dynasty as a continuation of the priest-patron dynamic, and focus on questioning CCP narratives about a continuous and unbroken historical rule of China over Tibet, which culminated in the CCP's logic that these historical relationships indicated that Tibet ceased to be an independent nation. Like narratives of the Imperial Age, narratives about these two historical periods were often told through frame saving strategies, which implicitly sought to rescue Tibet Movement historical frames from CCP claims about Tibet officially being incorporated into China during the Yuan Dynasty and being administratively controlled by China during the Qing Dynasty. Likewise, these narratives are also used in frame debunking strategies that explicitly challenged CCP narratives that frame Tibet as a part of China due to the events of the Yuan and Qing historical periods. In these ways, Tibet is still framed as an independent nation and the empirical credibility and consistency of CCP frames are challenged to lessen the resonance of CCP frames for the target audience.



For example, Students for a Free Tibet, which shares excerpts of the same van Walt van Praag text (1989) found on the Office of Tibet, New York, USA, described the thirteenth century Mongolian-Tibetan political priest-patron relationship in the following excerpt:

As Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire expanded towards Europe in the West and China in the East in the 13th Century, Tibetan leaders of the powerful Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism forged an agreement with the Mongol rulers in order to avoid the conquest of Tibet. The Tibetan Lama promised political loyalty and religious blessings and teachings in exchange for patronage and protection. The religious relationship became so important that when, decades later, Kublai Khan conquered China and established the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), he invited the Sakya Lama to become the Imperial Preceptor and supreme pontiff of his empire. (SFT 2011)

Here, this text interprets the Tibetan-Mongolian priest-patron political relationship as a practical solution that prevented Tibet from becoming a Mongolian conquest and allowed the Tibetan Buddhist sect to gain political influence within the Mongolian court. Furthermore, the priest-patron relationship appears to be characterized as a relationship of exchange rather than as a relationship of subjugation between master and servant: Tibetans provide religious goods in exchange for Mongolian military protection. In this way, Students for a Free Tibet is rescuing the frame that Tibet continues to be an independent nation (albeit under occupation) from CCP frames that place the Mongolian-Tibetan political relationship as the point in which Tibet is officially incorporated into China's borders.

Free Tibet is less generous in framing the priest-patron relationship as one of equivalent exchange and, instead, opts for language such as "peaceful submission" (Free Tibet 2009c) of Tibetans to the Mongolian Empire. However Free Tibet does suggest that Tibetans did have some power within the Mongolian Empire that was not enjoyed by many other subjugated regions, stating that "Tibetan monks enjoyed some dominance in religious affairs, after Tibetan Buddhism was made the official religion of the Mongol Empire" (Free Tibet 2009c). Through providing this nuance to the priest-patron relationship, Free Tibet uses frame saving strategies that qualify Tibet's submission to the Mongol leaders through highlighting Tibet's unique submissive relationship in relation to other countries dominated by the Mongolians.

More explicit, frame-debunking strategies are also used in this narrative to claim that any form of submission to the Mongolian Empire would not, as CCP claims suggest, prohibit Tibet from maintaining its political status as an independent nation. One van Walt van Praag excerpt (1989) found on Students for a Free Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, and The Office of Tibet, New York, USA, also asserts that regardless of the nature of the priest-patron relationship, Tibet was never legally attached to China after the Mongolians defeated the Song Dynasty in Southern China and the Jin Dynasty in Northern China.

The excerpt states,

The Mongol Empire was a world empire and, whatever the relationship between its rulers and the Tibetans, the Mongols never integrated the administration of Tibet and China or appended Tibet to China in any manner. Tibet broke political ties with the Yuan emperor in 1350, before China regained its independence from the Mongols. (Van Walt van Praag 1989)

Here, van Walt van Praag (and the website's that adopt his text) directly refutes CCP narratives that Mongolia integrated Tibet into its administration during the Yuan Dynasty. In this way, van Walt van Praag employs frame debunking strategies that not only frame Tibet as an independent nation, but also challenges the empirical credibility of the CCP's historical narratives that claim that Mongolia's rule over Tibet led to continuous and legal rule of the Tibetan Plateau during the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

This same narrative and frame debunking strategy challenging the PRC's right to include Tibet as a part of their national border was also used on Free Tibet's (2009c), "Historical Relations between Tibet and China". Free Tibet states:

Northern Burma, North Vietnam, Korea and large areas of Siberia were likewise all part of the vast Mongol Empire, yet none are claimed by Beijing today. (Free Tibet 2009c)

Here, Free Tibet provides examples of other Mongolian subjugated countries and regions that are currently independent of the PRC nation-state to directly debunk CCP narratives and question the empirical credibility of CCP's framing of Tibet as a part of China. Likewise, Free Tibet challenges the consistency of the CCP narrative: how can China claim that Tibet is a part of China due to its inclusion in the Mongolian Empire, but not claim that they are entitled to other nation-states in which China regularly

engages in foreign relations? In these ways, Free Tibet's text is attempting to use frame debunking strategies to minimize the resonance of CCP frames on the web user.

A similar set of framing and narrative processes are evident in narratives about the Tibet-Manchurian relationship during the Qing Dynasty: a period that is heavily covered in CCP propaganda and that has the strongest historical claims to political control over parts of the Tibetan plateau. For example, Free Tibet (2009d) states that after the Manchurians captured Beijing in 1644, the Tibetans, headed by the Fifth Dalai Lama, sought out a way to establish relations with the new Manchurian rulers. In this particular narrative, Manchurian interests in Tibet are described as related to interests in improving Manchurian relations with the Mongolians, who had stronger ties with the Tibetans (Free Tibet 2009d). In 1653, the Fifth Dalai Lama is said to have met with the Manchurian Emperor, Shunzi, to establish a priest-patron relationship (Free Tibet 2009d). The site states that this meeting created conflict amongst the Manchurian Court, which feared that this relationship "would cause the Emperor to be seen to submit to the Dalai Lama" (Free Tibet 2009d). Free Tibet explains:

Whilst the Dalai Lama was granted the respect of not having to perform the kowtow, performed by most 'barbarian envoys', it was not the recognition of him as an independent head of state. The significance of the Emperor being able to summon the Dalai Lama to his court was seen as one of nominal submission. (Free Tibet 2009d)

Here, the Emperor is clearly seen as the dominant party in the relationship and did not recognize Tibet as an independent state. However, Free Tibet (2009d) provides nuance to the nature of the Tibet-Manchurian power relationship by stating that the Dalai Lama did not "kowtow" to the Emperor, and that his presence was a sign of "nominal submission," which signify that the Dalai Lama was able to negotiate a higher status than the envoys from other regions under Manchurian rule. In this way, Free Tibet is engaging in frame saving strategies to implicitly challenge CCP claims that the Qing Dynasty increased its administrative rule over Tibet.

Free Tibet further clarifies the priest-patron relationship through using a frame-debunking strategy in "Historical Relations between Tibet and China" (Free Tibet 2009c). While the site admits that

the Manchurian ambans were able to exert “some degree of influence in Lhasa” (Free Tibet 2009c), the site directly question Chinese claims that ambans and the Dalai Lama shared the same level of political influence in the Lhasa government:

Chinese claims that the ambans enjoyed "equal standing with the Dalai Lama and the Bainqen Erdeni (Panchen Lama)" (China White Paper, p.8) are exaggerated, and even during a period of Manchu expansion under the Qianlong Emperor (1736-95), they were instructed "not to interfere in the internal policies of Tibet and to refrain from exploitation" (Tibet: A Political History, p.148). (Free Tibet 2009c)

Here, Free Tibet's (2009c) frame debunking strategy challenges the credibility of China's historical narratives (as found in China's white papers) and emphasizes Free Tibet's own historical credibility through citing historical evidence from Shakabpa's *Tibet: A Political History* (Shakabpa 2010). In this way, Free Tibet attempts to increase the resonance of their historical framing of the Qing Dynasty and decrease the resonance of the CCP's historical frames of this same period.

Likewise, the van Walt van Praag (1989; 1993) historical narrative mimics the same kinds of framing strategies found on Free Tibet. The text states that Manchurian influence was most strongly felt after the Dalai Lama received Manchu protection during Mongolian and Ghorka invasions in the Tibetan plateau. However, van Walt van Praag contends that,

At the height of Manchu power, which lasted a few decades, the situation was not unlike that which can exist between a superpower and a satellite or protectorate, and therefore one which, though politically significant, does not extinguish the independent existence of the weaker state. Tibet was never incorporated into the Manchu Empire, much less China, and it continued to conduct its relations with neighboring states largely on its own. (Van Walt van Praag 1989; 1993)

Here, as with van Walt van Praag's narrative of Mongolian priest-patron relationship, frame saving strategies are used to rescue the narrative that Tibet maintained its independence throughout the decades when it received Manchurian protection and frame debunking strategies are used to challenge CCP claims that Tibet continued to fall under increasing control during the Qing Dynasty.

In this way, these Tibet Movement historical narratives about the nature of Mongolian and Manchurian influences and political power in Tibet frame Tibet as continuing to be an independent

nation-state throughout these historical periods and challenge CCP claims that these historical events saw the legal integration of Tibet into China's national borders. These framing strategies work in cooperation to increase the empirical credibility of Tibet Movement frames, which in turn, increases their frames' resonance, while decreasing the empirical credibility and consistency of CCP frames, and hence the resonance of those frames. In sum, these strategies seek to encourage a web user to question the validity of the CCP narrative and to identify and verify as credible the Tibet Movement historical narratives.

### **An Occupied Tibet: Framing history through polarization-vilification strategies**

Narratives on Tibetan history all claim that from 1911-1950 Tibet functioned as a modern independent state without any Chinese interference. In 1913, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama proclaimed Tibet's independence after Manchurian troops were returned to China following the 1911 revolution that removed the Manchurians from power (Van Walt van Praag 1988b; Tibetan Youth Congress 2011a). Between the years 1911 and 1950, Tibet issued its own currency and passports and established a post and telegraph communication system (SFT 2011), with images of passports and money—visual artifacts of Tibet's modern independence—found on sites like Tibet Justice Center (2011). Narratives framing Tibet's independence also reference the country's diplomatic relationships with Great Britain, Mongolia, Nepal, India, and Bhutan during this period, including a 1913 treaty with Mongolia<sup>17</sup> and the Simla Treaty of 1913 (Free Tibet 2009d).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> This treaty established mutual recognition of Tibet and Mongolia's claims of independent nation status.

<sup>18</sup> While the legality of the Simla Conference's draft text that demarcated the border between Tibet and India, have been heavily debated (as the Chinese only initialed the text and did not sign), this event is still considered a primary piece of modern evidence supporting Tibet's independence: it demonstrates Tibet's engagement in foreign relations with other nation-states as an equal representative. The treaty consisted of Tibetan, Chinese and British negotiators, who arrived at the Simla conference to work out trade and border disputes between Tibet, China and India. One solution put forward during the conference would have granted China suzerainty over Tibet. This solution would have allowed an inner Tibet, which included Lhasa, to retain complete control over its internal affairs in inner Tibet, while outer Tibet would have allowed the placement of 300 Chinese soldiers and one amban. The treaty also provided demarcation of the Indian-Tibet border known as the McMahon Line. However, the Chinese representative, while initialing the agreement, refused to sign and the PRC does not officially recognize the treaty. The Tibetan's recognize parts of the treaty, but not the claims of Chinese suzerainty or divisions between an inner and outer Tibet due to China's unwillingness to sign the agreement.

It is in this narrative context, in which Tibet is framed as achieving and participating fully as an independent nation-state in the modern world, the historical narrative turns to Tibet's history of occupation. While CCP histories often end with the arrival of the PLA in 1949, Tibet Movement histories include events that occurred after the 1949/1950 invasion, including the arrival of the PLA, the signing of the 17-Point Agreement, the flight of the Dalai Lama, and the uprising of March 1959.<sup>19</sup> These narratives not only continue to engage in frame saving and frame debunking strategies to assert that Tibet is still an independent nation (now under occupation), but also shift to a strong use of polarization-vilification framing strategies that frame Chinese actions and policies (which include actions of the PLA and CCP leaders as well as CCP policies) as destructive, brutal, unethical and militaristic. These characteristics are contrasted with narratives that frame the Dalai Lama and Tibetans as a people of peace and non-violence. For the remainder of this section on historical narratives, I will focus on two events: the signing of the 17-Point-Agreement and the National Uprising of 1959. These events are described in detail in the Tibet Movement network and engage in polarization-vilification strategies that provide the framing context in which a web user often approaches narratives about human rights in Tibet.

Tibet Movement narratives about the 17-Point agreement occur within the context of the 1949-50 invasion of Tibet, during which Chinese military power completely overwhelmed a fragmented and less experienced Tibetan military. It is within this context that Tibet Movement narratives state that the 17-Point Agreement was signed under duress, which frames the agreement as legally null and void. Van Walt van Praag's text (1989) from Office of Tibet, New York, USA, also excerpted in Students for a Free Tibet (SFT 2011), calls the invasion a "turning point" that led to the imposition of the 17-Point Agreement. Tibetan Youth Congress states that the invasion led to talks in 1951 between a Tibetan delegation and the PRC in Peking, during which time the delegates were "forced to sign the so-called "17-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet".[sic] with threat of more military action in Tibet"(TYC

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<sup>19</sup> Many Tibet Movement activist and government-in-exile sites also detail the history of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamshala, Tibetan attempts to bring about a resolution on Tibet at the United Nations, and dates and details surrounding the history of Sino-Tibetan dialogue.

2011d). Here, the PLA's invasion of Tibet and potential threat of greater military action of Tibet is provided as evidence that provides empirical credibility to the narrative that the 17-Point Agreement is an illegal and non-binding document.

Furthermore, other Tibet Movement websites use frame saving strategies to assert that the 17-Point Agreement as invalid due to the PRC's violation of promises made within the agreement. For example, Free Tibet (2009d) uses a full-text copy of the 17-Point Agreement to engage in frame saving strategies to highlight specific points of the agreement that the PRC has violated, thus making the agreement null and void. Free Tibet (2009d) states that the Chinese "promised not to 'alter the existing political system in Tibet' and that 'in matters relating to various reforms in Tibet there would be no compulsion on the part of central authorities.'" By placing a copy of the text in the timeline and highlighting these two statements within the agreement, Free Tibet is identifying specific parts of the agreement that Tibet Movement activists have claimed that the Chinese have violated and rescuing the Tibet Movement frame that asserts that Tibet maintained its independence despite Tibetan signatures on the 17-Point Agreement.

Likewise, International Campaign for Tibet also highlights how China has violated the agreement and that these violations led to even greater instability in Tibet. International Campaign for Tibet states,

An agreement was imposed on the Tibetan government in May of 1951, acknowledging sovereignty over Tibet but recognizing the Tibetan government's autonomy with respect to Tibet's internal affairs. As the Chinese consolidated their control, they repeatedly violated the treaty and open resistance to their rule grew, leading to the National Uprising in 1959 and the flight into India of the Dalai Lama. (ICT 2009c)

Here, International Campaign for Tibet claims that the PRC's violations of their own 17-Point Agreement was the cause of growing Tibetan resistance to the PRC, the uprising in 1959, and concurrent flight of the Dalai Lama to India. In these ways, Tibet Movement sites are engaged in frame saving strategies that attempt to rescue their framing of Tibet as a (still) independent (occupied) nation from CCP narratives that frame the 17-Point Agreement as legal and valid.

While frame saving strategies are used to narrate the validity of the 17-Point Agreement, the events surrounding the 1959 Uprising in Tibet, annually celebrated by Tibetan refugees and their allies as National Uprising Day, is told primarily through polarization-vilification strategies meant to enhance the salience of the frame and increase its resonance in the web user that encounters these narratives. For example, the most detailed description of the National Uprising comes from Free Tibet's timeline, which lists the destructive results of the uprising:

An estimated 430,000 Tibetans are killed (Chinese estimate: 87,000 killed).  
One hundred thousand Tibetans flee with Dalai Lama into exile in India...  
On 10 March 1959, fearful that the Chinese intended to kidnap the Dalai Lama and take him to Beijing, 300,000 Tibetans surrounded the Norbulinka palace. Over the next days the Uprising grew. On 12 March 5,000 Tibetan women marched through the streets of Lhasa holding aloft banners demanding Tibetan independence. Tension escalated further as Tibetans erected barricades in Lhasa's streets whilst Chinese forces mounted machine-guns on Lhasa rooftops. It is estimated that between 30,000 and 50,000 well-armed Chinese troops were in Lhasa while heavy Chinese artillery had been placed strategically outside the city. (Free Tibet 2009d)

Free Tibet's (2009d) description uses polarization-vilification strategies to frame this event as a period of extremely heightened tension during which fearful Tibetans and Tibetan women activists, armed only with banners, face a large, and heavily militarized, modern Chinese army. What follows is Free Tibet's more detailed description of the results of the military's repression of the uprising:

On 19 March the Chinese started to shell Norbulingka, prompting the full force of the Uprising. On 21 March 800 shells rained down on the palace, slaughtering thousands of Tibetan men, women and children. Even the main monasteries - Drepung, Ganden and Sera - were shelled, destroying precious scriptures and other monastic treasures. Over a few days more than 86,000 Tibetans in central Tibet were killed by Chinese armed forces. (Free Tibet 2009d)

Here, Free Tibet (2009d) uses polarization-vilification strategies to emphasize China's role in death and destruction in Lhasa and to generate an emotional response in the reader: Tibetans are slaughtered, important cultural treasures are destroyed, and the Dalai Lama takes flight and gains asylum in India. Using the same frame strategy, Tibetan Youth Congress also provides a short description of the uprising stating that the Chinese retaliated using "ruthless force" (TYC 2011d), resulting in "Thousands of men, women and children were massacred in the streets of Lhasa and elsewhere" (TYC 2011d).



Likewise, International Campaign for Tibet also uses polarization-vilification framing to describe the event of the Uprising as a historical turning point that instigated twenty years of brutality against Tibetans. The website states:

The destruction of Tibet's culture and oppression of its people was brutal during the 20 years following the uprising. 1.2 million Tibetans, one-fifth of the country's population, died as a result of China's policies, according to an estimate by the Tibetan government in exile; many more languished in prisons and labor camps; and more than 6000 monasteries, temples and other cultural and historic buildings were destroyed and their contents pillaged." (ICT 2009c)

Here, 1959 is the event that brings about this drastic change in Chinese policy with Tibet, from the PRC chipping away at the promises made in the 17-Point-Agreement to full scale chaos and destruction that devastated the Tibetan people and Tibetan culture once the PRC instigated full scale democratic reforms following the uprising. In these narratives of the uprising, Tibetans are framed as victims of Chinese brutality and oppression: peaceful protestors of men, women and children engaging in public expressions of their discontent with Chinese policies and activities in Tibet (ICT 2009c). Alternatively, the Chinese are only depicted as aggressors: "ruthless" "oppressors" engaged in the "slaughter" of Tibetans and their culture (ICT 2009c).

To conclude, the narratives describing the signing of the 17-Point Agreement and the National Uprising provide a context under which Tibet is framed as an occupied independent nation. These narratives used frame saving strategies to rescue Tibet Movement frames asserting that the 17-Point Agreement did not indicate Tibetan acquiescence to Chinese rule and used polarization-vilification strategies to depict the Tibetan people as suffering from the death and destruction at the hands of a brutal occupying force. While frame saving processes are still evident in the retelling of Tibet's modern history, polarization-vilification framing processes become more central to the story of Tibet to set the stage for human rights narratives, which make up the bulk of content on many Tibet Movement website.

In this way, narratives about Tibetan history are primarily used in frame saving and frame debunking strategies to counter CCP frames about Tibet's history and the assertion that Tibet is

emotionally and politically tied to China throughout its history. Moreover, frame saving and frame debunking strategies engage in enhancing the Tibet Movement's frames' empirical and perceived credibility, while poking holes in the CCP's frames' empirical and perceived credibility and frame consistency. In doing this, texts found on Tibet Movement websites are seeking to enhance the resonance of their own frames while also seeking to decrease the resonance of CCP frames.

Furthermore, this reliance on frame saving and frame debunking strategies only appear to shift when engaging in narratives about the PRC's invasion of Tibet, during which there begins to be a greater reliance on polarization-vilification framing strategies. This use of polarization-vilification framing continues to engage in a framing contest against CCP propaganda websites while also providing a context within which a web user may read narratives about human rights in Tibet, which are more often used as a means of diagnosing contemporary problems in Tibet in order to motivate web users to take action, either through actively supporting the Tibet Movement as a whole or a specific Tibet Movement goal, such as cultural preservation. Through using polarization-vilification strategies in the final pieces of the historical narrative about Tibet, Tibet Movement websites begin to align the Tibet Movement with values such as peace, human rights, and social justice, all of which are values that are amplified in prognostic and motivational frames used on many Tibet Movement activist, cultural preservation, and media websites.

### **Human Rights Stories: Intersecting framing strategies to persuade and mobilize web users**

In this section, I will describe how narratives about human rights are generally told using polarization-vilification strategies that depict Tibetans as peaceful victims of Chinese policies, military forces, and police activities that are designed specifically to harm Tibetans and marginalize them in their own country. I will also demonstrate that specific human rights stories about political prisoners, economic oppression, and religious and cultural oppression are also told in ways where framing tasks (diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames) and strategic framing processes (such as frame amplification and frame extension) often intersect. The types of framing tasks and strategies used are often dependent upon

where these narratives are found. For example, on web pages that are designed simply to inform a web user about human rights in Tibet (often titled “About Tibet” or “Human Rights”), human rights narratives are often used in diagnostic framing tasks to educate the reader on the primary Tibet Movement concerns; whereas campaign web pages that explicitly encourage web users to take a specific political action in support of Tibet often use diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks when telling human rights narratives and rely on frame amplification or frame extension strategies.

Throughout this chapter, I will demonstrate how these intersecting tasks and strategies often attempt to resonate with an audience through emphasizing the salience and credibility of the selected frames. Emphasizing the salience of the frame is a particular challenge when considering that target web users often do not appear to be Tibetans. This means that the target audience of many websites would be individuals whose lives are not likely to directly benefit from the success of the Tibet Movement. I will also demonstrate that several websites explicitly target “Westerners” (often implying Americans, Canadians, Australians, and people of the United Kingdom) and attempt to increase the salience of the frame for these target recruitment pools through frame amplification processes that align the Tibet Movement with existing “Western” cultural narratives on human rights, the religious aspirations of “Western” Buddhist practitioners, and popular cultural attitudes regarding Buddhism. Some websites also host text that engage in frame extension processes that claim that supporting the Tibet Movement and preserving Tibetan culture will provide a solution to rampant “Western” materialism, making the success of the Tibet Movement something that would directly benefit “Western” culture.

### **Tibetans as a People of Peace**

As noted in the section on historical narratives that describe the National Uprising of 1959, stories about an occupied Tibet are often couched in polarization-vilification frames in which a peaceful Tibetan population is confronted with a brutal Chinese military. Some of the most polarized versions of these narratives are written or spoken by non-Tibetans, such as Hollywood actor, Richard Gere, and Tibet scholar, Dr. Robert Thurman. For example, at the end of Thurman’s (1988a), “Tibetan Culture” (Thurman

1988a), found on International Campaign for Tibet and Office of Tibet, NY, Thurman explicitly frames Tibetan culture and history as inherently spiritual and peaceful. Thurman states,

Tibetans are unique on the planet in that their national life is wholly dedicated to Buddhism. For them the Dharma is all in all. Their culture was laboriously transformed over the thousand-year period from Srong btsan sgam po (early seventh century) to the Great Fifth Dalai Lama (early seventeenth century) from a normally ethnocentric, warlike, imperialistic national culture to a universally Buddhicized spiritual, peaceful culture. Essentially, they have been unilaterally disarmed for over 300 years. Their material development has been systematically neglected in favor of their spiritual development. For centuries, the main line item in the budget of the national government has been support of the monasteries and the studies and the practices of the monks and nuns. (Thurman 1988a, 1988b, 1988c)

In this description, Tibetans are said to have evolved from materialistic and militaristic instincts to a culture dedicated only to spiritual education and development subsidized by a spiritually-inclined Tibetan government. These types of claims are found in a number of websites where Thurman appears to hold some influence in the administration of the organization, including International Campaign for Tibet and the Conservancy for Tibetan Arts and Culture and are often used to frame the importance of preserving Tibetan culture for the benefit of Western civilization (more on cultural preservation, “Western” benefits from the Tibet Movement and frame extension will be discussed later in the chapter).

Other statements indicating that everyday Tibetans and Tibetan culture was inherently peaceful were found when contrasting the nature of Tibetans with the great suffering inflicted upon them by China. For example, the article, “Tibetans in Canada,” found on Canada Tibet Committee, describes the PLA invasion of Tibet as a modern, militaristic invasion against a peaceful and nonviolent people (Given 2011). The article states,

China's invasion of Tibet pitted modern weapons and mechanized warfare in the hands of seasoned troops against Tibetan weapons that were relics of an earlier style of warfare and against a peaceful people who were unprepared for violent conflict. (Given 2011)

Here, Tibetans are viewed as a “peaceful people:” a people unaware of, or unaccustomed to the modernized military violence that is here used to characterize the Chinese.

The Dalai Lama is another figure in Tibet Movement narratives that is often used in frames that set up a direct dichotomy between the peaceful intentions of the Tibetans and the antagonistic actions of China's leaders that indicate that China is not serious about developing a peaceful solution for Tibet's future. For example, on the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama (dalailama.com), the Dalai Lama is represented as a peacemaker trying to work with the Chinese through the political compromise of the Middle Way Approach (MWA), rather than seeking full independence. The site writes that the MWA would benefit both Chinese and Tibetans through providing Tibetans with greater autonomy and the Chinese nation with greater political and internal stability (Dalai Lama 2011a). On the site, a web user can find multiple stories of the Dalai Lama's attempts to work with the PRC (Dalai Lama 2001, 1988) as well as news content describing events where the Dalai Lama has worked directly with the Chinese community to promote peace and stability between China and Tibet, such as his meetings with China-based civil rights activist Teng Biao and human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong in January 2011 (Dalai Lama 2011b). Each of these examples on the Dalai Lama's website frames the Dalai Lama as an actor that is motivated by peace and driven to find a compromise that benefits both parties and implicitly places the failure of these attempts to compromise upon Chinese politicians that refuse to discuss the MWA proposal.

Another example of how the figure of the Dalai Lama is used in polarization-vilification framing is the Canada Tibet Committee's website, which hosts multiple Dalai Lama quotations concerning the importance of peace, compassion, and cooperation. Two prominent quotations alternate from page to page, located on the site's banner image: one quote focuses on the need for humans to develop a sense of universal responsibility (CTC 2011a) while the second quote focuses on how all humans, religious and nonreligious, appreciate kindness and compassion (CTC 2011e). In contrast, the site's web page describing Chinese strategies for long-term rule of Tibet draws attention to text from a leaked PRC government document that states that China is engaging in "efforts to mute international criticism of its occupation policies in Tibet" (CTC 2011c) and a "continued determination to vilify the Dalai Lama" (CTC

2011c). In this way, narratives about the Dalai Lama and Chinese leaders and policies are placed in polarization-vilification frames to persuade the web user to view the current Tibet-China relationship as one between a peaceful people seeking out compromise and a militarized people that refuses to compromise. These frames attempt to culturally resonate with an audience through aligning with popular “Western” cultural narratives about Tibet as a mythical, spiritual, and peaceful Shangri-La and the popular status of the Dalai Lama’s as a religious celebrity and international icon of peace.

### **Human Rights Violations, Framing and Resonance**

As seen above, narratives about peaceful Tibetan culture and leaders like the Dalai Lama are often used in polarization-vilification frames that provide a context with which to contrast narratives about the brutal and/or deceptive actions of Chinese military and government officials. These polarization-vilification frames continue in narratives about specific human rights abuses against Tibetans, which include political oppression through mechanisms of torture, imprisonment, death and execution, religious and cultural oppression and destruction, and economic and development policies that are intended to marginalize Tibetans in their own country. These polarization-vilification frames also intersect with other strategic framing processes and framing tasks to persuade a web user to support and align themselves with the narratives of the Tibet Movement, as well as to motivate and mobilize web users to take action. Throughout, these framing strategies attempt to resonate with a web user through attempting to raise their frames’ salience and credibility with their target audience.

Political prisoner human rights narratives were frequently found on archived sites within the Tibet Movement network. These narratives were found on activist sites, journalism and other media sites, and government-in-exile websites. Many activist sites featured “Political Prisoner Campaign” pages, such as Australia Tibet Council ([atc.org.au](http://atc.org.au)), Free Tibet, International Tibet Network ([tibetnetwork.org](http://tibetnetwork.org)), International Campaign for Tibet, and Tibetan Women’s Association ([tibetanwomen.org](http://tibetanwomen.org)) (ATC 2011d;

ICT 2009j; ITN 2008c; Free Tibet 2009e; TWA 2011c).<sup>20</sup> Other activist websites, such as Tibetan Youth Congress and Students for a Free Tibet, contained general human rights campaign web pages that featured specific political prisoners in Tibet (SFT 2011f; TYC 2011c). Political prisoners were also the focus of a website representing the collaborative activist campaign, Free Tibetan Heroes ([www.freetibetanheroes.org](http://www.freetibetanheroes.org))<sup>21</sup> and the website Filming for Tibet ([leavingfearbehind.com](http://leavingfearbehind.com)), which was entirely focused on the political prisoner and filmmaker, Wangden Dhondup. Even the Tibetan Buddhist book publisher, Snow Lion Publications ([snowlionpub.com](http://snowlionpub.com)), which is dedicated to cultural preservation of Buddhist texts through book publication, contained political prisoner narratives on their activism information page through a call to action titled, “adopting a political prisoner” (Snow Lion Publications 2009a). As these narratives were intended to mobilize Tibet Movement activists to support or participate in a campaign, these above sites often engaged these narratives using a combination of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks.

Other stories were found on media and journalism sites, such as TibetInfoNet’s ([tibetinfonet.net](http://tibetinfonet.net)) “Prisoners and Protest” page (TibetInfoNet 2011a), while other discussions about political prisoners were incorporated into narratives about the history of Tibet since occupation (Office of Tibet 2011) and general issues in Tibet today (Central Tibetan Administration 2009b). In these ways, political prisoner narratives tended to be primarily used for diagnostic framing tasks that intend to explain to a web user some of the current problems that Tibetans face in Tibet today.

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<sup>20</sup> Canada Tibet Committee also had a “Political Prisoners” campaign page located at [tibet.ca/en/campaigns/human\\_rights/political\\_prisoners.html](http://tibet.ca/en/campaigns/human_rights/political_prisoners.html), however there was no text was on this page at the time of the archive.

<sup>21</sup> Free Tibetan Heroes is a joint campaign run by International Tibet Network and includes Australia Tibet Council, Guchusum ([guchusum.org](http://guchusum.org)), Students for a Free Tibet, Tibet Initiative Deutschland ([tibet-initiative.de](http://tibet-initiative.de)), Tibet Society ([tibet-society.org.uk](http://tibet-society.org.uk)), and Tibetan Women’s Association (ITN 2014). The campaign calls for the release of nine political prisoners, many of whom are featured on other activist campaign sites (ITN 2011). This campaign provides image and text profiles of all nine Tibetans, general news from Phayul ([phayul.com](http://phayul.com)) and *Radio Free Asia* ([rfa.org](http://rfa.org)), reports from *Tibetan Review* ([tibetanreview.net](http://tibetanreview.net)) on Tibetan political prisoners, and multiple opportunities for web users to engage in supporting the cause (ITN 2011).

Activist campaign narratives about political prisoners often contained detailed information, or profiles, of a handful of specific prisoners. These profiles were also often accompanied with a photograph of an individual (see image 1). For example, Tibetan Women's Association's "Political Prisoners" campaign page lists political prisoners, such as the Eleventh Panchen Lama, and short abstracts on each prisoner's history and imprisonment term (TWA 2011c). Each of these abstracts contain links to a page specifically dedicated to that prisoner, which provides greater details on their activities prior to their arrest and other events related to the prisoner's arrest (such as local community demands made to release the prisoner). In these ways, political prisoner narratives are being used in diagnostic framing tasks that point to a specific problem that the organization is working to solve. Moreover, at the end of these prisoner descriptions are often details about what the Tibetan Women's Association is doing to help support the prisoner and occasionally requests that the web visitor to take action in support of a particular prisoner through helping with circulating petitions (TWA 2011d) or writing to their UN and Chinese government officials about the prisoner (TWA 2011b). In these ways, the framing task of the narrative shifts from diagnostic to motivational with the web user being requested to take action. These prisoner narratives are also framed in polarization-vilification strategies used to contrast a Tibetan victim (often engaged in peaceful protest, or in the case of the Panchen Lama, too young to engage in any political behavior) with the inhumane human rights violations carried out by Chinese police and military. The use of photographs and detailed information about their arrests also attempt to raise the empirical credibility of these frames as well as increase the frames cultural resonance with other political prisoner-human rights frames from other social movements, such as those found on organizations such as Amnesty International.

Other websites used different visual and textual methods to narrate the story of political prisoners or supplemented these different methods along with prisoner profile pages. International Campaign for Tibet provided web visitors with documents such as a "ICT Prisoner File" (ICT 2009f) and "ICT Prisoner List" (ICT 2009g), which together, attempt to list all the political prisoners detained in the PRC, including those detained during the 2008 Olympic protests. These documents were engaged in diagnostic framing



tasks and provided visual magnanimity and in-depth detail to the extent of the number of political prisoners and arbitrary detentions. Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (tchrd.org) also displayed a similar device to provide a sense of breadth of the human rights problem through a political prisoner search engine (TCHRD 2011a) (see image 2). The search engine stated the number of current prisoners, released prisoners, and deaths of Tibetan while imprisoned (TCHRD 2011a). Like the document listing prisoners found on International Campaign for Tibet, this web feature was also used in a diagnostic framing task to provide the web user with the opportunity to learn more about each prisoner and provides a sense of the reality of this specific human rights problem in Tibet.

A sub-narrative situated within the political-prisoner narrative is the torture of Tibetans prisoners. The Office of Tibet, New York, USA states that torture often consists of “beatings, shocks with electric batons, deprivation of sleep or food, exposure to cold and other brutalities” (Office of Tibet 2011). While torture is often briefly listed as one of my human rights violations that have occurred in prisons, Free Tibet (2011c) highlights torture through a specific “Torture in Tibet” page (see image 3). The page features “Survivor Stories” with profile pictures of Tibetans who had experienced torture (Free Tibet 2011b), a quiz on the realities of torture in China and Tibet (Free Tibet 2011a), and a series of four videos of British actors, Dominic West, Juliet Stevenson, David Threlfall, and Alan Rickman, each of whom read Tibetan testimonies about their torture experiences (Free Tibet 2011a). Throughout this section of Free Tibet are buttons requesting that a web visitor to join or donate to the organization.

Here, narratives of torture are used in diagnostic and motivational framing tasks to inform the web user of the problem of torture in Tibet and to encourage the web user to join and/or donate to Free Tibet. These narratives are also used in polarization-vilification framing strategies that intersect with frame amplification strategies to emphasize the powerlessness of Tibetan victims and brutality of Chinese actions in Tibet, while amplifying human rights frames: that the Tibet Movement is not just a Tibetan issue, but a human rights issue. In this way, these framing processes transform Tibetan experiences and concerns into central concerns for those not directly affected by Tibet, attempting to increase the salience

of the human rights frame for non-Tibetans. Furthermore, the videos are used in a way that increases the empirical credibility of the torture claims (through allowing the web user to learn about torture through the words of Tibetans that have these experiences), while simultaneously attempting to heighten the emotional appeal and hence, the centrality of the issue (to those personally unaffected by torture in Tibet) through using well-known and respected professional actors to dramatically read the English translations of Tibetan torture testimonies.

Another human rights narrative that intersects with political prisoner narratives is the death and executions of many Tibetans while protesting, during imprisonment, escaping from China into exile, or through poorly planned PRC reforms in Tibet. The most graphic and emotionally striking imagery of these types of narratives were found on the Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy's posters about the 2008 Olympic protests in Tibet (TCHRD 2011b). One of these posters, "Mass Uprising in Tibet", features three rows of images detailing protest events and interactions with Chinese military and police (TCHRD 2011b). The first row of images consist of scenes from the 2008 protests as well as a harrowing image of protestors hovering over deceased Tibetan bodies that were said to be shot by Chinese soldiers (TCHRD 2011b). The center row of images is even more graphic, showing close-up photographs of deceased Tibetans and their gunshot wounds (TCHRD 2011b). Two other pictures in this row are portraits of young Tibetans that had been killed with descriptions of how they were shot (TCHRD 2011b). The third row of images show police and military actions against protestors, including an image of an arrest, an image a police officer holding a rifle out of a van window while driving down a street, and an image of a line of prisoners being "paraded in front of state media in Lhasa"(TCHRD 2011b). The final image consists of a vigil that is described as having been held by Tibetan students "to display a protest against Chinese government" (TCHRD 2011b). At the bottom of the poster is the statement,

China launches massive arrests drive in Tibet. Streets full of paramilitary troops. Atleast 70 Tibetans killed, many injured, thousands arrested and hundreds disappeared...DEATH TOLL MOUNTING IN TIBET! (TCHRD 2011b)

Posters such as this one provide the viewer with a very graphic reality of human rights violations in Tibet and, like Free Tibet's videos of torture in Tibet, frame these human rights violations through an intersection of polarization-vilification and frame amplification strategies. In this poster, photographs are chosen that depict the PRC as engaging or having engaged in violence (graphic images of deceased protestors) and demonstrating their military power (such as the rifle in the van window and parading arrested protestors) (TCHRD 2011b). These images are then contrasted with images that depict Tibetans as peaceful protestors (the vigil imagery) and victims (the portraits of deceased Tibetans) (TCHRD 2011b). Together, this poster's photographs and text work in tandem to amplify the human rights frames of the Tibet Movement: that these 2008 protest events and China's reaction to the protests are aligned with a targeted web user's own cultural narratives of political oppression and violence. Like Free Tibet's use of videos, this poster also emphasizes the empirical credibility of these human rights frames through the use of photographic evidence. This also has the effect of emphasizing the salience of these frames through the use of graphic and powerful imagery of political protest in the face of overwhelming military aggression and death that attempt to emotionally appeal to a web user's own human rights cultural values and concern for human life.

While the above narratives focused specifically on political oppression and physical abuses, other narratives focused on PRC economic policies and development within the TAR and other parts of the Tibetan plateau. Of particular concern were policies encouraging the population transfer of non-ethnic Tibetans into Tibet (also called population transfer) and the construction of the Gormo-Lhasa railroad. These economic narratives, when found in "About Tibet" sections of websites like the Central Tibetan Administration, Free Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, International Tibet Network, Tibetan Youth Congress, and Australia Tibet Council, were often used in diagnostic framing tasks (ATC 2011b; Central Tibetan Administration 2009b; Free Tibet 2009b; ICT 2009h; ITN 2008a; TYC 2011e). Economic narratives were also found on activist campaign pages, such as Canada Tibet Committee's "Railway" campaign web page (CTC 2011b), Tibetan Women's Association's "TWA Appeal to Boycott Chinese

Goods” (TWA 2011e), and Students for a Free Tibet’s “Economic Campaign” page (SFT 2011c), engaged in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing tasks intended to mobilize a web user to take action. Many of these narratives used polarization-vilification and frame-debunking strategies to vilify PRC policies and debunk their claims that these policies were intended to benefit Tibetans.

For example, Students for a Free Tibet states that the PRC claims that its “Go West” policy, or “Western Development Plan”, is dedicated to accelerated development for the benefit of Tibetans (SFT 2011d). However, the organization argues, these policies are actually a means of harming Tibetans by helping the Chinese consolidate military, economic, and political control over the plateau (SFT 2011d). The site states,

Tibetans in Tibet want development, but they do not want the kind of development the Chinese government is imposing on them, where they have no say and ultimately do not benefit from it. (SFT 2011d)

Likewise, International Campaign for Tibet also expressed concerns for Chinese economic and development policies stating:

During ICT's one-month tour of eastern Tibet, it became apparent that the Party's goals have been drastically reduced from its once grandiose plans of social, human and economic transformation to simply holding onto power, taking care of Chinese settlers and extracting Tibet's natural resources. (ICT 2009j)

Like Students for a Free Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet uses a frame debunking strategy to counter the PRC’s expressed goals of benefitting Tibetans in Tibet, and uses polarization-vilification strategies to frame Chinese intentions as only focused on political and social control in the region and exploiting Tibet’s natural resources.

Regarding population transfer, the Tibetan Youth Congress’s narratives of economic development and human rights frames this economic policy in stark polarization-vilification frames that

draws parallels between the hidden intention of PRC economic policies and the Jewish Holocaust (TYC 2011h). The site's section promoting the International Friends of Tibetan Youth Congress<sup>22</sup> states,

Already outnumbered by a sea of Chinese immigrants, the Tibetan people are today not only fighting for freedom, they are also struggling for survival. Some believe that the present policy of population transfer could will be China's final solution' for Tibet. (TYC 2011h)

Here, Tibetan Youth Congress's phrase, "China's final solution,"<sup>23</sup> is a direct reference to the Jewish Holocaust, which accuses these economic plans as a form of genocide.

The controversial construction of the Gormo-Lhasa railway is also framed using strategies that attempt to diminish the resonance of CCP narratives about the railway's benefits while asserting that Chinese interests in developing Tibet are purely for the benefit of Chinese, not Tibetans. For example, the International Tibet Network stated that China has portrayed the railway as a great development that will benefit Tibetans through bringing economic improvement to the region, but that "the true motivation of the plan is to consolidate China's political control over the western frontier areas including Tibet" (ITN 2008a). Likewise, Canada Tibet Committee cites a series of issues with the railway, including increased immigration of migrant workers, environmental risks due to an increasing population and access to mines, a lack of consultation with Tibetans living in the region, and further marginalization of Tibetan culture and language in the region (CTC 2011b). China Tibet Committee also warns that there will be an increase in Chinese military personnel and supplies (CTC 2011b). In these ways, sites rely on frame debunking and polarization-vilification strategies to counter CCP narratives and attempt to decrease the resonance of CCP narratives about economic improvements, while increasing the salience of Tibet Movement frames through polarization-vilification strategies that connect to global narratives about human rights and colonial occupation.

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<sup>22</sup> International Friends of Tibetan Youth Congress is a network, or forum, of Tibetan Youth Congress supporters made up of non-Tibetans. Only Tibetans are allowed to join the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC 2011h).

<sup>23</sup> This term is also found on the website's more detailed description of the population transfer policy, found on their "Facts About Tibet" page (TYC 2011g). Other language harking back to the Jewish Holocaust can be found on Tibetan Youth Congress' "White Paper," where the history of the Lhasa Uprising in 1959 is described as having been "repressed with a savagery reminiscent of the Nazis in Warsaw" (TYC 2011j).

Another primary set of human rights narratives centered on religious repression in Tibet and cultural oppression in Tibet. These narratives used a combination of framing strategies to appeal with an audience that may not be directly affected by human rights violations in Tibet. Narratives of religious oppression in Tibet were often found used in diagnostic framing tasks on “About Tibet” or “Tibet Info” sections of sites, such as Australia Tibet Council, Free Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, Canada Tibet Committee, the Tibet Office, New York, USA, and the Central Tibetan Administration (ATC 2011e; Central Tibetan Administration 2009b; CTC 2011c; Free Tibet 2009f; Office of Tibet 2011; SFT 2011b). These narratives often described significant constraints and threats against monks and nuns living in Tibetan institutions. These constraints and threats included forced re-patriotic campaigns, a ban on the display and ownership of images of the Dalai Lama, excluding religious Tibetans from employment in government, the intimidation, harassment and arbitrary arrest of religious leaders, and the destruction of religious sites (ATC 2011e; Central Tibetan Administration 2009b; CTC 2011c; Free Tibet 2009f; Office of Tibet 2011; SFT 2011b). The Central Tibetan Administration (2009b) claims that China’s Third (1994) and Fourth (2001) Work Forums on Tibet “have called for an array of measures to wipe out the vestiges of Tibetan religion.”

For example, Students for a Free Tibet provides a historic overview of religious repression of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet, from the Cultural Revolution to the present day (SFT 2011b). The site’s description of China’s “Strike Hard” Campaign in 1996<sup>24</sup>, states:

A major component of this campaign focused on religion. Monks and nuns had to attend "patriotic re-education" sessions, photos of the Dalai Lama were banned, monks and nuns who did not comply with all regulations were expelled from monasteries and nunneries and monastic life was closely monitored and regulated by the Communist Party. While all Tibetans suffered under the "Strike Hard" Campaign, monks and nuns bore the brunt of most of the new policies. Most of these policies are still in effect today. (SFT 2011b)

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<sup>24</sup> The “Strike Hard” Campaign was a PRC policy of political and religious repression that followed a period of relative liberalization that had followed the Cultural Revolution. This campaign has engaged in severe religious oppression due to monks and nuns having historically been at the forefront of public political resistance against the Chinese government.

After this description of the “Strike Hard” campaign, which centers the focus of the policy on repressing monastic religious activities, the site provides a list of the present day consequences of these policies, including the police surveillance of monks and nuns, the ban on images of the Dalai Lama, and a ban on monks and nuns being able to enter government buildings (SFT 2011b). Here, Students for a Free Tibet use religious oppression narratives in diagnostic framing tasks to help the web user understand the depth and breadth of the problem.

Narratives about cultural suppression and preservation were often integrated into stories of religious repression, with the exception of narratives related specifically to the marginalization of the Tibetan language. Stories of cultural suppression were found in “About Tibet” and “Info Tibet” sections of activist sites, like Australia Tibet Council, Free Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, and Students for a Free Tibet (ATC 2011e; Free Tibet 2009f; ICT 2009h; SFT 2011b) on “Tibet info” of historical sections of Tibet government-in-exile sites, such as the Office of Tibet, New York, USA and the Central Tibetan Administration (Central Tibetan Administration 2009b; Office of Tibet 2011), and on websites representing cultural preservation organization, which contained many of these narratives within their texts about the history and aims of the organization (LTWA 2010a; TIPA 2011).

These narratives often used diagnostic framing tasks to claim that Tibetan culture is “endangered” or under “threat” and used prognostic framing tasks to assert that the solution to an endangered culture was cultural preservation. However, multiple framing strategies often intersected in these stories, such as frame extension, frame amplification, and polarization-vilification, in order to resonate with their web users. Unlike other stories that amplified the human rights frame of a narrative in order to connect with web users, these cultural and religious oppression stories—and in particular, the need for cultural preservation and supporting cultural preservation efforts—often amplified the narratives about Tibetan Buddhism when framing Tibetan culture as endangered and using frame extension strategies that extended the goals of cultural preservation (such as maintaining Tibetan identity) to include solving rampant “Western” materialism.

Examples of these intersecting strategies are found throughout cultural preservation websites and activist websites in the network. For example, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Art's (tibetanarts.org) "About TIPA" page explains that the cause of Tibet's cultural extinction, said to have occurred after 1959, the year of the National Uprising (TIPA 2011). The text states:

...The Communist Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced His Holiness the Dalai Lama and some 80,000 Tibetans to flee india [*sic*]. After the occupation, the Chinese authorities attacked every aspect of Tibetan culture and civilization. (TIPA 2011)

Likewise, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (ltwa.net) also uses this same narrative of Chinese Communist occupation after 1959 and the Dalai Lama's focus on cultural preservation after arriving in exile (LTWA 2010a). The site's "History" page states,

The devastation wrought by the Communists Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959 has rendered the existence of Tibetan culture in peril. Scores of learning centres, ancient manuscripts, artefacts and countless other aspects of Tibetan cultural heritage have either been plundered or destroyed under the garb of modernity. Realizing the impending threat and precariousness of the situation His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama conceived of and founded the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives to restore, protect, preserve and promote the culture. (LTWA 2010a)

Here, as with the "About TIPA" text, the blame, or diagnosis, for cultural extinction lay with "Communist Chinese" (LTWA 2010a; TIPA 2011), not just Chinese military or Chinese policies. The use of this phrase in the cultural extinction narrative engages in polarization-vilification framing to depict a Chinese culture that is defined by a political ideology (and atheism) and a Tibetan culture, which on the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives website, is usually synonymous with Tibetan Buddhism.

In terms of frame extension strategies, the best examples are found on sites directly connected with Robert Thurman or using Thurman's works. For example, in "An Outline of Tibetan Culture," found on International Campaign for Tibet (Thurman 1988b) and The Office of Tibet, New York, USA (Thurman 1988c), Thurman writes that Tibetan culture is under attack (Thurman 1988a). Furthermore, Tibetans are "unique on the planet" due to their lives as dedicated only to Buddhism and that Buddhism transformed their culture into a culture of peace, characterized as having an "inner modernity" (Thurman



1988a). Thurman claims that this “inner modernity” can solve the problems of materialistic cultures, stating:

It [*Tibetan culture*] is a culture of inestimable value, as a mirror of ours, as extremely inward as we have been extremely outward. It may contain precious keys with which we can rediscover planetary equilibrium, restoring spiritual sanity to those maddened by extreme materialism. Its life or death is our life or death. It lives underground at home, in open air only in exile. We must protect it, nurture it and patiently wait for all concerned to rediscover its jewel-like value and need for special treasuring. (Thurman 1988a)

In this excerpt, Thurman accomplishes two things to extend the frame of Tibetan cultural and religious preservation for a non-Tibetan audience: 1) he uses diagnostic framing to place blame upon “extreme materialism” for global problems in an attempt to align with the target audience’s expected cultural values and concerns, and 2) he extends the goals of the Tibet Movement to include the restoration of global “spiritual sanity” or “planetary equilibrium,” goals that are expected to be more central to concerns of non-Tibetans. Thus, Tibetan cultural oppression is transformed from a problem that only impacts Tibetans to a problem that impacts “Westerners”. Therefore, the success of the Tibet Movement is central to the success of “Western” spiritual fulfillment and global problem-solving.

This frame, that Tibetan culture can save “Western” humanity and solve global problems, is also invoked in Richard Gere’s quote on the opening page of the “All About Tibet” section of International Campaign for Tibet’s “Resource Center” (ICT 2009b). Gere states,

Tibet is a human rights issue as well as a civil and political rights issue. But there's something else too - Tibet has a precious culture based on principles of wisdom and compassion. This culture addresses what we lack in the world today; a very real sense of inter-connectedness. We need to protect it for the Tibetan people, but also for ourselves and our children. (ICT 2009b)

Like Thurman’s framing of Tibetan culture, Gere is also using frame extension strategies to attempt to make the issues of Tibet resonate with a non-Tibetan audience: to increase the salience of Tibet Movement frames through increasing the centrality of the issue and its potential effects on the global population. We must help Tibetans save their culture in order to save ourselves and our future.

Likewise, Tibet Fund also uses strategic frame extension to connect cultural preservation with developing solutions to global problems. The final paragraph of Rinchen Darlo's "Message from Tibet Fund's President" states,

Though centuries old, the Tibetan culture offers remarkably contemporary wisdom for today's world. Tibetan cultural beliefs teach patience in the face of human suffering and universal responsibility in light of our need to live together and share limited resources on our small planet. With this quintessentially modern message coming from our ancient culture, I trust you will see the value of a thriving Tibetan community woven into the fabric of the modern world. (Tibet Fund 2009)

Here, Tibet Fund attempts to make this particular Tibet Movement issue resonate with a non-Tibetan web user: though preserving Tibetan culture, the world can learn values such as universal responsibility and patience, which would help with global problems, such as limited resources in an ever-growing population. As with other narratives using this type of frame extension, the Tibet Movement extends its goals beyond impacting Tibetans and to include making a spiritual contribution to global society.

A simpler version of this frame extension strategy is also found on cultural preservation sites. These versions often are found in Dalai Lama quotations hosted on these pages that describe Tibetan culture as a world heritage or claim that a cultural preservation organization's goals can help to benefit global society. For example, the Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture's ([tibetanculture.org](http://tibetanculture.org)) front page states,

The Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture is working to create a better understanding of the peoples, cultures, and traditions of Tibet, as well as the threat that confronts them. Tibetan culture forms a valuable part of the world's heritage. Humanity would be poorer should it be lost.

-His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (CTAC 2009b)

Likewise, the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts' front page's text begins with a quote from the Dalai Lama that states that Tibetan culture is "one of the heritages of the world" and is "facing the threat of extinction" (TIPA 2011). In these two quotes, calling Tibetan culture a "world heritage", or "heritage of the world" that is under threat suggests to the web user that, as with world heritage sites, the preservation and maintenance of Tibetan culture is not just a concern for Tibetans, but is a global responsibility that

can provide global benefits. Likewise, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives' "Library" page reiterates this frame, stating that the organization's resource center on Tibetan culture and cultural exchange is "of the utmost importance in a contemporary world shaped by political and spiritual confusion" (LTWA 2010b). Thus, the "Library's" cultural archive and exchange programs preserve and spread Tibetan culture, which has the power to form solutions to global political and spiritual problems. As with Thurman's (1988a) essay, cultural preservation organizations, like the Library for Tibetan Works and Archives, engage in frame extension strategies to increase the resonance of Tibet Movement frames by making increasing the centrality of Tibet Movement goals for non-Tibetans.

While these types of frames are an attempt to extend Tibet Movement frames to include goals that are not directly connected with Tibet and Tibetans, religious and cultural suppression narratives are also used in frame amplification strategies that emphasize narratives about Tibetan Buddhism, religious oppression and Buddhist beliefs in order to mobilize Buddhist practitioners, or those with a general interest in Buddhism. These narratives, found on Canada Tibet Committee and Australia Tibet Council, are an attempt to motivate Buddhist believers through emphasizing narratives that will resonate with their religious beliefs, values, and interests: to encourage a personal connection to Tibet Movement goals.

For example, Australia Tibet Council's "Become a Voice for Tibet" page asks the web visitor, "How do you connect to Tibet?" and offers four images that represent four Tibet Movement issues (ATC 2011a) (see image 4). One of the images is of the Dalai Lama and is captioned, "Buddhism" (ATC 2011a). Upon clicking the "Buddhism" image, the web user is taken to a separate page titled, "The Tibetan Buddhism Connection", which describes religious repression in Tibet (ATC 2011f). The page states that the Dalai Lama's Middle Way is the solution to ending religious repression and requests that the web visitor "Support religious freedom in the home of Tibetan Buddhism by becoming a Voice for Tibet"(ATC 2011f). While not explicitly reaching out to Buddhists, the placement of the image and text representing "Buddhism" (and not just "religion" or "religion and culture") on the "Become a Voice for Tibet" page amplifies the Buddhism narrative over other forms of Tibetan religion and culture and

implies that Australians, who have some philosophical or religious interest in Buddhism, are able to personally find a connection with the Tibet Movement through this specific Tibet Movement issue.

In a more explicit way, the Canada Tibet Committee specifically targets web users that self-identify as Buddhist and centralizes the issue of religious oppression for this specific population. This particular process of frame amplification dominates the web page, “Dharma Resource Centre” (CTC 2011d). The text on this page begins with the Dalai Lama quote, “Unless freedom comes to Tibet, then Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet is impossible” (CTC 2011d), which is then followed by a quote from the 1985 Canadian Chief Justice providing a definition of religious freedom (CTC 2011d). Following these two quotes are two Canada Tibet Committee statements: “this is why Canadians can practice Buddhism, this is why the Canada Tibet Committee is working to bring freedom of religion to Tibet” (CTC 2011d). This is followed by another Dalai Lama quote that states, “To be interested in religion you have to be interested in politics” (CTC 2011d). The Canada Tibet Committee then provides its own description of the purpose of, and materials one can find, on the resource page:

This Dharma Resource Centre includes a video from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, news articles on the political role of Buddhists, relevant government reports on religious freedom in Tibet and, most importantly, steps you can take so that together we can see the day when Tibetans worship as freely as you do. (CTC 2011d)

This page’s message and the materials hosted on this web page amplify the issue of religious oppression in the Tibet Movement and align this with a socially engaged Buddhist narrative that is available in the target Canadian population: that to be an authentic practicing Buddhist you have to be political and socially engaged to alleviate the suffering in the world. Canada Tibet Committee provides materials for Canadian Buddhists through its Dharma Resource Centre that attempt to resonate with Canadian Buddhists and to mobilize this group through amplifying their personal religious connection (and religious responsibility) to the Tibet Movement.

In these ways, Tibet Movement websites frame narratives of human rights using multiple strategic processes and framing tasks. These processes and tasks often intersect and have multiple

functions, from informing the target audience about the problems, solutions, and reasons to mobilize over a specific Tibet Movement issue (or the Tibet Movement as a whole), to vilifying the opposition, and to amplifying or extending specific frames to reach a broader recruitment population that would not be directly affected by what happens in Tibet, China or to Tibetan refugees. In this way, the Tibet Movement is more than just a movement about occupation or nationalism, but is also a human rights movement that encompasses a wide range of issues that a variety of individuals can connect to.

### **The Future Status of Tibet: A frame dispute within the movement**

As noted in the first section of this chapter, Tibet Movement historical narratives use frame saving and frame debunking strategic processes to assert that under international law, Tibetans are an occupied independent country and therefore have the right to self-determination, whether they choose a future of genuine political autonomy within China's borders or of complete independence from the PRC as their own nation-state. The choice is presented on Tibet Movement websites as one that should be made by Tibetans themselves, those living inside and outside of Tibet.

The issue of Tibetan independence has been a contentious one in the refugee community although these contentious issues are minimized on many of the archived Tibet Movement websites. Many sites that were archived supported the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach or simply stated they were for "Tibetan self-determination".<sup>25</sup> The International Tibet Network, which represents a coalition of Tibet Movement NGOs, avoids the topic of the future status of Tibet altogether, placing the priority of the coalition as "to 'Put Tibetans in Tibet First'" (ITN 2008b). The site states:

Network members are committed to non-violence as a fundamental principle of the Tibetan struggle. They regard Tibet as an occupied country and recognise the Tibetan Government in Exile as the sole legitimate government of the Tibetan people. Beyond

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<sup>25</sup> Self-determination is the right for a people to determine their own political status and economic, social and cultural development. This principle is found in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations and is recognized in multiple international legal instruments (UNPO 2006). Tibetan's right to self-determination can lead to several options, including independence from the PRC and autonomy within PRC borders. While some websites appear to use the term, "self-determination" as simply the right of Tibetans to choose, or use the term in an effort to avoid taking a public position on the frame dispute, other sites appear to conflate the right to "self-determination" with the Middle Way Approach.

these principles, the International Tibet Network respects the variety of views and opinions of its member organisations, for example concerning Tibet's future political status, and believes that diversity strengthens our movement. (ITN 2008b)

While it may seem contradictory for sites supporting MWA goals of genuine autonomy to use narrative framing that claims Tibet as an occupied independent nation, those supporting MWA, such as the Central Tibetan Administration, the Office of Tibet, New York, USA, the Official Website of the Dalai Lama, and International Campaign for Tibet, use narratives about Tibet's history and current human rights situation to frame MWA as a political compromise. The MWA is said to be supported by the majority of Tibetans in-exile, while also able to fit within the legal framework of the PRC's constitution and the 17-Point Agreement. Moreover, the MWA would provide Tibetans with the right to govern themselves in areas in which they are currently being oppressed (e.g. cultural, religious, social, and environmental policy realms) (Central Tibetan Administration 2009c). In this way, narratives of human rights are amplified in the MWA's diagnostic framework: the biggest problem for Tibetans is a lack of human rights and loss of culture after occupation—not a loss of its status as an independent nation-state—and therefore the best prognosis for the situation in Tibet is to find a solution to human rights in Tibet. Thus, Tibet's history as an occupied nation is framed as a story that has shaped the current political situation between Tibetans and Chinese, but it is not the primary problem, or the primary diagnostic frame, and therefore, the solution is not gaining political independence.

However some sites, such as Students for a Free Tibet and Tibetan Youth Congress, as well as individual Tibetan writers on *Phayul*, such as Jamyang Norbu (Norbu 2011), vociferously support the path of rangzen, or independence, arguing that the Tibet Movement should be framed first and foremost as a nationalist movement, not a human rights movement. For example, the Tibetan Youth Congress' organizational aims are all dedicated to a nationalistic cause over all other issues. The organization's four aims are:

- 1) To dedicate oneself to the task of serving one's country and people under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Spiritual and Temporal Ruler of Tibet.

- 2) To promote and protect national unity and integrity by giving up all distinctions based on religion, regionalism or status.
- 3) To work for the preservation and promotion of religion and Tibet's unique culture and traditions.
- 4) To struggle for the total independence of Tibet even at the cost of one's life. (TYC 2011b)

Here, Tibetan Youth Congress frames their cause as a nationalistic one of serving country. The ways one advocates for this case is to promote national unity through placing one's national identity as paramount over religious, social, or geographical self-identification, preserving Tibetan culture and religion, which serves as the basis of Tibetan national identity, and to be willing to forfeit your own life in order to achieve national independence. While the Tibetan Youth Congress' website narrates many of the human rights violations that occur in Tibet and these human rights stories are framed as important to understanding the problems of occupation, solving human rights in Tibet is not the ultimate prognosis: the overarching prognostic frame is to achieve independence.

Likewise, Students for a Free Tibet's quote at the beginning of this chapter explicitly calls out the frame dispute between MWA and rangzen supporters in the Tibet Movement in an attempt to orient web users to align with a rangzen framework for understanding Tibet Movement narratives. The quote states that Tibet is an occupied independent country (which is supported, interestingly enough, using the same historical content found on prominent MWA sites) and that those supporting Tibetans in Tibet are not just engaged in a human rights movement, but a nationalist movement (SFT 2011k). In this way, human rights frames are ancillary to historical frames: human rights in Tibet are only gained through the establishment of an independent Tibetan nation.

These two prognostic frames about the goals of the Tibet Movement pertaining to the future status of Tibet are engaged in a frame dispute. Both frames use the same historical and human rights narratives on their sites, but to different ends. For sites that support the MWA, the Tibet Movement is framed as a conciliatory movement that wants to provide benefits such as peace, stability, and an improved human rights situation for both Tibetans and Chinese. Historical narratives are important for

understanding the context in which the CCP operates in Tibet, but are not used to demand independence: MWA narratives work hard to fit their solution within the legal framework of the PRC constitution and the 17-Point Agreement, in which China agreed to stay out of most of Tibet's local cultural, religious, and social affairs. However, the independence movement is a nationalist movement. Human rights narratives are used to frame the Chinese as a brutal occupying force that has no legitimate claim to Tibet and should be permanently removed. Historical narratives are not just used on these sites to illustrate how occupation occurred, or just to create a context within which to better understand human rights narratives, but are the primary diagnostic narrative that insists upon a diagnosis of creating a separate Tibetan nation-state.

In this way, frame disputes occur in the Tibet Movement and are found in the content of a handful of sites in the network. However, this frame dispute is, for the most part, minimized. It is only featured on a few of the activist sites and on specific stories and reports found on media sites in the network. While historical narratives are found on many sites in the network, almost all of the archived sites engaged in human rights narratives for the purpose of mobilizing their target online audience. Furthermore, MWA and rangzen oriented sites also, on occasion, shared content, as was the case with Students for a Free Tibet and International Campaign for Tibet's use of van Walt van Praag's "Legal Status of Tibet" (Van Walt van Praag 1988b). These sites also used many of the same framing tasks and strategic framing processes to recruit and mobilize web users. As will be seen in chapter four, this minimization of the frame dispute and emphasis on shared framing and shared narratives is mirrored in the ways Tibet Movement issue network sites connect to one another via hyperlinks: the occurrence of this frame dispute appears to be mirrored in the characteristics of the network relationships within the issue network as a whole.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, there is an overall consensus regarding the master narratives in the Tibet Movement about historical and human rights narratives and how these narratives are framed on Tibet Movement websites. For example, historical narratives are generally engaged in frame saving and frame debunking



processes in a framing contest that counters CCP claims about Tibet's historical integration into China since the Yuan Dynasty. These historical narratives also often use polarization-vilification strategies that intersect with frame saving and frame debunking strategies when histories of Tibet narrate events that occurred after the 1949-50 PLA invasion.

Likewise, human rights narratives often are engaged in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing to describe current problems in Tibet (such as political prisoners and torture), potential solutions to these problems (such as freeing political prisoners) and motivations to help be a part of these solutions through appealing to the target audience's own cultural narratives, ideals, and belief systems. This was seen in examples of political prisoner narratives that amplified human rights frames in the Tibet Movement with intersecting framing strategies of polarization-vilification to depict victimized (and often peacefully protesting) Tibetans against a stronger, militarized Chinese power.

It is also evident that Tibet Movement organizations targeted specific types of audiences, such as "Western" audiences (e.g. American, English, Canadian and Australian). Human rights narratives about religious and cultural oppression and solutions of cultural preservation were often employed in strategic frame amplification processes that emphasized the importance of religious and cultural issues in the Tibet Movement in an attempt to connect to "Western" interest in Tibetan culture. Likewise, websites also used frame extension processes that attempted to include solutions to resolve "extreme materialism" and global problems as goals of the Tibet Movement. In these ways, framing strategies are used to make the Tibet Movement appeal to a broad audience that would generally not be directly affected by the successes or failures of the movement as a whole. These strategies would be more likely to increase the salience of the Tibet Movement through portraying the Movement as central to a non-Tibetan web user's personal experiences and cultural values and concerns.

While there is a great deal of framing and narrative consensus across sites, in particular across sites attempting to engage with a specific type of audience, some Tibet Movement organizations use their

website's content to engage in frame disputes about the future status of Tibet. In these cases MWA and rangzen narratives frame the Tibet Movement as either a human rights movement (in the case of MWA) or a nationalist movement (in the case of rangzen). However, this dispute is often downplayed or minimized on many sites, if mentioned at all. Places where this dispute was most prevalent were Tibetan Youth Congress, Students for a Free Tibet, Central Tibetan Administration, the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama, and International Campaign for Tibet. Websites, such as International Tibet Network, attempt to bridge this frame dispute through their own narratives about engaging in partnership with both types of organizations.

To conclude, the Tibet Movement Network is a large and complex network of sites that represent organizations and individuals holding very different goals in the Tibet Movement (e.g. humanitarian aid, activist, governmental, or media/journalism related). However, despite the various interests of these sites, the master narrative is fairly consistent with only small deviations and the largest contestation is often downplayed, or relegated to website content on a very small set of websites. For the web user, this material may even be overlooked unless one has developed a certain amount of knowledge about Tibet refugee political debate. This narrative variety, and yet significant consistency, seems to reflect the nature of the network itself, which is filled with numerous actors, but has only a handful of very prominent sites on the network that act as information gatekeepers, with many websites using the materials (e.g. reports, other texts, video) of these gatekeepers on their own site. It reflects a certain level of resource sharing (particularly information resources) and desire to engage with other sites that hold different goals and interests in order to maximize web user recruitment and engagement within the broad scope of Tibet Movement concerns. It is a movement seeking many paths to resonate with a web user.

## **Chapter Three: The CCP propaganda issue network**

The world media is monopolized by westerners. The Dalai clique's long deceptive propaganda, having taken a lead, has a good standing in the world public opinion. In addition, they use modern media facilities like Internet, films, television, etc. to carry out massive propaganda in a number of imaginative ways. As a result of this, lies advocated and spread by them are considered as reliable facts on the issue of Tibet. The westerners' powerful machinery for making public opinion has created a lot of misunderstanding about our country in the minds of foreigners. Similarly, there are lots of biased views. On top of this, the eastern and western views on human rights are different. Our struggle for the international public opinion will be more rigorous and complicated than ever before. Our external propaganda work on Tibet will be very difficult. Therefore, we must work hard and make improvements. At the same time, we must know the overall benefit of our external propaganda on Tibet and favourable conditions for carrying this out.” (Zhao 2000)

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the following research questions: 1) what narratives are found on Web sites in the CCP Propaganda issue network and 2) how are these narratives used to frame the current status of Tibet, Tibetan refugees and/or other political and/or historical events and issues pertaining to Tibet and China to persuade a web user to agree/support CCP narratives and frames? In order to answer these research questions, this chapter will describe and analyze narratives about Tibet's history and human rights as found on the archived CCP propaganda issue network websites. This chapter will demonstrate that CCP propaganda websites used consistent master narratives and framing strategies to engage in a framing contest with the Tibet Movement about history and human rights for the purpose of persuading the web user to agree with or support the PRC's position on Tibet, transform the cultural meaning of human rights frames for the target audience, and limiting a web user's engagement in Tibet's social, cultural or political issues beyond visiting Tibet as a tourist.

First, I will analyze how narratives about Tibet's history frame Tibet as an inherent and historic part of China's own territory. These narratives are developed through the use of relatively standardized chronologies, based on PRC white papers, which limit Tibetan history to approximately seven periods that often end with the 1951 Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. Analysis of these historical narratives also focuses on how specific historical events and historical actors are emphasized to portray an ancient personal bond between Tibetan and Han peoples and their political leaders. Throughout this section I will

demonstrate how these narratives are used to provide counterframes to Tibet Movement historical claims and that these counterframes are engaged in frame saving strategies to rescue frames that have been called into question by Tibet Movement organizations and frame debunking strategies that attempt to explicitly debunk specific Tibet Movement claims. These counterframing strategies depend strongly on narratives from Chinese white papers (often written specifically for the purpose of debunking the opposition's frames), Chinese Tibetology research (an academic-like enterprise often used to raise the empirical and perceived credibility of a frame), and descriptions of tourism sites (also an attempt at raising the empirical credibility of the frame through providing places where the "truths" of these frames can be verified in person). Using these materials to construct these historical narratives, the CCP attempts to improve their frame's perceived and empirical credibility, maintain frame consistency, and hence, attempt to improve their frame's resonance with a web user.

I will then demonstrate how CCP narratives implicitly and explicitly question the credibility of the Tibet Movement's polarization-vilification framing strategy regarding the history of Tibet after the PLA's arrival into the region in 1949-50. In the CCP's retelling of Tibet's history since 1949-50, Tibetans are framed as grateful and happy for the arrival of the PLA and Chinese administration of the region: Tibetans are characterized as supporting the 17-Point Agreement, the Chinese military's destruction of the 1959 rebellion, and the 1959 democratic reforms. Likewise, this chapter will suggest that CCP narratives about this historical period engage in their own polarization-vilification strategy that vilifies "Western imperialism" and the Tibetan aristocracy and contrasts these characterizations through framing Chinese actors and political activities as beneficial for the region and Tibetan peasants and those outwardly supporting the CCP as grateful Tibetan "serfs". Like with Tibet Movement narratives, I will also demonstrate how narratives surrounding the entry of the PLA into Tibet in 1949-50 coincide with a shift in framing strategies where polarization-vilification strategies intersect frame debunking and frame saving strategies for the purpose of providing a historical context within which human rights narratives occur.

Following the section on historical narratives, is an analysis of narrative themes and frames about Tibetan human rights that characterize “Old Tibet” as a “feudal serfdom” and juxtaposes this Old Tibet against narratives about the improved living standards of Tibet since the PRC’s 1959 democratic reforms that followed the “armed rebellion” (what Tibet Movement calls the “popular uprising” or “Tibetan Uprising”) on March 10<sup>th</sup> 1959. Through a description of these narratives, I will demonstrate how CCP human rights narratives are, like historical narratives used in counterframing processes that include frame debunking and frame saving strategies that call into question the credibility of the Tibet Movement’s human rights accusations against China. Furthermore, these CCP sites engage in strategic frame transformation processes to assert a new cultural interpretation of human rights that shifts the focus of human rights from the political and cultural rights of the individual, to the rights of the greater community’s economic stability and high standard of living. This section of the chapter show how these narratives and framing strategies attempt to persuade the web user that China’s work in Tibet is a human rights success story and that the foremost concern of the PRC’s policies is to benefit Tibetans.

Furthermore, these framing strategies are employed in images and articles from Chinese news sources that depict Tibet’s modernization successes and everyday Tibetan happiness and gratitude towards the PRC government. These stories also intersect with narratives about Tibet’s burgeoning tourism industry. These themes lead to a narrative conclusion requesting that foreigners should be open-minded in how they view the current political situation in Tibet and, if possible, travel to Tibet to witness these improvements. In these ways, CCP narratives are engaging in counterframing the Tibet Movement in a way that questions the validity of information that foreigners receive about Tibet from those not currently living inside Tibet or the PRC and in doing so, claims that the only legitimate information one can have on Tibet is the information one receives from witnessing these reforms in person as a tourist to Tibet.

After analyzing these narrative themes and framing strategies, this chapter will conclude a short discussion that demonstrates how these CCP websites are designed as a counterframing propaganda tool

to correct the everyday “Westerner” that has serious “misunderstandings” or “incorrect information” about the situation in China (Zhao 2000). In this way, the issue network’s websites are framed as tools for correcting misunderstandings and generating better understanding between China and foreigners (Zhao 2000). While I stated that Tibet Movement websites used a wide-array of strategic framing processes and framing tasks to enhance the credibility, salience, and hence resonance of these frames with a targeted web user for the purposes of persuading the web user to agree with these frames, recruiting the web user to the cause, and mobilizing the web user to act, I argue in this chapter that China’s counterframing strategies (such as frame debunking, frame saving and polarization-vilification) are only used for the purpose of engaging in a “struggle for truth” that intends to persuade a web user to limit their engagement on the issue of Tibet and to maintain an “open mind” on the issue until they are able to travel to the region through a PRC-managed tourism company.

### **Historical Narratives: Counterframing processes and contextualizing present day Tibet**

All of the archived websites analyzed published historical accounts or news articles that narrated Tibet’s history, historical events and actors. These narratives defending the CCP view that Tibet has always been a part of China serve as a counterframe to the Tibet Movement’s own set of histories. Websites also used articles showcasing Tibetology research and the public media statements of Tibetologists that defended or provided further evidence for China’s ancient claim to Tibet, descriptions of tourist sites that provided evidence of Han-Tibetan historical relationships, and evidence of the hardships faced by Tibetans under the feudal serfdom social structure that ruled Tibet until the establishment of democratic reforms in 1959. All of these methods had the dual role of defending China’s political claim to Tibet and in validating China’s actions in Tibet as being of benefit for the majority of Tibetans.

Many websites had an entire section (or sections) of their site dedicated to telling the history of Tibet , such as China Tibet Online ([eng.tibet.cn](http://eng.tibet.cn)), Tibet Human Rights ([en.tibet328.cn](http://en.tibet328.cn)),

PressClubofTibet.org (presscluboftibet.org), TibetCulture.net (en.tibetculture.net), and Tibet Tourism Bureau (www.xzta.gov.cn/yww/) (CAPDTC 2011d; China Tibet Online 2011f; China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2011b; PressClubofTibet.org 2011e; Tibet Human Rights 2011d). Other sites embedded Tibetan history within other related sections of the site, such as *China Tibet News*' (english.chinatibetnews.com ) subsection, "The Past", located within the site's "Culture" section (China Tibet News Web 2011f).

Many of the historical accounts and timelines found on these sites appeared to be from other sources. For example, the article, "Tell you a true Tibet—Sovereignty of Tibet" (IOSC 2009b) hosted on Tibet Human Rights, is attributed to an excerpt from the white paper, "Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation" (IOSC 1992a). Likewise, content from China Tibet Online's history web pages appear to be from a combination of unattributed sources.<sup>26</sup> The site's history subsection, the "Pre-Tubo Kingdom" (China Tibet Online 2011k) is from Chen Qingying's, *Tibetan History* (Chen 2003, 10), and the pages on the Yuan Dynasty (China Tibet Online 2011n) and the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (China Tibet Online 2011j) are excerpts from, "Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation" (IOSC 1992a). Furthermore, PressClubofTibet.org's historical timeline (PressClubofTibet.org 2011e) shares the

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<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to determine whether the use of unattributed content on these sites is a practice of strategic ambiguity on the part of the CCP websites, simple web producer sloppiness, or a lack of time and resources provided to the web producer to create original content. In the case of hosting uncited, excerpted, white paper content as a series of separate articles on China Tibet Online's Yuan Dynasty (China Tibet Online 2011n) and the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (China Tibet Online 2011j) webpages, this may be a form of strategic ambiguity: there may be an attempt to hide the fact that these pieces of content are direct copies of government documents. This impression of strategic ambiguity comes in part from there being no attempt at providing any type of "source" or "citation" for the material, as well as its lack of clarity in determining the original purpose of the content (the reader is left to determine whether the content is from government paper or a Chinese academic essay or report). In other cases, such as an unattributed or misattributed news article on sites like China Tibet News, this may simply be the case of sloppiness on the part of the web producer as there does not appear to be an attempt to hide the original purpose of the content (i.e. the material appears in its original context and function as a news update or article about an event or issue). In the case of Press Club of Tibet, the site's small size and limited content, as well as it being located outside of the issue network at the time of data collection (but not at the time of collecting URLs to select a sample for narrative analysis), may indicate sloppiness on the part of the web producer as well as a lack of time and resources to provide original content or to be concerned with attributing content used on other websites.

same content found on Tibet Tourism Bureau's article, "Tibet-an Inseparable Part of China" (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007k) and *China Daily's*, "Tibet History" (China Tibet Information Center 2005b).<sup>27</sup>

Some historical chronological accounts were very simple, whereas others were lengthy and highly descriptive. However, most sites generally stuck to a very basic chronological outline of Tibetan history that included the Tubo Kingdom (what the Tibet Movement calls the Imperial Age or Tibetan Empire of the seventh through tenth centuries), the Yuan Dynasty (thirteenth through fourteenth century), Ming Dynasty (fourteenth through seventeenth century), Qing Dynasty (seventeenth through twentieth century), the Republic of China Era (1912-1949) and the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet in 1951. Sites, such as China Tibet Online, also included historical descriptions of the "Pre-Tubo Kingdom" (China Tibet Online 2011k), the "Era After the Collapse of the Tubo Kingdom" (China Tibet Online 2011c), and the "Establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region" (China Tibet Online 2011d).

What is perhaps most striking when reading the history of Tibet on these sites, as compared to those on Tibet Movement sites, are the extensive use of Chinese terminology to describe historical periods, Chinese historical data that emphasize the strengthening of ties between Han and Tibetan ethnicities, an intensive focus on the ins and outs of Chinese Dynastic influence and administration of Tibetan affairs,<sup>28</sup> and the lack of historical information about Tibet following 1951 (in particular, the history of the Cultural Revolution that occurred from 1966 through 1976). These elements make for a very distinct account of Tibetan history that emphasizes a distinctly Han-centered point of view and downplays, and at times completely eliminates, the use of Tibetan historical perspectives in the retelling of history.

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<sup>27</sup> China Daily attributes this content's origins to China Tibet Online.

<sup>28</sup> One exception to this is the *People's Daily Online's* ([english.people.com.cn](http://english.people.com.cn)), "History of Tibet" (People's Daily 2008), which divides Tibetan history into four periods based on Tibetan rulers (rather than Chinese Dynasties) of Tibet. This historical description is also found on many Tibet tourism sites, such as the Tibet Travel website of the China International Travel Service Co. (CITS) ([tibettravel.org](http://tibettravel.org)) (TDBSCITS 2009) and Shangrila Tours ([shangrilatours.com](http://shangrilatours.com)) (Shangrila Tours 2013).



In what follows is a brief discussion of the historical narrative themes found on these sites and how these themes were used in frame-saving and frame-debunking strategies through methods of storytelling that rely on Chinese records, news articles on the celebration of significant historical figures in these Chinese-focused narratives, such as Princess Wencheng, Chinese Tibetology research, and tourist site descriptions that illustrate these historical truths. I will demonstrate how the CCP uses these narrative strategies in frame saving and frame debunking strategic processes to raise the credibility of the CCP's historical frames and to question the credibility of the Tibet Movement's polarization-vilification strategies that characterize the Chinese as brutal invaders and Tibetans as peaceful protesters. In doing so, I also suggest that the CCP are engaging in using narratives in their own polarization-vilification strategic process to shift from a narrative framework that polarizes Tibetans and Chinese, to a framework that polarizes a union of Tibetan serfs and Chinese Communists against a union of aristocratic Tibetans and Western imperialists.

### **The Tubo Kingdom: Establishing intimate ties between Tibetans and Han**

The Chinese historical narrative of Tibet often begins with the Tubo Kingdom (a term only used by Chinese historians) to highlight the strengthening of ethnic ties between the Tibetan and Han people. Narratives about the Tubo kingdom are often found in white papers in full text or excerpt form on the CCP websites. For example, Tibet Human Right's "Sovereignty of Tibet", part one of "Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation", states:

By the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Tibetans and Hans had, through marriage between royal families and meetings leading to alliances, cemented political and kinship ties of unity and political friendship and formed close economic and cultural relations, laying a solid foundation for the ultimate founding of a unified nation. (IOSC 2009b)

Thus, while Tibet is not yet, in CCP's point a view, officially a part of Chinese territory, it is the foundation upon which the concept of "China's Tibet", or a unified China, develops. It is a period during which Han and Tibetans become interconnected and unified in friendship and kinship. Here, Tibet Human

Rights uses this section of the white paper<sup>29</sup> as part of the website's "The Historical Truth" section, which is specifically designed to engage in frame debunking strategies against Tibet Movement historical frames (Tibet Human Rights 2011d). In this particular excerpt, the CCP counters the Tibet Movement framing of early Tibetan history as a period of clear-cut independence and instead frames this period of history as the beginning of a unified China: a historical period that lay the foundation for establishing strong kinship, political, economic and cultural ties between Hans and Tibetans.

Within the Tubo Kingdom narrative, two historical figures tend to dominate as symbolic icons of Tibetan-Han unification: the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo<sup>30</sup> and his Han wife, Princess Wencheng. In descriptions of their matrimonial union, certain historical details remain absent in the CCP narrative, such as the relationships between Songtsen Gampo and his other wives.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, CCP narratives also consistently frame this marriage as an almost-spiritual unification between Tibetan and Han relations while de-emphasizing the rivalry and power dynamic between Tang rulers and the Tibetan empire. Furthermore, many of these narratives frame the Tibetan rulers as carrying a deep respect and admiration for Han culture. In this way CCP narratives are engaged in providing a counterframe to Tibet Movement narratives that emphasize Songtsen Gampo's military and political dominance in the region and minimize Princess Wencheng's importance to the role of one of Gampo's many wives.

For example, on TibetCulture.net, the article, "Four Factors Constituting Friendly Tubo-Tang Relations," pays little attention to the political context in which Songtsen Gampo proposed marriage to Wencheng, or of the political and military power of his empire, but delves into extensive detail about how

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<sup>29</sup> This white paper and many others are, in and of themselves, texts engaged in frame debunking strategies that argue against Tibet Movement claims and attempt to assert their own frame for China's right to Tibet.

<sup>30</sup> Songtsen Gampo ruled from 617-649/50 C.E. and unified the tribes of the Tibetan Plateau.

<sup>31</sup> Many Western academic and Tibetan historical accounts depict Songtsen Gampo as having forged multiple matrimonial alliances with the daughters of many of his potential adversaries, including those of the Tibetan nobility and Nepalese Princess Bhrikuti Devi of Nepal (Shakabpa 2010; Uebach 2008). Very little about these other marriages are found on the sites in the CCP propaganda network as is any suggestion that Songtsen Gampo's requests for these alliances, including with Princess Wencheng, were often accompanied with a potential threat of war with the expanding Tibetan empire (Shakabpa 2010, 118--199; Uebach 2008, 5). Furthermore, while Western and Tibetan academics state that both princesses were devout Buddhists and brought images of the Buddha to Tibet (Shakabpa 2010, 118--199; Uebach 2008, 5), the Nepalese princess' religious influence is often underplayed or subservient to the influence of Princess Wencheng.

Songtsen Gampo's Chief Minister, Gar Tongtsen, impressed the Tang Emperor with his comprehension of Tang Confucian morals and Chang'an court protocol: signs indicating Tongtsen's deep respect and admiration for Tang beliefs and customs (Wu, 2007a). Moreover, there are also details on how Songtsen Gampo was deeply impressed by the Han Kingdom, including his eventual adoption of Han embroidered silk clothes, invitations to Han intellectuals to "teach him the correct way to write memorials to the throne" (Wu 2007a), and future instances in which Tang and Tubo marital alliances were made to avoid war through establishing an "uncle-nephew relationship" (Wu 2007a) between Han and Tibetans, in which the Han emperor takes on the elder role of the uncle. This article is told in a way that frames the character of Songtsen Gampo as respectful of Han customs and, in many ways, submissive to these customs, suggesting that Han ways were clearly deemed to be culturally superior to the great Tibetan leader. Furthermore, this article provided a counterframe to Tibet Movement's claim that Songtsen Gampo was a strategic politician and provided a very real military threat to the Tang Empire. Furthermore, Fengzhen Wu's work is a piece of Tibetology scholarship: an academic-like enterprise that falls under the supervision of the Ministry of Propaganda. His article lists footnotes and a bibliography, which may raise the empirical credibility of this frame to the web user.

Likewise, in TibetCulture.net's "Tibetology" subsection titled, "Historical Celebrity", Princess Wencheng features more prominently than Songtsen Gampo (CAPDTC 2011c). In the article, "Songtsan Gampo and Princess Wencheng," Wencheng is said to have been loved by the Tibetan people and that she had a "dancing and singing party in Lhasa" when she arrived (China Tibet Information Center 2007). She is also credited with an increase of social progress in the Tubo Kingdom through teaching Tibetans how to grow crops and vegetables, her knowledge of Buddhism and overseeing the construction of Buddhist monasteries, and bringing horses, camels and donkeys to the region (China Tibet Information Center 2007). The article ends with a description of the roles each party played in the story of the development of the Chinese nation:

Songtsan Gambo unified Tibet, promoted political, economic and cultural development of his Tubo Kingdom, and strengthened ties between Tibet and Central Plains. In so doing he made outstanding contributions to the unification of the Chinese nation. Princess Wencheng, who married into the Tubo Kingdom and worked to promote economic and cultural exchanges between the Central Plains and the Tubo area, left a historic legacy of friendship and cooperation between the Han and the Tibetan peoples. All these events have been recorded in history books and lie embedded in the minds of the Han and the Tibetan peoples. (China Tibet Information Center 2007)

Here, Songtsen Gampo's historical contributions are framed as the initiation of the political project of a unified China that includes Tibet, and Princess Wencheng is framed as a symbol of Han and Tibetan friendship: a direct counterframe to the Tibet Movement's framing of this history as a period of Tibetan independence and military dominance.

Songtsen Gampo and Princess Wencheng's union is also used as a contemporary symbol for the ancient (and loving) Tibetan and Han ethnic ties that were forged during this period in history. Princess Wencheng even appears to rival her spouse in popularity as an icon of this ancient ethnic friendship. An article in China Tibet Online described how artists have created a *thangka*<sup>32</sup> of Princess Wencheng to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (Zhang 2009), while another article celebrates the popularity of a modern opera about Princess Wencheng (Wu 2008). In the case of the opera, it is not only the topic of the production, but the style of the production itself that is representative of the historical friendship between Han and Tibetans as the show combines Peking and Tibetan operatic styles (see image 5). In these ways, news articles are used on sites to continue to perpetuate the framing of Wencheng and Gampo as the foundations for a unified China. Furthermore, through showcasing the popularity of these historical characters in contemporary times, the CCP sites are suggesting that these frames hold a high level of salience and credibility for contemporary Tibetans and Chinese and therefore, outsiders should also consider these to be credible narratives for Tibetans.

The China Tibet Tourism Bureau also highlights the importance of Princess Wencheng through descriptions of particular tourist sites in Tibet, such as Yumbulagang Palace (China Tibet Tourism Bureau

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<sup>32</sup> Thangka paintings are religious paintings used in meditation practice.

2007n), the Potala Palace (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007g), Yarlung Folk Cultural Center (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007m), Trandruk Monastery (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007l), Jokhang Monastery (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007c), and the Barkhor Area (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007a). For example, in the description of Trandruk Monastery, Princess Wencheng is said to have stayed at the monastery and left Buddhist relics there. The article's "evaluation" section<sup>33</sup> states that the "most precious treasure in the monastery" is a pearl thangka brought by Princess Wencheng (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007l). Likewise, in the description of Yumbulagang Palace, the palace watchtower is said to have been the first summer home for Princess Wencheng (China Tibet Tourism Bureau, 2007s) and the Jokhang Monastery description states that Princess Wencheng used Chinese cosmology to select the site for the temple (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007c). In these ways, a web user is presented with information that not only provides continuing counterframes to the Tibet Movement's devaluation of Princess Wencheng, but also provides actual physical places that a web user can visit, which lends an air of empirical credibility to the CP frame.

Therefore, while the marriage of Songtsen Gampo to Princess Wencheng is noted in Tibet Movement websites' historical narratives, the CCP propaganda network sites reframe this marriage into a symbolic historical moment that provides the foundation for future kinship, economic, and cultural ties between Tibetans and Han and the beginning of the unified China project. In this way, CCP sites provide a counterframe to Tibet Movement websites that assert that this early period in Tibetan history clearly demonstrates Tibet's historical independence and uniqueness as a distinct nation from China. This story is retold in historical accounts from white papers, Tibetology research, tourist descriptions, and in propaganda news articles that celebrate Princess Wencheng's influence in Tibet, the symbolic familial ties between ethnic Tibetans and ethnic Han, and de-emphasize the political power of the Tibetan empire during this period of history. For CCP narratives, the Tubo Period is an important narrative not because it is the first period where Tibetans established their own empire, but because it is the first period in Chinese

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<sup>33</sup> This section of the China Tibet Tourism Bureau's tourist descriptions often state specific materials of interest for the tourist travelling to the site.

history where Tibetans are framed as taking part in the historical construction of the modern-day Chinese nation-state.

### **The Yuan Dynasty: Tibet is “officially” established as a part of China**

In CCP issue network narratives, the Yuan Dynasty is the official historic period during which Tibet became a Chinese territory ruled by a “central” Chinese government (IOSC 1992a). In this narrative, Tibet became “an administrative region of China” (PressClubofTibet.org 2011h; China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007k) due to Genghis Khan’s subjugation of local tribes in the region. In 1260, Kublai Khan ascended to the throne and granted Sakya Pandita’s nephew, Phagpa, the title of “Imperial Tutor” and made him politico-religious leaders of Tibet (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007k; PressClubofTibet.org 2011h). In 1279, Kublai Khan unified China’s territory and it is at this point that Tibet officially “became an administrative region under direct jurisdiction of the central government of China” (PressClubofTibet.org 2011h; China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007k) through the creation of the High Pacification Commissioner’s Office, which acted as Tibet’s local and administrative organization (China Tibet Online 2011n).

In the CCP narrative, the narrative of a priest-patron relationship that reflected equal, or nuanced, power-relations between China and Tibet (as argued by Tibetan historians) is absent or contested. In the article, “Scholar: Tibet Under Effective Jurisdiction of China Central Gov’t Since 13th Century” (Xinhua 2008b), Tibetan Scholar Basang Wangdu, refutes Shakabpa’s (2010) arguments supporting a priest-patron relationship between China and Tibet in *One Hundred Thousand Moons*. Wangdu argues that the Yuan central government placed three administrative leaders in the Tibetan-populated areas of China, registered Tibetan households, set up post houses, and nominated regional officials, which indicates that the Yuan Dynasty’s relationship with Tibet was not an equal one in terms of governance and that while Tibetans still provided religious guidance, it was no longer independent in administering its own political affairs (Xinhua 2008b). In this way, Wangdu is using frame debunking strategies to explicitly refute Tibet Movement narratives that bring historical nuance to the Mongolian-Tibetan relationship during the Yuan

Dynasty. Likewise, the CCP's publication of an article solely about a Tibetan Tibetologist's academic-based arguments regarding the Yuan Dynasty's administration of Tibet is an attempt to raise the perceived credibility of the CCP's frame articulators (in this case, a Tibetan scholar), to boost their frame's credibility and potential resonance with a target audience.

One article on the history of the Sakya sect also minimized Tibetan religious power during the Yuan Dynasty, but did not reject the possibility of Tibetan religious power in Mongolian political affairs (China Tibet Information Center 2005a). This article had some similar narrative tones when describing the priest-patron relationship to those found in the Tibet Movement websites. The article stated:

In the 13th century, the influence of the sect was so strong that it played a dominant role in the social life of the Yuan court. Both Sa-pan and Phags-pa contributed to the consolidation of the Yuan Empire and played integral roles in the development of the Sakyas Sect. Phags-pa was respected by Emperor Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty and was honored Master of the Yuan Empire.” (China Tibet Information Center 2005a)

Here, the two influential Sakya religious leaders and are shown to have played a more central role in the Yuan court rather than acting as the passive receivers of Yuan official titles, such as “Imperial Tutor”. However, despite this potential similarity between CCP and Tibet Movement frames regarding the Sakya-Mongolian Empire narrative, this CCP narrative counterframes the Sakya's power in the Yuan Empire in terms of how they used this power in a way that “contributed to the consolidation of the Yuan Empire” (China Tibet Information Center 2005a). In this way, these more nuanced narratives about the Sakya's sect's relationship to the Khan are framed in a way that is similar to the framing of the Tubo Empire: here, the Yuan Dynasty narrative attempts to demonstrate how Tibetans have historically played a central role in building a unified China. In this way, Tibetans are framed as committed to, and actively participating in, China's nation-building project, not a Tibetan nation-building project.

While this description appears to verge slightly from an official government narrative that ignores or completely minimizes the priest-patron relationship, other articles state that the Sakya Sect had no other choice but to submit to the Mongolians. In the Tibetology article, “The Administrative System in

Tibet during the Tang and Yuan Dynasties” (TangJia-hong 2007), Sakya Pandita and his nephew Phagpa are said to have been forced into establishing a relationship with the Mongolian leader, Godan. The author writes,

At that crucial point, the Tibetan people made the wise choice of relying on the Yuan central government to preserve Tibet's political system and form a unified local administration. This event was vividly recorded in the famous historical document known as Sakya Pandita's Letter to the Tibetans. (TangJia-hong 2007)

Here, the Tibetan decision to join forces with the Mongolians is described as a “wise choice” (TangJia-hong 2007) as they faced a stronger military rival. Furthermore, the article states that the political and economic powers conferred to the Sakya Sect actually enabled greater control by the Yuan government, “by whose imperial edicts their privileges were strictly defined” (TangJia-hong 2007). These actions are also said to have established Tibet as a feudal serfdom due to the Sakya sect’s ability to combine and wield religious and political authority (TangJia-hong 2007). In this way, CCP narratives maintain their counterframing of Tibet as a part of a historically unified China and continue to attempt to raise the empirical and perceived credibility of their frames through publishing Tibetology works that reproduce these frames.

In the world of CCP-managed tourism, the primary site of significance for demonstrating the history of the Yuan Dynasty’s rule in Tibet is Sakya Monastery. The China Tibet Tourism Bureau states, “Sakya Monastery not only records the history of the combination of religion and politics in Tibet, but also deemed as the sign that Tibet was brought into Chinese domain officially” (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007j). In this way, tourism sites (and websites) posit counterframes to those found in the Tibet Movement and attempt to raise the empirical credibility of the CCP framing of the Yuan Dynasty through emphasizing a place, or site to visit, where you can experience and see the evidence for this particular narrative framework first-hand.

To conclude, the Yuan Dynasty is a moment of special significance for CCP propaganda narratives. It is the historical moment during which the PRC claims to have gained the region of Tibet and



incorporated Tibet into a unified China. This framing of Tibet during the Yuan Dynasty relies on descriptions of the role of Tibetan leaders in the priest-patron relationship and the establishment of Yuan government offices in Tibet. Methods of establishing these historical narratives occur through the avid use of government white papers, as well as Chinese Tibetology research and the careful management of tourism destinations, all of which are strategically used to raise the empirical and perceived credibility of the CCP framing of this time period. These narratives act as counterframes to Tibet Movement stories about the Yuan Dynasty that claim that the Dynasty does not indicate Tibet's incorporation into China nor represent the beginning of an unbroken historical line of direct Chinese governance from a central government over Tibet.

#### **Ming and Qing Dynasties and the Nationalist Government: Stories of continuous control and increasing administration of Tibet**

Narratives about the Ming (fourteenth to seventeenth century) and Qing (seventeenth to twentieth century) Dynasties are each used to support the historical narrative depicting China's growing control over administration of Tibet via the Chinese central government and framing Tibet as historically a part of a China. As the white paper, "Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation," states, "In 1368, the Ming Dynasty replaced the Yuan Dynasty and inherited the right to rule Tibet" (IOSC 1992a). In this statement, it is implied that rule over Tibet went unbroken between dynastic periods and that change in dynastic empires occurred in a linear and relatively smooth fashion. The white paper provides various pieces of evidence to support the characteristics of Ming and Qing rule, including the government's ability to punish Tibetan local officials that offended the law (IOSC 1992a). However, what is most notable about Ming and Qing historical narratives is the emphasis placed on moments when Chinese leaders appointed specific Tibetans into the Chinese government, granted Tibetan officials with Chinese titles of honor, and provided them with official diplomas and seals. These examples are intended to raise the empirical credibility of the frame through providing evidence of China's involvement in Tibetan politics. These examples and stories are also an attempt at using frame saving strategies that promote a counterframe to the Tibet Movement narrative that claims that there was not an unbroken line of

succession of Chinese Empires that ruled over Tibet and any relationship between Tibetans and Chinese rulers was simply one of a priest-patron relationship.

For example, PressClubofTibet.org (2011a) states that the Ming Dynasty continued in the Yuan Dynasty's tradition of administering political control in the Tibetan region. The site states that the Ming court continued the tradition of dynastic rulers conferring special titles to Tibetan religious leaders, such as Khon Drakpa of the Sakya Sect being named, "Prince of Dharma" (PressClubofTibet.org 2011a) and Shakya Yeshe of the Gelugpa sect being honored with the title, "The Great Compassionate Prince of the Dharma" (PressClubofTibet.org 2011a). In the site's description of the Qing Dynasty, we read that the court improved the administration of Tibet (PressClubofTibet.org 2011c). Most notable is a statement about how the Beijing emperor conferred titles to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama and officially recognized their political and religious powers of Tibet (PressClubofTibet.org 2011c). Here, PressClubofTibet.org relies solely on the conferring of titles as the primary form of evidence to support its historic narrative and to imbue this narrative with some empirical credibility.

Likewise, the article, "The Story and Significance of Prince Chanhua Offering Tribute to and Requesting a New Title from the Qing Court in the Early Qing period" (Deng 2007), featured on TibetCulture.net, attempts to add empirical credibility to narratives claiming that seals and titles are indications of Chinese imperial power over Tibet, which, in turn, attempts to make the framing of the CCP version of Tibet's history resonate more clearly for the web user. Here, Deng's description of Prince Chanhua's desire and requests for a new Qing title is used to establish the political importance of conferred names and seals for Tibetans. The article concludes that those Tibetans receiving the seal and title of the Qing court were viewed as having the authority to exercise power in their local Tibetan context. Deng (2007) writes, "Their yearning for a seal from the imperial court also showed the root cause of their ideology of submission to the Qing court." Here, the author is arguing that the seals and titles conferred upon Tibetans held power due to the authority of the Ming and Qing Imperial courts and, *more importantly*, that Tibetans in Tibet understood the power of these materials and symbols as they too

believed that the Qing government had control over their local domain. For those promoting and pursuing the CCP propaganda position on Tibet's history, it is important for this distinction to be made in order to counter Tibet Movement claims that only the Chinese government viewed themselves as rulers of Tibet and that Tibetans had no such understanding of this power relationship. Therefore, Deng argues that Tibetans at that time did not view the Qing courts relationship to Tibet as a continuation of a priest-patron relationship between equals, but that they acknowledged that they were a part of China's political domain. In this way, CCP narratives are engaged in frame saving strategies to rescue their historical frames that Tibet Movement narratives have called into question and to maintain their counterframe that the Ming and Qing Dynasty continued to administer political power in Tibet. Likewise, using Tibetology articles that provide in-depth analysis of historical documents and figures, such as Prince Chanhua, are a strategic means for boosting the perceived and empirical credibility of the CCP frame.

The CCP's attempts at raising the credibility of Ming and Qing historical frames are also found in tourist site descriptions. The China Tibet Tourism Bureau describes several places where a tourist will find many of these historical diplomas and seals, such as Potala Palace. The Potala Palace description states:

There are also a unique collection of golden diplomas and jade seals granted to successive Dalai lamas by Chinese Ming (1356-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) emperors to re-affirm the official ties between the local Tibetan administration and the central Chinese government. (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007g)

Here, the collection of diplomas and seals are artifacts that portray China's political authority in Tibet and promote the overarching historical frame that Tibet has historically been a part of a unified China.

Likewise, Tibet Tourism Bureau's article on Chambaling Monastery (Camdo Monastery) highlights for the interested tourist those materials and historical details that provide evidence for close ties between the monastery and the Qing court. One of these ties is the Emperor Kangxi giving titles to "Living Buddhas" and bronze seals to the Panchen Erdini: items that are still said to be held by the monastery (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007b). In this way, tourism sites that contain these artifacts continue to function as

physical evidence of the CCP historical narrative, providing empirical credibility to CCP frames that China is the legitimate ruler of Tibet.

While the narrative of the political relationship between Tibet and China's Ming and Qing Courts contained many details that depict China's authority in Tibet, the narrative's dominant focus is on the political symbolism of conferring of titles, seals and diplomas. While some sites, such as [PressClubofTibet.org](http://PressClubofTibet.org) (2011a, 2011c), simply state what these titles were, Tibetologist, Deng (2007), argues for their political importance for Chinese and Tibetans. The China Tibet Tourism Bureau also provides a platform for showcasing the physical artifacts that support the narrative, suggesting that a web user can view this artifacts for themselves should they visit Tibet. In these ways, CCP websites use narratives of Ming and Qing titles, seals, and diplomas to claim that China continued to politically control Tibet since the Yuan Dynasty: control that is meant to be viewed as unbroken with a central government that continues the same administrative traditions that currently guide the governance of the Tibet people. In these ways, CCP sites use their Ming and Qing narratives to frame Tibet as historically a part of China in order to raise the credibility of this frame through promoting specific interpretations of historical evidence and tourist sites and to engage in frame-saving strategies against Tibet Movement accusations claiming that China's history of Tibet is not accurate or legitimate.

### **The Peaceful Liberation: The end of Tibetan history and silence of the cultural revolution**

While Tibet Movement narratives framed the period between 1911-1950 as a period of unquestioned independence for Tibet and spent significant energy on examining and supplying evidence to the web user supporting this narrative framework, CCP narratives about the period leading up to the 1949-50 Peaceful Liberation are relatively short and frame the period as one of continuing administration of Tibet via a central Nationalist Chinese government. For example, the white paper, "Tibet: Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation," which China Tibet Online adopts for the web content explaining this historical period, asserts that China continued its rule over Tibet. For example, the white paper states that the central government created the Bureau of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs in 1912,

which was responsible for all local Tibetan political concerns (IOSC 1992a). Furthermore, the white paper states that the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama were also said to have received honorific titles, and that the Tibetan government sent a representative to the Nanjiang national government's National Assembly in 1946 (IOSC 1992a). The white paper also states that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had accused the British of testing his loyalty to the central Chinese government. As a final argument for China's rule of Tibet during this period of history is a narrative of the discovery of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's incarnation, which was said to have been conducted under the central government's approval and knowledge (IOSC 1992a), continuing in the tradition of China's administration of the reincarnation system. In these ways, CCP narratives counterframe Tibet Movement frames using similar narrative elements found in previous CCP historical narratives: the conferring of titles, administrative offices concerned with the local politics of Tibet, and involvement in Tibet's religious sects.

While the period of the Chinese Nationalist Government may be quite short in narrative detail when compared to the publication of stories from the Tubo Kingdom, Yuan and Qing Dynasties, the narratives depicting the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet up to the 1959 Rebellion are quite lengthy. Of importance for the CCP narratives in these sections is providing evidence that establishes the PLA as well-liked and welcomed by everyday Tibetans. Likewise, the CCP also uses narratives of this period to demonstrate how only the wealthy Tibetan aristocrats (often said to be heavily influenced by Western imperialists) were antagonistic to Chinese reforms and activities in Tibet.

In establishing the PLA and CCP cadres in Tibet in this way, the CCP is attempting to provide evidence that validates the legality of the 17-Point Agreement and its response to the 1959 uprising (what the CCP texts call the "1959 Rebellion") and enactment of democratic reforms. It also demonstrates the CCP's use of frame saving strategies that are employed to counter Tibet Movement polarization-vilification strategies that characterize Tibetan-Chinese conflict as one between peaceful protesting victims and a brutal, militarized invader. Likewise, CCP, in attempting to minimize the Tibet Movement's polarization-vilification frames, in turn supply their own polarization-vilification strategy

that vilifies Tibetan aristocrats, Western imperialists, and Tibetans influenced by Western imperialism against a unified population of Tibetan serfs (or the everyday Tibetan) and Chinese cadres. As with the Tibet Movement's shift to adding polarization-vilification frames to its historical narratives of mid-twentieth century Tibet, CCP sites also shift to adding polarization-vilification frames during this period in order to contextualize the human rights narratives found in other sections of their web sites.

For example, the PLA and Central government were often described as having a positive relationship with the Tibetan people and, especially, the monasteries upon arrival in Tibet. One article on China Tibet Tourism Bureau (2007i) claimed that Tibetans called the PLA, "soldiers sent by Buddha" and describes how PLA troops always respected religious freedoms in Tibet. The site states:

One particular night, the PLA troops established camp outside a remote monastery in the wilderness. The rain fell in torrents and the cold and shivering troops were soaked to the bone. Nonetheless, no one sought shelter in the monastery. Lamas in the monastery were deeply touched, and offered hot tea and invited the wounded and sick into the monastery. The PLA troops finally arrived in Tibet, with commanders Zhang Jingwu and Zhang Guohua arranging talks with upper-class lamas in the Zhaibung, Sera, Gandain and Jokhang monasteries. On October 18, 1951, they issued alms to the three major monasteries, as well as the Jokhang and Ramoge monasteries and the Upper and Lower Tantric Seminaries. They also issued alms to all lamas attending the Grand Summons Ceremony in 1952. (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007i)

Here, the soldiers, although suffering from bad weather and a lack of shelter, are shown to be respectful of the religious traditions of the Tibetan people by not forcing their way into the monasteries to find respite from the cold. The monks are characterized as being emotionally moved by their restraint and invite them inside. The PLA is also described as having provided generous alms to several of the larger and most important monasteries in the region. The article concludes that despite the Dalai Lama and separatists' betrayal, the Chinese have continued their policies of religious freedom and supported lamas, catalogued cultural relics, restored monasteries and so on. In this way, CCP narratives attempt to delegitimize the Tibet Movement's polarization-vilification strategy that frames Chinese actions in Tibet as always antagonistic to Tibetans. In turn, this CCP narrative is also pointing out a contradiction in Tibet Movement frames that always depict the Chinese as antagonistic to Tibetan religion, pointing to a

historical moment where the Chinese military acted in respect and deference to Tibetan religious traditions. By questioning the Tibet Movement's frame consistency, the CCP uses this narrative in an attempt to enhance their own frame's credibility and assert that this point in history was intended to benefit Tibetans and bring positive reforms to a region that they view as legitimately a part of their own country.

While CCP websites often depict Tibetans welcoming the PLA into Tibet, they also promote the view that the 17-Point Agreement was not signed under duress and was, in fact, supported by the Dalai Lama. On Tibet Human Rights, one Xinhua article argued that the agreement was signed only after fair and peaceful negotiations (Xinhua 2009b). Likewise, another *Xinhua* article on *China Tibet News* argued that Tibetan peasants and serfs welcomed the PLA into Tibet with open arms and that the 17-Point Agreement was the document that liberated these Tibetans from the shackles of Western imperialism and pro-imperialist (namely upper class) Tibetans (Xinhua 2009d). As with the case of the narrative of the PLA entry into Tibet, the 17-Point Agreement is another historical event that is strategically framed to counter Tibet Movement polarization-vilification frames that depict the agreement's signature as conducted under duress due to an ever-present Chinese military threat, while also positing a new set of CCP-constructed polarization-vilification framework that pits (non-aristocratic) Tibetans against Western imperialism and upper class Tibetans. In this way, CCP uses this counterframing strategy to shift the polarization-vilification framework from one based on ethnic lines to one based on class-lines.

This polarization-vilification strategy becomes the predominant counterframing strategy in CCP narratives about the 1959 Rebellion. Using excerpts from the white paper, "Tibet- Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation" (1992), China Tibet Online states that the Rebellion was led by two groups: Tibetan aristocrats, who refused reform for their own selfish interests, and foreign imperialists meddling in China's affairs through the United States CIA (China Tibet Online 2011g). The rebellion was also said to have been instigated by the mayor of Lhasa, who prevented the Dalai Lama from viewing a show at the local Chinese military barracks: a show the Dalai Lama had expressed interest in viewing in his letters to

General Tan Kuan-sen<sup>34</sup> (China Tibet Online 2011g). Here, the mayor of Lhasa is blamed for spreading rumors about the Dalai Lama's safety and is accused of provoking all citizens to rebel. In this way, the 1959 Rebellion is narrated as an event that consisted of one set of antagonists, the selfish, anti-reform Tibetan elites and foreign imperialists (namely, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency) against the protagonists, the PLA, who are said to have acted with the support of patriotic Tibetan monks and lay people (China Tibet Online 2011g). As with narratives about the 17-Point Agreement, CCP narratives attempt to re-frame tensions between Chinese and Tibetans using polarization-vilification strategic processes that are based predominantly on class divisions rather than ethnic divisions.

Overall, the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet is where many of these CCP-based website histories end. The narrative of the Peaceful Liberation is one where the PLA is framed as aligned with the interests of everyday Tibetans, a counterframe to the Tibet Movement's narratives about this period of history. Likewise, the CCP uses its own polarization-vilification strategy to frame the rebellion as a battle between Tibetan aristocracy and its allies against the everyday people of Tibet. By polarizing the actors in this narrative based on class-lines, the CCP both validates the need for China to immediately enforce Democratic Reforms in Tibet, rather than wait for the local government's attitudes towards reforms to change and sets up the socio-historical context in which a web user is meant to relate to CCP human rights narratives.

### **Human Rights Stories: Counterframing and limiting web user participation and engagement with Tibet**

While historical narrative themes are used to legitimate PRC claims to territories inhabited by an ethnic Tibetan majority, narratives on human rights are also used to legitimate PRC claims to Tibet. This is accomplished through narratives that frame the human rights situation in Old Tibet (Tibet prior to the 1959 instigation of democratic reforms) as a feudal serfdom. In turn, narratives about Old Tibet are used

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<sup>34</sup> In the Dalai Lama's autobiography, *My Land My People*, the Dalai Lama states that his reasons for writing these letters that appeared conciliatory to the general and in agreement with the general's view that the rebellion was caused by those wanting to undermine Chinese-Tibetan relations (not caused by anxiety over the Dalai Lama's potential safety in the PLA camp), was to prevent a violent confrontation between the protesting Tibetans surrounding the Dalai Lama at Norbulingka and the PLA (Dalai Lama 1997, 147--149).



as a point of comparison to the contemporary human rights situation in the PRC-modernized Tibet, which is framed as a human rights success story. These sets of narratives and frames are a part of CCP counterframing processes that use frame debunking and frame saving strategic processes to describe how the PRC cares about Tibetans, strives to make policies that will benefit the population and region, and that the success of these policies can be seen through Tibetan expressions of gratitude for reforms and through visiting Tibet to see these reforms in action. In this way, CCP narratives are attempting to boost their frames resonance through promoting their frames' empirical and perceived credibility (through evidence of successful reforms, expressions of Tibetan happiness, and requests for the web user to hold judgment on human rights in Tibet until they are able to visit the country themselves) while questioning the credibility in Tibet Movement human rights frames. These CCP narratives are also used in strategic frame transformation processes in an attempt to reframe the cultural meaning of human rights. In this frame transformation, the cultural meaning of human rights is altered from one about individual political and cultural freedoms to one about community-experienced economic improvements, where stories showcase the increasing financial stability and standard of living that can now be experienced by the everyday Tibetan.

In the section that follows, I will discuss narrative themes used to frame Old Tibet as a feudal serfdom for the purpose of transforming the interpretation of human rights frames so that they encapsulate the goals of the CCP's democratic reforms since the 1959 rebellion. In this way, Tibet under PRC-rule can be framed as a human rights success story. I will also describe how CCP websites engage in frame saving and frame debunking strategies to promote their frame's credibility while attempting to diminish the resonance of the Tibet Movement's human rights frames through questioning their frame's empirical and perceived credibility. I will also examine how narratives on human rights in Tibet are also intertwined with images, entertainment, and news articles that portray everyday Tibetans as happy in Tibet as well as proclaiming gratitude toward PRC policies, perhaps best seen in recently created PRC holiday, Serf

Emancipation Day.<sup>35</sup> I will demonstrate how these narratives of happiness and gratitude are also an attempt at raising the credibility of CCP human rights frames and act as a frame saving strategy against Tibet Movement human rights accusations. I will then examine how narratives concerning Tibetan happiness and human rights also include stories that portray “Westerners” that have visited, or are visiting, Tibet as enjoying Tibet and happily witnessing and confirming CCP human rights frames. I will demonstrate how these stories are used, like the images and texts depicting happy Tibetans, to raise the credibility of CCP frames and engage in frame debunking processes that explicitly refute Tibet Movement frames. I will also suggest that the web user reading these materials is encouraged to visit Tibet so that they can witness these truths for themselves.

### **Old Tibet as a Feudal Serfdom**

Descriptions framing Old Tibet as a feudal serfdom are found on *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online, Tibet Human Rights, TibetCulture.net, China Tibet Online, *China Tibet News*, and the Tibet Tourism Bureau and are based on descriptions found in multiple white papers on Tibet hosted on many of these websites (IOSC 2008, 2009a, 2004b, 2003, 2000, 1998, 1992). These white papers often characterize feudal serfdom in a way that draws comparisons with European history: feudal serfdom is said to be “even darker than medieval society in Europe” (IOSC 2008, 2009a), “darker and more cruel than the European serfdom of the Middle Ages” (IOSC 1992a), or “even darker and more backward than medieval Europe” (IOSC 2004b).

Descriptions of the human rights atrocities that occurred under Tibet’s feudal aristocracy are described at length in the historical sections of many of the archived websites, such as TibetCulture.net, *China Tibet News*, China Tibet Online, and China Tibet Tourism Bureau (CAPDTC 2011d; China Tibet News 2011e; China Tibet Online 2011f; China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2011b), in the “Opinion” sections

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<sup>35</sup> Serf Emancipation Day started on March 28, 2009 to celebrate the end of feudal serfdom following the dissolution of the Tibetan government on March 28, 1959. This holiday was created in an attempt to counteract the first-year anniversary of the Olympic-related protests of the Tibetan uprising in March 2008 and the annual commemoration of the March 10, 1959 uprising (Smith 2010, 234-250). The event consisted of speeches, testimonies from liberated serfs and a rally in Potala Square (Smith 2010, p.249).

of China Tibet Online (China Tibet Online 2011i), and in daily news articles that portray specific instances that demonstrate how Tibetan lives have improved since 1959 (e.g. new work and education opportunities, an individual's increase in finances since 1959). Other sites, such as *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online (chinatibet.people.com.cn), provide stories of feudal serfdom through hosting copies of PRC white papers, such as "Tibet's March Toward Modernization" (IOSC 2001) and "Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet" (IOSC 2004b). Other sites provide these narratives through links to external websites, such as TibetCulture.net's "Features" section (CAPDTC 2011b), which links to a China Tibet Online's web page celebrating Serf Emancipation Day titled, "2009" (China Tibet Information Center 2011) and *China Tibet News'* links to a series of CCTV videos and stills titled, "The Past of Tibet- Episode I" (CCTV International 2008a) and "The Serfs' Miserable Life" (CCTV International 2008b).

Amongst these descriptions of feudal Tibet, there are several articles regarding the use of slave-trade contracts and the use of torture. For example, in *China Tibet News'* "Slave Trade Contracts Reveal Lack of Freedom in Serfdom-Reigned Tibet" (Xinhua 2009e), the author argues against the romanticized vision of pre-liberation Tibet as a Shangri-La, stating:

In his commentary, Wang Xiaobin said the contracts were proof that serfs in the old Tibet, who made up 95 percent of total population, enjoyed no freedom at all. "Serfs were sold and bought like commodities in the old Tibet, and were forced into labor by the serf owners. They fell prey to the loan sharks, and were taken advantage of because they could not read nor count," said the commentary. The Dalai Lama and his supporters in the West have described the old Tibet as a "romantic Shangri-La" where "...all the people were entitled to freedom," it said. "But in reality, should there be a 'free Tibet', it was only enjoyed by the serf owners who resorted to the armed riot in 1959 in order to maintain their 'freedom' forever," the commentary said. (Xinhua 2009e)

Here, the Tibetans that participated in the 1959 Rebellion are characterized as slave owners, desperately clinging to the old ways of exploiting the lower classes and the only Tibetans enjoying any sense of Tibetan freedom during this period of history. In this way, the article engages in a frame debunking strategy that explicitly refutes Tibet Movement historical frames that characterize protesters as engaging in a desire for an independent and free Tibet, and propose that these participants were only the upper

classes of Tibetans, who were the only Tibetans that were free in any way and used this freedom to engage in exploitive feudal rule.

Likewise, in “Seven Questions for the Dalai Lama: Whose "Shangri-La" was the old Tibet?” (People’s Daily 2009d), a document created explicitly to debunk Tibet Movement frames, the text accuses the Dalai Lama of lying about a “free Tibet” prior to the 1959 reforms. The author asserts that the legal and social systems of Old Tibet only served the interests of serf owners and was not a place of freedom for the majority of the population. The author defends this argument through citing statements made by two Tibetologists, Zhang Yun from the China Tibetology Research Center, and American historian, Tom Grunfeld. Yun states that the Dalai Lama has praised feudal serfdom “beautifying the cruel oppression of serfs by serf owners as a cultural feature of Tibet” (People’s Daily 2009d), then, citing Grunfeld’s research on a 1940 survey of the material goods owned by families in eastern Tibet, quotes Grunfeld’s conclusion that “there is no evidence to show that Tibet was a utopian Shangri-La” (People’s Daily 2009d). Here, like the *China Tibet News* article above, this text’s narrative is used in strategic frame debunking to refute Tibet Movement historical frames of a free Tibet and explicitly attempts to raise the credibility of CCP’s framing of Old Tibet through incorporating evidence from Chinese Tibetology and American historical research on Tibet: an attempt to raise the perceived credibility of the CCP frame and in turn, attempting to increase the resonance of the frame for the web user.

Furthermore, China Tibet Tourism Bureau’s website’s description of Pala Manor demonstrates how tourist sites are marketed and maintained as a means of validating CCP frames about the horrors of feudal society. The Manor’s description states:

Pala Manor remains intact as a reminder of the vast contrast in the way in which the nobles and serfs lived in Tibet and as such provides evidence and datum for research into the politics, economy and culture of Tibet while still a society based upon privilege and slavery, which is also a good place for you to know the Tibet history. (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007f)

This description of Pala Manor is also followed with a statement that indicates that the ruler of the manor went into exile with the Dalai Lama (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007f). In this way, the tourism website is not only claiming that this physical place of Pala Manor lends empirical credibility to the CCP's Old Tibet frames, but also implicitly informs the viewer that those in exile—who are also the group the CCP often blames for unrest in Tibet and are considered separatists—are in fact the same people who enjoyed the privileges of Tibetan society prior to 1951 and who, in turn, wish to reinstate in Tibet the same type of unjust theocratic government. Thus, this tourism site both lends credibility to the CCP's Old Tibet frames while also questioning the perceived credibility of those Tibetans articulating the human rights and historical frames in the Tibet Movement.

Likewise, “The Last ‘Dark Ages’”, provides a list of tortures that were conducted in old Tibet (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007d). These include, “gouging out the eyes, cutting off the ears, hands or feet; pulling out tendons; throwing the criminal into water or shutting the criminal into a wooden case lined with nails facing inwards” (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007d). The article adds that artifacts from this period are said to be on display at the Exhibition of Tibetan Social and Historical Relics in the Beijing Cultural Palace of Nationalities (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007d). As with the case of Pala Manor, tourism plays an important role in informing the web user of the horrific realities of human rights in Old Tibet, while also providing to those visiting the country with ample opportunities to view artifacts that provide physical evidence for Tibetan feudal serfdom's history and in turn, provides this framing of Old Tibet with empirical credibility and raises its potential to resonate with the web user.

### **The End of Feudal Serfdom: Transforming international human rights frames**

While some stories on CCP propaganda sites focus only on narratives about Old Tibet, in other cases narratives about Old Tibet are used to draw comparisons with the improved lifestyle of Tibetans that have benefitted from CCP reforms. For example, Tibet Tourism Bureau's “History” section's articles on the feudal system of old Tibet often compares this system to the progress that has occurred since 1959, which includes preferential treatment of Tibetans and other minorities over majority Han

peoples, the end of gender inequality, revitalization of the Tibetan population, and freedom of religion (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2011b). For example, in the article, “Monument to Tibet Liberation Unveiled”, senior Tibetan official, Raidi, compares the character of “Old” and modern Tibet:

In just fifty years, the people of Tibet, led by the Communist Party of China, have made historic strides in changing their social system, and their living standard has kept improving. This [*sic*] fifty years has witnessed Tibet going from darkness to light, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity, from dictatorship to democracy, and from closedness to openness. (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007e)

In this way, contemporary Tibet and democratic reforms are framed as a human rights success story, transforming international human rights social movement frames, which often focus on individual political and cultural rights, to a human rights frame that is injected with cultural values of increased economic development and community-level social and political progress.

On CCP sites, sometimes the benefits of reforms are described in news articles, other times in photography, and in other times in the words of Tibetans themselves, who provide statements to journalists about the changes that have been made in Tibet. These narratives that describe the positive impact of Chinese democratic reforms all attempt, either through frame saving or frame debunking strategic processes, to counter the Tibet Movement’s framing of contemporary Tibet as a place undergoing innumerable human rights violations. These counterframes follow a narrative that describes how democratic reforms have ended torture, grown the economy and provided financial gains for Tibet and Tibetans, support religious freedom and Tibetan Buddhism, and support a thriving culture and enacted generous cultural preservation programs. Some of these narratives appear to directly counter the specific human rights accusations as framed by the Tibet Movement, while others will attempt to transform the frames of specific topics within the Tibet Movement’s human rights narratives (such as

religious freedom and torture) in order to provide greater opportunities for the CCP to increase their frame's resonance for the targeted web user.<sup>36</sup>

For example, when discussing the issue of torture, CCP website narratives do not attempt to explicitly debunk Tibet Movement human rights accusations about China system of torture, political and cultural imprisonment and detainment, but instead describe the tortures used in Tibet's feudal society and how reforms have ended these types of torture. In "A Tibetan Guide Tells True Tibetan Development in 50 Years" (CRI 2009), the article interviews Qiong Ji, a Tibetan guide for a Beijing exhibition marking the fiftieth anniversary of reform in the TAR. The article discusses how the exhibit displays torture instruments, scenes of "the miserable life of serfs" (CRI 2009) and "jubilant celebrations" (CRI 2009) that occurred after serfdom was abolished. This article uses Qiong Ji's own words to demonstrate the way Tibetans living in the PRC emotionally identify with the narrative of serfdom and the horrors of torture.

Qiong emotionally introduced each part of the exhibition. "I was born in 1959, in the year the reform began, but my parents were serfs in noble houses when they were young." She felt very depressed, "They were hard times. Serfs led a miserable life and they even had no freedom of movement. The instruments in the exhibition have presented a real old Tibet." (CRI 2009)

The article then continues with Qiong Ji explaining how her life is better than her parents, how she has been educated as a guide, and how she has children that also received education, asserting that these accomplishments would have been impossible in old Tibet (CRI 2009). In this way, Tibetan voices are

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<sup>36</sup> For example, CCP news articles will often counter Tibet Movement frames of an endangered culture by describing the large amounts of financial resources that the government has provided to Tibetan cultural preservation programs dedicated to restoring religious texts, monasteries, and other forms of Tibetan cultural expression. However, when dealing with issues such as the torture of prisoners, religious oppression (such as the inability to keep pictures of the Dalai Lama or the use of "education reform" programs in monasteries), the propaganda narratives often avoid engaging in the specifics of Tibet Movement human rights accusations on these websites and instead transform the Tibet Movement's human rights frame from a focus on individual political and religious rights to one of community-focused social and economic gains. In this sense, Tibet Movement human rights frames focused on torture of political prisoners is transformed in CCP sites to refocus torture frames to the torture of lower class Tibetans in feudal serfdom. In this way, CCP reforms are framed as providing human rights to the lower classes through ending these forms of torture and class exploitation. Likewise, Tibet Movement human rights frames focused on individual religious freedoms are transformed into CCP human rights frames that assert that their religion policies free the religious community at large from impurities that are incurred through their organization's or spiritual leaders' involvement in politics. Freedom of religion is also transformed to emphasize frames of religious freedom to include the freedom to not be religious.

used to enhance the perceived credibility of the CCP's human rights framework that depicts Old Tibet as a feudal serfdom and transform contemporary Tibet into an example of a human rights success. Likewise, the article's descriptions of the exhibits displays of torture instruments and photographs of jubilant celebrations following the end of feudal serfdom are used as frame saving devices to assert the human rights atrocities committed by the aristocratic Tibetans of the past and, in turn, rescuing the CCP's historical frame that depicts Tibetans as welcoming reform and celebrating CCP activities in Tibet.

Perhaps the most prolific human rights narratives found on the archived websites are those depicting economic improvements and modernization in Tibet. These stories emphasize the new frame of Tibetan human rights from one focused on political freedom to one that equates freedom with economic prosperity. Some of these narratives are found in general news articles, whereas *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, Tibet Human Rights, China Tibet Online, and *China Tibet News* have an "Economy" or "Business" section on their sites (China Tibet Online 2011b; People's Daily 2011c; Tibet Human Rights 2011b; China Tibet News Web 2011b). For example, on the *People's Daily* site, articles often tout the increases in economic growth in the region (Xinhua 2011a, 2011b; 2011c; Xinhua and Tibet Daily 2010). Some of these articles are also accompanied by images that depict Tibetans smiling and expressing their happiness with these gains, such as one of a smiling Tibetan female farmer in "GDP of Tibet's Bainang County tops 410 Mln Yuan" (Xinhua 2010b).

Tibetans are also shown to celebrate these economic gains through new cultural rituals. For example, in "Tibetans Celebrate Economic Boom with New Rituals" (Xinhua 2010c), we are told the story of a Tibetan man who has bought a new car and that there is now a "Mosur" community ritual that has developed in rural communities to celebrate new car ownership. The Mosur ritual is said to involve friends, presentation of hada,<sup>37</sup> songs, dances, and drinking of barley liquor (Xinhua 2010c). The article claims that car ownership has risen significantly amongst Tibetans (Xinhua 2010c). This and other stories showing an improving economy and economic achievements of the region all support the frame that

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<sup>37</sup> Hada are white ritual scarves used as religious offerings.



human rights improve through financial gains in the society: that Tibetan financial gains have risen Tibetan standards of living, providing access to better education, health care, and individual independence.

In these ways, narratives of economic improvements are central to the CCP's framing of modern-day Tibet as a human rights success story: they transform international human rights frames that support the individual rights of political and religious freedoms to an interpretation of human rights based on a community's (and individual's) experience of financial gain, economic stability and prosperity as central to Tibetan happiness. These stories are also a part of the CCP's frame saving strategy to rescue their human rights frame from Tibet Movement accusations that CCP economic policies are only intended to help consolidate China's power in Tibet and have the effect of marginalizing Tibetans in their own country. Through using statistics of economic growth in the region, these sites are able to enhance their frame's empirical credibility, while also attempting to use Tibetan voices in their articles to improve their frame's perceived credibility. In these ways, CCP sites are attempting to re-construct human rights narratives and transform them in a way that may resonate with a web user.

As one of the primary Tibet Movement human rights narratives focused on issues of religious freedom and cultural preservation, including the preservation and use of the Tibetan language, issues of cultural preservation and religious freedom also receive a great deal of attention on CCP websites. In these narratives, government policies and reforms are all depicted as valuing religious freedom and providing financial support and encouragement for Tibetan Buddhist institutions. These narratives are found in white papers and other government documents, such as China Tibet Tourism Bureau's statements on religious freedom in the temporary constitution of China (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007i), and the white paper, "Protection and Development of Tibetan Culture" (IOSC 2008). These stories are also found in articles located within a website's special sections dedicated to culture and religion, found on sites like China Tibet Online, *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, TibetCulture.net, *China Tibet News*, and China Tibet Tourism Bureau (CAPDTC 2011e; China Tibet News Web 2011d;

China Tibet Online 2011a, 2011l; China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2011a, 2011c; People's Daily 2011b, 2011e).

Some of these articles feature quotes from the Eleventh Panchen Lama stating that Tibetans have religious freedom (Xinhua 2009c), while others describe current religious events in Tibet (China Tibet News Web 2009), and government statements indicating that religion can be of value in promoting social harmony (Xinhua 2010a). On PressClubofTibet.org, one article claimed that Tibetans now have “true” freedom of religion in that now they are free *not* to believe (PressClubofTibet.org 2011d). Overall, the texts of these articles showcase a living and breathing Tibetan Buddhism that is thriving under PRC rule and is generally viewed as a positive activity.<sup>38</sup> In this way, CCP narratives are engaged in frame saving strategies to rescue their human rights frames from Tibet Movement frames that accuse the CCP of engaging in a wide-variety of actions that limit religious freedom or are attempting to destroy religion in Tibet.

Photographs are also used extensively in articles found on these sites and function as a method of raising the empirical credibility of these CCP narratives that frame Tibetans as enjoying full religious freedom. In these photographs, Tibetan religious followers and monastics are often shown engaged in their traditional religious activities. For example, in “Pay Homage to Sacred Monastery,” pilgrims and a monk are shown waiting in a queue to visit a local monastery (Zhang 2011b). Likewise, the China Tibet Online image, “a smiling pilgrim,” shows a content elderly man twirling a portable prayer wheel (Amanda 2010). In *China Tibet News*’ “Tibetans Celebrate Traditional Festival in Lhasa” a series of images are shown from the Monlam Chenmo festival (China Tibet News Web 2009). These images show pilgrims kowtowing, turning prayer wheels, smiling monks lighting butter lamps (see image 6), and other smiling monks engaged in traditional ritualized forms of Buddhist philosophical debate (China Tibet

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<sup>38</sup> One article did indicate that despite the encouragement of religious freedom and encouragement of Tibetans taking part in their traditional religious practices, Tibetan Buddhism did appear to have a negative impact on Tibetan pocketbooks as one third of a believer’s finances would often go to religious expenses, such as rituals, or alms to monastics (Wu 2010). This was one of the few articles that did not thoroughly endorse Tibetan Buddhism when practiced without politics.

News Web 2009). In these ways, Tibetans are depicted in CCP narratives as engaging in their religious traditions. Photographs here function as evidence for these CCP narratives and appear to be an important frame-saving strategy to countering Tibet Movement accusations.

Within the broad narrative of Tibetan religious freedom, a certain amount of energy is expended on these websites in clarifying and validating government control of the Tibetan reincarnation system. This occurs through a storyline that makes two points to validate control: 1) that there is a historical precedent for government control of the reincarnation system through the ritual of a golden urn that had become integrated into the religious practice itself since the Qing Dynasty, and 2) that government control of the reincarnation system, (as well as the need to use force or control any part of the religious system that appears to be involved in political activities) has helped to maintain the purity of the Tibetan Buddhist religion through keeping it free from politics.

For example, the article, “Reincarnation of Living Buddhas,” describes the history of Tibet’s reincarnation system to emphasize the important historical role and political power of China in Tibetan religious affairs, selecting certain moments during the Yuan and Qing Dynasties where China is depicted as the caretaker of Tibetan Buddhism (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007h). China is portrayed as having helped to save Tibetan Buddhism’s purity for all Tibetans from the ever-problematic upper classes. The article states:

The Gelug Sect of Tibetan Buddhism came to power in Tibet in the 17th century and the Living Buddha reincarnation system became a bone of contention with the upper class in Tibet. In 1793, as part of an effort to turn the tide by overcoming drawbacks characteristic of soul boys nominated from the same tribes, the Qing government promulgated the 29-Article Ordinance for the More Efficient Governing of Tibet. Article one of the Ordinance stipulates: In order to ensure the Yellow Sect continues to flourish, the Grand Emperor bestows it with a golden urn and ivory slips for use in confirming the reincarnated soul boy of a deceased Living Buddha. For this purpose, four major Buddhist Guardians will be summoned; the name's [*sic*]of candidates, as well as their birth years, will be written on the ivory slips in the three languages - Manchu, Han chinese and Tibetan; the ivory slips will be placed into the golden urn and learned Living Buddhas will pray for seven days before various Hotogtu Living Buddhas and High Commisioners stationed in Tibet by the Central Government officially confirm the reincarnated soul boy by drawing a lot from the golden urn in front of the statue of

Sakyamuni in the Jokhang Monastery. The system of drawing lot from the golden urn thus perfected the Living Buddha reincarnation system of Tibetan Buddhism” (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2007h)

In this quote, the author implies that the reincarnation system had created conflict amongst the upper class due to incarnations being determined based on tribal affiliations (political affiliations) rather than religious reasons. The Qing government is then seen to step in to rectify the situation by creating a ritual in which China is transformed as a caretaker of the Buddhist reincarnation system, “perfecting” the system for Tibetans.

The concept of government-supervised religion leading to religious purity and preservation of religious freedom and beliefs is also seen in “Religions in Tibet” (China Tibet Online 2005b). After discussing the large amount of financial resources that the Central Government has invested in renovation, maintenance, and preservation of monasteries and other important Buddhist cultural sites, the article states that “Modern civilization has not only brought great changes to Tibet, but also make the divine light shine forth from the region's monasteries even more brightly” (China Tibet Online 2005b). As with the narrative above, the central Chinese government is framed as the protector or caretaker of Buddhism in Tibet and has made Tibetan Buddhism stronger than it was before government intervention. In these ways, CCP narratives not only validate the use of government policies to approve of religious incarnations, but also suggest that this government-run system has maintained the purity of the reincarnation system and hence, Buddhism itself. Both articles engage in frame saving strategies that implicitly rebuke Tibet Movement narratives indicating that control over the reincarnation system is evidence of a lack of religious freedom in Tibet, instead asserting that the CCP’s management of the reincarnation system has evolved out of a larger historical context of Chinese religious management for the purpose of maintaining the Tibetan spiritual purity.

Similar to narratives about Tibetan Buddhism, narratives about Tibetan culture are also found in government white papers (IOSC 1992a, 2000), news articles, and imagery. Through these materials the story of Chinese reforms and Tibetan culture consist of two primary parts: 1) that China preserves a

thriving Tibetan culture, and 2) that China (and Tibetans) wants to share the richness of Tibetan culture to the world. Each of these points builds upon a narrative that makes up a part of a frame debunking strategy to explicitly refute Tibet Movement claims that Tibet has been the victim of cultural genocide. As the white paper, “Protection and Development of Tibetan Culture” states:

Facts show that there has been no "cultural genocide" in Tibet at all over the past half-century and more. On the contrary, the traditional culture of Tibet has been appropriately inherited, effectively protected and vigorously promoted, while modern Tibetan culture, oriented toward modernization, the future and the rest of the world, has opened up to the outside world and achieved rapid and all-round development propelled by Tibet's economic and social development. Tibetan culture is blooming with new vigor and energy in the new age and profoundly influencing the life of Tibetans and the development of Tibet's modernization through its diverse content and innovative forms. Moreover, with its unique charm, Tibetan culture is attracting worldwide attention, enriching the diverse cultural heritage of the Chinese nation and influencing that of the world as a whole. It is safe to say that the situation concerning the protection, prosperity and development of Tibetan culture in any historical period of old Tibet bears no comparison with the situation in Tibet today, and the achievements in this regard are undeniable to anyone who respects facts. (IOSC 2008)

As this white paper excerpt demonstrates, the CCP narrative refutes accusations that there has been cultural genocide in Tibet, and suggests that Tibetan culture is flourishing more than during any period of history. Far from cultural genocide, Tibetan culture, the CCP asserts, is reinvigorated and expanding beyond its traditional borders.

This narrative of cultural preservation is also found in many articles about specific cultural preservation programs found on *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, *China Tibet News*, TibetCulture.net and China Tibet Online. These include articles about preservation of cultural relics and books in China (Xinhua 2009a, 2008a; Wu 2011b; Mirenda 2009), immense and ongoing financial investments into cultural preservation programs (China Tibet Information Center 2008; Wong 2011), the number of approved intangible cultural heritage materials (China Tibet Information Center 2010b), and preservation of ancient buildings (Summer 2010). These articles all engage in frame saving strategies that implicitly rescue CCP cultural preservation narratives from contemporary Tibet Movement frames of cultural endangerment: these article attempt to provide evidence for China's cultural preservation programs and

China's dedication to preserving Tibetan culture and, in turn, attempt to provide empirical credibility to the CCP's cultural preservation narrative. The second part of this narrative, in which China wants to share Tibetan culture with the world, is seen in articles like "Tibetan Culture Gets Popular Far and Wide" (Jin 2011). This article hails the benefits of the Qinghai-Tibet railways in bringing Tibetan culture to those outside of Tibet and suggests that the article is engaging in a frame saving strategy to implicitly refute Tibet Movement accusations that this railway project was only built for military rule and is helping to destroy Tibet and Tibet culture.<sup>39</sup>

The Tibet Tourism Bureau's article on the Shoton Festival, or Yoghurt Festival, is another attempt to tell a story of a thriving Tibetan culture where tradition continues and is preserved and shared with the world (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2008a). First, the Shoton Festival is said to have been listed in 2006 as part of China's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List, implying that the festival is of great importance to China's own cultural heritage as a multi-ethnic nation. Second, the festival is said to be a blend of traditional and modern elements, which include the traditional unfolding of a large Buddha painting, and Tibetan opera, as well as sports, tourist activities and "other modern elements" (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2008a). Thus, the festival would not only be of benefit to Tibetans, but also inviting to tourists, who can come and view this event in person, be exposed to traditional Tibetan culture, and witness its continuation. In this way, CCP narratives are engaged in providing a counterframe to Tibet Movement narratives that assert that China is attacking Tibetan culture and that Tibetan culture is currently endangered in their own land. In the case of the article about the Shoton Festival, not only is the Festival depicted as an event providing empirical credibility for Tibet's thriving culture, but also as a place where a web user can visit to see this thriving culture for themselves.

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<sup>39</sup> The impact of the Qinghai-Tibet railway and Sichuan-Tibetan railway construction has been a primary concern for Tibet Movement activist organizations such as Students for a Free Tibet (SFT 2011h) and Canada Tibet Committee (CTC 2011b). These activists claimed that the true purpose of the railway was to accelerate the influx of non-Tibetans into Tibet, consolidate Chinese military rule over Tibetans as well as increase exploitation of Tibet's natural resources (CTC 2011a; SFT 2011h).

In these ways, using tourism descriptions, news articles and white papers, a case is made for improvements in human rights in Tibet that followed a historical context of repressive feudalism and human rights violations. Modern day Tibet's current human right situation is framed as a human rights success story. This success story is defended through a combination of frame-saving and frame-debunking strategies that attempt to counter Tibet Movement accusations about human rights violations in Tibet through enhancing the CCP's frame's credibility in an attempt to resonate with a web user. Likewise, CCP attempts to shift human rights frames from a Tibet Movement framework that centers on individual political rights to one centered more on economic stability and financial gains.

### **Happiness and Celebration: Enhancing the credibility of human rights frames through visual media**

Just as narratives on specific human rights (e.g. torture, religious freedom and cultural preservation) were used to counterframe Tibet Movement human rights narratives using an intersection of frame saving, frame debunking, and polarization-vilification strategies, narratives that strongly relied on visual media and entertainment to portray Tibetan happiness and expressions of love for the PRC were also used to enhance the credibility of CCP's human rights frames. This was often accomplished through the use of photographs of (often smiling) Tibetans and visually-saturated special web features on archived sites. While some of these images are found in news articles about the economy and narratives of religious freedom,<sup>40</sup> many images were found in photo gallery sections hosted on many CCP propaganda websites.

For example, in TibetCulture.net's "News" section is an image gallery entitled "Smiles in Yushu During the Spring Festival" (Niki 2011) (see image 7). This image gallery has a dual role of showing both Tibetans that are happy in Tibet and specifically, Tibetans happy in Yushu, which experienced a destructive earthquake in 2010: an event that Chinese officials were eager to lavish media attention upon in order to demonstrate their hard work in helping the region. Likewise, *China Tibet News's* "Image

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<sup>40</sup> For example: "A smiling pilgrim" from China Tibet Online (Amanda 2010), *China Tibet News's* pictures of happy, energetic monks engaged in traditional forms of Buddhist debates in "Tibetans celebrate traditional festival in Lhasa" (China Tibet News Web 2009) and *China Tibet News's* images of women harvesting barley (Xinhua 2010b).

Gallery's", "Happy Tibetan People" (People's Daily 2009b), shows a series of photographs of smiling Tibetan people, in particular, women, and beautiful images of Tibetan scenery. Tibet Tourism Bureau also shows images of Tibetan happiness and joy. In one photo album entitled, "'White Lhasa' Brings Fun" (China Tibet Tourism Bureau 2008b), young Tibetans are shown enjoying the snow, including a portrait of a little boy with his snowman. These images depict a fun-loving and jovial place filled with happy everyday people. Likewise, Tibet Human Rights' "Culture" section hosts a China Tibet Online photo gallery entitled, "Gala of Tibetan songs and dances" (China Tibet Online 2011e). Here, a web user views images of a televised celebration of the Chinese Lunar New Year and "Farmers' New Year" featuring female Tibetan dancers, male dancing farmers, and children in rabbit suits<sup>41</sup> (China Tibet Online 2011e). All of these images, online special features, and media productions are methods for supporting the narrative that Tibetans are happy, grateful, and celebratory of the democratic reforms in Tibet.

These images of Tibetan happiness attempt to raise the empirical credibility of China's narrative framework, which depicts Tibetans as grateful and content in a PRC-run Tibet, while also an attempt to raise the perceived credibility of the frame through the use of Tibetan subjects. Likewise, through raising the credibility of the CCP frame, these pictures are intended to boost the CCP's human rights frames in a way that resonates with a web user, who may be looking for more than textual proof about how Tibetan's feel about CCP reforms and governance.

Tibetans are also shown to celebrate their relationship with China and gratitude towards Tibet's improving human rights situation through the celebration of the newly established, Serf Emancipation Day. For example, in *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online hosted a special web issue on the 1st anniversary of Serfs' Emancipation Day (People's Daily 2011d). This new "holiday" was created after the Tibetan protests surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympic torch relay. The web page states that "Tibetans now live a free, prosperous and civilized life, and with the loving care and efforts of the Central Government" (People's Daily 2011d).

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<sup>41</sup> 2011 was the year of the Rabbit in China.



Likewise, the special website “Focus” pages of Tibet Human Rights (Tibet Human Rights 2011c) and on the “Features” page of TibetCulture.net (CAPDTC 2011b) feature visually-rich special online issues about the modernization of Tibet and events like the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet and the Chinese New Year. For example, one of the Tibet Human Rights “Focus” pages, the “59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” provides a brief history of the Liberation with images of memorabilia from the Liberation (Tibet Human Rights 2011a) (see image 8). At the bottom of this page is a section titled, “Tibet Today,” which shows a series of images and captions, some of which have images of smiling Tibetans (one is spinning a prayer wheel while another waters her garden), images of cultural or religious activities, and an image representing “eco-safety construction” (Tibet Human Rights 2011a) (see image 9). In these ways, special web “features” are used to raise the credibility of the CCP human rights framing of democratic reform and control of the Tibetan plateau as a human rights success story. These web features, like the photo galleries featured above, use images and text to depict a happy and grateful Tibetan populace that lends empirical and perceived credibility to the CPP framework. These pages point to historical events, images of individual successful or happy Tibetans, historical artifacts, or other materials that are used as supporting evidence for CCP human rights frames. Moreover, through using images of Tibetans, they also lend the CCP frame with perceived credibility through suggesting that the articulators of these frames are Tibetans.

### **Foreigners and Frame Credibility: Limiting engagement and encouraging tourism**

Another method that CCP websites use to lend empirical and perceived credibility to CCP human rights frames are the use of statements and stories from foreigners visiting Tibet. In these narratives, non-Chinese visitors to Tibet claim that they have seen for themselves that Tibetan lives have improved under reforms and that the international view of Tibet (as framed by the Tibet Movement) is inherently flawed. These articles and personal essays were found in *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online, Tibet Human Rights, TibetCulture.net, China Tibet Online, PressClubofTibet.org and *China Tibet News*. *China Tibet News* even had an “Altitudes’ Voices” section of their website that hosted several articles of foreigners expressing praise over Tibet’s development (China Tibet News Web 2011a).

For example, PressClubofTibet.org (2011b) uses an article that quotes a Dutch photographer, Jan, hailing Tibet's improvements. Jan states,

After I came to Tibet, I feel strongly that Europeans' understanding of Tibet is not good, and there are a lot of misunderstandings among them," said Jansen Jan, a photographer from the Netherlands. "I was impressed by the religious freedom enjoyed by the Tibetan people. (PressClubofTibet.org 2011b)

In this excerpt, Jan's accomplishes two things to promote the empirical and perceived credibility of CCP human rights frames. First, Jan claims that European's view of Tibet is flawed with "misunderstandings:" an attempt to strategically limit the empirical and perceived credibility of outsider claims about Tibet. Second, Jan also claims that he witnessed Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and that religion is thriving in Tibet, which lends empirical credibility to CCP human rights frames, while also, as a PRC outsider that has visited Tibet, lends perceived credibility to these same frames.

Likewise, in an article from *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, Nina Karpacheva, the Supreme Rada of Ukraine Plenipotentiary of Human Rights, is quoted as saying that her 1999 visit to Tibet convinced her that China has made a "positive contribution" to Tibet (People's Daily 2009c). As with the quotation from Jan, Karpacheva's status as a foreigner is used to lend perceived credibility to CCP human rights frames. Her statement also lends empirical credibility as yet another piece of evidence to support CCP frames that Tibet is a human rights success story.

Perhaps the most adamant foreign witness to Tibet actively engaged in disproving and attempting to minimize the credibility of Tibet Movement frames is Italian-Canadian writer, Lisa Carducci. In the *China Tibet News* article, "What's the Matter with Tibet?" (Xinhua 2008c), Carducci laments the incorrect assumptions Westerners and Tibetan refugees have about Tibet due to "anti-China propaganda" (Xinhua 2008c). She describes an interaction with Tibetan women in Nepal where she tells the women that Tibetans in Tibet do not support independence. When the Tibetan women state that they have seen pictures of Chinese soldiers killing Tibetans in the streets, Carducci asks them whether these photographs are "from the 'cultural revolution' period when Tibetans just as other Chinese suffered and were treated

badly” (Xinhua 2008c). Here, Carducci engages in frame debunking strategies, explicitly refuting the claims of the Tibetan refugees to persuade the reader to view Tibet Movement narratives (whether perpetuated by foreigners or Tibetan refugees) as propaganda and to frame those who believe such propaganda as misguided and harmful. Carducci simultaneously attempts to minimize and call into question the perceived and empirical credibility of Tibet Movement frames. As a foreigner, in this case, a Canadian, she lends to CCP human rights frames her own perceived credibility as an outside journalist and writer while providing empirical credibility to CCP frames through verifying the CCP’s claims about Tibetans enjoying full human rights in China.

While CCP narratives use foreign witnesses in Tibet as a means of questioning the credibility of Tibet Movement claims and raising the credibility CCP frames, CCP narratives also invite foreigners to travel to Tibet so that they can witness their framing of Tibet as a modernized country with improving human rights. This tourism aspect of the narrative is found explicitly in tourism section on sites like *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online, China Tibet Online, *China Tibet News*, PressClubofTibet.org and TibetCulture.net (CAPDTC 2011g; China Tibet News 2011g; China Tibet Online 2011m; People’s Daily 2011f; PressClubofTibet.org 2011f).

Tourism narratives are also expressed through established outlinks to tourism companies like Travel China Guide (travelchinaguide.com), which received links from the front pages of Tibet Human Rights and China Xinjiang (chinaxinjiang.cn) and from PressClubofTibet.org’s “Tibet Travel” page (PressClubofTibet.org 2011f). Likewise, China Highlights (chinahighlights.com), another tourism company, also received links from PressClubofTibet.org (2011g). Tourism narratives were also expressed through outlinks to tourism information resources, such as PressClubofTibet.org linking to Religion Tour of China (china-tourism.net) (PressClubofTibet.org 2011g) and the *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online linking to China Tibet Tourism Bureau (People’s Daily 2011a). These websites provide images of tourists, Tibetans, and sites in Tibet and describe different tour routes you can take and tourist sites that you can visit, all of which support the propaganda narratives discussed above (such as Pala Manor as a

site proving feudal serfdom of Old Tibet). Sometimes CCP websites also depict tourist experiences in Tibet through photographs of smiling foreign tourists, such as the image of Slovenian tourists on a tour bus in “Great Changes in Tibet” (Wu 2011a) and a photo of a woman smiling amongst a Tibetan prayer flags and streamers in “Colorful Sutra Streamers’ Blessings” (Zhang 2011a) (see image 10).

Perhaps the invitation to foreigners is most explicitly stated in “Foreigners Asked to Visit Tibet to Experience Traditional Culture” (People’s Daily 2009a). This article quotes part of a speech made in Kazakhstan by Syroeskin, the chief researcher of the Presidential Strategy Institute of Kazakhstan, in which he describes the cultural activities that he experienced during his 2007 trip to Tibet (People’s Daily 2009a). After praising the improved communication and transportation infrastructures in modern Tibet (again, as with many other foreign witnesses to Tibet, supporting the empirical credibility of CCP frames), he states that he found that Tibetan traditional culture remained vibrant and was being supported by Tibetans and Han Chinese (People’s Daily 2009a). Syroeskin continues,

Tibet used to be place full of mysteries for me. Influenced by the western media, I once doubted if the traditional culture had been well protected there. But now, what I want to say to all of you is that the Tibetan ethnic culture is in a good state of preservation. I hope those who really care about Tibet will be able to go there and solve the 'mystery' in their hearts. (People’s Daily 2009a)

Here, Syroeskin, like Jan the photographer, states that western media (the implication here being western propaganda) has misguided foreigners and encourages outsiders to visit Tibet to correct these misunderstandings about Tibet’s culture (People’s Daily 2009a). In this way, Syroeskin’s quote debunks the claims of outsiders, attempting to limit the credibility of those claims, while also stating that those who truly care for Tibet should travel there first, providing the web user with the one option available to them for making a credible judgment on Tibet.

In this way, these stories of foreigners, like the images of Tibetan happiness, lend both perceived and empirical credibility to the CCP’s human rights counterframe through directing attention to the claims put forth by those who would be perceived as not under the control or influence of the CCP. At the same

time, they often raise questions regarding foreign knowledge about Tibet, often framing foreigners who adhere to Tibet Movement-aligned frames as misinformed and thus, attempting to minimize foreign credibility on the subject of Tibet. In turn, this often leads to a narrative conclusion (sometimes explicitly suggested) that if foreigners want to be informed about the current situation in Tibet (if they want their frames to be empirically credible), then they, like foreigners depicted in these CCP-friendly articles, need to visit Tibet for themselves. Likewise, the websites archived in the issue network all provided ample opportunities to learn about travel in Tibet or to find a travel company to arrange a group tour to Tibet. Together, the narratives surrounding foreigners and human rights in Tibet work in tandem to persuade foreigners to limit their engagement with Tibet (in particular, social activism and political engagement in their own country) with the exception of tourism engagement: tourism in Tibet is openly and strongly encouraged.

## **Conclusion**

As seen above, the websites archived in the CCP propaganda issue network are framed as tools for correcting misconceptions about Tibet. The CCP's historical narratives are a part of a complex frame saving and frame debunking set of strategies that occur within the context of a framing contest with the Tibet Movement. China's claims to ownership of Tibet rely on the historical record from a distinctly Chinese point of view that relies on how Chinese dynasties viewed their relationship to Tibet, from the earliest ties of kinship and friendship in the "Tubo Kingdom" to the inclusion of Tibet into Yuan Dynasty borders and continuing administration and control of Tibet that has been carried forward in an unbroken line through to the present day. Historical narratives regarding the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet and 1959 Rebellion also engage in polarization-vilification strategies that counter those made by the Tibet Movement. These CCP polarization-vilification strategies align Tibetans and Han based on a desire for class equality and pit this ethnic union against an antagonist of aristocratic Tibetans and the imperialist West.

This polarization-vilification strategy in CCP histories sets up a context from which a web user is to approach CCP human rights narratives, which frame Old Tibet as a feudal serfdom and the PRC's Tibet as a human rights success story. Thus, human rights narratives, commonly found in other international activist contexts and used extensively to frame Tibet Movement narratives, are a part of the CCP's strategic frame transformation process used to re-interpret China's current control over Tibet and establishment of specific economic reforms as having provided "real" human rights for Tibetans: something that Tibetans were unable to do for themselves. In CCP human rights frames, narratives are employed using frame saving and frame debunking strategies where China is shown to care about Tibetans and to have employed democratic reforms and policies that will benefit Tibetans as a whole. These reforms and policies, which the Tibet Movement frames as human rights violations, are injected with new cultural meanings: government reforms are not economic reforms, but human rights reforms. Moreover, Tibetans living in China are framed as grateful and happy to be Chinese and to benefit from these reforms and policies. Stories about human rights successes in Tibet are an attempt to lend empirical credibility to CCP frames while attempting to minimize the Tibet Movement's own frame credibility. Likewise, images of Tibetan happiness and interviews with Tibetans in CCP media declaring their support for reforms and the PRC, lend an air of perceived credibility to CCP human rights frames.

Moreover, human rights narratives about Tibet also frame foreign views of Tibetan human rights as misinformed and challenge the perceived credibility of Tibet Movement-aligned foreigners. In this way, foreigners are only provided with an air of credibility when they are depicted as actually having visited China and Tibet. These methods of framing Tibetan human rights are employed in news articles about foreign visitors and in the tourism sections of these websites. In this way, propaganda issue networks websites are imploring their web users to limit or avoid any political engagement with the Tibet issue until they are able to visit Tibet with a CCP-approved tour group.

To conclude, the CCP propaganda network is a small, homogenous network that only contains one master narrative. There is no real contestation in the network: the master narrative is not only told the

same way using the same frames, but it is also often told using the very same content from site to site. Those sites that were more central in the network were not always the most influential in terms of developing original narrative content. (Example: *People's Daily* ranked high in in-degree centrality but most of their materials were from the English-language version of China Tibet Online, which measured lower in centrality). Furthermore, as this is not a social movement network, this network's narratives and framing processes were not conducted in a way that was meant to encourage a reader to take any actions. The only potential actions being suggested are for a web user to travel to Tibet as a tourist on one of China's circumscribed tours. This is the only "call for action" that the CCP wants foreigner to take. Unlike the social movement network, which employed many different kinds of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to align a web visitor to the cause and encourage them to be politically active, the CCP network attempts to use narrative framing processes to defend the credibility of their frames, attack the credibility of their opponents, and transform international concepts of human rights to align with a cultural re-interpretation of human rights that focuses on economic stability and social development under Chinese rule for the purpose of preventing web users to take any action other than one that would support China's own financial interests.

## **Chapter Four: Network and narrative relationships**

### **Introduction**

This chapter integrates the narrative and framing analysis conducted on chapters two and three with hyperlink network analysis data and qualitative link analysis data from the archived websites in order to answer the following research question: What are the relationships between a site's narrative choices and hyperlink choices? This chapter will answer this question through first analyzing the relationship between each issue network's structure and the network's narrative and framing characteristics, then linking this to a micro-level analysis of hyperlinking practices that contextualizes linking strategies in their narrative and framing contexts in which they are found on the archived sites. To better understand the general functions of specific types of hyperlinking strategies used on individual sites, I adapted Florence Passy's (2003) typology of network-relationship functions in social movement contexts. In this way, I was able to contextualize linking practices within the framing strategies used on individual sites. After analyzing the relationship between networks and narratives in each issue network, I then compare the two issue networks' narrative-network relationships to demonstrate how these relationships reflect the nature of the different types of politics and political activities in which each issue network is engaged.

This chapter will begin with a description of the characteristics of the Tibet Movement issue network and measurements of centrality found in the hyperlink network analysis data. I then suggest a relationship between this network's characteristics and network's framing data that indicates a framing dispute in the network. This chapter will then focus on specific hyperlinking and framing strategies on archived sites within the network. This section will analyze the different types of connections made on these sites and how the narrative and framing context in which these connections are found frame the purpose of these links and the link's targeted content. This chapter will then analyze the CCP propaganda issue network's linking and narrative strategies at the macro and micro level, following the same methods of analysis. I will then conclude with a comparison of the two issue networks to demonstrate how their



selection of hyperlink-narrative strategies relate to the different types of politics and political activities that occur within each network. I will demonstrate how the Tibet Movement network's hyperlink-narrative strategy focuses on exposing a web user to a broad range of framing strategies to increase the chance for a user to find a frame that resonates with their own worldview and hence, increase their chances of political participation in the movement. Likewise I will demonstrate how the CCP's hyperlink-narrative strategy primarily relies on limiting the chances that a web user can be engaged on the issue of Tibet to state-run tourism, relying on hyperlinking strategies designed to promote their frame's credibility through maintaining a high level of frame consistency.

### **The Tibet Movement Issue Network**

The Tibet Movement issue network was made up websites and blogs representing a diverse range of stakeholders, many of whom were solely focused on issues related to Tibet or Tibetan culture. While most of the websites represented formal organizations focused on the Tibet Movement or Tibetan interests<sup>42</sup>, there were also sites representing organizations and individuals not officially affiliated with Tibet Movement goals and narratives. These included websites representing U.S. government offices, such as the U.S. Senate (senate.gov) and U.S. Department of State (state.gov), social networking sites, such as Facebook (facebook.com), international media organizations, such as the *New York Times* (nytimes.com) and *The Guardian* (guardian.co.uk), and international activist NGOs, such as Amnesty International (amnesty.org), Human Rights Watch (hrw.org) and The Carter Center (cartercenter.org).

As described in chapter two, while the narrative analysis of sites within this network demonstrated a great deal of narrative and framing consistency surrounding a broad range of issues related to Tibet's history and human rights, there was one primary point of narrative contention: the future political status of Tibet.<sup>43</sup> This debate created a frame dispute in the movement regarding whether the

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<sup>42</sup> These types of sites include Tibetan Government-in-Exile and its affiliated offices, Tibetan media organizations, activist organizations, Tibetan refugee community groups, humanitarian aid organizations, Tibetan religious organizations, Tibetan cultural preservation organizations, Tibetan blogs, and Tibetan message forums.

<sup>43</sup> This point of narrative contention concerns the highly emotional debate over the goals of the Tibet Movement regarding genuine autonomy within the PRC (the Dalai Lama's Middle Way approach), or a free and independent

Tibet Movement should be framed as a nationalist movement or a human rights movement. Some websites, particularly those supporting an independent Tibet, specifically pointed out this ongoing frame dispute to web users on their site (e.g. Tibetan Youth Congress and Students for a Free Tibet).<sup>44</sup> However, websites supporting MWA rarely acknowledged this frame dispute, instead championing the Dalai Lama's role in designing and promoting the MWA and claiming that most Tibetans had voted for and supported the MWA.<sup>45</sup> Despite this one frame dispute, most sites in the network engaged in adopting some or all of the master narratives and frames on history and human rights and used one or more strategic framing processes, such as polarization-vilification, frame extension, and frame amplification, to mobilize their target audience to financially support a specific organization or to take action in support of an organization's political goals (e.g. donate to an organization, write to a political leader). In what follows is a discussion with how these types of framing strategies and disputes relate to the structural characteristics of the Tibet Movement issue network and the linking strategies used on individual websites within the network.

### **Hyperlink Network Analysis in the Tibet Movement Issue Network**

The Tibetan Movement Issue Network was made up of 199 (2/16/2011) to 201 (2/8/2011) websites and had a low network density of .037 (compared to the propaganda networks density of 0.19 to 0.17). The network had an average in-degree centrality index of 21.876% and an out-degree centrality index of 43.703%, making this a more centralized network than the CCP propaganda network. This higher level of network centrality appears to be connected to a relatively small number of sites receiving

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Tibet nation-state. These goals concern not just the TAR, but the geographic areas of China where ethnic Tibetans are the majority. These areas include the traditional region of Ü-Tsang (currently the TAR, which includes part of the traditional region of Kham), as well as the traditional region of Kham (Sichuan, plus portions of Qinghai, Gansu and Yunnan provinces) and Amdo (Qinghai and parts of Gansu province).

<sup>44</sup> Independence narratives and a critique of the MWA position were also found on other sites in the Tibet Movement issue network that had been partially archived in HTTrack due to links made to these sites originating from the initial set of archived sites. These sites included Jamyang Norbu's *Shadow Tibet* blog (jamyangnorbu.com) and the International Tibet Independence Movement (rangzen.com).

<sup>45</sup> The Dalai Lama's website states that a preliminary opinion poll was conducted in 1997 in which 64% of opinion letters to the Dalai Lama indicated that they would support the MWA or any decisions of the Dalai Lama on this issue without a referendum. The site also states that the text of the MWA proposal was undertaken in 1988 after consultation with members of the government-in-exile, representatives of Tibetan NGOs, newly-arrived Tibetans and others (Dalai Lama 2011a).

large numbers of outlinks from unique nodes in the network. Furthermore, even fewer sites received and transmitted links to a large number of unique nodes in the network. This discrepancy in the amount of links sent and received by unique URLs in the network led to two sites acting as high status authorities (receiving in-links from a large number of unique URLs) and only one site having a high status as both authority and broker (receiving *and* transmitting links to a large number of unique URLs in the network).

The most influential and prestigious site within this network, the primary gatekeeper and broker, was the MWA-supporting site, International Campaign for Tibet (savetibet.org) (please see table 3 for more on centrality measurement per site and network map 4 for a concentric map indicating sites with high levels of in-degree centrality). This site received the highest level of in-degree centrality within the network, receiving 686 links from fifty-one separate nodes in the issue network on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and receiving 763 links from fifty separate nodes on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011. However, it should be noted that the majority of these links were received from International Campaign for Tibet's own weblog, *ICT: Weblog* (weblog.savetibet.org).<sup>46</sup> While this may suggest that the site may not be as influential as it appears in centrality measurements, it is worth noting that the narrative analysis of the archived sites indicated that the International Campaign for Tibet was a common source of content and information used on other websites. In this way, International Campaign for Tibet is a dominant authority in the network due to its level of in-degree centrality and use as primary source material for other websites looking for content. Likewise, the site is also a dominant broker (as represented in node betweenness centrality: see network map 5), receiving and transmitting links to and from a high number of unique URLs, including anti-MWA sites engaged in the frame dispute. In this way, International Campaign for Tibet's extensive transmission of outlinks and reception of inlinks from a large range of websites is able to maintain dominance in the network, establishing connections between contentious organizations and their narratives, and acting as a primary gatekeeper of information and resources. It is likely that any web user

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<sup>46</sup> The *ICT: Weblog* received 561 links on February 8<sup>th</sup> and 640 links on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

entering the Tibet Movement issue network will, at some point, encounter International Campaign for Tibet.

Another authority in the network was the Central Tibetan Administration ([tibet.net](http://tibet.net)), which had a high level of in-degree centrality only second to the International Campaign for Tibet (see network map 4). While the Central Tibetan Administration received links from many sites in the network, it did not transmit links to other sites in the issue network and therefore, was not influential as a broker, bridging between issue network sites (we will see more of the exclusive nature of the Central Tibetan Administration's outlinking strategy below). In this way, International Campaign for Tibet inhabited a stronger network role than Tibet's own government-in-exile. While materials from the government-in-exile were found on other sites in the network and it appears to be an important place for obtaining source materials, the Central Tibetan Administration does not appear to want to establish and develop hyperlink relationships to other Tibet Movement organizations and limits a web user's knowledge of other Tibet Movement organizations once they arrive on the exiled government's site.

Other central sites in the network were the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama ([dalailama.com](http://dalailama.com)), *Phayul* ([phayul.com](http://phayul.com)), Students for a Free Tibet ([studentsforafreetibet.org](http://studentsforafreetibet.org)), and Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy ([tchrd.org](http://tchrd.org)) (see network map 4). These sites held a strong degree of influence via in-degree centrality during the week of February 8-16<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Of these sites, however, only the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama and *Phayul* appeared to have any influence as a broker due to their relatively high node betweenness centrality measurements within the network on both dates. In particular, *Phayul's* focus on media aggregation and Tibet Movement community-building places the site in a strong position as a narrative and network broker, able to connect organizations that are actively engaged in the MWA-rangzen frame dispute.

In summation, the Tibet Movement issue network was a more diverse network than the CCP propaganda issue network: there were many more stakeholders and a diverse range of stakeholder types.

The occurrence of a frame dispute in the movement may also correlate to the Tibet Movement network's higher level of network centrality (as compared to the CCP propaganda network) as certain sites such as International Campaign for Tibet, vie for—or are provided with—gatekeeping power that allow them to maintain narrative dominance in the network. Likewise, some of the most centralized sites in the network, such as International Campaign for Tibet and *Phayul*, appear to maintain their high power status as authorities and brokers, sending and receiving links between sites from different sides of the frame dispute in an attempt to either engage in—or foster a sense of—collaboration between these organizations, while also reinforcing the perceived credibility of these sites regardless of the frame dispute.

In the next section, I will discuss the individual hyperlink choices that sites made to provide opportunities for the web user to learn more about the various facets and interests of the Tibet Movement and to connect them to activist opportunities. I will demonstrate how individual sites strategically published hyperlinks to other websites for promoting either socialization functions, links used as part of a site's identity construction process that linked the user to a broad range of Tibet Movement narratives and frames, or structural-connection network functions, used to connect a web user with an opportunity to take action. Through this discussion of link types, I will show how the variety of linking and narrative strategies used within the Tibet Movement network (and occasionally to sites in the opposition's network) are representative of their larger social movement strategies: the need to increase the potential for a web user to encounter a broad range of narratives and framing strategies, which in turn, increases the potential for a frame to resonate with the web user. In this way, the relationship between framing and hyperlinking strategies in the Tibet Movement network indicated a diverse social movement that desires to gain support from a wide possible pool of potential recruits and wants to provide this pool with ample opportunities to be engaged and take action to show their political support.

### **Qualitative Hyperlink Analysis in the CCP Issue Network: Linking and narrative relationships**

While many different hyperlinking strategies were present on Tibet Movement sites, I will discuss hyperlinking strategies that developed relations between network actors engaged in socialization and structural-connection network functions. In Florence Passy's chapter, "Social Networks Matter, But how?", Passy (2003) writes that a network's socialization function is involved in identity construction processes that are intended to align an individual with a particular cause: to create social structures that define political frames and help construct and sustain political identities. Likewise, Passy (2003) writes that a network's structural-connection function provides opportunities for a potential political recruit to participate prior to their joining an organization.

By adapting these two types of network functions, we can conceptualize how individual hyperlinks can establish web relationships that engage in these types of network functions. For example, in hyperlink networks, hyperlink connections engage in establishing socialization network functions by providing a web user with access to organizational connections that share the same master narratives and frames that construct and mold the identity of a social movement in a way intended to resonate with a potential web user recruit. Likewise, hyperlink connections that connect a web user to specific opportunities to take action in support of a movement goal are laying the foundations for the structural-connection functions of a network. In this sense, we can categorize links as either socialization hyperlinks or structural-connection hyperlinks depending upon whether the context in which the link is found is engaged in establishing a specific function for the hyperlink network.

In the case of the Tibet Movement, websites are clearly engaged in establishing socialization hyperlink networks on "Tibet Links" or "Link Resources" pages, which provide a web user with lists of hyperlinks to other Tibet Movement organizations: by viewing the content on these linked sites, a web user is expected to be exposed to a broader range of Tibet Movement narratives and framing strategies that can strengthen their understanding and potential interest in one or more Tibet Movement organizations. However, while link resource pages provided the web user with multiple avenues for

approaching Tibet Movement master frames, individual websites used different strategies in framing their list of resources to increase the potential for a user to find resonance with the Tibet Movement, and/or due to the website's own constructed identity as a specific type of Tibet Movement actor.

For example, while some sites simply listed a variety of links to other Tibet Movement websites in a single list, other resource pages, such as International Campaign for Tibet's "Tibet Links" page (ICT 2009m), Students for a Free Tibet's "Links" page (SFT 2011g), and Australia Tibet Council's "Links" page (ATC 2011c), categorized large numbers of links into specific categories based on the type of actor the website represented<sup>47</sup>. These category types generally included exile government, cultural, and political organizations. In this way, Tibet Movement organizations are socializing web users to approach the Tibet Movement through a wide range of narrative categories and their respective master frames. This is similar to the Tibet Movement's overall approach to engaging web users to find resonance in one or more movement issues through amplification strategies that align a web user's current political interests or passions with a specific Tibet Movement campaign issue, such as religious freedom, or political prisoners.

Another variation in the way individual Tibet Movement websites developed list of resources, which appear to be directly related to an organization's own constructed identity within the Tibet Movement, was the level of inclusivity found in the list of hyperlinks. For example, some sites appeared to be less inclusive than others, linking only to those sites that shared a very specific type of Tibet Movement aim, such as a cultural preservation site only linking to another cultural preservation site. In other cases, a site restricted their published list of links resources to only include sites that shared a very specific narrative frame, such as links to sites only sharing aims of the MWA or independence, or only linking to sites that

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<sup>47</sup> For example, Students for a Free Tibet divided eighty links into nine separate categories<sup>47</sup>, of which the "Cultural" category contained twenty links, more than the number of "Political" links on the site (sixteen links) (SFT 2011g). International Campaign for Tibet hosted 132 links on their Tibet Links Page and divided these links into eleven categories, the two largest categories of links being "Tibet Support Community" (thirty links) and "Cultural and General Information" (twenty-nine links) (ICT 2009m). Likewise, Snow Lion Publications' (2009b) "Tibetan Links" page contained 181 resource entries divided between twenty-eight categories that included a range of topics from "Just for Fun" and "Astrology" to "Activism" and "Government-in-exile."

were affiliated with their own organization through an administrative connection, such as a “local chapter” of a national or international organization.

One example of this was the Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture’s ([tibetanculture.org](http://tibetanculture.org)) “Resources” page (CTAC 2009c). As noted in Chapter Two, the Conservancy was founded by Robert Thurman and contains narratives that frame the history of the Tibetan Plateau as a “Buddhist civilization” (CTAC 2009d). Not surprisingly, the Conservancy’s website contains a dominant narrative of the uniqueness of contemporary Tibetan culture—often conflated with Tibetan Buddhism—which is under threat and in need of preservation for the benefit of all of humanity (CTAC 2009b).

This narrative framework contextualizes the linking choices made on the Conservancy’s “Resources” page. The page features four categories of links: “Tibetan Culture”, “Buddhism”, “News” and “Organizations” (CTAC 2009c) (see table 4). When reviewing the categories and associated links as a whole, several framing strategies emerge. First, Tibetan culture is framed as Buddhist culture. Not only is there a “Buddhism” section on the page, but the links to BuddhaNet ([buddhanet.net](http://buddhanet.net)), DharmaNet ([dharmanet.net](http://dharmanet.net)), and Buddhist Channel TV ([buddhistchannel.tv](http://buddhistchannel.tv)) direct the web visitor to large non-sectarian Buddhism information sites that include, but are not exclusively about, Tibetan forms of Buddhism and Buddhist-related news (CTAC 2009c). In these cases, the narratives of Buddhism (its history and traditions) become a “resource” that the website’s creator expects may resonate with the web user and provide a greater understanding Tibet and Tibetan culture. The addition of these non-sectarian Buddhist resources are also aligned with the Conservancy’s own frame amplification and extension strategies that focus on preserving Tibetan Buddhism as the central Tibet Movement issue and engages in orientalist views that the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism is a cure for “Western” materialism and a solution to global problems (as discussed in chapter two). Furthermore, links to International Campaign for Tibet and the Office of Tibet, New York, USA ([tibetoffice.org](http://tibetoffice.org)) host a full-text (and easy to find) copy of Robert Thurman’s “A Cultural Outline of Tibet” (Thurman 1988b; 1988c), which develops this frame extension strategy in greater detail.



Moreover, the Conservancy's narrative that frames Tibetan culture as endangered and needing preservation is amplified via academic links to Yale's Digital Himalaya's ([digitalhimalaya.com](http://digitalhimalaya.com)) "Links" page (Digital Himalaya 2013), the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library ([www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html](http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html)), as well as links to Tibet Fund ([tibetfund.org](http://tibetfund.org)), and all of other listed "Organizations" sites, which contain the cultural preservation frame. Links to *Phayul* and *Voice of America's* Tibetan-language "Tibet News and Features" page ([voanews.com/tibetan](http://voanews.com/tibetan)) also contain stories that use these narrative frames.

Second, the Conservancy's "Resources" page also appears situated within a solidly MWA prognostic framing of the future status of Tibet: the site's "Organizations" category only lists sites that share the MWA frame, such as International Campaign for Tibet, Office of Tibet, New York, USA, and the Central Tibetan Administration (CTAC 2009c). While independence narrative frameworks can be found within the content of sites listed as a resource within the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library<sup>48</sup> and in some editorials found on *Phayul*, these sites do not promote one framework over the other. In this way, a web user can directly access sites like International Campaign for Tibet, the Central Tibetan Administration and Office of Tibet, New York, USA, which explicitly and fervently describe and support the MWA, but can only access rangzen frames if they visit *Phayul* and the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library and spend time perusing through the diverse views expressed in the content of these sites, in which no one particular view dominates. In these ways the Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture's "Resources Page" uses socialization hyperlinks to construct a social network that exposes a web user to MWA prognostic frames while also using hyperlinks that embody the frame amplification and extension strategies found on the Conservancy's website (and other sites affiliated with Robert Thurman).

Like the Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, Tibetan Youth Congress ([tibetanyouthcongress.org](http://tibetanyouthcongress.org)) also used a hyperlink strategy that attempts to socialize the web visitor within

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<sup>48</sup> For example, a link to the International Tibet Independence Movement (ITIM) ([www.rangzen.com](http://www.rangzen.com)) can be found on the Virtual Library's "Tibetan Politics" web page (TSWVL 2008).

the confines of a specific side of the Tibet Movement frame dispute: in this case, framing the Tibet Movement as a nationalist movement. The primary list of external link resources (found on the right-hand side of all pages on the website) direct to an international array of Youth Congress chapters, such as Regional Tibetan Youth Congress New York & New Jersey ([tibetanyouthcongress.us](http://tibetanyouthcongress.us)), Seattle Tibetan Youth Congress ([seattletyc.org](http://seattletyc.org)), and the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, Taiwan ([rtyc-taiwan.blogspot.com/search/label/En Version.html](http://rtyc-taiwan.blogspot.com/search/label/En%20Version.html)) (TYC 2011i). The only other lists of links that Tibetan Youth Congress hosted as link resources are on their “Facts about Tibet” page (TYC 2011g). The bottom of this page, titled “Contact Addresses For more information on Tibet: [INDIA]” (TYC 2011f), recommends a series of other contacts to help the web visitor learn more about Tibet. Most of these contacts consist of an international array of government-in-exile information offices, although this list primarily contains the addresses and email information of these offices (not hyperlinks) (TYC 2011f). The few hyperlinks provided in this section of the web page are to South Africa’s Office of Tibet ([officeoftibet.com](http://officeoftibet.com)), and Japan’s Office of Tibet ([tibethouse.jp](http://tibethouse.jp)) (TYC 2011f).

While these links are made to sites representing the government-in-exile (which supports MWA frames) and could be interpreted as representing some degree of collaboration and connection to actors with contentious narratives and an attempt to socialize the web user to a larger spectrum of Tibet Movement frames, it is important to consider that the Tibetan Youth Congress site is prioritizing the rangzen affiliated organizations through providing a web user with hyperlinks to each of these affiliated sites from all pages of [tibetanyouthcongress.org](http://tibetanyouthcongress.org). In contrast, the sites that are officially connected to MWA narratives are buried at the very bottom of a lengthy web text on Tibet’s history and human rights situation (TYC 2011f). Second, by not providing the web visitor with many of these MWA organizations’ URLs, Tibetan Youth Congress is placing (an albeit small) barrier between the web user and MWA-supported information and is not engaged in building a hyperlink network with these organizations. This suggests that Tibetan Youth Congress is primarily interested in guiding a web user through a network dominated by nationalist prognostic frames. Furthermore, as the sites listed in the “Facts About Tibet”

page are all government-affiliated organizations (and not MWA focused Tibet Movement support groups, such as International Campaign for Tibet) (TYC 2011f), they could also serve the purpose of providing Tibetan web users with information that would help them to contact their local government-in-exile representatives for the purpose of engaging with the exiled government's evolving democracy. In this way the site does not appear to just be providing a non-Tibetan web users with links to more general information about Tibet, and hence engaging in socializing a web user to identify with these frames, but perhaps providing a structural-connection function for Tibetan web users through providing a member of the Tibetan exile community with government contact information so that they can be an informed and active in Tibetan political issues in-exile, such as promoting the rangzen movement.<sup>49</sup>

A similar example of this type of hyperlink list strategy that restricts the web user to one side of the frame dispute was found on the Central Tibetan Administration website. The government-in-exile website's "Other Sites" menu tab lists eight external websites, six of which are regional bureaus or affiliated with a government-in-exile office (Central Tibetan Administration 2009d).<sup>50</sup> The other websites listed as "Other Sites" are the Central Tibetan Administration's online television station, TibetOnline.TV ([tibetonline.tv](http://tibetonline.tv)), and the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama (Central Tibetan Administration 2009d). In this way, the Central Tibetan Administration is more restrictive in its networking strategy than Tibetan Youth Congress: the government-in-exile only provides a web user with links to affiliated organizations that carry the same shared narrative framework, including their position on the MWA. In this way, Central Tibetan Administration is socializing the web user only to frames controlled by their affiliates; mimicking some of the same hyperlinking strategies found in the CCP propaganda network in that

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<sup>49</sup> It should be noted that members of Tibetan Youth Congress must be Tibetan. However, non-Tibetans can join the International Friends of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC 2011h). With this in mind, it seems likely that the Tibetan Youth Congress would be focusing their website to speak to an intended audience of Tibetan's in exile as much as for people with little knowledge about Tibet.

<sup>50</sup> These sites are the India-Tibet Coordination Office ([indiatibet.org](http://indiatibet.org)), the Tibet Bureau-Genf ([tibetoffice.ch](http://tibetoffice.ch)), the Arabic language Central Tibetan Administration site ([tibet.net/tibet.net/ar/index.html](http://tibet.net/tibet.net/ar/index.html)), the Spanish language version of The Office of Tibet, New York, USA site ([tibetoffice.org/sp/index.html](http://tibetoffice.org/sp/index.html)), the Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia ([tibethouse.jp](http://tibethouse.jp)), and Russia's Save Tibet!: Center for Tibetan Culture and Information ([savetibet.ru](http://savetibet.ru)) (Central Tibetan Administration 2009d).

outlinks are restricted to those organizations whose content falls under the purview of the same government body.

While the above sites have resource pages that use socialization links to restrict a web user to a very specific side of the MWA-independence frame dispute, other sites appear to use their resource pages to establish socialization links that actively build bridges between diverse actor types and narrative frameworks. For example, International Campaign for Tibet's "Tibet Links" page provides outlinks to multiple websites listed under a broad range of categories (ICT 2009m). Some of these sites are affiliated with the Central Tibetan Administration and showcase MWA narratives, while other links lead to "Tibet Support Community" organizations that promote rangzen narratives, such as Students for a Free Tibet and Tibetan Youth Congress (ICT 2009m). Likewise, the International Campaign for Tibet's weblog's blogroll connected to sites with independence narratives, such as Jamyang Norbu's, *Shadow Tibet* blog (jamyangnorbu.com) and the *Students for a Free Tibet blog* (blog.studentsforafreetibet.org), while also linking to sites representing Tibetan voices located inside the PRC, such as Woesser's, *Invisible Tibet* (woesser.middle-way.net) and *High Peaks Pure Earth* (highpeakspureearth.com) (ICT 2011). In this way, International Campaign for Tibet was able to provide to the web user a wide-range range of narratives, perspectives, and frames on Tibet as expressed by Tibetans in exile and Tibetans living within PRC borders.

International Tibet Network (tibetnetwork.org), a coalition organization that coordinates campaigns between different Tibet Movement support groups, also bridges MWA and rangzen organizations using a links page titled, "Useful websites" (ITN 2008d) (see table 5). This list of links is also firmly situated within the International Tibet Network's own organizational narrative that frames its work as coalition building between potentially adversarial groups. For example, the International Tibet Network provides the following story about its central principles as a coalition organization: that the Tibet Movement is a non-violent struggle, that Tibet is an occupied country, and that the Central Tibetan Administration is the only legitimate government representing the Tibetan people (ITN 2008b). Through

adherence to these principles and an additional statement on the page affirming that the organization “respects the variety of views and opinions of its member organisations” (ITN 2008b), the “Useful websites” collection and categorization of selected links are framed as connections of collaborative activism. In this way, the site exposes the web user to organizations that can work together, despite the presence of a frame dispute, while also raising the credibility of human rights frames in the movement, which appear as spaces of narrative agreement between potentially adversarial groups.

For example, the “Useful website” page begins with a series of links to external websites representing International Tibet Network’s collaborative campaign efforts, such as Free Tibetan Heroes ([www.freetibetanheroes.org](http://www.freetibetanheroes.org)) (ITN 2008d). The page continues with a group of links labelled “Government in Exile Offices.” These links include the Central Tibetan Administration, its affiliated offices, and the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama (ITN 2008d). This is followed by links to sites representing a diverse range of stakeholders listed within the categories, “Non Governmental Organisations,” “News/ Media and Information,” “Blogs,” and “Culture, Aid & Development” (ITN 2008d). The category, “Non Governmental Organizations,” included links to MWA sites, such as International Campaign for Tibet and Australia Tibet Council ([atc.org.au](http://atc.org.au)), as well as rangzen sites, such as Tibetan Youth Congress, the International Tibetan Independence Movement, and Students for a Free Tibet (ITN 2008d). The category, “News/Media and Information,” also holds content that exposes the web user to a wide variety of Tibetan voices about the future status of Tibet and raises numerous concerns of Tibetans, including the day-to-day politics of the government-in-exile (ITN 2008d). The “Blogs” category also showcased many different voices about Tibet, including those voices inside the PRC (ITN 2008d). The final category, “Culture, Aid & Development,” represented organizations that help Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet and included Tibet Movement narratives focused on specific themes, such as the need for cultural preservation and political repression (ITN 2008d).

As a whole, the links and categories published on “Useful websites” established bridges that connected organizations holding adverse positions regarding Tibet’s future political status and framed

these contentious voices via the International Tibet Network's own personal narrative of coalition and collaboration on issues of consistent agreement: namely, political and cultural human rights. In this way, a web user is exposed to the different political identities found in the Tibet Movement, while also seeing how these distinct identities (and the frame dispute they represent) can be minimized for the purpose of working together towards very specific human rights issues: issues that are framed as consistent and empirically verifiable across the Tibet Movement and hence raise their potential to resonate with the user.

In these ways, Tibet Movement websites used link resources pages and link lists to connect a web user to different Tibet Movement (and some not related to the Tibet Movement) organizations for the purpose of socializing the web user to a broad range of Tibet Movement goals, issues, and frames. Some of these lists of links were inclusive of many different Tibet Movement actors and Tibet movement narratives, while others were more exclusive. However, as a whole, these links established networks of actors that provided a socialization function for web users learning about the Tibet Movement. These larger scale networks maximized the possibility that a web user would be exposed to a broad range of framing strategies and increased the potential for a specific narrative to resonate with a web user.

However, while links found on resource pages were an effective way for a website to establish the parameters within which a web user might be exposed to the narratives and frames in the Tibet Movement network, these links were not the only types of socialization links found on these sites. Socialization links also occurred on pages that embedded hyperlinks within narrative content for the purpose of providing greater depth about a specific political issue, event, or actor. These links were often used in diagnostic or motivational framing tasks found on activist campaign pages, news articles, or pages dedicated to general information about specific human rights issues. These links often directed to a specific piece of content hosted on another website, or to front page news features hosted on sites such as *Phayul*, Central Tibetan Administration, and International Campaign for Tibet. These links carried out socialization functions in that they provided opportunities for the web user to engage more deeply with a specific Tibet Movement narrative than what was available on the site where the link originated: these links provided web sites

with the opportunity to depend upon another organization's shared narratives and frames. In this way, Tibet Movement sites are demonstrating the consistency of specific narratives and framing tasks across the network, which may increase the potential for the frame to resonate with the web user.

For example, International Campaign for Tibet often transmitted links to resources and news found elsewhere in the network. In an article about the detention, torture, and trial of the environmentalist, Karma Samdrup, and his brothers, International Campaign for Tibet linked to a *High Peaks Pure Earth* post of an impassioned speech made by Dolkar Tso, the wife of Karma Samdrup (ICT 2010a). International Campaign for Tibet also linked to information on the first celebration of Serf Emancipation Day in the TAR, providing a link to the front page of the Central Tibetan Administration, which had published a press release about Tibetans observing Serf Emancipation Day as "a day of mourning" (ICT 2009l). Likewise, in a story about current protests in Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet linked to a *Radio Free Asia* video of protests in Qinghai against increasing Chinese-language curriculums in Tibetan schools (ICT 2010b). In these ways, International Campaign for Tibet is not just using its own content to expose the web user to the master frames shaping narratives about political prisoners, Tibetan history, and cultural oppression, but is linking to content that provides even greater detail about contemporary events in Tibet: details that are shown to fit within the master frames, imbuing them with credibility and consistency.

The Tibet Connection ([thetibetconnection.org](http://thetibetconnection.org)) also transmitted links to other websites when describing the individual interviews and news stories that were being featured on their site. As with International Campaign for Tibet, these socialization links built upon the credibility and consistency of Tibet Movement master frames through linking to sites that provided evidence, or greater detail, about Tibet Movement narratives. For example, Tibet Connection's "Our Current Program" page featured stories about the arrested musician, Tashi Dhondup along with a brief excerpt about his song "1958-2008" and detainment in September 2008 for producing "counter-revolutionary content" (Tibet Connection 2011). This excerpt was then followed with a list of sources providing more information on Tashi

Dhondup (Tibet Connection 2011), which linked to resources on International Campaign for Tibet (ICT 2009n), Free Tibet (Free Tibet 2009a) and High Peaks Pure Earth (High Peaks Pure Earth 2010a). The site also provided a link to thirteen YouTube music videos from Tashi Dhondup's album, "Torture Without A Trace" (Tibet Connection 2011). Using hyperlinks to socialize the web user to Tashi Dhondup's music, lyrics, and information regarding his detainment on social movement organization pages and blogs, the web user is exposed to the details of the case of Tashi Dhondup and his placement within the framework of the Tibet Movement political prisoner narrative. These links provide a range of evidence about Tashi's music and prison status that is consistent across these sites, which in turn reinforce a sense of empirical credibility and frame consistency to the narrative of Tashi Dhondup and frames of political prisoners in Tibet. This reinforcement of the credibility of these human rights frame raises the potential for the frame to resonate with the web user.

These same types of hyperlinking strategies that promoted a socialization function of the network were also found on the campaign pages of some Tibet Movement activist sites. The use of links on these campaign pages not only carried out the same functions of enhancing the credibility and consistency of master frames, but was also a part of the site's diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks.

For example, Students for a Free Tibet's campaign pages often directed a web user to another site to provide greater informational depth on a specific campaign issue or event. The campaign page, "Shanghai Exposed: Stop the attack on Tibet's Culture," contained links to sites that are within the issue network, as well as sites that contain propaganda narratives on PRC servers (SFT, 2010). The narrative of the "Shanghai Exposed" campaign page focused on the story of Shanghai Expo's "Tibet Week" (SFT 2010). Students for a Free Tibet claimed that this event was a propaganda attempt to claim Tibetan culture as Chinese culture and to "whitewash its [China's] abysmal human rights record in Tibet" (SFT 2010), especially in relation to the harassment and imprisonment of Tibetan artists and writers that use their talents to speak out against China. Here, this narrative frames the story of the Shanghai Expo as a form of



cultural oppression and connects the cultural oppression of Tibet to other human rights concerns, such as political imprisonment.

Within this narrative were links that provided greater narrative depth to the campaign. The “Shanghai Expo” text in the first paragraph of the campaign page, which uses diagnostic framing tasks to characterize the Expo as a symbol and symptom of human rights violations in Tibet, was linked to the official Shanghai Expo website ([en.expo2010.cn](http://en.expo2010.cn)) hosted on a PRC server (SFT 2010). While the content of the Shanghai Expo website does use Tibet Movement frames or continues the Tibet Movement master narrative, the link itself is contextualized as proof of Chinese cultural oppression: it is held up as empirical evidence supporting the activist site’s framing of the Expo as a part of the Tibet Movement’s greater human rights narrative. In this way, the link is provided as a means of providing empirical credibility to this specific framing of the Shanghai Expo and therefore plays a role in the diagnostic framing tasks that describe the human rights problem that the web user is supposed to identify with and take action against (more on the function of links to the opposition’s online narratives and frames below).

As with Students for a Free Tibet, other websites also used hyperlinks on campaign and “take action” web pages as a means of socializing the web user to the narratives of a campaign issue. Canada Tibet Committee incorporated links and materials from other websites that would provide a more robust overview about a campaign issue and its goals. The site’s campaign web page “Corporate Social Responsibility”, urged Canadian companies to adopt UN Global Compact principles that would ensure that basic human rights are observed in international workplaces (CTC, 2011b). This campaign was closely tied to narratives of human rights and economic repression discussed in chapter two. The campaign page included a link to [unglobalcompact.org](http://unglobalcompact.org) ([www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)), which provides a web visitor with access to more detailed information about the compact’s provisions (CTC, 2011b). In this way, the hyperlink to [unglobalcompact.org](http://unglobalcompact.org) was couched in a prognostic framing task that provided details to the web user about a potentially realistic solution to a very specific issue: in this case, ensuring human rights practices in international Canadian-owned workplaces.

Likewise, International Campaign for Tibet also linked to materials on other sites via campaign action alerts. One example was the page, “Take Action to Free Dhondup Wangchen” (ICT 2009k). This page provided the web visitor with the opportunity to view the Filming for Tibet website (leavingfearbehind.com) (ICT 2009k), which held more information and news about Dhondup Wangchen as well as a link to his film on Tibetan attitudes prior to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. These links were embedded in a narrative that was engaged in motivational framing tasks that provided a rationale and call to action to support Dhondup Wangchen. The resources that these links led to provided background information about Dhondup Wangchen and continued to socialize the web visitor to narratives that consistently framed Dhondup Wangchen as a political prisoner in an unjust political system. In these ways, the links that International Campaign for Tibet provided were used to encourage or motivate a web user to take a political action through connecting to detailed information about a narrative that provided the frame with credibility and consistency between International Campaign for Tibet and the Filming for Tibet website.

As noted in the example of Student for a Free Tibet’s campaign page on the Shanghai Expo, Tibet Movement websites also occasionally linked to websites that were not just outside of the Tibet Movement issue network, but that were within the CCP propaganda issue network or subject to the same state-established content constraints as these CCP issue network sites. These were also socialization links that attempted to increase the potential for resonance between a web user and Tibet Movement frames. However, these links were not an attempt to expose a web user to sites that carried the same narratives and frames in an attempt to demonstrate the consistency of a Tibet Movement frame across sites, but were methods of building empirical credibility for Tibet Movement frames through using the link in a strategic frame debunking process. In this way, these links were contextualized as connections to artifacts of CCP deception, which in turn damaged the perceived credibility of CCP counterframes while providing credibility to Tibet Movement frames.

Three cases in which this frame debunking hyperlinking strategy was observed to occur were Students for a Free Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, and The Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library. These cases presented these links within a narrative context that either directly debated the claims made by the opposition or labeled the opposition's materials as propaganda and replete with contradictions or falsehoods. In these ways, links to the sites with oppositional narratives were engaged in frame debunking strategies that provided evidence—or lent empirical credibility to their narrative—that the opposition's narrative was deceitful and false. Thus, Tibet Movement websites used hyperlinks to expose the web user to the ongoing framing contest between the social movement and the CCP while socializing the web user to approach oppositional narratives from a specific Tibet Movement lens. In turn, Tibet Movement sites are able to transform the cultural meaning of the materials found on CCP sites in a way that supports or encourages Tibet Movement frames.

For example, Students for a Free Tibet transmitted links to CCP websites in a subsection of their site titled, "Fact vs. Myth" (SFT 2011e).<sup>51</sup> The front page of the "Fact vs. Myth" subsection states that while there are "two sides to every story"(SFT 2011e), Tibet Movement activists must understand the arguments from both sides of the debate in order to effectively argue against Chinese propaganda and its supporters to "expose the truth about Tibet"(SFT 2011e). This page provided four internal links on the site that presented to the reader the various facets of Chinese propaganda, including a copy of a leaked government document titled, "Tibet-related external propaganda and Tibetology work in the new era"<sup>52</sup> (Zhao 2000), Lhadon Tethong's<sup>53</sup> articulated response to common Chinese state-produced propaganda claims titled, "China's Favorite Propaganda...And Why It's Wrong" (Tethong 2004), an article by academic Michael Perenti titled, "Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth" (Perenti 2003), which supports PRC historical claims about Tibet, and a Tibet Movement activist's response to Perenti's work by Joshua

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<sup>51</sup> The "Fact vs Myth" section was listed in the larger "About Tibet" section of the website.

<sup>52</sup> This document claims to be the text of a speech given by Zhao Qizheng, a minister of the Information Office of the State Council. This text was found reprinted on multiple Tibet Movement sites.

<sup>53</sup> Lhadon Tethong is a Tibetan activist brought up in Canada, who has served as the Executive Direction of Students for a Free Tibet International (2003-2009) and director of the Tibet Action Institute (tibetaction.net).

Schrei titled, “A Lie Repeated – The Far Left’s Flawed History of Tibet” (Schrei 2011). While the whole of this subsection is engaged in frame debunking strategies to counter CCP frames, only Lhadon Tethong’s essay contained hyperlinks to CCP websites.

Tethong’s (2004) essay directly debates Chinese historical and political propaganda about Tibetan history, Tibetan exiles, and the Dalai Lama. She states that this essay was written as a strategic response to the shift in Chinese propaganda strategy outlined in Zhao Qizheng’s statements to the Ninth Meeting on Tibet-Related External Propaganda in 2001, also provided on the “Myth vs. Fact” subsection of the website (Tethong 2004). This shift in propaganda strategy emphasized working with Chinese and Western scholars on Tibet, promoting selected Tibetan voices from inside the PRC, and aligning these academic and individual Tibetan claims with state propaganda claims (Tethong 2004). Therefore, Tethong’s essay is constructed as a way to provide Tibet Movement activists with logical and factual responses to this new strategic propaganda effort and its basic claims: how to strategically counter the opposition’s counterframes through frame debunking practices.

After explaining the purpose of the document, Tethong (2004) responds to specific Chinese propaganda, such as “Tibet has always ‘belonged’ to China”, Old Tibet was a backwards, feudal society and the Dalai Lama was an evil slaveholder”, and that “China ‘peacefully liberated’ Tibet, and Tibetans today are happy under Chinese rule.” For each of these propaganda narratives listed in her essay, Tethong (2004) explains what evidence is provided to support the propaganda narrative, then proceeds to refute each narrative using evidence found in the historical and human rights stories provided on many websites within the Tibet Movement network.

At the end of Lhadon Tethong’s (2004) essay, she provides the web visitor with a series of resources to learn more about the information she provided. While some resources are citations to books, such as Tsering Shakya’s (1999) *Dragon in the Land of Snows* and Kenneth Knaus’ (1999) *Orphans of the Cold War*, other resources contain links to online documents about Tibetan political history and propaganda

(Tethong 2004). These links lead to the 1996 Central Tibetan Administration's (1993) white paper, "Tibet: proving truth from facts," which appeared to be a dead link, and two Chinese white papers published on the *Xinhua News Agency* website (news.xinhuanet.com), "Tibet—it's ownership and human rights situation" (IOSC 1992b) and "Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet" (IOSC 2004a). These two links to Chinese white papers on the *Xinhua News Agency* website (news.xinhuanet.com) provide the web user with the opportunity to not just read these documents, but venture outside of the Tibet Movement issue network and into the domain of a website dominated by CCP counterframes.<sup>54</sup>

However, despite Students for a Free Tibet's website providing the web visitor access to these oppositional materials, it does not do so as a means of providing equal voice to CCP propaganda as an alternative point of view or encouraging social ties with the PRC site. A web user that reads Lhadon Tethong's essay would be primed to approach the CCP narratives and frames from a Tibet Movement frame debunking perspective: these links are not presented for the web user to review the white papers with an unbiased eye, but with an eye formed by the Tibet Movement narrative. Thus, the web page uses frame debunking strategies to contextualize the propaganda materials that one can access via these links and frames these materials as strategic attempts at misinformation or artifacts of CCP deception. In this way, the materials on these CCP sites provide empirical credibility to Tibet Movement narratives that counter the opposition's claims about Tibet's history and human rights situation and in turn, damage the perceived credibility of CCP frames.

International Campaign for Tibet also linked to CCP propaganda issue network websites in some of their news and reports. Again, these links were contextualized in frame debunking strategies that sought to attack the credibility of CCP frames. For example, in the article "Tensions High in Tibet on Eve

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<sup>54</sup> While the news.xinhuanet.com website was not a part of the Propaganda issue network itself at this time, one of its mirrored English language *Xinhua News* sites (chinaview.cn) was in the CCP propaganda issue network. Furthermore, the web page containing the white paper, "Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet" (IOSC 2004a), which Students for a Free Tibet links to from Tethong's essay, has a banner image that is titled, "China View" with the URL labeled, "www.chinaview.cn" (IOSC 2004a). Moreover, the white papers listed on Tethong's essay were hosted on multiple CCP propaganda issue network websites, the content providing the master frames and narratives for CCP propaganda issue network sites.

of ‘Serf Emancipation Day’” (ICT 2009l), the article’s section titled, “China’s Propaganda Offensive on Tibet,” described the PRC’s expensive global media campaign promoting Serf Emancipation Day (ICT 2009l). This section of the news article included a link to a *China Tibet News* web feature titled, “50 Years in Tibet: Changed and Unchanged” (China Tibet News Web 2011e) and then stated,

The wording of ‘50 years in Tibet’ on the website is contradictory as it appears to counter the official position that Tibet has always been a part of China, and that Tibet is not a country but a region of the PRC. (ICT 2009k)

Here, International Campaign for Tibet uses a hyperlink to *China Tibet News* as a means of proving the inconsistency of China’s propaganda claims through highlighting what they believed to be an apparent contradiction: the phrase, “50 years in Tibet” (ICT 2009k). Despite the possible intended meaning behind the *China Tibet News*’ title for this page,<sup>55</sup> the link was not provided as a social connection to *China Tibet News* or to direct a web user to an oppositional site so that they can read and review this site and pass judgment for themselves; this link was provided within a frame debunking context that attempts to socialize a web visitor to a polarization-vilification frames that cast CCP sites, such as *China Tibet News*, as dishonest, contradictory, and false. In this way, International Campaign for Tibet uses socialization hyperlinks to oppositional sites for the purpose of damaging the frame consistency and credibility of CCP narratives and frames, which in turn may weaken the resonance of these CCP frames on the web user.

International Campaign for Tibet also used this same strategy when posting another outlink to *China Tibet News* in the article, “Fears for Three Environmentalist Brothers as ‘Gaunt’ Karma Samdrup on Trial after Torture” (ICT 2010a). After describing the torture and detainment of the brothers, their family, and friends, the article stated that the brother, Rinchen Samdrup, had previously been profiled and praised on *People’s Daily* and *Beijing Youth News* for their environmental work even though they were in detention at the time of these publications (ICT 2010a). Here, a hyperlink was provided to the reader that directed to a Chinese-language *China Tibet News* article (Beijing Youth Daily 2010) that the site claimed praised Rinchen’s work (ICT 2010a). As with the previous International Campaign for Tibet article, this

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<sup>55</sup> This page’s title could also be interpreted to read this as 50 years of “democratic reform” in Tibet.

link was provided to the web visitor as part of a frame debunking strategic process that attempted to demonstrate how the PRC's own government actions contradict their own propaganda: someone can be tortured and arrested while also being profiled as a PRC hero that has made positive community contributions toward preserving the environment (ICT 2010a). Furthermore, the link led to a Chinese-language web page, which would mean that unless the web visitor is fluent in the language, they would remain reliant on the truth claims and narrative framing of International Campaign for Tibet. In this way, International Campaign for Tibet used socialization links as part of their frame debunking toolkit to damage the perceived consistency and credibility of CCP frames, while injecting their own frames with empirical credibility. A web user isn't expected to use the link to read about CCP narratives in an unbiased way (they may not be expected to read the link at all), but it appears to be expected that the links will encourage the Tibet Movement's frame resonance with the web user.

Another website that actively linked to the CCP propaganda issue network was the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library, run by Dr. T. Matthew Ciolek at Australia National University. This site functions as an academic website resource page, listing URLs to a vast array of Tibet-related resources. Categories or URLs include "Databases", "Electronic Forums and E-mail Addresses", "General Information", "Human Rights", "Politics", and "Religion" (TSWVL 2010b). While the site is oriented towards providing academic resources about Tibet, it also maintains that Tibet's status is an independent country under Chinese occupation, establishing Dr. Ciolek's personal alignment with Tibet Movement historical frames (TSWVL 2010b).

While many sites listed were a part of the Tibet Movement issue network, some directed to websites hosted on PRC servers or were a part of the CCP Propaganda issue network. For example, under the category, "News, Electronic Newsletters & Journals" (TSWVL 2010a), the first link listed under the section, "News," is "China Tibet Information Services," currently known as China Tibet Online ([tibet.cn/en/index.html](http://tibet.cn/en/index.html)). The listing for this site is described on the Virtual Library as, "Tibet-related news, commentaries, and propaganda from China" (TSWVL 2010a). Here, the link is clearly identified

and framed as containing propaganda materials. Two other outlinks on the “News” page (TSWVL 2010a) lead to sites within the Tibet Movement issue network, such as a link to *Radio Free Asia*’s interviews with Tibetans during the 2008 protests (Radio Free Asia 2008)<sup>56</sup> and TibetInfoNet’s “Tibet 2008: reported unrest and related incidents” page, which provided a database of known events of unrest in the Tibetan plateau during the 2008 Olympic protests (TibetInfoNet 2011b). The descriptions of these two links indicate only that they contain news (TSWVL 2010a). The section beneath “News” on this page, labeled as “Analysis,” also contains more links to Tibet Movement network sites (TSWVL 2010a).<sup>57</sup> With the exception of the link to China Tibet Online, all other links go to sites within the Tibet Movement issue network or other related Tibet Movement sites and all descriptions of these Tibet Movement focused links do not include language that would insinuate the sites contain bias or propaganda. In this way, the Tibetan Studies WWW virtual Library, while maintaining that it is an academic site, is engaged in frame debunking processes through characterizing China Tibet Online as propaganda, while characterizing news from the Tibet Movement as simply news. The page as a whole has established a network of out-links intended to socialize the web user to predominantly Tibet Movement frames, while questioning the perceived credibility of CCP counterframes.

Likewise, the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library’s page, “General Information about Tibet” page also provides links to sites that are in the CCP propaganda issue network (TSWVL 2009). For example, the section of the site titled, “Tibet’s History” (TSWVL 2009), provides a link to “The Historical Status of China’s Tibet” (Wang 1997).<sup>58</sup> The link’s description states that, “the book postulates” that Tibet has been a part of Chinese territory since the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368)” (TSWVL

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<sup>56</sup> Archived URL on the Tibetan WWW Virtual Library page is [www.rfa.org/english/news/politics/2008/03/15/tibet\\_interviews/index.html](http://www.rfa.org/english/news/politics/2008/03/15/tibet_interviews/index.html), however, this page on *Radio Free Asia* did not archive correctly and redirects to <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/politics>. The citation above is to the current URL listed in the Virtual Library.

<sup>57</sup> These links include the Tibet Information Network ([www.tibetinfo.net/index.html](http://www.tibetinfo.net/index.html)), the International Campaign for Tibet’s “Press Watch” web page ([www.savetibet.org/news/tpw/index.html](http://www.savetibet.org/news/tpw/index.html)) and the Canada Tibet Committee’s World Tibet News page ([www.tibet.ca/en/pages/wtnnews.htm](http://www.tibet.ca/en/pages/wtnnews.htm)).

<sup>58</sup> This link led to the online version of the 1997 book by Wang Jiawei and Nyima Gyancain (also spelled: Nimajianzan) (Wang and Nimajianzan 1997); however the material itself was not archived. The Virtual Library directed the link to [http://www.tibet-china.org/historical\\_status/english/index.html](http://www.tibet-china.org/historical_status/english/index.html) (TSWVL 2009).



2009).<sup>59</sup> This same page also links to the older version of China Tibet Online (China Tibet Information Center: <http://www.tibetinfo.com.cn/english/index.asp>) and a link to the Chinese embassy in the United States' web page on "Tibet Issues" ([www.china-embassy.org/Press/Tibet.htm](http://www.china-embassy.org/Press/Tibet.htm)), which was listed as having contained press releases on Tibet current events, the Dalai Lama, and human rights improvements in Tibet (TSWVL 2009).

Unlike the link to China Tibet Online in the "News" section of the Virtual Library, these links are provided with descriptions that do not indicate that the site should be judged as propaganda. Thus, they do not appear to be used in explicit frame debunking strategies. Instead, the descriptions of these links list some of the materials and subject matter that each site contains, such as "Tibetan Dictionary" and "News" (TSWVL 2009). However, the final PRC-originating link this web page directs to the website, Tour in Tibet (Xizang) ([www.ihep.ac.cn/tour/tb.html](http://www.ihep.ac.cn/tour/tb.html)), and is described as "A tourism/PRC propaganda brochure" (TSWVL 2009). Here, tourism is qualified by the Virtual Library as also being a part of PRC propaganda in the same manner as the link to Tibet Online found on the "News" section of the site. This link is used in a frame debunking strategy designed to question the perceived credibility of the frames on that particular site.

The last CCP propaganda narrative link found on the Virtual Library was on the page titled, "Politics" (TSWVL 2008). This page primarily featured Tibet Movement issue network sites, or other sites working within a Tibet Movement narrative framework, such as materials found on Central Tibetan Administration affiliated websites ([tibet.net](http://tibet.net), [dalailama.com](http://dalailama.com), and [tibet.com](http://tibet.com)), the Australia Tibet Council, and Free Tibet ([freetibet.org](http://freetibet.org)) (TSWVL 2008).<sup>60</sup> However, the "Politics" page (TSWVL 2008) also

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<sup>59</sup> The book itself argues against van Walt van Praag's declaration of Tibet-China relations as consisting only of a Cho-Yon relationship, noting that this relationship would have been seen politically as sovereign and subject (Wang and Nimajanzan 1997, 20–21) and develops a lengthy historical argument for China's rule of Tibet, the lack of human rights in Old Tibet, the deleterious effects of the Dalai Lama and government-in-exile on Tibet, and achievements of the PRC in Tibet (Wang and Nimajanzan 1997).

<sup>60</sup> Other Tibet Movement issue network links included the International Campaign for Tibet ([savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org)), the International Tibet Independence Movement, The Milarepa Fund ([milarepa.org](http://milarepa.org)), Tibet Information Network, Tibet Justice Center ([tibetjustice.org](http://tibetjustice.org)), and Tibetan Women's Association ([tibetanwomen.org](http://tibetanwomen.org)) (TSWVL 2008).

included a link to “White Papers of the Chinese Government” (CIIC 2011) on the China Internet Information Center website ([www.china.org.cn](http://www.china.org.cn)). This link, sandwiched between the International Tibet Independence Movement ([rangzen.com](http://rangzen.com)) and the Virtual Library’s, “National Report of Tibetan Women” (TSWVL 2008), appears out of place amongst a lengthy list of websites that adhere strictly to Tibet Movement narratives on history and human rights. Tibet Movement narrative websites easily overwhelm the link to the CCP white papers: the number of Tibet Movement websites hosted on the “Politics” page indicates that the academic site has increased the chances that a web user will approach narratives about Tibet’s history and human rights through Tibet Movement master frames. In this way, the Virtual Library uses hyperlinks to extensively network to Tibet Movement sites, demonstrating a stronger sense of narrative and framing consistency and raising the level of credibility of Tibet Movement narratives, while, by only linking to one CCP website, minimizes the credibility of CCP frames through not providing other connections to sites sharing these same frames. In this sense, the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library uses links in a way that is reminiscent of Tibet Movement frame saving strategies, where the overwhelming number of Tibet Movement links is an implicit attempt to save Tibet Movement frames from CCP counterframes that can also be accessed on the site.

Overall, Tibet Movement websites did not often link to websites held on PRC servers or that were located within the CCP Propaganda issue network. Those that did outlink to these sites often did so by framing the PRC links within strategic frame debunking (or frame saving) processes that portrayed the content that a link directed to as lacking credibility. These links were not used to make friendly social connections with these sites, or to question the validity of Tibet Movement frames, but were used to socialize the web user to Tibet Movement frames that characterize CCP propaganda as misinformation and deceit. In this way, links to the opposition are framed as connections to web artifacts that prove the empirical credibility of Tibet Movement frames and disprove the empirical credibility and consistency of CCP propaganda frames. Thus, these links are also intended to increase the resonance of Tibet Movement

frames (that the Tibet Movement is an authoritative voice on human rights and history) and aligns these frames with the web user's own values.

While the socialization function of networks was the dominant function of most links found in the network, hyperlinks were also used to engage in the structural-connection function of a network. As noted above, structural-connection functions of social networks provide opportunities for a potential recruit to participate in an action prior to their joining an organization (Passy 2003). Passy writes that the structural-connection function of social networks connect prospective participants to mobilization opportunities “enabling them to convert their political consciousness to action” (Passy 2003, 24). In a hyperlink network, a link is explicitly engaging in structural-connection functions when it is providing participants with mobilization opportunities. The links are often found in motivational framing tasks, such as a specific call to action to support a cause, and are considered structural-connection links when the link plays a role in completing a particular action. In this way, structural-connection links are those links provided to the web user for the purpose of engaging in a specific political-opportunity. While they may also have a secondary socialization function of continuing to reinforce Tibet Movement frames and narratives, their primary function is to connect a web user to an opportunity to take action. Below are examples of how these types of hyperlink connections occurred on individual websites and how these links are related to the narrative and framing choices made on individual sites.

Students For a Free Tibet's “Shanghai Expo” campaign, which had a link to the official Shanghai expo website (en.expo2010.cn) posted as part of a diagnostic framing task to demonstrate Tibetan cultural oppression, followed these diagnostic framing tasks with descriptions of different types of actions that a web visitor can take along with hyperlinks that either provide more information about these actions or help the web visitor complete one of these actions. For example, the first action is to “Celebrate Tibetan Cultural Resistance” (SFT 2010) and requested that visitors:

Watch and share videos and poems expressing Tibetan unity and pride profiled in SFT's 3rd episode of the Renaissance Series, “I am Tibetan ང་ཙན་ས་ཡིན།”: Voices from Occupied

Tibet held in front of the Chinese consulate in New York City >>[View videos courtesy of High Peaks Pure Earth.](#) (SFT 2010)

This call to action included a link to music videos and translated lyrics that were featured on *High Peaks Pure Earth* (2010b). In order to complete the requested action, a web user has to visit either the “Renaissance Series” link (which directs to an internal page on the Students for a Free Tibet website) or the outlink to “High Peaks Pure Earth” (SFT 2010). In this way, the site is using hyperlinks to directly connect a web user to a political opportunity where they can support Tibetan artists through viewing and sharing videos and poems and then sharing these with others in the web user’s own personal social network.

Other Student for a Free Tibet campaign pages also used links to connect a web user to a specific action. For example, Student’s for a Free Tibet’s campaign page, “Contacting Government Representatives about Tibet,” was designed to help a web user contact their local political representative to encourage them to support the Tibet Movement as a whole (SFT 2011a). The page was divided into three parts: 1) a list of links to contact information on political representatives in different countries, 2) a “Why Do It?” section that provided the narrative context for why someone should be motivated to contact their representative, and 3) a “How Do I Start?” section that provided steps on how to contact one’s representative and what they should say to them (SFT 2011a).

In the first section of this campaign page titled, “Find Your Representative: for USA, UK, EU, Canada, India and Latin America”, the web user was provided with links to websites that provide information about an individual’s government representatives and their contact information (SFT 2011a).<sup>61</sup> The next section of this page motivates the visitor to take action through a story that shows how letters to representatives make real impacts. The site states,

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<sup>61</sup> These links included the Parliament of Canada website ([www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode7ed3.html?Menu=HOC](http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode7ed3.html?Menu=HOC)) and the UK site, “TheyWorkForYou.com” ([www.theyworkforyou.com/index.html](http://www.theyworkforyou.com/index.html)) (SFT 2011a).

In the United States, where SFT has the most members, former congressional staffers have told SFT that constituents' letters, phone calls and meetings really do make a difference. Due to grassroots pressure, for example, the U.S. Congress declared that Tibet is an illegally occupied country, has forcefully called on China to release Tibetan political prisoners, and passed the Tibetan Policy Act. Officials in the U.S. government have told Tibet activists that they want to do more for Tibet, but can only take strong action if they are under pressure from constituents. (SFT 2011a)

The final section of this campaign page, "How Do I Start?," provides the instructional portion of the page that outlines how a web user can complete the call to action through finding their representative (using the links listed in the "Find your representative" section at the top of the page), writing them a letter, and encouraging their representative to engage in a face-to-face meeting (SFT 2011a). Links are also provided beneath this section so the web visitor can find the contact information of Chinese embassies and Chinese (SFT 2011a).

Here, Students for a Free Tibet provides a brief narrative that highlights how a simple action, such as a writing a letter, can have real-world impacts, such as the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act. The final statement of this excerpt clarifies that US officials will only pursue these kinds of actions if they receive pressure from their constituents, such as letters, thereby justifying the efficacy of the call to action (SFT 2011a). In this way, Students for a Free Tibet are engaging in prognostic and motivational framing tasks to demonstrate how real solutions to specific Tibet issues can be accomplished through specific forms of political action: in this case, writing letters. Through constructing a case for writing letters, the page also provides links that directly connect a user to their political representative's contact information, or the contact information of government officials. Thus, these links have a distinct structural-connection function of providing a political opportunity to the web user and situating this political opportunity within prognostic and motivational framing strategies that tell a user how they can accomplish specific Tibet Movement goals.

Likewise, the Students for a Free Tibet campaign website, "Stop Mining in Tibet!" (SFT 2011j) also used a similar linking strategy to encourage a web user complete a requested action. One of the calls to action on this page is to write to the mining company, China Gold's, "website messaging center" (SFT

2011j) with a message requesting that the company end their mining operations in Tibet. The link to the message center is provided at [www.chinagoldintl.com/s/SendMessage.html](http://www.chinagoldintl.com/s/SendMessage.html) and the web user is provided with talking points that they should use when engaging in this campaign action (SFT 2011j). Here, the narrative of mining in Tibet, framed used diagnostic framing tasks about economic oppression, contextualizes the need to take action. The narrative then provides a call to action, guiding the web user to share this specific mining narrative, and uses a hyperlink to directly connect the web user to an opportunity to share the Tibet Movement narrative to the China Gold mining company (SFT 2011j).

Other sites used structural-connection links to provide a web user with information about another organization's campaign or cause and requested that a web user visit the external campaign web page and support the cause. For example, the non-profit publication company, Snow Lion Publications' (2009a) "Activism" web page provided a small amount of information to the web user about the imprisonment of the Panchen Lama. The site then added,

But the story is not over. Your efforts as part of the Panchen Lama Pact Team can affect the future of this boy's life and the future of Buddhism in Tibet.  
You can help free the Panchen Lama. Visit <http://www.savetibet.org/panchenlama/index.htm> for more information, history, and action. (Snow Lion Publications 2009a)

Here, Snow Lion Publications uses narratives of political prisoners in motivational framing tasks that are intended to encourage the web user to take direct action about a specific cause (freeing the Panchen Lama). The site then provides an outlink that leads directly to International Campaign for Tibet's Panchen Lama campaign page where the web user can take part in the cause from another website. Thus, Snow Lion Publications links to an external site for the expressed purpose of structurally connecting a web user to a specific activism opportunity that is taking place in another website.

Likewise, the website, Tibet Online ([tibet.org](http://tibet.org)), a virtual community space, activist organization, and large web resource center for Tibet Movement organizations, provided a "Take Action" box on the front page of their site that linked to the campaign pages of several Tibet Movement activist organizations

(Tibet Online 2010a). For example, Tibet Online stated that “Students for a Free Tibet has several Action Campaigns as well as information on protests in Tibet” (Tibet Online 2010a). The site linked the term “Action Campaigns” to the front page of the Students for a Free Tibet website. The “Take Action” box then stated, “Here are several other Action Campaign Centers” (Tibet Online 2010a). The linked “Action Campaign Centers” text directed to another Tibet Online page (2010c) that lists links to the specific “take action” or “campaign pages” on four activist websites. The websites listed on this page of Tibet Online (2010c) include International Tibet Network’s summary of campaign action on executed Tibetans (ITN 2009b), International Campaign for Tibet’s “Action Center” page that provides opportunities to take action on a wide variety of Tibet Movement issues (ICT 2009a), Students for a Free Tibet’s “SFT’s Urgent Action Alerts!” page about the 2010 earthquake in eastern Tibet (SFT 2011i) and Free Tibet’s “Urgent Action Campaigns” page (Free Tibet 2010). Each of these links function to establish structural-connection networks that provide the web user with activism opportunities that are found throughout Tibet Movement sites.

In these ways, websites in the Tibet Movement issue network used structural-connection links to connect a web user directly to the campaigns of other organizations or used structural-connection links as a means for a web visitor to complete a campaign action requested on the site, such as writing to a mining company’s message forum or viewing and sharing online videos. Like socialization links, structural-connection links also established network relationships, however, the primary purpose of networks established through structural-connection links was to provide a political opportunity for the web user.

## **Conclusion**

As demonstrated above, the Tibet Movement is a complex issue network made up of a large number of sites where only a handful play a role as centralized authorities and brokers. While the occurrence of a frame dispute in the network may indicate a stronger need for certain sites to maintain dominance as authorities and brokers in the network, the network is also engaged in establishing a wide-range of hyperlinking and framing strategies for the purpose of exposing web users to a broad range of

Tibet Movement narratives and framing strategies, as well as political opportunities, to increase the chance for a user to find a frame that resonates with their own worldview and to find an opportunity for political participation in the movement. At the level of the individual site, often these hyperlinking strategies are intimately linked with the framing strategies that contextualize these links. In these ways, Tibet Movement sites are engaged in a combination of framing and linking strategies that intend to promote a web user to become politically engaged in the Tibet Movement. In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss the network-narrative relationship in the CCP propaganda issue network and how these network-narrative relationships are indicative of the propaganda issue network's overarching goal of preventing a web user to take action about Tibet.

### **The CCP Propaganda Issue Network**

In some ways the CCP propaganda issue network was similar to the Tibet Movement issue network in that narratives (and the materials constructing these narratives) were often shared extensively throughout the network. However, unlike the Tibet Movement network, the propaganda network is not a network of actors with differing political goals and interests and present contentious narratives; the CCP propaganda issue network was largely a single voice that contained one narrative—or a set of narratives—that were often copied throughout the network.

The propaganda issue network consisted of websites representing government print media, such as *Xinhua News* (chinaview.cn) and *Tibet Daily* (whose online presence is called *China Tibet News*) (english.chinatibetnews.com), government-run online propaganda, such as China Tibet Online (eng.tibet.cn), government organized non-governmental organization (GONGO) websites, such as the China Society for Human Rights Studies (chinahumanrights.org) and the China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture (CAPDTC) (called TibetCulture.net), tourism companies, such as the Travel China Guide (travelchinaguide.com), and other websites similar in content and design to China Tibet Online, such as China Xinjiang (en.chinaxinjiang.cn). These websites all hosted content that supported government-sanctioned narratives about Tibet's history and China's human



rights record in minority (non-Han) regions of the PRC. While some site's stated goals that were explicitly aimed at disseminating government propaganda, such as *China Tibet News*, China Tibet Online, and Tibet Human Rights (en.tibet328.cn), other sites had alternative goals such as cultural preservation, cultural exchange, and tourism. However, all sites used many of the same shared content and frames.

In what follows is a discussion with how this consistency in master frames and narratives are related to the characteristics of the issue network as a whole and the linking strategies used on individual websites in the issue network. I will demonstrate how consistent propaganda frames led to a less centralized network than the Tibet Movement as no single site needed to act as a gatekeeper since all narratives—and much of the actual content—was essentially the same. I will then demonstrate how individual sites used socialization links to other sites for the purpose of keeping a web user within a single set of master frames that evoked a high level of frame consistency within the network. This was done primarily through lists of link resources found on the home pages of many of these websites. While CCP propaganda sites did not engage extensively in creating hyperlinks other than lists of link resources, some sites did establish socialization links through citations to source content and embedding linked terms in a text that intended to define these terms for the web user. Throughout this section of the chapter, I will demonstrate how the general lack of variety in linking strategies and lack of framing strategies outside of those put forth in CCP propaganda documents, are representative of the CCP's overarching propaganda strategy for a foreign audience: the need to encourage a web user to limit their political engagement with Tibet and to only engage with Tibet as a tourist. Likewise, these sites attempted to raise their frame's potential resonance with the web user through emphasizing their frame's consistency across the network.

### **Hyperlink Network Analysis in the CCP Issue Network: Network and narrative relationships**

As an issue network, the propaganda network was small in size, made up of only sixteen (2/8/2011) to twenty-one sites (2/16/2011). Of these sites, only some were unique in that they were not merely mirror versions of a site or a translated version of the site. For example, on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, sixteen distinct URLs were in the issue network, but only twelve of these were unique websites (See table

6). There was also a greater fluctuation between sites found in the network between the dates of 2/8/2011 and 2/16/2011 (see tables 6 and 7), as well as between these two dates and the initial IssueCrawler run to select sites for archiving.<sup>62</sup> This is probably less due to changes in the body content of the sites (which appear fairly static and unchanged, even when viewing the 2011 content in 2013), which rarely contains embedded hyperlinks, and more due to changes in the “website Links” section of a site.

The network as a whole had an average in-degree centralization index of 15.307% and average out-degree centralization index of 35.025% making this a less centralized network than the Tibet Movement network, which may be indicative of the network not containing any frame disputes.<sup>63</sup> The sites with the highest level of in-degree centrality on both dates of the IssueCrawler were the English language, *Xinhua News* (chinaview.cn), and the Chinese language version of *China Tibet News* (chinatibetnews.com), both of which are state-run news sites. Other sites that were central in the network on both dates of the IssueCrawler were the English language *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online (chinatibet.people.com.cn), China Tibet Online, TibetCulture.net, and China Radio International (english.cri.cn) (see network map 6). On February 16, 2011, the IssueCrawler data also indicated that China Xinjiang and Travel China Guide were high in in-degree centrality.<sup>64</sup> The English-language website, Tibet Human Rights, also raised its in-degree centrality measurement by the time of the second run of the IssueCrawler. The site had received zero links and transmitted links to five separate nodes on February 8, 2011, but on February 16, 2011, Tibet Human Rights received links from four unique nodes (including *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online and China Xinjiang) in the network and transmitted links

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<sup>62</sup> As noted earlier, China Tibet Tourism Bureau (www.xzta.gov.cn/yww/) and PressClubofTibet.org (presscluboftibet.org) were not listed in the issue networks of either week, although the *People’s Daily’s* China Tibet Online did link to the China Tibet Tourism Bureau on their list of links at the bottom of the front page of their website.

<sup>63</sup> Centralization index measurements are from the February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Issuecrawler data. Data from the February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 IssueCrawler also indicated that the network was less centralized than the Tibet Movement network on the same date.

<sup>64</sup> China Xinjiang was not a part of the issue network on February 8, 2011 and Travel China Guide was low in in-degree centrality on February 8, 2011 (see tables 6 and 7).

to eight separate nodes. This indicates that the sites within Tibet Human Right's ego-network were actively engaged in establishing a network of propaganda sites during this time.

In terms of overall site strength in the network, the most influential sites were *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online and TibetCulture.net. Both sites ranked high in in-degree centrality on both dates, while also transmitting links to more unique nodes, which placed these sites as important brokers in the network and in a position of slightly elevated prestige over *Xinhua News* and the Chinese language version of *China Tibet News*, which ranked high in in-degree centrality, but did not transmit to other sites in the issue network. However, the prestige of *Xinhua News* should not be underestimated as this site contained a great deal of content that was copied and pasted across many of the sites in the issue network. In this way, *Xinhua* is a dominant content source site for others in the propaganda network.

Despite the presence of some sites having a higher degree of centrality than others, there was still a much smaller range of difference in network centrality between sites in this network. For example, by February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, two sites received links from six unique URLs, whereas five sites received links from five unique URLs and four sites received links from four unique URLs. The limited number of potential unique URLs that can transmit and receive links in the network appear closely related to the presence of a relatively homogenous set of master narratives found in the network, all of which are framed in the same manner. In what follows is a qualitative analysis of the types of socialization hyperlinking strategies used in the CCP propaganda issue network and their relationship to these homogenous narratives.

### **Qualitative Hyperlink Analysis in the CCP Issue Network: Linking and narrative relationships**

As noted in the section on the Tibet Movement, socialization hyperlinks engage in functions where a web user is provided access to sites that construct and mold the identity of a network in a way that is intended to resonate with a potential recruit. On CCP propaganda websites, the socialization function was the only way that hyperlinks appeared to function on these websites. These links appeared in lists of link resources on Tibet, in citations of news articles posted on *China Tibet News*, and as a means of defining

specific terms used on a website. Structural-connection functions were not explicitly found on propaganda sites as these sites had no intention of encouraging the web user to take a political action on Tibet. The only hyperlinks that could be characterized as having a possible structural-connection function would be links made to tourism websites as these sites appear intimately connected to propaganda narratives on human rights encouraged foreigners to visit Tibet. However, these links were only ever presented as a link resource about Tibet, not embedded explicitly in a request for the user to visit Tibet.

For example, the most common occurrence of socialization links were found on site's presenting a selection of "related" links or "website" links, similar to "links resources" pages found on Tibet Movement sites. These lists of links were usually presented in a row along the bottom of a website's front page (e.g. *China Tibet News*, *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, Tibet Human Rights, TibetCulture.net, and China Xinjiang). While some sites only listed these links once on the front page, the link list from *China Tibet News* and *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online were found at the bottom of every page on the site.<sup>65</sup> PressClubofTibet.org also had lists of links, but, unlike many other sites in the network, maintained these on a separate "Links" page that invited readers to suggest links (PressClubofTibet.org 2011g). Another alternative links list was found on China Tibet Online, which used its "Culture" section to showcase a list of useful links (China Tibet Online 2011a) and an actual "Links" page that carried several more links than those posted on the front page of the "Culture" section (China Tibet Online 2011h).

These lists of links often established social connections to other propaganda-related information websites on Chinese culture, human rights, and Tibet. In this sense, the websites are continuing to engage in an act of persuasion intended to raise the possibility that CCP narratives will resonate with the web user through heightening a sense of cross-network framing consistency. Likewise, many sites linked to websites related to tourism in Tibet. These sites also worked within the same CCP master frames and imbued the network with narrative consistency.

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<sup>65</sup> Peculiarly, Tibet Human Rights' lists of links resources were found on most pages via the HTML source code, but these links were not visible on every page in the archive.

For example, *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online listed sites that included *People's Daily Online* ([english.people.com.cn](http://english.people.com.cn)), *Xinhua's* special Tibet-related page, "Focus on Tibet" ([chinaview.cn/tibet/index.html](http://chinaview.cn/tibet/index.html)), China Tibet Online, China Tibet Tourism Bureau, *China Tibet News*, Tibet Human Rights, and TibetCulture.net (People's Daily 2011a). This list of sites led a visitor to read more (often the same) information about Tibet from three other state-run media organizations (*Xinhua*, *People's Daily*, and *Tibet Daily*), a state-run propaganda website about Tibet (China Tibet Online), two websites run by CCP-supervised GONGOs (TibetCulture.net and Tibet Human Rights) and the China Tibet Tourism Bureau, which encourages a visitor to come to Tibet, providing information about how to obtain a visa through a group tour and where to eat, shop, stay, and visit. In this way, the *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online site keeps a web user within a network of state-run media frames about Tibet: frames which are thoroughly consistent in their presentation.

Likewise, Tibet Human Rights also divided links between general information on Tibet and China, including tourist information (Tibet Human Rights 2011e). The site linked to a series of human rights related sites including Women of China ([womenofchina.cn](http://womenofchina.cn)), which focuses on women's rights in the PRC, and Tibet Human Rights' parent organization, China Human Rights (Tibet Human Rights 2011e). Tibet Human Rights also linked to China Xinjiang, which carried a few historical and human rights narrative parallels with propaganda about Tibet (Tibet Human Rights 2011e). Tibet Human Rights also linked to Show China ([en.showchina.org](http://en.showchina.org)), which is similar in design to China Tibet Online and provides information on Chinese culture, religion, art and tourism (Tibet Human Rights 2011e). The final link found on the Tibet Human Rights page is to Travel China Guide (Tibet Human Rights 2011e), an English-language tourism company that provides information on tourist packages to Tibet and other regions of China. Furthermore, this particular grouping of websites is heavily interlinked. China Xinjiang uses the same linking strategy creating a perfect mirror image to Tibet Human Rights, sending outlinks to

Tibet Human Rights, Women of China, China Human Rights, Show China, and the Travel China Guide<sup>66</sup> (China Xinjiang 2011). Together, Tibet Human Rights ego-network of sites establishes a hyperlink network that has a strong socialization function that raises the sense of frame consistency within the network and reinforces CCP master frames and master narratives.

*China Tibet News* and PressClubofTibet.org (China Tibet News Web 2011c; PressClubofTibet.org 2011g) also contained links to tourism sites. PressClubofTibet.org, while no longer a part of the issue network by the time of archival, linked to two tourism sites including the tourism company (PressClubofTibet.org 2011g), China Highlights (chinahighlights.com) and tourism information site, Religion Tour of China (china-tourism.net), which provided an English-speaking web visitor with further information on travelling to Tibet. *China Tibet News* linked to the tourism magazine, 西藏旅游杂志 (Tibet Travel Magazine) (51tibettour.com), issued by the China Tibet Tourism Bureau (China Tibet News Web 2011c). However, what sets apart this link apart from other tourism links is that Tibet Travel Magazine was not an English language site and no English-language version appears to be available (51tibettour.com 2011). Therefore, this website is clearly for Chinese-speaking tourists interested in travelling to Tibet.<sup>67</sup>

While these tourism links appear to be inviting the web user to travel to Tibet (or other parts of China) and peruse the details on tourist packages and are consistent with CCP narratives that frame

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<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that Show China also links to Tibet Human Rights, China Xinjiang, China Human Rights, Women of China and the Travel China Guide (ShowChina.org 2011). The site also links to China Tibet Online, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China (scio.gov.cn), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (fmprc.gov.cn) (ShowChina.org, 2011). China Human Rights also links to Show China, Tibet Human Rights, China Xinjiang, and Women of China, as well as *Xinhua News* and China Tibet Online (CSHRS 2011). A China Human Rights web user is able to click for more link resources, but those were not successfully archived. Women of China (2011) links to a number of organizations, media and commerce sites including Beijing Travel (beijingimpression.com), China Human Rights, China Xinjiang, Show China, China Travel Tourism (chinatraveltourism.com), Mysterious China (mysteriouschina.com), Cheap Holidays (bookcheapholidaysonline.co.uk), and China Tours (chinaprivatetravel.com).

<sup>67</sup> It is, however, rather curious that this link is only one of two links listed on the English-language version of *China Tibet News* and is not listed at all on the Chinese-language version of *China Tibet News*. Perhaps this is due to a web producer oversight or limitations placed on the web producer at some level of the web production process regarding what hyperlinks were acceptable to create on the site.

tourism as the only legitimate way a foreigner can discover the truth about Tibet, these links should not be understood as having a primary structural-connection function. First, these links are not functioning within a context that explicitly calls out a potential opportunity for the web user to become engaged on Tibet: they are not attempts at structurally connecting a web user to a specific political opportunity, but to further engage with and encounter CCP master frames about Tibet. Second, in the case of links to China Tibet Tourism Bureau and Religion Tour of China, the web user is only provided with information about travelling to Tibet, not the opportunity to sign up for a specific tour. While links to Tibet Travel Magazine and Travel China Guide do provide opportunities for a user to “take action”, Travel China Guide is the only site that is accessible for the English-speaker. In this sense, the web user mostly encounters tourism links that have dominant socialization functions focused on increasing alignment between a web user and CCP frames and maintaining frame consistency across the network. If a web user does choose to travel to Tibet through a link like Travel China Guide, then this action would still be carried out in a context of the CCP master frames that guide the regulatory framework under which foreign tourists are only allowed to visit Tibet via government-approved group tours.

The two sites that did not use tourism links in their link lists were China Tibet Online and TibetCulture.net. China Tibet Online’s list of links on their “Links” page mainly linked to government media sites, such as *Xinhua*’s “Culture and Edu- Art” page ([www.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/art.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/art.htm)), *People’s Daily*’s China Tibet Online, China Radio International, and Chinaculture.org ([chinaculture.org](http://chinaculture.org)), run by the Ministry of Culture<sup>68</sup> (China Tibet Online, 2011b). China Tibet Online also linked to the TibetCulture.net website and Artinfo ([artinfo.com](http://artinfo.com)), a global contemporary art site that operate independently outside of China, although features a Chinese international edition (China Tibet Online, 2011b). With the exception of Artinfo, which appears to fall

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<sup>68</sup> Chinaculture.org was listed on the website as “China Daily” however the “China Daily” text linked to Chinaculture.org, not the *China Daily* news website at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn>.

outside the propaganda narrative sphere,<sup>69</sup> the majority of the front page materials hosted on the sites receiving these links suggest that Tibet Online wants to move a visitor to websites that continue promoting China's democratic reforms and the CCP narrative on China and Tibet, especially those that promote the propaganda narrative of cultural preservation.

Likewise, TibetCulture.net avoided tourism websites in its link list and predominantly relied on state-run media sites such as China Tibet Online, China Radio International, China Daily, *People's Daily*, the *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online website, *Xinhua News*, the China Internet Information Center (china.org.cn), the Chinese-language USWTV (uswtv.com), and China Central Television (english.cntv.cn) (CAPDTC 2011f). Perhaps more than any other page, TibetCulture.net relies solely on propaganda media sites as a way of connecting to the network. These links all carried out socialization functions through providing the web visitor with more opportunities to encounter the same Tibet narratives through CCP master frames, which maintain a high level of frame consistency in the network.

While the most visible method for employing socialization links was found in lists of resources, the second method for creating hyperlink connections to other sites was through a source citation on an individual article or image gallery. This was found mainly on *China Tibet News*, but also occurred on TibetCulture.net, and China Tibet Online.<sup>70</sup> On pages that hosted these types of links, linked sources were often noted at the bottom of an article's content or a series of images.<sup>71</sup> In some circumstances, a link was listed within the body of an article's text, usually as a caption to a photograph.<sup>72</sup> In this way, a reader has the opportunity to leave one site to visit another where the original story was found. These links, however, were not created to send a user to a specific article or source within an external website (as occurred on

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<sup>69</sup> Artinfo (www.artinfo.com) appears to fall outside of the entire narrative sphere of Tibet and does not appear to contain narratives from either side of the Tibet framing contest.

<sup>70</sup> Please note that *China Tibet News* did not create hyperlinks for all of its citations to sources.

<sup>71</sup> For example, the article, "Commentary: A 'human right' to attack handicapped woman?" (CAPDTC 2008) states that its source was "tibetculture" and links to <http://en.tibetculture.net/>.

<sup>72</sup> For example, in the article, "Celebrate Second Serfs Emancipation Day" (Sophia 2010), the first photo of a theatrical performance has a caption which states, "Local people in Kangma County perform for celebrating the first anniversary of the Serfs Emancipation Day, photo from [www.chinatibetnews.com](http://www.chinatibetnews.com) on March 27." (Sophia 2010)



some Tibet Movement issue network sites), nor were they an attempt to build narrative depth into a specific CCP frame; these links all transmitted a web user to an external website's front page rather than specific narrative content. Thus, the propaganda network's use of linked citation appeared to function more as a bibliographic citation or a social connection to another website rather than extend the narrative about a specific narrative theme.

Infrequently, hyperlinks also engaged in socialization functions when embedded within the main body of a text, such as an article, to provide a web visitor with more information about a specific term, such as "monks" or "Wencheng." This occurred in the article, "Odd Numbers with Good Luck in Tibet" (Li 2005), and a small number of China Tibet Online articles such as, "Documentary Sheds New Light on Tibet" (Wu 2007b), "History of Religions in Tibet" (China Tibet Online 2005a), and "Religions in Tibet" (China Tibet Online 2005b). In these articles, embedded hyperlinked keywords all led to an older version of China Tibet Information Center located at [zt.tibet.cn](http://zt.tibet.cn). These pages provide descriptions of each linked keyword, such as "Wencheng", "monks", "population", "Buddhism", "Han", and "sculptures."

For example, on "Odd Numbers with Good Luck in Tibet" (Li 2005) and "History of Religions in Tibet" (China Tibet Online 2005a), the term, "monks" is linked to [zt.tibet.cn/english/zt/religion/200402004518142634.htm](http://zt.tibet.cn/english/zt/religion/200402004518142634.htm), located on an older version of China Tibet Information Center. Here, the web user encounters an article describing the social status of monks within their own monasteries and in the class hierarchies of everyday society in Old Tibet (China Tibet Information Center 2013). The article states:

Apart from their common belief in Buddhism, Tibetan monks and nuns, as a social group, were a community full of contradictions, with huge gaps in wealth and social status. (China Tibet Information Center, 2013b)

The article continues by describing how upper class monks, the minority, exploited and oppressed serfs, and impoverished monks and nuns through labor exploitation, rape, torture, and other means (China Tibet Information Center 2013). In this way, this particular linked keyword is not providing the web user with

basic definitions of what a monk is or the role of the monk in Buddhist soteriology, but continues to socialize a web user to CCP frames of Old Tibet and caricatures of monks divided along lines of class-status as either upper-class oppressors or exploited serfs.

## **Conclusion**

As demonstrated above, the CCP propaganda issue network is a small and homogenous network made up of mainly government-supervised sites where network roles, such as authorities and brokers, are diminished. This lack of strong gatekeeper figures in the network appears to be closely related to the lack of narrative contention and the strong sense of narrative consistency in the network. The network also uses a limited range of socialization hyperlinks for the purpose of exposing web users to the CCP's master narratives and master frames, imbuing the network with a strong sense of framing consistency, and, while providing some opportunities to engage in travel to Tibet, does not provide any other means of being politically engaged in the Tibet issue. In this way, the propaganda network exhibits a political agenda that wants to dissuade people from all types of political action: whether it is joining the Tibet Movement or mobilizing in some manner to support CPP frames. In the final conclusion of this chapter, I will compare the network-narrative relationships of the two issue networks and how these relationships relate to the nature of politics in each network.

## **Conclusion: Comparisons of narrative-network relationships in the issue networks**

Overall, the two issue networks were vastly different in their size and complexity. Each network's characteristics (in terms of centrality) matched the level of narrative variance found in each network: the more complex and centralized Tibet Movement issue network contained more narrative conflict or narrative variance with a wide-variety of actors, goals, and internal debate, while the less centralized, and less complex propaganda issue network contained greater narrative cohesion with fewer actor types and no frame disputes. This does not mean that there was no narrative cohesion in the Tibet Movement network (there was), but that there was far greater narrative cohesion in the propaganda network and a greater use of shared artifacts, such as white papers and *Xinhua* news articles, over original site content. Furthermore, the Tibet Movement issue network contained sites that functioned as brokers or bridges

between actors with contentious narrative frameworks, whereas the propaganda issue network did not contain websites that promoted contentious narratives. Tibet Movement sites also, on occasion, linked to sites outside of their own issue network or linked to a site that carried narratives from the opposition's network. The one case in the CCP issue network where a link that led to a site outside of the CCP's control, China Tibet Online's publication of the Artinfo link, did not contradict propaganda narratives about Tibet: in fact, they did not contain any narratives about Tibet whatsoever.

In both the Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda issue networks, hyperlinks were often created to engage in socialization connections that attempted to align a web user to the issue network's master frames and to increase the resonance of these frames for the web user through heightening a sense of frame consistency in the network. In the Tibet Movement network, socialization links were often found on links resources pages as well as in news articles, on content about specific Tibet Movement issues, and on campaign pages. On "links resources" pages, socialization links worked to either bridge organizations engaged in a frame dispute, to link a web user to the wide range of issues and frames in the Tibet Movement (potentially amplifying certain issues over others), or to limit a web user's knowledge to a limited set of Tibet Movement frames and narratives. Links were also used by some sites, such as the Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, in frame amplification and frame extension strategies designed to capture a broad range of targeted web users and their cultural beliefs and values. Tibet Movement socialization links were also embedded in narrative content used in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing tasks, which provided greater details about specific narratives and provided a greater sense of empirical credibility to the specific frame that shaped these narratives.

On CCP propaganda sites, socialization connections were generally found on the front pages of CCP websites and were the primary type of hyperlinks found on these sites. Other socialization links functioned as citations to other CCP news article or were used to define specific Tibet-related terminology within a strict CCP framework. These connections were used to encourage a shared identity between sites and maintain the frame consistency found on CCP networks, while potentially increasing

the resonance of the master frames for the web user through demonstrating the consistency of the frames from site to site in the network.

Unlike CCP websites, Tibet Movement websites also used structural-connection hyperlinks that provided a web user with specific opportunities to engage in political actions on Tibet. These links were always found in narratives used in motivational framing tasks. The web user was required to select these links in order to engage in the specific call to action or to connect to another organization that is conducting a specific action. The only links on CCP sites that appeared to have a slight structural-connection function were links to tourism companies, however, these links were never in a context in which there was a specific request for the web user to visit Tibet and many of these links went to sites with tourism information, not sites with the option to select and pay for a specific trip to Tibet.

Thus, the Tibet Movement's hyperlinking and narrative strategies demonstrated a higher level of complexity than the CCP propaganda issue network. Tibet Movement sites used a wide variety of framing strategies and socialization links to maximize the potential for one or more Tibet Movement frames to resonate with a web user. Moreover, these sites often had the express purpose of encouraging a web user to become engaged in supporting a specific organization's goals or to become actively political engaged through structural-connection links that provide the web user with an opportunity to take action on a specific issue. In this way, the narrative and framing strategies, combined with the networking strategies of the Tibet Movement indicate a movement consisting of many actors that wants people to be actively engaged in learning about Tibet: they want a web user to become knowledgeable in the broad range of issues about Tibet, to have one or more of these issues resonate with the web user, and to mobilize the web user to take some sort of action, either political (such as protest, letter writing campaigns, or sharing information to others about Tibet), or financial in support of a specific organization and their goals of humanitarian aid, cultural preservation, or activism.

The linking strategies on the CCP issue network, however, were less complex and encouraged limited engagement on the part of the web user. Web users were encouraged not to judge China and its policies—to not be politically active at home—and were only provided with links to sites that maintained narrative consistency with this view. Even tourism links were limited to tourism websites that fell under the narrative control of the CCP and are the only links that implicitly encouraged a web user to do something other than read and agree with CCP narratives. Moreover, as foreign tourism in Tibet is heavily controlled through requiring foreigners to only travel into the region via government-approved tour groups, the web user would still only be able to encounter Tibet via the master frames of the CCP. Thus, the CCP propaganda issue network wants foreigners less engaged in influencing China's international relations. They are not interested in gaining donations or getting a web user to take action, they are only interested in a foreign web user *not* being an active participant.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

This dissertation described and analyzed the intersecting relationships between narratives, framing and networks through an analysis of storytelling practices, linking practices, and network characteristics that occurred on websites located within and between two opposing issue networks engaged in a framing contest about Tibet's history and human rights situation. This research centered its analysis and discussion on three sets of general research questions: 1) What narratives were found within each issue network, 2) how did each issue network frame these narratives and for what purpose, and 3) what were the relationships between an issue network's narratives choices and hyperlink choices and how did these narrative-network choices compare to those found in the other network? Therefore, this study's purpose was to investigate how intersecting processes of storytelling, framing, and linking occur in a networked context in which allied stakeholders place pressures upon one another in shaping their narrative-network strategies, as well as acknowledging the framing contest context in which a social movement's opposition's own narrative-network strategies place further pressures upon the narrative-network strategies of a social movement's stakeholders.

To answer these questions, chapter two focused on the historical and human rights narratives found on the archived websites in the Tibet Movement issue network. This chapter described the framing tasks and strategic processes used to frame narratives about the current status of Tibet, Tibetan human rights, and historical events and issues pertaining to Tibet and China. This chapter demonstrated how these framing processes and tasks attempted to align the Tibet Movement with the values of their targeted web user and persuade the web user to politically identify with the Tibet Movement for the purpose of mobilizing the web user to take action. To develop a comparison with these Tibet Movement network framing strategies, chapter three focused on historical and human rights narratives told on CCP propaganda issue network sites. This chapter described and analyzed how these sites framed narratives about the current status of Tibet, Tibetan history and Tibetan human rights to align their frames with the

values of their targeted web users and to persuade them to not become politically engaged on Tibet. Chapter four described and analyzed hyperlink network analysis data from both sites to measure each network and each site's level of centrality and combined these results with a qualitative analysis of the context in which hyperlinks were used on individual archived sites. This chapter demonstrated that narrative-network relationships in each issue network at the micro and macro level reflected the level of narrative homogeneity in the network and the types of politics that were occurring in each network: social movement politics and state-run/monitored propaganda politics. Thus, this dissertation was designed to closely analyze the narrative and framing strategies of each network, to describe how narrative and framing strategies shaped linking strategies in these networks, and how these links established distinct types of issue networks that carried out specific political functions that reflected the politics of each network.

What follows is a summary of data from these three chapters and what these data tell us about narrative-network relationships within and between these two issue networks. I will combine and summarize the results of each of the three data chapters in this study to clarify how the different narrative-network relationships within sites and between sites in an issue network directly related to the overall purpose of each issue network's greater political goals: the Tibet Movement network's narrative-network relationships directly related to their stakeholder's interests in promoting political engagement, while the CCP propaganda network's narrative-network relationships directly related to their stakeholder's interests in discouraging foreign political engagement. I will conclude this section of the chapter with a discussion of the significance of these findings for social movement studies, Tibet-China area studies, and social movement organizations that can use these methods to strategize their network relationships on the Web.

This section of the chapter is then followed with a brief discussion of the benefits of combining qualitative forms of analysis with hyperlink network analysis and other forms of quantitative link data when studying the usage and function of hyperlinks in their website and network-level contexts. This section will demonstrate how using these mixed methods contextualize the function of links in website

content, provide a cultural and political context for better understanding the macro-level relationships of hyperlink networks, and can be used to confirm the results of each form of analysis. This chapter will then conclude with some suggestions for future research on Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda framing contests, as well as possible comparative research with other social movement framing contests.

### **Network-Narrative Relationships within and between the Two Issue Networks**

As seen in chapters two and four, the Tibet Movement issue network is a complex and highly centralized interconnected network produced by multiple actors (e.g. civic institutions, activist organizations, humanitarian aid organizations, bloggers, journalists, religious organizations, refugee community groups, newspapers, artists, cultural preservation organizations) that each have their own specific organizational and individual political, cultural and social goals. At the center of this online network hierarchy is International Campaign for Tibet ([savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org)), the top authority and broker in the network. Other stakeholders with authority in the network, holding high measurements of in-degree centrality, are the activist organizations, Students for a Free Tibet ([studentsforafreetibet.org](http://studentsforafreetibet.org)), Tibet Center for Human Rights and Democracy ([tchrd.org](http://tchrd.org)) and Free Tibet ([freetibet.org](http://freetibet.org)), government-in-exile organizations, such as the Central Tibetan Administration ([tibet.net](http://tibet.net)) and the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama ([dalailama.org](http://dalailama.org)), and media-focused websites, such as *Phayul* ([phayul.com](http://phayul.com)), Tibet Online ([tibet.org](http://tibet.org)), and *Voice of Tibet* ([vot.org](http://vot.org)).

Despite representing different types of stakeholders with different goals within the network, the websites analyzed in this study demonstrated a high level of narrative and framing consistency: most appeared to draw from a common narrative toolkit that contained shared artifacts (e.g. text, images, and videos), narratives, narrative themes, and framing strategies about Tibet's history and human rights. For example, on websites featuring historical narratives, these sites generally adopted similar frame saving and frame debunking processes to engage in a framing contest with CCP histories about Tibet. These historical narratives also intersected these frame saving and frame debunking strategies with polarization-vilification strategies when narrating historical events in Tibet following the PLA invasion, which



established a historical context that framed human rights narratives. Likewise, human rights narratives on Tibet Movement sites were often engaged in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing tasks to mobilize web users to become a Tibet Movement ally, to support a specific Tibet Movement organization through donations, or to take a specific political action in support of a specific Tibet Movement cause. This was demonstrated in examples of political prisoner narratives that intersected frame amplification strategies in order to emphasize alignment between the Tibet Movement and other human rights movements, and in polarization-vilification strategies depicting victimized Tibetans in an on-going battle with brutal Chinese military and government forces occupying Tibet. These types of framing tasks and framing processes geared towards mobilizing web users were seen across a range of site actors, from activist organizations to humanitarian organizations.

Another narrative and framing strategy found in the Tibet Movement network related to how specific activist websites, such as Students for a Free Tibet and International Campaign for Tibet, and the Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library ([ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html](http://ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html)), established socialization links (links used as part of a site's identity construction and meaning making process designed to increase the potential for resonance between a social movement's frames and a web user's cultural values) to websites in the CCP issue network or hosting CCP propaganda content. These links were often clearly employed in strategic frame debunking and polarization-vilification processes that framed Tibet Movement narratives as truths and CCP narratives as misinformation or deceptions, often framing the links themselves as connections where a web user can view the opposition's deception, often labelling the materials that a link transmitted to as propaganda. This resulted in Tibet Movement sites presenting to the web user questions about CCP frames' perceived credibility, empirical credibility and frame consistency, placing constraints upon the ability of these CCP-originating materials to develop frame resonance with web user's that approach these materials via these socialization links. Likewise, having links to these materials raises the possibility that the Tibet Movement website's narratives will resonate with the targeted web user, as their own frame's credibility is raised through providing the web

user with access to these materials framed as empirical evidence of Tibet Movement claims against the PRC. In this way, Tibet Movement socialization links to CCP materials takes a risk in exposing web users to their opposition's original content, but mitigates these risks by contextualizing the CCP content as part of the website's own frame debunking strategy: describing the content of the materials found via the links and framing these materials as evidence of their opposition's falsehoods.

Despite having a high level of narrative and framing consistency across many sites, a site's specific selection of these themes and framing strategies were often unique to the goals of the organization or individual(s) that the site represented or to the interests of the targeted audience of the website. For example, sites that featured Robert Thurman as a prominent board member, that had a strong focus on cultural preservation goals, or that expected "Western" visitors such as Americans (Tibet Office, New York, USA), Canadians (Canada Tibet Committee), or Australians (Australia Tibet Council), often used human rights narratives about religious and cultural oppression and cultural preservation in frame amplification or frame extension processes, which could appeal to a broad audience that would generally not be affected by the successes or failures of the movement as a whole. These sites often emphasized the importance of religious and cultural issues in the Tibet Movement for the purpose of connecting to the intended web user's potential popular cultural interest in Tibetan Buddhism (frame amplification) or suggesting to the web user that Tibet Movement goals include solving non-Tibetan problems, such as Western forms of cultural materialism or global spiritual chaos (frame extension).

Furthermore, some Tibet Movement stakeholders engaged in frame disputes about the future status of Tibet. This highly contentious issue has created divisions within the Tibetan refugee community as those supporting the Middle Way Approach (MWA) have been criticized as supporting a position of "political ambivalence" (Sonam 2013), whereas those expressing support for *rangzen* are criticized as defying the interests and wishes of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration, which in turn

has led to accusations that rangzen supporters actually benefit the CCP.<sup>73</sup> This frame dispute is also central to how one frames the general purpose of the Tibet Movement: it is either a nationalist movement or a human rights movement.

Of those sites under analysis, MWA sites were the top three network authorities as measured via in-degree centrality (International Campaign for Tibet, Central Tibetan Administration, and the Official Website of H.H. Dalai Lama). However, rangzen-supporting sites, such as Students for a Free Tibet, or sites that also provided a platform for rangzen opinions, such as *Phayul*, also maintained a high degree of network authority. Some of the sites that engaged in this frame dispute explicitly or implicitly, such as the Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture ([tibetanculture.org](http://tibetanculture.org)) and Central Tibetan Administration chose to only link to like-minded organizations or affiliated organizations on their link resources pages. Other sites such as the Tibetan Youth Congress ([tibetanyouthcongress.org](http://tibetanyouthcongress.org)), allowed for a few links to the opposition, but dominated their website with links to local Youth Congress (rangzen) organizations.

Despite the occurrence of this frame dispute and the attempts made by some websites to limit the number of links that they transmit to sites on the other side of the frame dispute, there were websites that did establish a variety of socialization links that had the effect of bridging websites engaged in this frame dispute. This was the case for International Campaign for Tibet, Tibetan Women's Association ([tibetanwomen.org](http://tibetanwomen.org)), and Students for a Free Tibet, all of which established links to MWA and rangzen sites via their link resources pages. In the case of International Tibet Network ([tibetnetwork.org](http://tibetnetwork.org)), narrative strategies about collaboration intersected with their selection of socialization links to explicitly acknowledge the frame dispute and actively bridge these organizations together for common goals. Websites also established connections between MWA and rangzen sites using socialization links that connected to specific external content for the purpose of providing depth on a specific narrative. This

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<sup>73</sup> For example, on Jamyang Norbu's, *Shadow Tibet* blog ([jamyangnorbu.com](http://jamyangnorbu.com)), Norbu's articles supporting *rangzen* (or independence) are often followed by comments either vociferously supporting Norbu or calling him a traitor and providing fodder for future CCP allegations that the Dalai Lama's request for genuine autonomy is nothing more than a veiled attempt to gain independence.

occurred in Tibet Connection's ([thetibetconnection.org](http://thetibetconnection.org)) story about the arrested musician, Tashi Dhondup, which provided links to International Campaign for Tibet and Free Tibet (Tibet Connection 2011). Structural-connection links, which linked a web user to specific political opportunities (such as calls to action), also bridged MWA and rangzen sites, such as Tibet Online's "Take Action" box connecting users to the campaign and action center pages found on Students for a Free Tibet and International Campaign for Tibet (Tibet Online 2010a).

In this way, the results of the hyperlink network analysis of the Tibet Movement, which suggests that the network has a relatively high degree of centrality in comparison to the CCP network, in combination with the results of the qualitative analysis of links, narratives, and framing found on the archived websites, appear to support Bennett, Foot, and Xenos' (2011) findings on Fair Trade social movement networks: the more contentious the network, the more centralized the network is around one or two gatekeeper sites. In Tibet Movement networks, the Middle Way Approach tends to dominate in gatekeeper roles, although voices for independence can easily be found in the network and sites supporting one of these frame dispute positions may still link to a site that holds an oppositional position. So we see narratives in the network situated within website relationships that are relatively friendly and supportive: they engage in actively linking to one another as an official resource (or have a mediator, such as International Campaign for Tibet or International Tibet Network do so in their stead), while also bridging the narrative divide using hyperlinks that share specific narrative resources, content, and campaign opportunities.

Therefore, the Tibet Movement issue network is a network of actors in conversation, with specific actors dominating the dialogue. The network's narrative variety, and yet significant narrative and framing consistency, seems to reflect the nature of the network itself: a space made up of complex social movement relations between a variety of stakeholder types. Within this network space, a few gatekeepers dominate, but there is a high degree of resource sharing (particularly text, image and video artifacts) and hyperlink connectivity. This reflects a desire to maximize the potential for a web user to encounter frames

that resonate with their personal beliefs and values and hence increase the possibility that a web user will support the movement: each of these sites wants the web user to be a political agent in the cause.

In contrast, the CCP propaganda issue network was a small, more homogenous network that only contained one master narrative that was told across a small selection of stakeholders, all of which appear to be under the supervision of the Ministry of Propaganda in the PRC. These sites represented the online version of government print media, government-run online media, GONGOs, tourism companies, and other propaganda-related sites on non-Tibetan topics, such as China Xinjiang. There were no apparent frame disputes in the network and all sites appeared to work with the same sets of master narrative themes and master frames founded upon CCP white papers. Network sites often borrowed content from other sites, particularly from *Xinhua News* (chinaview.cn), *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online (chinatibetpeople.com.cn), *China Tibet News* (english.chinatibetnews.com), and China Tibet Online (eng.tibet.cn), as well as materials from government white papers, Tibetology research papers, and tourism materials.

For example, the CCP's historical narratives and human rights narratives were all used in frame saving and frame debunking strategies that were engaged in a framing contest with the Tibet Movement. Historical narratives focused on providing empirical credibility to the PRC's claim to Tibet: a website's historical section often used CCP white papers, Tibetology evidence, and tourism site descriptions to explicitly debunk Tibet Movement historical claims and defend CCP historical claims. Historical narratives about the 1959 Uprising (CCP narrative: 1959 Rebellion) also consistently engaged in intersecting polarization-vilification strategies with these frame saving and frame debunking strategies. These polarization-vilification frames were used to frame Tibetans and Han as united together along class lines, while framing the antagonists of the Uprising as an alignment between aristocratic, upper-class Tibetans and the imperial West. This alignment between wealthy Tibetans and imperialist Western interests was also used to contextualize claims of historical human rights violations of Tibetans prior to the PLA's arrival in Tibet and narratives of human rights successes in Tibet after the implementation of

democratic reforms. In this way, CCP historical narratives are framed for the purpose of countering Tibet Movement narratives that claim Tibet is legally an independent country under occupation, that the PLA as an invading force working against Tibetans, and that PRC reforms in Tibet are human rights violations.

In turn, polarization-vilification strategies contextualize Old Tibet as a feudal serfdom and the PRC's Tibet as a human rights success story, which depicts China as empathetic and caring to Tibetans while Tibetans are framed as grateful and happy to be a part of China. These stories frame these reforms as oriented towards human rights goals to appeal to a targeted web user that holds cultural values of improving international human rights. In these ways, stories about human rights successes in Tibet are part of a frame transformation and frame saving strategy that attempts to transform the cultural meaning of international human rights frames to prioritize economic stability, financial gains, and reformations of earlier Tibetan-created class systems over political and religious freedoms. In doing so, the CCP is attempting to raise the salience of their human rights narrative framework (CCP reforms are human rights reforms), while also lending empirical credibility to CCP frames (articles demonstrating proofs of reform successes). In turn these human rights framing strategies concurrently attempt to harm the credibility and salience of Tibet Movement human rights frames through characterizing the Tibet Movement's human rights narratives as false and created for the purpose of helping wealthy Tibetans to reinstate feudalism in Tibet: to turn back the social evolutionary clock. CCP narratives on human rights often publish quotations from Tibetans expressing their support for reforms and the PRC, or publish photographs and other visual imagery, such as the signing of the 17-Point Agreement, to support their claims that Tibetans embrace reforms. These forms of content that portray Tibetans as grateful and welcoming of CCP reforms are also an attempt to raise the perceived credibility and empirical credibility of CCP human rights frames.

Moreover, CCP human rights narratives also frame foreign opinions about Tibet as badly misinformed and misguided. Foreigners are only framed as credible sources when they are depicted as actually having visited China and Tibet on an approved tour or when they reiterate CCP narratives. Tourism to Tibet is encouraged on tourism sections found on many of these websites as well as through

socialization links to tourist information websites or tourism company sites that provide packaged tours to Tibet and China. In this way, propaganda issue network websites are imploring their web users to limit or avoid any political engagement with the Tibet issue until they are able to visit Tibet with a CCP-approved tour group. This desire to minimize a web user's political engagement is also seen in a distinct lack in structural-connection hyperlinks and motivational framing tasks.

As with the consistency in narratives and frames, there was also a consistency in socialization linking strategies, which tended to promote linking to the front page of sites that often hosted much of the same types of artifacts (e.g. articles, white papers, and photographs). Here, almost all of the socialization links found were established via lists of links resources, citations to other CCP news sites, and links embedded in a web page's content that connected a user to definitions of specific terms (all of which were defined within a CCP framework). Each of these types of links connected to sites that shared the same set of master narratives and frames. The primary exception to this rule was the link to Artinfo ([www.artinfo.com](http://www.artinfo.com)), which did not contain materials that related to Tibet at all.

While CCP sites verged from Tibet Movement sites in their high level of narrative and framing consistency and limited use of socialization links, the CCP also had lower network centrality measurements, with no one or two websites acting as consistent and prominent gatekeepers. The only two sites that appeared to hold the highest level of in-degree centrality were *Xinhua News* and the Chinese language version of *China Tibet News* ([chinatibetnews.cn](http://chinatibetnews.cn)). However, many other sites received an almost equivalent number of in-links from unique URLs including the *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, China Tibet Online, and China Radio International ([english.cri.cn](http://english.cri.cn)).

Furthermore, the levels of centrality found in this particularly issue network should be analyzed with caution as the number of sites in the network and levels of centrality in the network appeared to undergo a great deal of change from the time of the first HNA to develop a sample of sites, to the dates of the two HNAs conducted during the month of February in 2011. Sites like China Xinjiang

(chinaxinjiang.cn) and Women of China (womenofchina.cn) do not appear in the issue network on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, while sites such as China Tibet Tourism Bureau (www.xzta.gov.cn) and PressClubofTibet.org (presscluboftibet.org), which had been in the network at the time of the first HNA for archive selection, were no longer in the network by February 2011. However, there was still a strong level of narrative and framing consistency, as well as actual content, between these two sites that were not represented in the HNA. This may indicate that for CCP propaganda sites, strategic linking is less important than strategic content selection: whether using the same materials across sites is a requirement due to restrictions set into place by the government, is due to a shortage in original content, or a shortage in hiring staff to create original content is unknown. In this way, CCP propaganda issue networks seem to rely on framing and linking strategies that focus on raising the resonance of their messages through raising the level of frame consistency, and hence their frame's credibility, across CCP sites (in and outside of the issue network).

Regardless of the reasons behind this issue network inconsistency, the CCP propaganda issue network, while sharing some of the same socialization link strategies, was an exceedingly distinct type of network in content and structure: it was homogenous in content, limiting a web user's exposure to Tibet-related narratives and websites that were available to visit. As noted above, there is no real contestation, or frame disputes in the network, as was found in the Tibet Movement issue network. The CCP master narrative is not only told the same way using the same frames, but it is also often told using the very same artifacts. Furthermore, this network's narratives and framing processes did not encourage a web user to engage in political actions unless it is to consider visiting Tibet as a tourist. This, not surprisingly, was unlike the Tibet Movement issue network, which contains many activist organizations in the network.

Thus, the Tibet Movement issue network is a social movement network that employs many different kinds of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks, strategic framing processes, and a multiple array of linking strategies to expose a web visitor to a wide range of movement stories and movement goals and encourages them to be politically active. The CCP propaganda issue network, as a



network of government-aligned propaganda sites, uses narrative framing processes and socialization links only to defend the credibility of their frames, attack the credibility of their opponents, and attempt to transform broader social movement master frames of human rights with China's version of human rights for the purpose of discouraging a web user to take political action and to limit their exposure to non-propaganda related frames. At most, the CCP's network is only interested in their targeted foreign web users engaging in the issue of Tibet as an online reader of one of their websites or travelling to Tibet as a tourist on a government-approved travel package.

In these ways, both Tibet Movement and CCP narrative-network relationships reflected a desire to extensively socialize a user in a process of political identity-construction: they wanted to provide the user with access to multiple narratives to increase the chances that a web user may encounter and experience a high degree of resonance with one or more frames, while also experiencing a decrease in resonance with one or more of the opposition's issue network's frames, often through questioning the opponent's credibility. Thus, we find extensive use of frame saving and frame debunking strategies on both networks that are employed to increase their frame's credibility in the framing contest. Likewise, both networks attempt to increase the salience of their frames—and use links to connect to other sites using consistent frames—through exposing web users to narratives that may potentially align with the web user's own cultural values and ideologies, often pulling from international human rights concepts.

However, the Tibet Movement network was specifically a network centered on a social movement. Many websites represented organizations that were trying to generate economic support from a web user, and/or made an effort to encourage a web user to personally engage in specific political actions that would support larger Tibet Movement goals. For these purposes, Tibet Movement narrative-network relationships provided an even greater variety of strategic framing processes than CCP propaganda sites, moving beyond aligning a web user's potential concern for cases of international human rights violations, to include attempts at aligning the identities of Buddhist-inclined users with Tibetan Buddhists in China and extending the Tibet Movement's overarching goals to include solving global

problems and individual “Western” hardships founded in excessively materialistic views. In this way, Tibet Movement narratives and frames contextualized socialization and structural-connection hyperlinks, working together to maximize the Tibet Movement’s potential recruitment pools in order to centralize the issue of Tibet to a targeted web user’s own life and experiences and providing these users with direct opportunities to take action for the cause.

In comparison, the CCP propaganda network is designed only to distribute government propaganda intended to inform and persuade its audience on a specific set of government doctrines. CCP websites did not use any structural-connection links and were not engaged in motivational framing tasks or other forms of strategic framing processes intended to encourage their web users to take a specific action against the Tibet Movement. Instead, CCP propaganda websites were more concerned with frame saving, frame debunking, and polarization-vilification strategies to defend and decrease the resonance of Tibet Movement frames—particularly the credibility of these frames. These sites did heavily rely on framing of their democratic reforms as human rights policies, but only for the purpose of discouraging a web user to engage in political actions and to either agree with, or be open to, the CCP’s doctrinal views on Tibet. If a web user wanted to be involved with these human rights policies, then they could do so only as an observer travelling to Tibet on an approved tourist package.

In reviewing the above summary of the three chapters, it is clear that the relationship between narratives, framing strategies and linking strategies go hand-in-hand. On websites, storytelling is a strategic art where meaning-making processes occur in the framing of these stories for specific political and organizational goals. Narrative themes and narrative artifacts are selected and employed from a toolbox of master narratives found in the web network. These narrative themes and artifacts are provided meaning through the use of framing tasks and strategic framing processes that aim at reaching a broad array of potential recruitment pools. For Tibet Movement organizations, this was accomplished by amplifying specific types of stories and frames, such as religious persecution, political freedoms and human rights atrocities. Likewise, CCP Propaganda sites also used these meaning-making processes to

counter Tibet Movement stories and transform Tibet Movement frames of human rights through a focus on economic policies and a break from the class system of Tibet prior to occupation.

These meaning-making processes take place in a context of a network of websites, each representing the interests of a specific organization, government, community group, or individual. When a web user enters into the flows of a hyperlink network, they encounter these narratives. These networks are, in turn, established through meaning-making narrative and framing processes. Links are established for socialization functions that provide a web user with greater exposure to similar narrative and framing processes, either through providing opportunities to the web user to visit a website to “learn more” about specific or broader issues pertaining to Tibet or providing opportunities to view specific artifacts from external sites that are intended to prove the narratives and frames of the initial site where the link originated. In the case of Tibet Movement sites, web users are also provided political opportunities to engage in achieving the financial or political goals of a specific organization or the Tibet Movement as a whole. In this sense, links are established to move a web user through the network, to expose the web user to the political, social, and cultural identity of the network, and to maximize opportunities for the web user to encounter narratives that resonate with their own cultural worldview. While these processes occurred on both issue networks, only the Tibet Movement network provided opportunities for the web user to take action, which correlates with the Tibet Movement’s status as a social movement rather than a government propaganda network.

In this sense, we see the same processes of narratives, frames and networks at play online that have been found offline. We also find that hyperlink networks appear to have two out of three of the same network functions that Passy (2003) found in her study of Swiss political organizations. The third function Passy (2003) identifies (as noted in the introduction), the decision-shaping function, is the only function that does not appear to be in play as hyperlink networks do not appear to have affordances that

provide a social context of interpersonal interaction for the web user to make the final decision to act.<sup>74</sup>

We also see, as Diani (2003) noted, that understanding social movement networks not only provides a focus on social structures, which can be empirically verified, but on the centrality of culture in establishing and maintaining the social connections that make up these social structures. Here as well, we see how cultural processes of narrative building and framing are the context in which linking choices are made and carried out online. In cases where links are made to the opposition, they are done so in the spirit of providing the web user with access to artifacts that are interpreted as providing proof that supports the frames established on the sites in which the link originates: they are the relational structures that are established as a result of a need to debunk the frames of the countermovement.

However, the content found on the archived sites also shows how social relations represented via hyperlink networks are only one layer of relations within social movements and propaganda networks. These are relations that are represented in digital form: situated amongst another context of relational processes and networks in play off of the Web. In the Tibet Movement, some hyperlink network connections reflect offline social relationships established through inter-organizational conferences, activist collaborations, and the multiple affiliations of individual actors that take on leadership roles, or are employed, in different organizations (see network map 1). Likewise, CCP sites likely reflect the offline networks of GONGOs and government media, all of whom publish content that is under the supervision of a centralized Ministry of Propaganda. While these web networks are represented via hyperlink connections, the relationships these hyperlinks represent are also sometimes manifest in their offline context.

In turn, some organizations that may not be as intimately connected in offline relationships due to the limited network relationships of their own staff and leadership, or due to a lack of resources that

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<sup>74</sup> It seems more than possible that this function could be carried out online in asynchronous or synchronous interactive forums, chat rooms, or other social network opportunities found on the internet. However, hyperlinks appear to only create opportunities, and do not appear—in and of themselves—to provide affordances that can persuade a user to take the political opportunities offered to them.

would allow an organization or individual to connect to the network via attending conferences or other collaborative movement activities, may find that linking in to the issue network (and requesting other sites to transmit links to their organization through URL resource pages), may be a simple, resource-lite way to connect to the greater social movement network. In this way, resource poor organizations or individuals can also receive potential recruits through accessing—and being accessed by—the network. These organizations can also use affordances of hyperlinks to share in the wealth of narrative and framing resources, as well as political opportunities, made manifest on other sites in the network. In this sense, offline social network relationships and online hyperlink relationships are mutually integrated layers of connection in which narratives and frames take place and can be accessed. In turn, these narratives and frames are a part of a process that provides the cultural context in which new relationships are established.

Therefore, by focusing this study on narratives and framing within and between these issue networks, this project acknowledges the need to contextualize social movement narrative and framing strategies on websites as occurring within a context of intricate and shifting social relationships established through hyperlink connections and shared narrative artifacts (e.g. copied text, images, and videos) and as occurring in a context of a framing contest against an opposition's issue network. Likewise, this project acknowledges that these online networks do not occur in a vacuum, but are related to offline networks that are established in other social contexts. In turn, these narratives and framing strategies also contextualize the function of hyperlink relationships found within the issue network itself, through providing the social, cultural, and narrative context in which each website's individual hyperlinking strategies are embedded. Though contextualizing narratives and frames in their macro-social structures and micro-level hyperlinking, narrative, and framing practices found on each site, we can analyze the relationship between narrative, framing, and linking practices within each issue network, compare how these two issue networks differ in these practices, and what these practices tell us about the unique politics of each network.

Thus, this research contributes to the field of social movement in several significant ways. First (as noted above), it demonstrates that social movement hyperlink networks also carry out two of the three types of functions that Passy (2003) describes in her study of individual social movement participation within Swiss political organizations. While hyperlinks in and of themselves in the Tibet Movement and CCP issue network do not appear to have affordances to build a network that engages in decision-shaping functions, these two issue networks did have hyperlinks that contributed to socialization and structural-connection functions.

Second, using a theoretical approach that focuses on narratives, framing and networks in combination with a methodological approach that can collect and analyze data in which these strategies occur at the micro-level of an individual website and the macro-level of the whole network provide robust results in better understanding the relationship between a social movement's narrative strategies, hyperlink networks, and relations between network members. It demonstrates how these online networks are built from the individual links used on single websites, links embedded in a site's own cultural and political practices (such as storytelling and framing), while also demonstrating how we can compare the large-scale structures of the network (such as levels of centrality) with the level of narrative and framing consistency found within the network itself. In addition, this study also considers the role of counterframing processes inside and outside of social movements when reviewing network-narratives relationships of a social movement and the macro-network structures that these relationships produce. Understanding counterframing processes, particularly framing contests, and how narrative, framing and networking process are employed in these contests, can help to better understand how external pressures are also shaping how network stakeholders engage in narrative, framing and linking strategies and the networks these strategies produce. In this way, social movement scholars can use this theoretical and methodological approach to study other social movements and social movement organizations that are engaged in framing contests and that use websites as a means of establishing an online representation of their stories and political goals. This approach could be particularly useful for scholars researching social

movements that are engaged in high profile framing contests with an opposition, such as a government, or national media networks.

Likewise, this research contributes to studies on Tibet and China, particularly works such as John Powers' (2004) *History of Propaganda*, which analyzes historical narratives about Tibet written by Chinese and Tibetan authors and found on a small selection of websites, and Warren Smith (2010) *Tibet's Last Stand?*, which analyzes the events of the 2008 Tibetan uprising and the influx of Chinese propaganda that followed the uprising. This study adds to these works through investigating PRC and Tibet Movement narratives about Tibet from a social movements' perspective that combines framing and network theory with methods of narrative and network analysis. For example, this study contributes to Powers' (2004) findings on Tibetan and Chinese narratives through thinking about narrative discourses about Tibet as occurring in a context of networked relations that occur amongst organizations and individuals involved in Tibet-related issues, as well as being in reaction to the content found on China's network of propaganda websites. Furthermore, we can use network theory and methods in combination with framing theory and methods of narrative analysis to uncover some of the more prestigious or authoritative narrative-network actors that create, disseminate, and perpetuate these narratives in these networks. In relation to Smith's (2010) work, this study further investigates Chinese propaganda narratives, framing, and linking processes that have occurred after the 2008 Tibetan protests in China to achieve a robust sense of the hyperlinking and framing strategies that PRC propaganda websites are using to persuade an international audience and to discourage political action on Tibet. Therefore, this research contributes to studies on Tibet-China relations through providing a theoretical and methodological perspective that can illuminate how networking and narrative strategies occur between various stakeholders in the Tibet Movement or in Chinese propaganda networks: a perspective that can add to Tibet-China studies that rely solely on historical methods or textual interpretation.

Finally, this research provides a set of methods that may be useful to those working with Tibet Movement actors, or other social movement actors, that want to strategize their online networking

relationships: in particular, finding out who they should be connected to in a social movement and how to increase their chances of receiving a resource link from one or more of the movement's more centralized social movement actors. As noted above, linking into a website network can be a relatively resource-lite way for emerging social movement organizations to raise their voice in the global dialogue about Tibet. However, a combination of network and narrative analysis could potentially help a new organization to have their voice heard by more people through engaging with the strategic narrative and linking practices already at play in a social movement issue network. Hyperlink network analysis could be used to pinpoint who the most important sites are in the network in terms of their status as a centralized authority or actor of high prestige. Once a list of important sites are generated, an organization could then send requests for these sites to list the organization as an important link on a "Links Resource" page on these high prestige sites. However, in order to increase the chances that a highly centralized site will transmit a link to a social movement organization's website or an individual social movement actor's web page, the organization or individual making the link request will need to speak the language of the site that they are requesting a link from: they will need to know the narrative and framing strategies of that website and the websites and affiliated sites and share in the telling and re-telling of these types of stories. To this end, narrative analysis is one such method in which these narrative and framing practices can be uncovered in a social movement issue network. These methods in combination could be a means of providing new social movement actors with a linking and content strategy that could potentially raise their status in the network, making their site more likely to receive web visitors.

### **Mixed Methods for Analyzing Network-Narrative Relationships**

If there is one methodological lesson to be learned from this study it is that the collection of hyperlink network data and hyperlink network analysis can tell us a lot about the macro-level structures of a network, including evidence that may help the researcher to better understand the strength of network ties. Evidence such as the number of hyperlinks a site receives from a website and whether a site both transmits and receives links from an external website, can provide us with a sense of whether several sites are engaged in a strong or weak social relationship. However, on its own, hyperlink network analysis



does not provide the whole story. Adding a qualitative approach that analyzes the content of a website (or sites) in combination with hyperlink network analysis provides the researcher with some significant advantages including 1) the ability to provide depth and breadth in one's analysis of network-narrative relationships at the micro and macro level and 2) the ability to confirm the results of narrative and network data.

First, a combination of hyperlink network analysis and narrative analysis allow for greater depth and breadth in research on narrative and network relationships. Narrative analysis provides great depth into the cultural meaning making practices of storytelling and framing, while hyperlink network analysis provides breadth in analysis of the over-arching social network structures in which these meaning making practices occur. This depth and breadth in analysis is most clearly seen in the ability to study narrative-network practices as they occur at the micro-level, on individual websites, and as they occur at the macro-level across the whole network.

For example, at the micro-level of narrative-network relationships on a website, the researcher can clarify the function of hyperlink relationships through analyzing the content in which the link is found as well as the link's target content. For example, it is clear that links established in the two issue networks above were, as Jackson (1997) states, "social and strategic acts." However, the kinds of social and strategic acts that contextualized a web creator's choices in establishing these links varied depending on the narrative and framing context in which the link was found. While lists of links labelled as "resources" were clearly engaged in the socialization functions of a network and encouraged a user to find out more about the Tibet Movement and affiliated Tibet Movement organizations, links used to provide greater depth about specific narratives, or connected to specific types of framing tasks, were engaged in providing depth to a specific narrative and building upon their frame's credibility and consistency. Likewise, frame debunking links were not attempting to make social friendships with the opposition, but were attempting to counter the opposition's own framing strategies and to carefully manage exposure to the opposition's narratives for the web user.

At the macro-level, these two methods also allowed for the ability to compare the structures of the whole network, such as the centralization index score of a network, with the level of narrative and framing consistency found in the whole network. In the case of the Tibet Movement, the centralization index score of the issue network was higher than the score of the CCP issue network. Furthermore, the International Campaign for Tibet had the highest level of prestige, influence, and brokership within the network, making this a crucial organization in terms of its narrative dominance in relation to its social ties. When compared to the narrative analysis data, the Tibet Movement issue network was found to also be engaged in a frame dispute, demonstrating that there was some level of narrative contestation occurring amongst sites within the network itself. In comparison, the CCP network had no narrative contestation. In this way, centralization measurements that place the Tibet Movement network as a more centralized network may correlate to the higher level of narrative contestation also found in the network, providing further support for Bennet, Foot, and Xenos' (2011) work on Fair Trade social movements and relationships between narrative contestation and levels of centralization in the network.

The second advantage to combining qualitative analysis of web content with hyperlink network analysis is that the researcher can analyze the context of links to confirm the results of the hyperlink network analysis in relation to the strength of ties in the network. For example, both the narrative analysis of the Tibet Movement archived sites and the hyperlink network analysis suggested that the International Campaign for Tibet was one of the central authoritative sites in the network. The International Campaign for Tibet received the hyperlinks from the largest number of unique URLs and transmitted links to the largest number of unique URLs in the issue network. These quantitative counts that indicated that International Campaign for Tibet was a central authority and broker in the network was also confirmed through the narrative analysis of web content in the network, which demonstrated that many websites borrow or host original content originally developed on International Campaign for Tibet.

Likewise, in the CCP propaganda issue network, the hyperlink network analysis indicated that China Xinjiang only appeared as a part of the issue network on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The centrality

measurements conducted on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 demonstrated that China Xinjiang had managed to not only enter into the issue network, but had an in-degree centrality measurement of 0.25, an authority equivalent to *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online, China Tibet Online, Travel China Guide (travelchinaguide.com), and China Radio International. However, the archive showed that there was very little content about Xinjiang in the Tibet-related CCP issue network sites and very little content on Tibet found on China Xinjiang. Therefore, while the site may seem to hold a rank that is equivalent to the authoritative influence of other Tibet-related sites, it holds very few narratives about Tibet.<sup>75</sup> In this case, the narrative analysis provided evidence that showed that some centralized sites can be outliers in terms of not demonstrating any actual influence, or level of authority, on particular narratives in the network. Without the materials collected and analyzed using narrative analysis, we would only be able to assume that China Xinjiang might be more centrally connected to narratives and frames about Tibet.

In these ways, using a form of qualitative textual analysis, which provides depth when studying narrative-network relationships, in combination with quantitative forms of data collection and analysis on hyperlinks (e.g. quantitative forms of link analysis or hyperlink network analysis), which provides breadth in a study of narrative-network relationships, can elucidate the functions of links, the relationships they establish between sites, and the degree of centralization in the network. Likewise, we can use hyperlink network analysis to confirm (or call into question) the results of the narrative analysis and vice versa. These two methods combined can help to validate the results of the other method and provide a more robust view of narrative, framing and linking practices.

### **Future Avenues of Research**

This research focused on the relationship between narratives and networks as found within and between two issue networks within a period of one week. While this research highlighted that websites engaged in inter-connected linking and framing strategies, this study is limited in its ability to generalize how these activities are carried out in each issue network over a longer duration of time, whether specific

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<sup>75</sup> Although there are many parallels between the CCP framing of Xinjiang history and human rights and CCP framing of Tibetan history and human rights.

events related to the Tibet Movement may alter framing strategies on these websites and hence alter the hyperlink relationships established on these sites, and whether these inter-connected strategies occur on non-English language sites in the network. This study is also unable to speak to whether these inter-connected strategies have impacted, shaped, or persuaded the opinions of an audience when these strategies were used. There are also several narrative and framing strategies that were outside of the scope of this study, such as the Tibet Movement's attempts to appeal to international environmentalism frames. Finally, this research is focused on oppositional issue networks engaged in a framing contest concerning a single social movement and the propaganda sites of an authoritarian nation, making it difficult to generalize about other social movements in other political and cultural contests. In order to counter the limitations in this study, I will now provide five possible avenues for future research. The first three relate specifically to the Tibet Movement, the next avenue for future research relates to comparative work across social movements, and the final avenue adds a component of research that would focus on audience reception of these strategies in order to be able to state whether these strategies have their intended effect.

The first possible avenue of research would analyze other narrative-network relationships in Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda issue networks. In particular, the Tibet Movement narrative of environmentalism could be an interesting focal point as the Tibet Movement's focus on environmental exploitation in the Tibetan Plateau appears to be a form of frame bridging that links the issue of CCP rule with the larger global environmentalism frames. This type of study would follow along the same methodological format and could even be conducted using the same data collected for this current study.

A second avenue of research would focus on sites in multiple languages. For this research program, the same methods of data collection and analysis could be used, but sites would be archived from languages other than English. One particular benefit of such a research program would be the ability to analyze whether CCP and Tibet Movement network-narrative strategies change when targeting a Mandarin or Cantonese speaking web users that may also be PRC citizens. For example, do CCP

propaganda websites provide calls to actions for Chinese citizens during periods of political tension overseas, such as the Chinese “protect the torch” protests that followed the 2008 Beijing Olympic torch in countries like the United States and Australia (Smith 2010)? Furthermore, this type of research program can compare how framing and narratives on Tibet Movement sites might differ depending upon their targeted cultural groups. What framing strategies are used to resonate with web users in France or web users in Hong Kong that may require different network-narrative strategies than those used on English-language sites? One of the difficulties in conducting this type of research project would be acquiring a multi-language research team to conduct the narrative analysis or relying on translators to first translate the sites prior to narrative analysis.

The third type of research program would focus on following the network-narrative relationships within both issue networks as they change during a specific event or set of events over a longer duration of time. For example, Ni Chen’s study on Chinese government communication practices described a changing attitude in Chinese officials towards their relationship with the media from a propaganda relationship to a relationship focused on public relations (Chen 2003). Likewise, the International Campaign for Tibet pointed to how the media changed its descriptions of prominent Tibetans in the community during events in which the same Tibetans were under government scrutiny (ICT 2010a). This kind of study can provide data to demonstrate how narrative-network relationships change within Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda network during events such as the annual National Uprising Day, or periods of protest from within Tibet, such as occurred during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Watching network-narrative relationships over longer durations of time would highlight how social movement and opposition stakeholders amend, or alter, their relationships to other stakeholders due to specific political, social, cultural, or other critical events.

The difficulty with this type of long-term study is logistical. Analyzing narrative and network data that had been collected over a period of a week was time-consuming and the storage of the archival data was also problematic as many storage options available in the general marketplace are limited in size

(the current study obtained almost 2 terabytes of data). Another difficulty would be anticipating a major event or set of events during which to begin collecting data.

There are several potential solutions to these problems. First, in terms of anticipating an event or set of events, data collection could be planned around an annual regular event such as National Uprising Day or during an anticipated event such as a visit made by the Dalai Lama or Chinese diplomats to foreign nations. Second, data analysis would require a team of researchers and the collection and analysis of archival data could be limited to a more shallow depth, such as the front page of a site and one level beneath the front page (such as front page of a news section of a website). Third, in order to adequately collect and maintain such a large amount of data, there would need to be a significant investment in data storage along with selecting an appropriate level of website depth in the archive. The project could also only focus the data collection archive on a specific type of organization within the Tibet Movement network, such as a handful of activist organizations. Likewise, the archive could focus on a specific selection of sites based upon a specific narrative issue, such as sites that most strongly represent the two sides of the frame dispute.

The fourth possible avenue for future research in network-narrative relationships between and within issue networks could be comparative in focus. This form of study would select different types of social movements, their actors, and their oppositional network and network of actors, and use the same methods of data collection and analysis in order to compare narrative-network strategies and relationships between social movements. This study would also require some investment in data storage and a narrative analysis research team; however, the benefits would be the ability to develop generalizable theory related to the relationship between narratives and hyperlink networks as they occur within social movements and between social movements and their opposition.

The final potential avenue of research would be to investigate whether these narrative, framing, and linking strategies affect an audience in a way that shapes or impacts their opinion about Tibet. The

current dataset, which consists of narrative and network data, is unable to make any statements regarding whether the storytelling and linking strategies found in these issue networks actually impact audiences due to their not being audience reception data in the dataset. Therefore, a way to complement the current dataset and to add an audience reception component could consist of conducting focus groups, during which invited participants could search through the websites in the archive or be provided with select materials in the archive (such as texts that use frame amplification strategies about human rights). After reading these materials, focus groups could then respond to questions regarding whether or not the materials they read changed or strengthened their previous opinions about Tibet's history and human rights situation. Adding this type of focus group component would complement the current study, which only focuses on a web producer's narrative-network strategies.

## **Epilogue**

While the data collected for this study captures a specific point in time in the Tibet Movement and events in Tibet, it does not capture ongoing political events in Tibet since the time of data collection, which have continued to shape and mold the narratives and frames in Tibet Movement and CCP propaganda issue networks. Since the time of data collection, over one hundred cases of self-immolations of Tibetans have taken place in the TAR, Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan Provinces and in exile<sup>76</sup>. The aftermath of the 2008 Beijing Olympic protests, combined with the increasing numbers of Tibetan self-immolations (which reached their peak in 2012 and 2013), have created heightened tensions between Tibetans and Han in the PRC, heightened tensions between Tibet Movement stakeholders and China, frustrations from within the Tibet Movement, and increasing surveillance and military control of Tibetans living on the Tibetan Plateau.

While the Chinese government places blame upon the Tibetan government-in-exile and their supporters for the self-immolations, Tibet Movement organizations place blame on the CCP. Yet, despite

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<sup>76</sup> Several cases of self-immolation have also taken place by Tibetan exiles.

having records of some of the final words of many of the dead,<sup>77</sup> government-in-exile organizations and activist organizations are divided regarding how to interpret the intentions behind the self-immolations. These divisions often run along the lines of the ongoing frame dispute regarding the future political status of Tibet: the motivations of self-immolations are framed as either a fervent desire for independence or a desire for an end to China's policies and human rights violations.

For example, rangzen blogger, Jamyang Norbu (2012), states that the self-immolators calls for the return of the Dalai Lama are metaphors for Tibetan independence. He writes,

... What they [Africans] were doing with the slogan "Free Mandela" was taking one of all too many political (and humanitarian) causes in Africa and the world, and giving it a unique and accessible brand; providing a distinctive human face, the face of a charismatic leader whose incarceration could symbolize the injustice and brutality that millions of blacks in South Africa were suffering under white rule. It is vital for all Tibetans, supporters and the exile administration to appreciate the slogan "the Dalai Lama must return to Tibet" in this larger visionary spirit, and let the world know that Tibetans in Tibet are calling for a nothing less than the return of their sovereign ruler to his independent homeland. And that call is clearly not just a rhetorical one. (Norbu 2012)

Alternatively, the website, Solidarity with Tibet ([solidaritywithtibet.org](http://solidaritywithtibet.org)), hosts a government-in-exile white paper that states that the motivations behind the self-immolations are related to various human rights violations, such as interference and suppression of religion and language, removal of nomads, population transfer policies, and general marginalization of Tibetans in their homeland (TPI 2013). The white paper states that the solution to self-immolations are those that attempt to "respect the aspirations of the Tibetan people—and at the same time, do not undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China" (TPI 2013).

These two distinct positions in the narrative divide point to a larger issue within both issue networks as a whole: what exactly do Tibetans in Tibet want? While Tibetan voices in the CCP propaganda issue network are clearly restrained, limited to the words of government-sanctioned Tibetan

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<sup>77</sup> The final last words of self-immolators have covered multiple concerns, from the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, to wishes for the long life for the Dalai Lama, wishes for the unity of the Tibetan people, independence from China, and attacks on Chinese policies.



officials, images of Tibetans as happy photographic subjects, or interviews with Tibetans that praise government reforms using word-for-word statements out of a CCP white paper,<sup>78</sup> there are also limitations in place in the Tibet Movement network that make finding unfiltered Tibetan voices from inside Tibet so difficult. This is not to say that there are no Tibetan voices in the Tibet Movement network (far from it), just that the voices of Tibetans living in exile tend to be the most dominant in the network and, unlike many voices of Tibetans in Tibet, these voices appear to have a great deal of control over their own self-presentation through the creation of English-language blogs, editorials, and websites representing exile community organizations.

There are several reasons why there are limitations to finding unfiltered Tibetans voices from inside the PRC in the Tibet Movement network. First and foremost, there are clear political and social constraints placed upon Tibetans in China: writing anything antagonistic about the PRC or CCP could be cause for arrest and in cases where arrest does not occur, often many blogs or blog entries deemed inflammatory are shut down by the government. Second, the dominant language in this particular Tibet Movement issue network is English, whereas most Tibetans in the PRC that would write about their political views and daily experiences would likely be writing in Tibetan or in Chinese. Third, when content from Tibetan blog posts and other communications do make it to the issue network, they often undergo a process of selection, translation and publication that (intentionally or unintentionally) frames the meaning and intentions of their words. For example, *High Peaks Pure Earth* (highpeakspureearth.com), selects certain Tibetan blog posts for translation and commentary, however, it is unclear how many Tibetan blog posts they encounter before they choose one to translate to their

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<sup>78</sup> These constraints have also led to International Campaign for Tibet taking on a new tactic for providing evidence to support the credibility of Tibet Movement claims regarding human rights: collecting and analyzing Sina Weibo (the Chinese microblogging platform) messages from Chinese tourists in Tibet. ICT has recognized the social and political constraints placed upon foreign journalists and tourists in accessing certain areas of Tibet and constraints placed upon Tibetans in Tibet in relaying information about Chinese military and political actions in Tibet, but has found that Chinese tourists in Tibet have far greater access to these areas and their Weibo messages are not as heavily surveyed and controlled. This realization has led to the collection of Weibo data from Chinese tourists and the publication of the report, "Has Life Always Been Like This?: Chinese Microbloggers Reveal Systematic Militarization in Tibet" (ICT 2014a).

website. Commentary added to the post by the *High Peaks Pure Earth* author can also frame the translated post in a way that may or may not have been intended by the original post's author.

While this study does not attempt to speak for Tibetans or what Tibetans in the PRC want, it does point to the fact that despite each network's limitations placed upon Tibetan voices within the PRC, only the Tibet Movement network provides examples where affordances and opportunities can be made to allow web users to encounter some of these voices first-hand. For example, Tsering Woeser's Chinese-language blog, *Invisible Tibet*, ([woeser.middle-way.net](http://woeser.middle-way.net)), was available in the Tibet Movement issue network with its original content free of translation and interpretation. Woeser, a Tibetan blogger in Beijing, despite being placed under house arrest, has continued to write about current events, such as self-immolations and the increasing presence of military and military checkpoints along the Tibetan plateau. Her blog is linked to the *ICTBlog* ([weblog.savetibet.org](http://weblog.savetibet.org)), *High Peaks Pure Earth* ([highpeakspureearth.com](http://highpeakspureearth.com)), and thirteen other unique URLs in the network. While a web user can encounter her site through one of these connections, those who require English translations, however, are required to view translations of her posts on *High Peaks Pure Earth* ([highpeakspureearthc.om](http://highpeakspureearthc.om)).

While this does place limitations upon what of Woeser's blog is accessible to the English-speaking web user (as noted above), it is important to note that there are opportunities within the Tibet Movement network for direct access to Tibetan voices from inside the PRC. This study demonstrates that while narratives and framing may be consistent in the Tibet Movement issue network itself, the presence of a frame dispute and presence of websites representing a wide variety of stakeholders provide potential opportunities and avenues for Tibetan interests from within the PRC to be heard in ways that are impossible in the CCP propaganda issue network. Individual sites in the Tibet Movement network can choose for themselves whether to connect to Tibetan blogs or post videos made by Tibetans from inside the PRC: there is no overarching authoritative figure, such as a Ministry of Propaganda, that prohibits a website from connecting to the issue network through any number of web actors. While stakeholders within the Tibet Movement may argue about the political desires and intentions of Tibetans in the PRC,

the social structures of the Tibet Movement's network, unlike the CCP propaganda network, provides opportunities where more voices of Tibetans in the PRC potentially could be heard. Whether these voices will be able to reach the Tibet Movement issue network unfiltered and unedited depends first and foremost upon the CCP's willingness to release social, political, military and surveillance constraints upon Tibetans within the PRC and second, upon the willingness of Tibet Movement issue network sites to accept link requests from Tibetan bloggers and other groups, including those that may not conform to the specific master frames of the Tibet Movement.

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## Appendices

### Tables

Table 1: Preliminary URLs for IssueCrawler

Tibet Movement Issue Network URLs	CCP Propaganda Issue Network URLs
<a href="http://www.tibet.net/">http://www.tibet.net/</a> <a href="http://www.tcv.org.in/">http://www.tcv.org.in/</a> <a href="http://www.savetibet.org/">http://www.savetibet.org/</a> <a href="http://www.tibetnetwork.org">http://www.tibetnetwork.org</a> <a href="http://www.studentsforafreetibet.org/">http://www.studentsforafreetibet.org/</a> <a href="http://www.thlib.org/">http://www.thlib.org/</a> <a href="http://www.tibetjustice.org/">http://www.tibetjustice.org/</a> <a href="http://www.tchrd.org/">http://www.tchrd.org/</a> <a href="http://www.tibettruth.com/">http://www.tibettruth.com/</a> <a href="http://www.rangzen.com/">http://www.rangzen.com/</a> <a href="http://www.tibetswiss.com/">http://www.tibetswiss.com/</a> <a href="http://www.tibet-initiative.de">http://www.tibet-initiative.de</a> <a href="http://www.phayul.com/">http://www.phayul.com/</a> <a href="http://www.c100tibet.org/">http://www.c100tibet.org/</a> <a href="http://www.tibetfund.org/">http://www.tibetfund.org/</a> <a href="http://www.tibetfocus.com/">http://www.tibetfocus.com/</a> <a href="http://worldbridges.com/Tibet/">http://worldbridges.com/Tibet/</a> <a href="http://www.tibet.ca">http://www.tibet.ca</a> <a href="http://www.freetibet.org/">http://www.freetibet.org/</a> <a href="http://www.kotan.org/tibet">http://www.kotan.org/tibet</a> <a href="http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html">http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html</a> <a href="http://www.peacejam.org">http://www.peacejam.org</a>	<a href="http://chinatibet.people.com.cn/index.html">http://chinatibet.people.com.cn/index.html</a> <a href="http://en.tibetculture.net/">http://en.tibetculture.net/</a> <a href="http://eng.tibet.cn/">http://eng.tibet.cn/</a> <a href="http://en.tibetmagazine.net/">http://en.tibetmagazine.net/</a> <a href="http://www.chinahumanrights.org/">http://www.chinahumanrights.org/</a> <a href="http://www.xzta.gov.cn/yww/">http://www.xzta.gov.cn/yww/</a> <a href="http://english.chinatibetnews.com/">http://english.chinatibetnews.com/</a> <a href="http://en.tibet328.cn/">http://en.tibet328.cn/</a>

Table 2: URLS archived

Actor	Title of Website	Location of Actor	Type of Actor
Tibet.net	Central Tibetan Administration	India	Government-in-exile
Savetibet.org	International Campaign for Tibet	USA	Activism
Dalailama.com	Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama	India	Government-in-exile/individual
Tchrd.org	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy	India	Activism
Phayul.com	Phayul	Unknown	Media
Tibet.ca	Canada Tibet Committee	Canada	Activism
Studentsforafreetibet.org	Students for a Free Tibet	USA	Activism
Tibetnetwork.org	International Tibet Network	USA	Activism-coalition
Tibetjustice.org	Tibet Justice Center	USA	Activism/aid
Freetibet.org	Free Tibet	UK	Activism
Tibetanyouthcongress.org	Tibetan Youth Congress	India	Activism
Highpeakspureearth.com	High Peaks Pure Earth	Unknown	Blog (translates Tibetan blogs)
Leavingfearbehind.com	Filming for Tibet	Switzerland	Activism/Media
Tibetinfo.net	TibetInfoNet	Unknown	Media
Tibetanarts.org	Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts	India	Cultural preservation
Tibetanwomen.org	Tibetan Women's Association	India	Activism
Snowlionpub.com	Snow Lion Publications	USA	Media
Tibetfund.org	Tibet Fund	USA	Humanitarian aid
Ciolek.com	Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library	Australia	Academic
Tibet-foundation.org	Tibet Foundation	UK	Humanitarian aid
Tnp.org	Tibetan Nuns Project	USA/India	Humanitarian aid
Men-tsee-khang.org	Men-Tsee-Khang	India	Cultural Preservation (medical)
Atc.org.au	Australia Tibet Council	Australia	Activism
Thetibetconnection.org	The Tibet Connection	Online only	Media
Tibetoffice.org	The Office of Tibet, NY, USA	USA	Gov- in-exile USA office

Tibetanreview.net	Tibetan Review	India	Media
ltwa.net	Library of Tibetan Works and Archives	India	Cultural Preservation
Tibetanculture.org	The Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture	USA	Cultural preservation
Tibetanvillageproject.org	Tibetan Village Project	Australia	Humanitarian aid
eng.tibet.cn	China Tibet Online (The China-Tibet Information Center)	China	Media (Gov)
en.tibetculture.net	Tibet Culture	China	GONGO
xzta.gov.cn	China Tibet Tourism Bureau	China	Government Office
en.tibet328.cn	Tibet Human Rights	China	GONGO
chinatibet.people.com.cn	China Tibet Online (published by <i>People's Daily</i> )	China	Media (Gov)
english.chinatibetnews.com	China Tibet News	China	Media (Gov)
en.chinaxinjiang.cn	China Xinjiang	China	Media
Presscluboftibet.org	PressClubofTibet.org	China	Unknown

Table 3: Tibet Movement issue network centrality measurements, 2/16/2011

URL	In-Degree	In-Degree Centrality	Out-Degree	Out-Degree Centrality	Node Betweenness Centrality
savetibet.org	50	0.25253	93	0.4697	0.19296
tibet.net	48	0.24242	0	0	0
dalailama.com	41	0.20707	4	0.0202	0.03348
phayul.com	36	0.18182	12	0.06061	0.03891
tibet.com	32	0.16162	0	0	0
tchrd.org	31	0.15657	13	0.06566	0.02285
studentsforafreetibet.org	31	0.15657	15	0.07576	0.02096
tibet.org	26	0.13131	56	0.28283	0.06279
tibet.ca	23	0.11616	29	0.14646	0.02007
freetibet.org	23	0.11616	22	0.11111	0.01738
tibetnetwork.org	22	0.11111	43	0.21717	0.02307
vot.org	21	0.10606	0	0	0
tibetanyouthcongress.org	20	0.10101	0	0	0
facebook.com	20	0.10101	0	0	0
hrw.org	20	0.10101	0	0	0
tibetjustice.org	17	0.08586	4	0.0202	0.00204
highpeakspureearth.com	17	0.08586	7	0.03535	0.00395
rfa.org	17	0.08586	2	0.0101	0.00113
tibetonline.tv	16	0.08081	0	0	0
tibetanarts.org	16	0.08081	0	0	0
guchusum.org	16	0.08081	0	0	0
rangzen.com	15	0.07576	48	0.24242	0.02256
ciolek.com	15	0.07576	33	0.16667	0.03135
tibetanwomen.org	15	0.07576	16	0.08081	0.00395
snowlionpub.com	15	0.07576	0	0	0
tibetfund.org	14	0.07071	19	0.09596	0.0062
tnp.org	14	0.07071	3	0.01515	0.00042
woeser.middle-way.net	14	0.07071	0	0	0
youtube.com	13	0.06566	1	0.00505	0.00133
leavingfearbehind.com	13	0.06566	0	0	0
amnesty.org	12	0.06061	2	0.0101	0.00059
tibethouse.org	12	0.06061	0	0	0
tibetinfo.net	12	0.06061	0	0	0
tibetinfo.net	12	0.06061	0	0	0
tibetswiss.com	11	0.05556	5	0.02525	0.00066

tibetoffice.org	11	0.05556	4	0.0202	0.00113
men-tsee-khang.org	11	0.05556	0	0	0
atc.org.au	10	0.05051	29	0.14646	0.00304
tibet-initiative.de	10	0.05051	35	0.17677	0.02496
jamyangnorbu.com	10	0.05051	12	0.06061	0.0053
kalontripa.org	10	0.05051	4	0.0202	0.00041
norbulingka.org	10	0.05051	0	0	0
worldbridges.com	9	0.04545	64	0.32323	0.03063
tibetfocus.com	9	0.04545	53	0.26768	0.04008
tibetwrites.org	9	0.04545	20	0.10101	0.00978
tibetsites.com	9	0.04545	28	0.14141	0.00818
freetibetanheroes.org	9	0.04545	16	0.08081	0.00415
kalachakra2011.com	9	0.04545	10	0.05051	0.0056
tew.org	9	0.04545	13	0.06566	0.00285
thdl.org	9	0.04545	1	0.00505	0.00036
tashilhunpo.org	9	0.04545	0	0	0
thetibetconnection.org	8	0.0404	25	0.12626	0.00219
tibettimes.net	8	0.0404	28	0.14141	0.00729
tanc.org	8	0.0404	17	0.08586	0.00509
tibettruth.com	8	0.0404	16	0.08081	0.00519
khabdha.org	8	0.0404	8	0.0404	0.00137
cecc.gov	8	0.0404	1	0.00505	0.00011
tibetanphotoproject.com	7	0.03535	16	0.08081	0.00231
tibetoffice.ch	7	0.03535	10	0.05051	0.01109
ltwa.net	7	0.03535	5	0.02525	0.00029
laogai.org	7	0.03535	4	0.0202	0.00554
tibet-foundation.org	7	0.03535	2	0.0101	0.00004
tibetanreview.net	7	0.03535	2	0.0101	0.00087
xizang-zhiye.org	7	0.03535	0	0	0
thetibetmuseum.org	7	0.03535	0	0	0
tibetcm.com	7	0.03535	0	0	0
whitecranefilms.com	7	0.03535	0	0	0
duihua.org	7	0.03535	0	0	0
loten.ch	7	0.03535	0	0	0
milarepa.org	7	0.03535	0	0	0
savetibet.ru	6	0.0303	14	0.07071	0.00704
songtsenhouse.ch	6	0.0303	15	0.07576	0.00358
bbc.co.uk	6	0.0303	4	0.0202	0.00022
latengonline.com	6	0.0303	1	0.00505	0.00977
stopminingtibet.com	6	0.0303	1	0.00505	0.00004
machik.org	6	0.0303	2	0.0101	0.00025

liaowangxizang.net	6	0.0303	0	0	0
tibetan.review.to	6	0.0303	0	0	0
tibetthirdpole.org	6	0.0303	0	0	0
tibet.no	6	0.0303	0	0	0
kagyu.org	6	0.0303	0	0	0
srfood.org	6	0.0303	0	0	0
supportteamtibet.org	6	0.0303	0	0	0
tibet.fr	5	0.02525	18	0.09091	0.00135
friends-of-tibet.org	5	0.02525	14	0.07071	0.00083
tibethouse.jp	5	0.02525	12	0.06061	0.00181
beijingwideopen.org	5	0.02525	9	0.04545	0.00131
amnyemachen.org	5	0.02525	11	0.05556	0.00307
tibetanculture.org	5	0.02525	7	0.03535	0.00097
tpprc.org	5	0.02525	4	0.0202	0.00011
meltdownintibet.com	5	0.02525	7	0.03535	0.00264
ecotibet.org	5	0.02525	4	0.0202	0.00028
tcwef.org	5	0.02525	1	0.00505	0
officeoftibet.com	5	0.02525	1	0.00505	0
digitalhimalaya.com	5	0.02525	4	0.0202	0.00211
voa.gov	5	0.02525	1	0.00505	0.00001
vtje.org	5	0.02525	2	0.0101	0.00499
nitatha.org	5	0.02525	1	0.00505	0.00003
mozilla.com	5	0.02525	1	0.00505	0.00031
tibetanaidproject.org	5	0.02525	1	0.00505	0.00062
blog.studentsforafreeti bet.org	5	0.02525	0	0	0
guardian.co.uk	5	0.02525	0	0	0
tibchild.org	5	0.02525	0	0	0
tibetlink.com	5	0.02525	0	0	0
tibetanvillageproject.or g	5	0.02525	0	0	0
sftuk.org	4	0.0202	50	0.25253	0.0094
tibet.org.tw	4	0.0202	33	0.16667	0.01113
tibet-info.net	4	0.0202	29	0.14646	0.00195
tibet.de	4	0.0202	20	0.10101	0.00178
friendsoftibet.org	4	0.0202	19	0.09596	0.00129
tibet.org.il	4	0.0202	17	0.08586	0.00297
gerefoundation.org	4	0.0202	13	0.06566	0.00089
misstibet.com	4	0.0202	12	0.06061	0.00127
tibet.org.za	4	0.0202	6	0.0303	0.00004
tibetaid.org	4	0.0202	10	0.05051	0.0019
musictibet.com	4	0.0202	7	0.03535	0.00066

dalailamafoundation.org	4	0.0202	4	0.0202	0.00015
missingvoices.net	4	0.0202	3	0.01515	0.00032
art4tibet1998.org	4	0.0202	4	0.0202	0.00037
peacejam.org	4	0.0202	6	0.0303	0.00182
chinaaid.org	4	0.0202	4	0.0202	0.00061
voanews.com	4	0.0202	1	0.00505	0.00024
cartercenter.org	4	0.0202	2	0.0101	0.00024
tibetflagge.net	4	0.0202	2	0.0101	0
lungta-verlag.de	4	0.0202	2	0.0101	0
tibhomes.org	4	0.0202	1	0.00505	0.00006
tibet-society.org.uk	4	0.0202	0	0	0
fotwa.org	4	0.0202	0	0	0
nytimes.com	4	0.0202	0	0	0
sftindia.org	4	0.0202	0	0	0
2008-freetibet.org	4	0.0202	0	0	0
tibetnews.com	4	0.0202	0	0	0
tibetsearch.com	4	0.0202	0	0	0
tibet3rdpole.org	4	0.0202	0	0	0
timesoftibet.com	4	0.0202	0	0	0
namgyal.org	3	0.01515	17	0.08586	0.00086
latibet.org	3	0.01515	16	0.08081	0.00073
weblog.savetibet.org	3	0.01515	16	0.08081	0.00102
tibet-institut.ch	3	0.01515	8	0.0404	0.00015
pbs.org	3	0.01515	6	0.0303	0.002
tibetanpaintings.com	3	0.01515	5	0.02525	0.00261
cwru.edu	3	0.01515	4	0.0202	0.00187
forums.phayul.com	3	0.01515	1	0.00505	0.00005
lib.virginia.edu	3	0.01515	2	0.0101	0.00066
unpo.org	3	0.01515	2	0.0101	0.00007
tibet-auf-dem-saentis.ch	3	0.01515	4	0.0202	0.00009
tibet-munich.de	3	0.01515	3	0.01515	0.00102
house.gov	3	0.01515	2	0.0101	0.00007
tibetabc.cn	3	0.01515	0	0	0
comunitatibetana.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
senate.gov	3	0.01515	0	0	0
state.gov	3	0.01515	0	0	0
potala.com	3	0.01515	0	0	0
bluetibet.be	3	0.01515	0	0	0
globalsourcenetwork.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0

casatibet.org.mx	3	0.01515	0	0	0
places.thlib.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
tibetfreunde.ch	3	0.01515	0	0	0
nyingma.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
gyudmed.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
ligmincha.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
tibetancc.com	3	0.01515	0	0	0
org2.democracyinaction.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
cnd.org	3	0.01515	0	0	0
rtycminnesota.org	2	0.0101	14	0.07071	0.00191
tibet-kultur.de	2	0.0101	9	0.04545	0.00063
tcvaa.ch	2	0.0101	4	0.0202	0.00008
theatlantic.com	2	0.0101	3	0.01515	0.00001
park.org	2	0.0101	2	0.0101	0
jamtsetsokpa.org	2	0.0101	1	0.00505	0
deine-stimme-entscheidet.org	2	0.0101	1	0.00505	0.00014
cnn.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
www1.esc.edu	2	0.0101	0	0	0
shat-tibet.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
ustibet.org	2	0.0101	0	0	0
brook.edu	2	0.0101	0	0	0
sft.convio.net	2	0.0101	0	0	0
is.gd	2	0.0101	0	0	0
flexform.de	2	0.0101	0	0	0
en.wikipedia.org	2	0.0101	0	0	0
tfos.ch	2	0.0101	0	0	0
xe.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
volunteertibet.org.in	2	0.0101	0	0	0
tibetsports.blog.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
tibet-envoy.eu	2	0.0101	0	0	0
china-embassy.org	2	0.0101	0	0	0
khamaid.org	2	0.0101	0	0	0
asianart.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
tibetanteas.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
tibetict.org	2	0.0101	0	0	0
members.aol.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
metacrawler.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0
usembassy-china.org.cn	2	0.0101	0	0	0
asiaobserver.com	2	0.0101	0	0	0



tcv.org.in	0	0	58	0.29293	0
c100tibet.org	0	0	23	0.11616	0
tibetswiss.ch	0	0	20	0.10101	0
thlib.org	0	0	21	0.10606	0
kotan.org	0	0	5	0.02525	0

Table 4: Categories and links from the Conservancy of Tibetan Art and Culture's "Resources" page (CTAC 2009c)

<b>Tibetan Culture</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>Organizations</b>
<b>Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library</b> (www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html )	<b>BuddhaNet</b> (buddhanet.net)	<b>Phayul.com</b> (phayul.com)	<b>Central Tibetan Administration Official Website</b> (www.tibet.net/en/index.php)
<b>Digital Himalaya</b> (www.digitalhimalaya.com/links.php)	<b>DharmaNet</b> (dharmanet.net)	<b>Buddhist Channel TV</b> (www.buddhistchannel.tv)	<b>The Office of Tibet, New York</b> (www.tibetoffice.org/en/)
<b>The Tibet Fund</b> (tibetfund.org)	<b>The Institute of Tibetan Classics</b> (www.tibetanclassics.org/index.html)	<b>Radio Free Asia</b> (www.rfa.org/english/)	<b>International Campaign for Tibet</b> (savetibet.org)
<b>The Dalai Lama Foundation</b> (www.dalailamafoundation.org/dlf/en/index.jsp)		<b>VOA Tibet News and Features</b> (www.voanews.com/tibetan/)	

Table 5: Categories and links from International Tibet Network's "Useful Websites" page (ITN 2008d)

<b>International Tibet Network Campaign Websites</b>	<b>Tibetan Government in Exile Offices:</b>	<b>Non Governmental Organisations:</b>	<b>News / Media and Information:</b>	<b>Blogs</b>	<b>Culture, Aid &amp; Development</b>
<b>Free Tibetan Heroes</b> (www.freetibetanheroes.org)	<b>Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama</b> (www.dalailama.com)	<b>Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy</b> (www.tchrd.org)	<b>Phayul</b> (www.phayul.com)	<b>High Peaks Pure Earth</b> (www.highpeakspureearth.com)	<b>The Tibet Fund</b> (www.tibetfund.org)
<b>I Love Tibet</b> (www.ihearttibet.org)	<b>Tibetan Government in Exile</b> (www.tibet.net)	<b>Tibetan Youth Congress</b> (www.tchrd.org)	<b>Radio Free Asia</b> (www.rfa.org)	<b>Tibetreport</b> (tibetreport.wordpress.com)	<b>Bridge Fund</b> (www.bridgefund.nl)
<b>Treasures of Tibet</b> (www.bangzhoe.wordpress.com)	<b>The Office of Tibet, New York</b> (www.tibet.com/)	<b>Tibetan Women's Association</b> (www.tibetanwomen.org)	<b>Voice of America</b> (www.voanews.com/tibetan)	<b>Blog for a Free Tibet</b> (tibetblogs.com/modules/feeds)	<b>Rokpa</b> (www.rokpa.org/int/eng/frameset.php?org.htm)
<b>Tibet Third Pole</b> (www.tibet3rdpole.org)	<b>The Office of Tibet, London</b> (www.tibet.com)	<b>International Campaign for Tibet</b> (www.savetibet.org)	<b>Voice of Tibet</b> (www.vot.org)	<b>Tibetan Plateau</b> (tibetanplateau.blogspot.com)	<b>The Seva Foundation</b> (www.seva.org/site/PageServer)
<b>Chinese Leaders</b> (www.chinese-leaders.org/index.html)	<b>The Tibet Bureau, Geneva</b> (www.tibetoffice.ch)	<b>Students for a Free Tibet</b> (www.studentsforafreetibet.org)	<b>The Tibet Connection</b> (www.thetibetconnection.org)	<b>Woeser's Blog - Invisible Tibet (Chinese)</b> (woeser.middle-way.net)	<b>Tibetan Nuns Project</b> (www.tnp.org)
<b>China Tibet Friendship</b> (www.chinatibetfriendship.org)	<b>The Office of Tibet, Belgium</b> (www.bluetibet.be)	<b>Australia Tibet Council</b> (www.atc.org.au)	<b>World Tibet News</b> (www.tibet.ca/en/newsroom)	<b>Tibetan Blog བོད་མིའི་ལྷན་ཁག་ (Tibetan)</b> (www.tibetabc.cn)	<b>Volunteer Tibet</b> (www.volunteertibet.org.in/home.php)

dship.org)					
<b>Free The Panchen Lama</b> (www.freepanchenlama.org)	<b>The Office of Tibet, South Africa</b> (www.officeoftibet.com)	<b>Free Tibet</b> (www.freetibet.org)	<b>Tibet Infor (French)</b> (www.tibet-info.net/www/index.php)	<b>Wokar Blog</b> འོད་དཀར་བླ་མེད་ལྷན་ཁག་ (Tibetan) (www.wokar.net)	
	<b>Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Tokyo</b> (www.tibethouse.jp)	<b>International Tibet Independence Movement</b> (www.rangzen.com)		<b>Tamleng</b> གཏམ་རྒྱུང་། (Tibetan) (tamleng.wordpress.com/category/uncategorized)	
	<b>Tibet Culture &amp; Information Centre, Moscow</b> (www.savetibet.ru)	<b>Tibet Justice Centre</b> (www.tibetjustice.org)		<b>Khabdha</b> ཁ་བདུ། (Tibetan) (www.khabdha.org)	
	<b>Tibet Religious Foundation of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Taiwan</b> (www.tibet.org.tw)	<b>Canada Tibet Committee</b> (www.tibet.ca)		<b>Gerlang</b> རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ། (Tibetan) (gerlang.org)	
				<b>-&gt; Tibet Patria Libre (Spanish)</b> (http://tibetpatrialibre.wordpress.com/)	

Table 6: CCP propaganda issue network centrality measurements, 2/8/2011

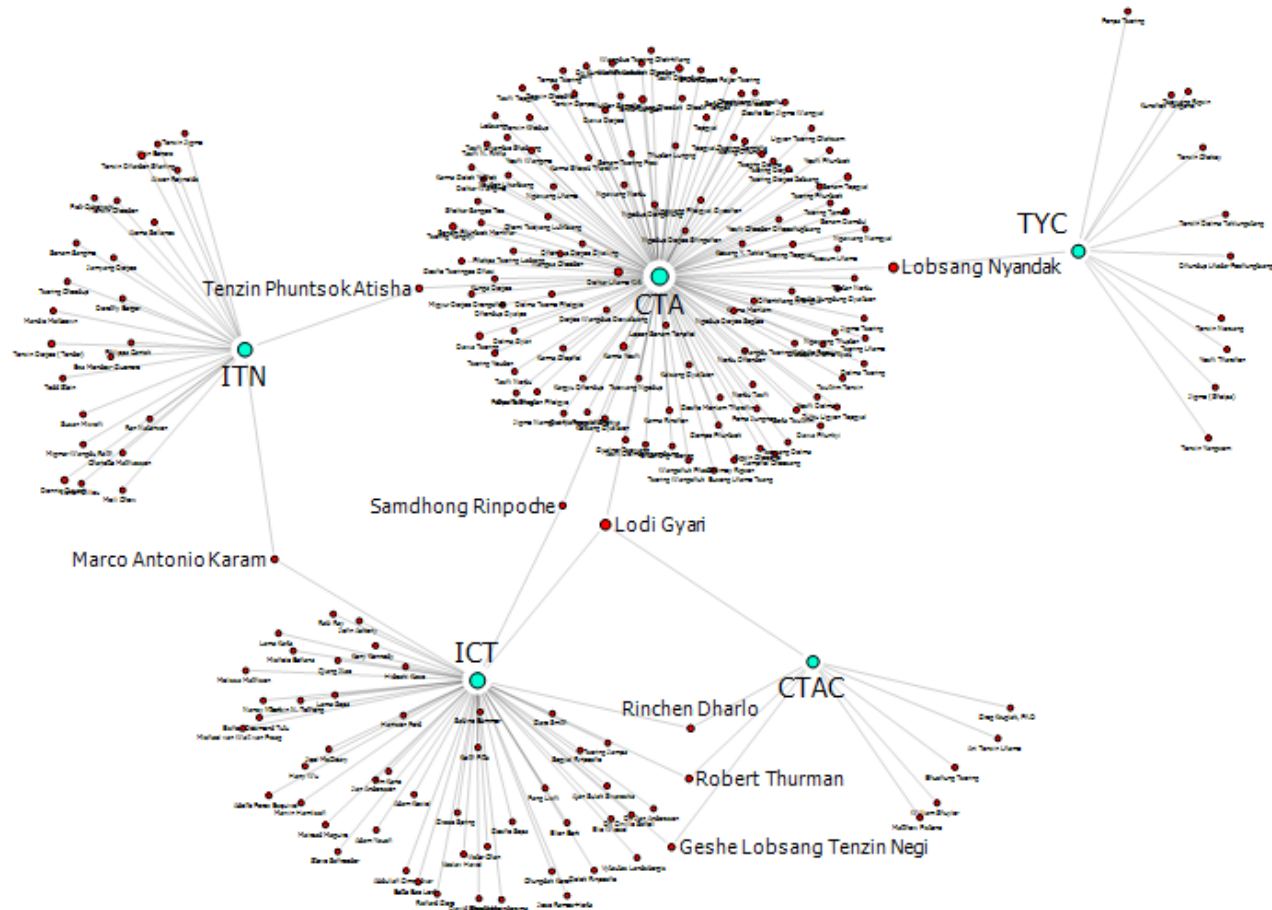
URL	In-Degree	In-Degree Centrality	Out-Degree	Out-Degree Centrality	Node Betweenness Centrality
chinatibet.people.com.cn	5	0.3	7	0.47	0.16
chinatibetnews.com	5	0.3	0	0	0
chinaview.cn	5	0.3	0	0	0
en.tibetculture.net	4	0.27	8	0	0.13
eng.tibet.cn	4	0.27	6	0.4	0.09
english.cri.cn	4	0.27	0	0	0
51tibettour.com	3	0.2	0	0	0
tibetculture.net	3	0.2	2	0.13	0.03
chinadaily.com.cn	2	0.13	2	0.13	0
english.cctv.com	2	0.13	0	0	0
english.chinatibetnews.com	2	0.13	8	0.5	0.06
travelchinaguide.com	2	0.13	0	0	0
xz.people.com.cn	2	0.13	4	0.27	0.04
zt.tibet.cn	2	0.13	1	0.07	0.01
en.tibet328.cn	0	0	5	0.33	0
en.tibetmagazine.net	0	0	2	0.13	0

Table 7: CCP propaganda issue network centrality measurements, 2/16/2011

URL	In-Degree	In-Degree Centrality	Out-Degree	Out-Degree Centrality	Node Betweenness Centrality
chinaview.cn	6	0.3	0	0	0
chinatibetnews.com	6	0.3	0	0	0
chinatibet.people.com.cn	5	0.25	8	0.4	0.22
eng.tibet.cn	5	0.25	6	0.3	0.13
en.chinaxinjiang.cn	5	0.25	4	0.2	0.05
travelchinaguide.com	5	0.25	1	0.05	0.01
english.cri.cn	5	0.25	0	0	0
en.tibet328.cn	4	0.2	8	0.4	0.17
en.tibetculture.net	4	0.2	9	0.45	0.13
en.showchina.org	4	0.2	5	0.25	0.05
womenofchina.cn	4	0.2	5	0.25	0.02
xz.people.com.cn	3	0.15	4	0.2	0.08
tibetculture.net	3	0.15	2	0.1	0.02
51tibettour.com	3	0.15	2	0.1	0.01
english.cctv.com	3	0.15	0	0	0
english.chinatibetnews.com	2	0.1	8	0.4	0.03
zt.tibet.cn	2	0.1	1	0.05	0.004
chinadaily.com.cn	2	0.1	2	0.1	0
en.tibet.cn	2	0.1	0	0	0
chinahumanrights.org	0	0	6	0.3	0
en.tibetmagazine.net	0	0	2	0.1	0

## Network Maps

Network Map 1: Social network connections between Tibet Movement organizations via an organization's key staff. Organizations (*blue*) from *left to right*: International Tibet Network (ITN), International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture (CTAC) and Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). Key individuals (*red*) bridging organizations, from *left to right*: Marco Antonio Karam (ITN and ICT), Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha (ITN, CTA), Samdhong Rinpoche (ICT, CTA), Lodi Gyari (ICT, CTA, and CTAC), Geshe Lobsang Tenzin Negi (ICT, CTAC), Robert Thurman (ICT, CTAC), Rinchen Dharlo (ICT, CTAC), and Lobsang Nyandak (CTA, TYC).



Network Map 2: Tibet Movement IssueCrawler network map



## Tibet 1000 End

**Co-link Map Details:**

```

Author: Laura Busch
Email: lbusch@u.washington.edu
Crawl start: 16 Feb 2011 - 02:22
Crawl end: 16 Feb 2011 - 08:12
Privilege starting points: off
Co-link Analysis Mode: page
Iterations: 1
Crawl Depth: 2
Node count: 194

```

Map generated from [Issuecrawler.net](http://Issuecrawler.net) by the [Govcom.org](http://Govcom.org) Foundation, Amsterdam.

**Legend:**

**Statistics:**

Destination URL: <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/bold-report-beijin...>  
Page date stamp: none  
Links received from crawled population: 2273

Links from network (1 - 20)

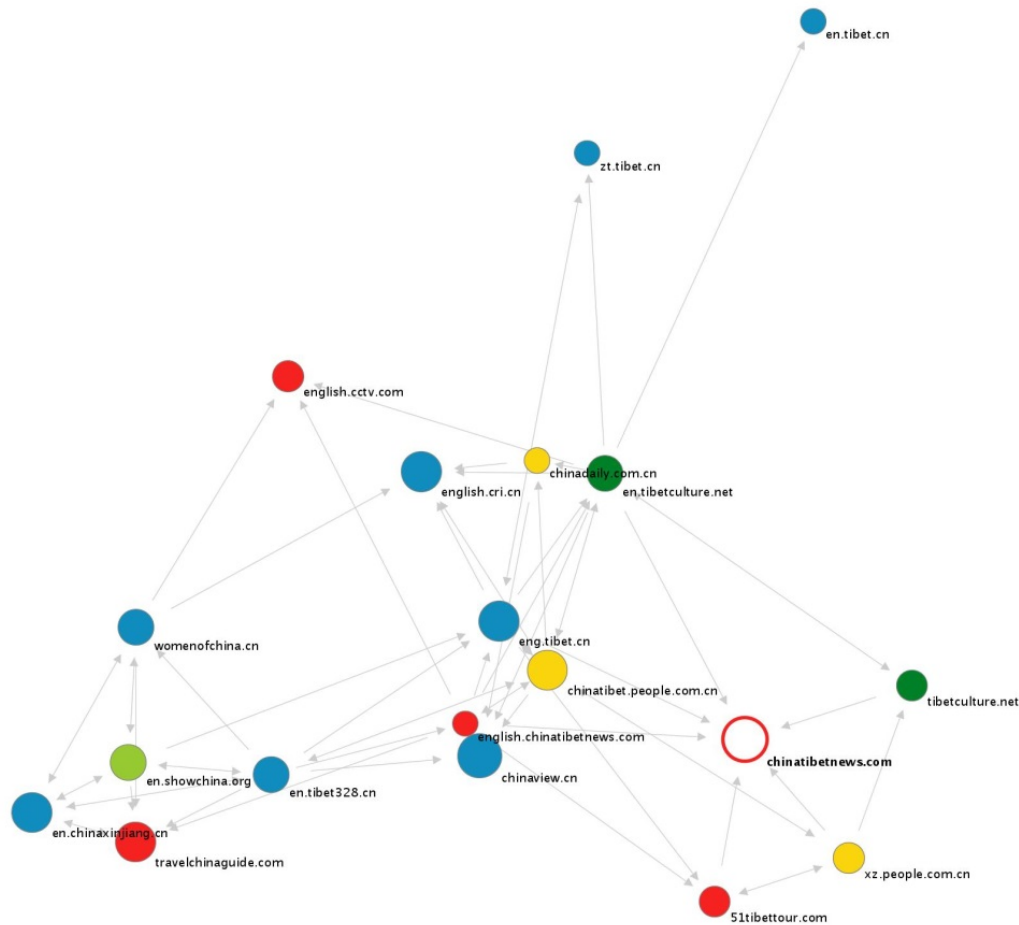
1. [ciolck.com](http://ciolck.com)
2. [meltedowntibet.com](http://meltedowntibet.com)
3. [missingvoices.net](http://missingvoices.net)
4. [musiclibet.com](http://musiclibet.com)
5. [pbs.org](http://pbs.org)
6. [phayul.com](http://phayul.com)
7. [rangzen.com](http://rangzen.com)
8. [rtcymninesota.org](http://rtcymninesota.org)
9. [savetibet.ru](http://savetibet.ru)
10. [sfutk.org](http://sfutk.org)
11. [tanc.org](http://tanc.org)
12. [tew.org](http://tew.org)
13. [thetibetconnection.org](http://thetibetconnection.org)
14. [tibet-info.net](http://tibet-info.net)
15. [tibet-kultur.de](http://tibet-kultur.de)
16. [tibet.ca](http://tibet.ca)
17. [tibet.de](http://tibet.de)
18. [tibet.fr](http://tibet.fr)
19. [tibetaid.org](http://tibetaid.org)
20. [beijingwideopen.org](http://beijingwideopen.org)

Links to network: 93

< | >



Network Map 3: CCP propaganda IssueCrawler map



#### PRC 1000 End

##### Co-link Map Details:

Author: Laura Busch  
 Email: lbusch@u.washington.edu  
 Crawl start: 16 Feb 2011 - 08:13  
 Crawl end: 16 Feb 2011 - 10:36  
 Privilege starting points: off  
 Co-link Analysis Mode: page  
 Iterations: 1  
 Crawl Depth: 2  
 Node count: 19  
 Map generated from Issuecrawler.net by the Govcom.org Foundation, Amsterdam.

##### Legend:

• (.com)(.com.cn) • (.cn) • (.org) • (.net)

##### Statistics:

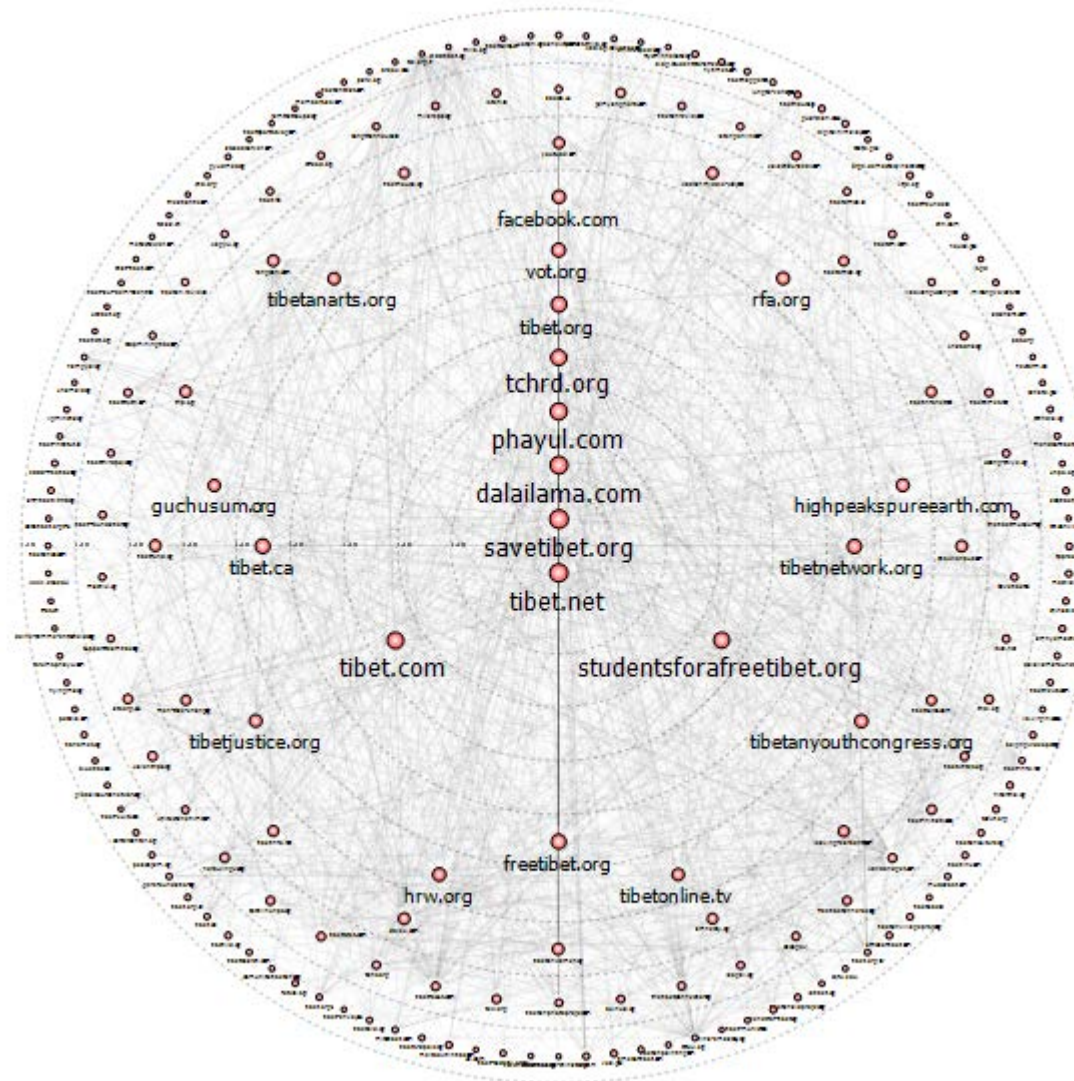
**chinatibetnews.com**  
 Destination URL: http://www.chinatibetnews.com  
 Page date stamp: none  
 Links received from crawled population: 3492

##### Links from network (1 - 20)

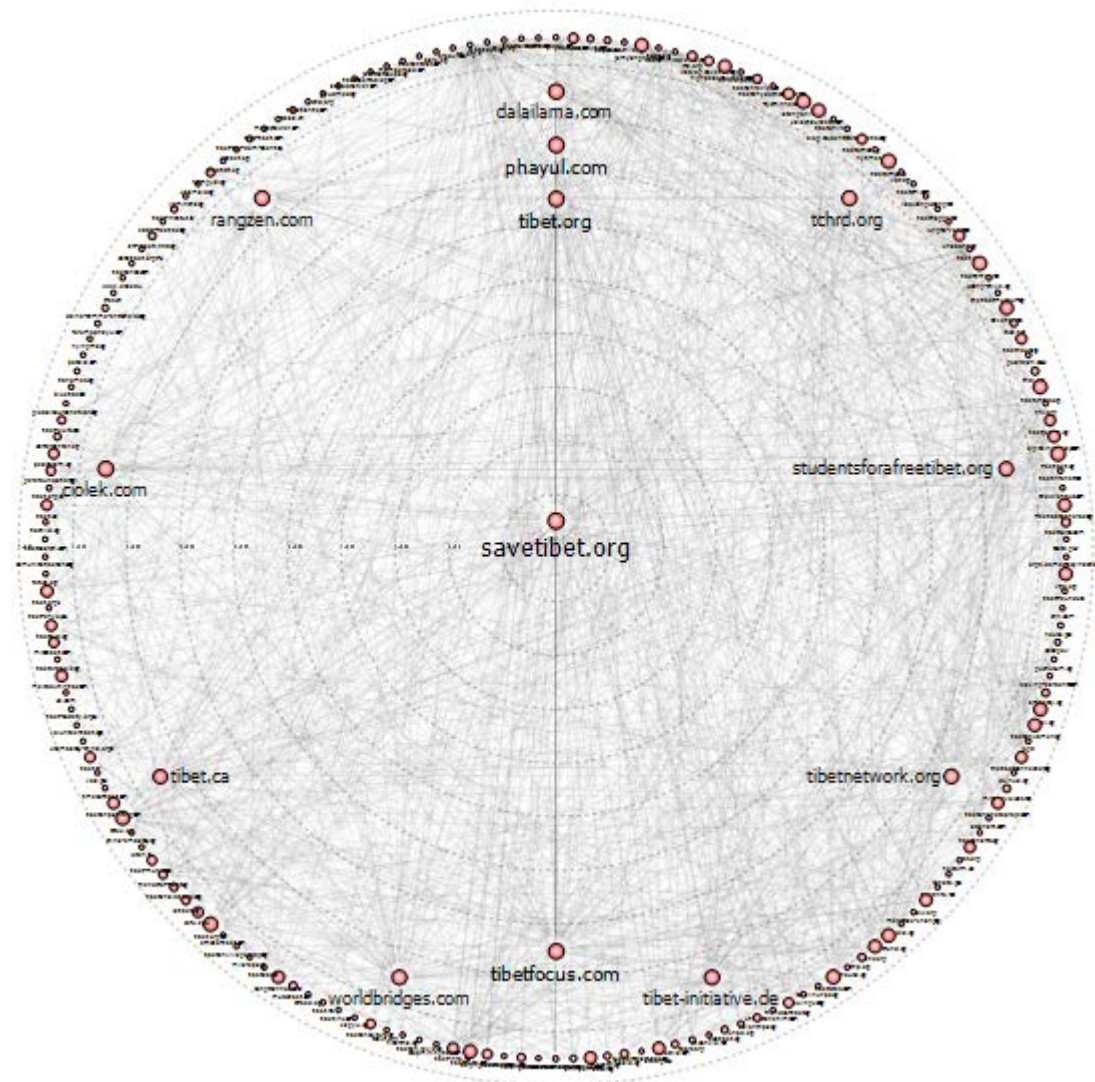
1. eng.tibet.cn
2. english.chinatibetnews.com
3. en.tibetculture.net
4. tibetculture.net
5. xz.people.com.cn
6. 51tibettour.com

Links to network: 0

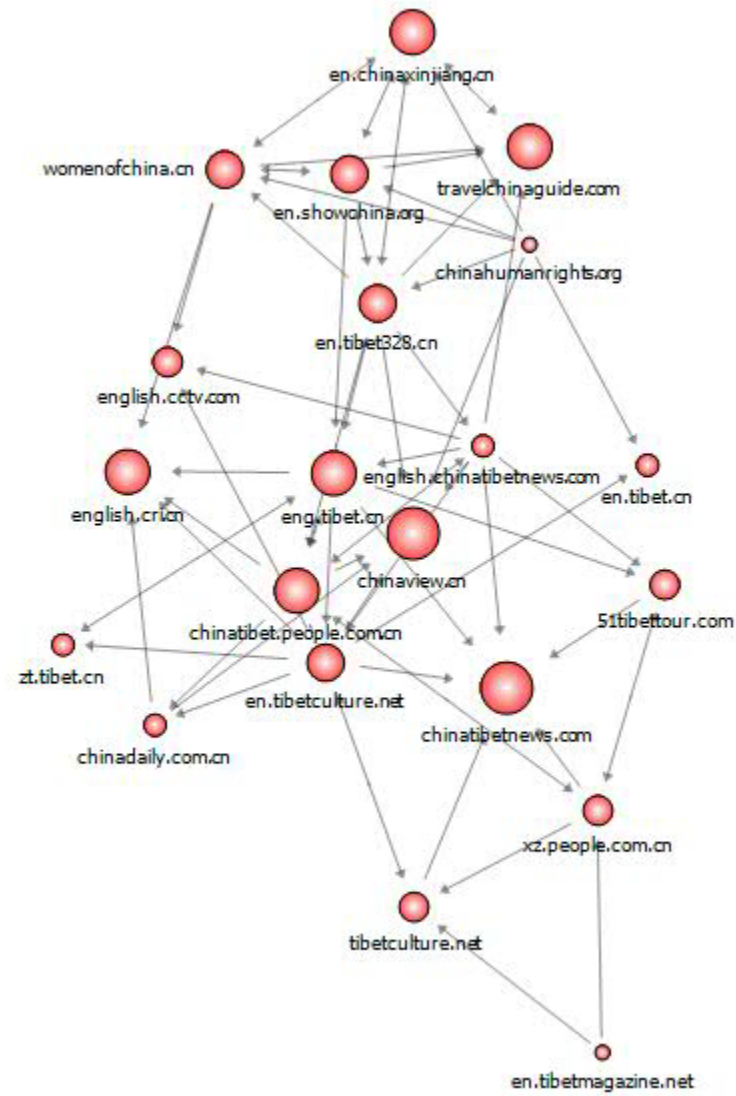
Network Map 4: Tibet Movement network concentric map indicating sites with high levels of in-degree centrality. *Larger* nodes represent higher levels of in-degree centrality.



Network Map 5: Tibet Movement network concentric map indicating sites with high levels of node betweenness centrality. *Larger* nodes represent higher levels of node betweenness centrality.



Network Map 6: CCP propaganda issue network. *Larger* nodes represent higher levels of in-degree centrality





## Images and Screenshots

Image 1: Example of a portion of a political prisoner photo gallery (TWA 2011c)

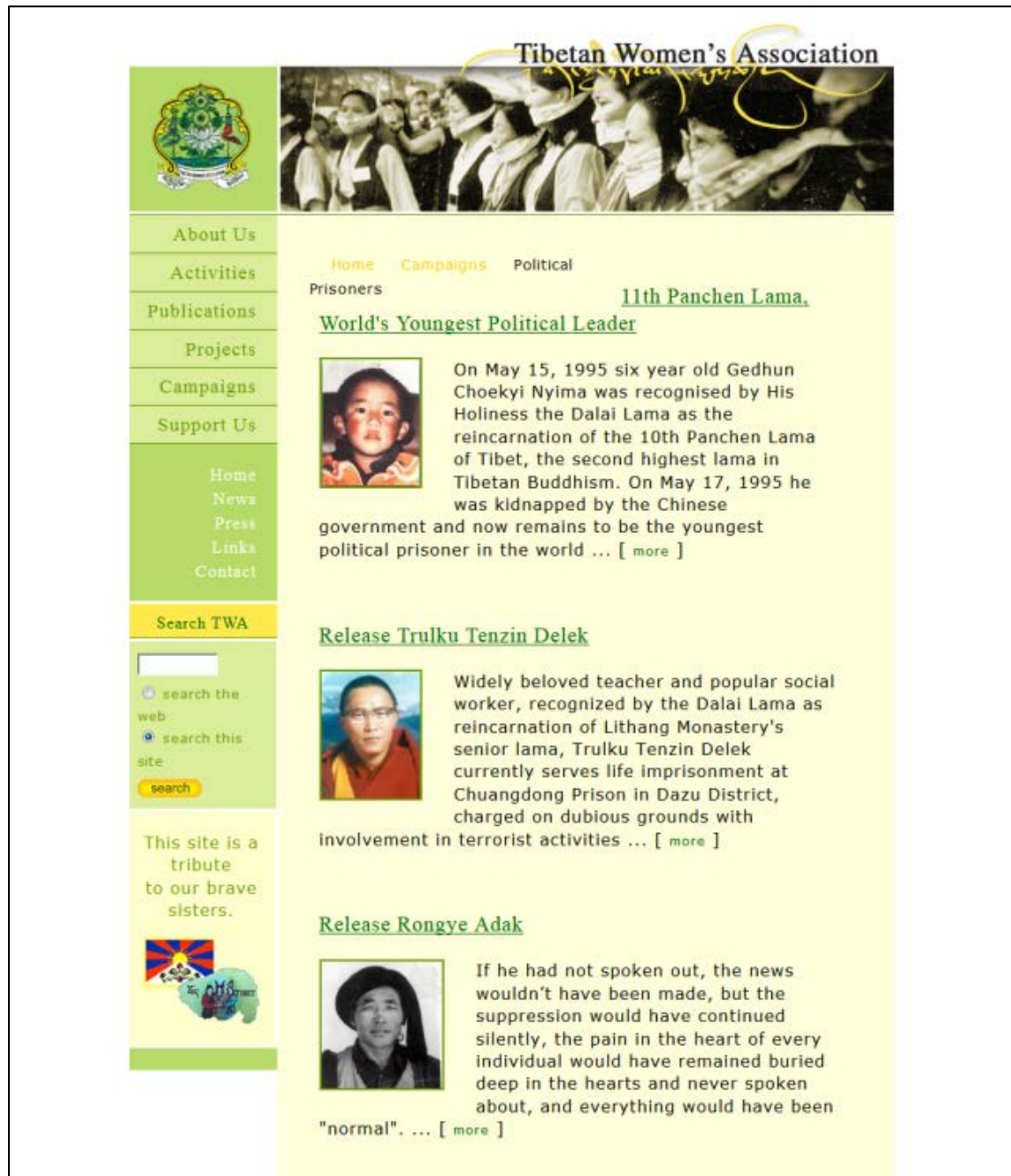


Image 2: An example of a political prisoner database from Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD 2011a)

## LIST OF KNOWN POLITICAL PRISONERS

[Home](#)
[Search](#)

Welcome to the political prisoners search engine.

Today February 7, 2011, 4:07 pm

- 1391 Current Prisoners
- 476 Released
- 113 Death Prisoners

Search		
Use in search	Criteria	Criteria value
<input type="checkbox"/>	Status :	Current Prisoners ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name :	<input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex :	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age :	<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Affiliation :	A-Khor Monastery ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Death :	Between (dd/mm/yyyy) <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> and <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prison :	Chushul PSB DC ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	Origin :	Arura Village, Kardze County, Kardze "TAP" Sichuan Province ▾
<input type="button" value="Search"/>		

Image 3: Free Tibet's "Torture in Tibet" page (Free Tibet 2011c)

STOP TORTURE IN TIBET

TORTURE IN TIBET

[FREE TIBET](#) | [HOME](#) | [VIDEOS](#) | [SURVIVORS](#) | [TORTURE](#) | [TAKE ACTION](#)

DONATE

JOIN US

**TORTURE IN TIBET**

Torture is an everyday reality in Tibet.

Torture is used by China as a weapon against dissent, creating a climate of fear.

Torture must stop.

To shine a spotlight on the widespread use of torture in Tibet British actors lent their voices to Tibetan torture survivors who can not speak out for themselves. Watch [Dominic West](#), [Juliet Stevenson](#) and [David Threlkirk](#) and listen to [Alan Rickman](#).

[UPDATE](#) China bans evidence obtained by torture. [read more](#)

VIDEO TESTIMONIES

Watch survivors' testimonies read by British actors.

SURVIVORS

Read survivors' stories.

TORTURE

Learn about torture in Tibet. Try our quiz.

TAKE ACTION

Take action to stop torture.

JOIN NOW AND RECEIVE A CAMPAIGN POSTER

Image 4: Image on Australia Tibet Council's "Become a Voice for Tibet" page (ATC 2011a)





Image 5: Photograph from, “Tibetan-Peking opera 'Princess Wencheng' on Show.” Caption reads, “Drama still shows Tibetan people celebrated the arrival of Princess Wencheng, photo from China Tibet Information Center by Wang Fei, August 21” (Wu 2008).





Image 6: Photograph from, “Tibetans Celebrate Traditional Festival in Lhasa” (China Tibet News Web 2009). Caption reads, “Tibetan pilgrims add butter into Buddha lamps at the Sera Monastery during the Grand Summons Ceremony in the suburb of Lhasa, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, on March 10, 2009” (China Tibet News Web 2009).



Image 7: Photograph from, “Smiles in Yushu During the Spring Festival” (Niki 2011). Caption reads, “The smiling faces of Tibetan children in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province during the spring festival, photo from Xinhua” (Niki 2011).



Image 8: Screenshot of Upper half of Tibet Human Rights' "Focus" section, "The 59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (Tibet Human Rights 2011a).

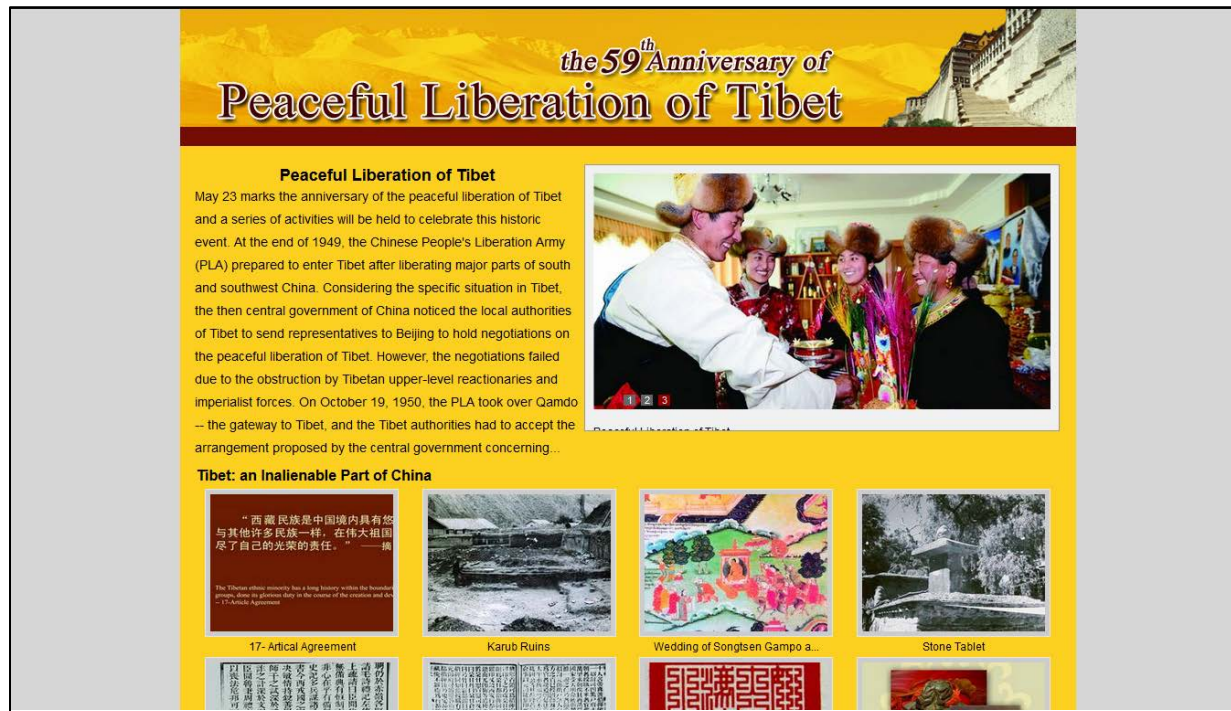


Image 9: Screenshot of lower half of Tibet Human Rights' "Focus" section, "The 59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (Tibet Human Rights 2011a).

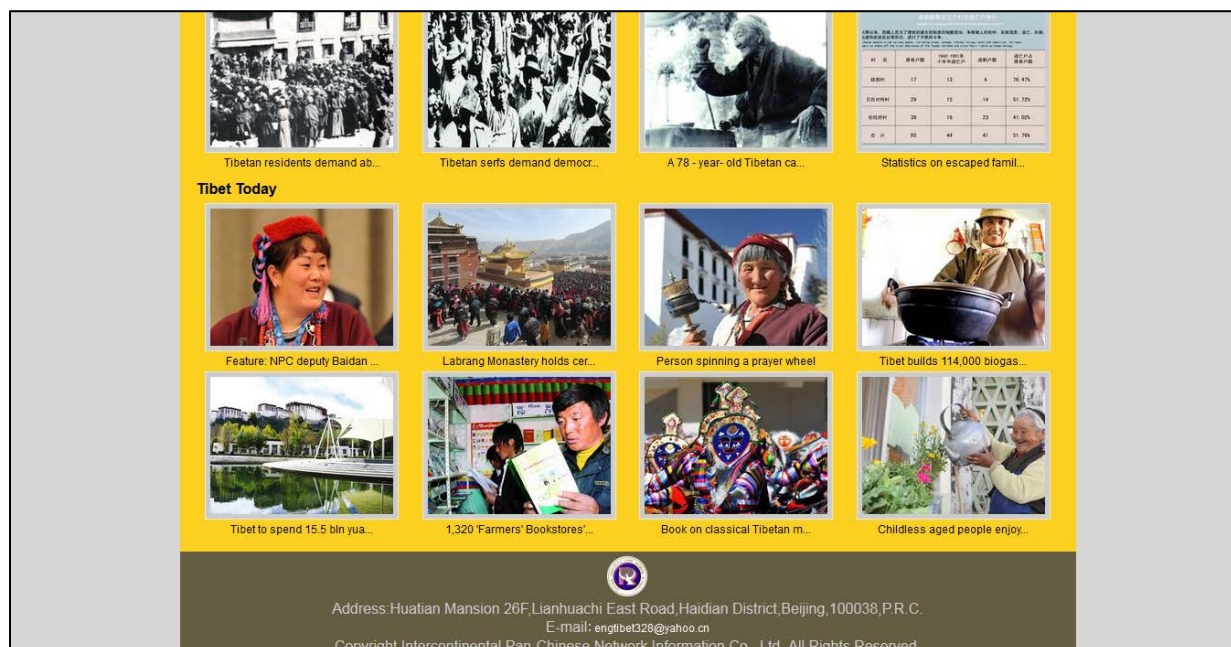




Image 10: Photograph from, “Colorful Sutra Streamers' Blessing” (Zhang 2011a). Caption reads, “A foreign tourist sits among the colorful sutra streamers at the foot of snow mountain” (Zhang 2011a).



## Propaganda Network as an Issue Network

While all CCP websites and their content fall under the purview of the Propaganda Department, they are not all websites created by the same entity. For example, the TibetCulture.net website represents the China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture (CAPDTC). This association is a government organized non-governmental organization (GONGO): a hybrid organization that claims to be an NGO with an independent legal status, but that is also under the authority of the government and acts in turn as a support mechanism for the government. This particular GONGO is registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the PRC and “is subject to their supervision, inspection and administration” (CAPDTC 2011a). The CAPDTC is led by the Member’s Representative Congress, which conducts elections for the Association’s Council, which conducts various administrative duties, plan programs, council elections, and implements the Congress’ resolutions (CAPDTC 2011a). The organization’s members are obtained through an interested person submitting a membership application and receiving approval by the Council, then paying membership dues. While CAPDTC is controlled by government agencies, they, like other GONGOs, such as the China Society for Human Rights, appear to have some limited autonomy with members involved in numerous activities, including social scientific and historical research.

Another layer of complexity in the network is the relationship between each node and the Central Propaganda Department. Communication and Political Science scholar, Anne-Marie Brady notes that the Central Propaganda Department plays either a direct “leadership” (*lingdao*) role over some government sectors and government offices (e.g. Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Civil Affairs, mass organizations and NGOs) or a “guiding” (*zhidao*) role over other types of organizations and government sectors (e.g. National Tourism Administration, social science research and Xinhua News Agency) (Brady 2008) (p9-19). Furthermore, these divisions do not always appear clear cut, as the Central Propaganda Department has the ability to appoint senior staff in *People’s Daily* and *Xinhua News* (Brady 2008, 16). In the propaganda network, there are nodes representing organizations and institutions in which the Central

Propaganda Department would either have a clear leadership (e.g. TibetCulture.net, *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online) *or* a guiding role (e.g. China Tibet Tourism Bureau, China Travel Guide).

## Notes on Citing Articles and Materials from Chinese Websites

Finding the original source of news articles on CCP issue network sites could sometimes be difficult. Often sites attributed sources to the website's in which they were found, not necessarily the article's author. At other times, content would be attributed to a simple URL rather than a site, such as [tibet.cn](http://tibet.cn). This URL could represent an article written for the China Tibet Information Center, or the later evolution of the site, China Tibet Online. As China Tibet Online and China Tibet Information Center were the most difficult in terms of determining how to cite these sources, the following citation choices were made to determine whether to attribute the work to the original site, or the new-and newly renamed-site. Therefore, the following choices were made regarding how to cite web content:

Sources were cited as China Tibet Information Center:

- When a website attributed content explicitly to China Tibet Information Center.
- When content was found on the older China Tibet Information Center website (that still retains this title) at <http://zt.tibet.cn/english>, even when a publication date for the content was not available.
- When a website attributed content to “[tibet.cn](http://tibet.cn)” or “[en.tibet.cn](http://en.tibet.cn)” *and* the publication date of the content was prior to July 8, 2010, the date of the name change to China Tibet Online.
- When content on [eng.tibet.cn](http://eng.tibet.cn) was accessed prior to July 8, 2010 and there was no date or name attributed to the content.

Sources were cited as China Tibet Online:

- When a website attributed content explicitly to China Tibet Online
- When a website attributed content to “[en.tibet.cn](http://en.tibet.cn)” or “[eng.tibet.cn](http://eng.tibet.cn)” *and* the publication date of the content was after July 8, 2010.
- When content on [eng.tibet.cn](http://eng.tibet.cn) was accessed after July 8, 2010 and there was no name or date attributed to the content.

Sources were cited as *People's Daily*:

- When the *People's Daily's* website, China Tibet Online, was, as a whole, cited.
- When an article's was cited as having derived from *People's Daily*, *People's Daily Online*, "people.com.cn", "people.com", or "chinatibetpeople.com.cn" and no other author was provided.
- When an article was found on the *People's Daily* website or the *People's Daily's* China Tibet Online website and no other author was provided.

Sources were cited as *Xinhua*:

- When no author was provided and the only source of an article cited was *Xinhua*, *Xinhuanet*, or by a URL representing the *Xinhua News*, such as "chinaview.cn".