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March 10th: The Tibetan Peoplehood Movement

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Abstract

Tibetans have been internationally displaced for over 60 years; following the failed Lhasa Uprising that began in the spring of 1959. Yet, despite being internationally displaced, Tibetans appear to construct and sustain their peoplehood movement around the annual commemoration of the events that took place in the Lhasa Uprising on March 10th. The paper shows how the March 10th protests have been institutionalized and used by Tibetan leaders and their followers to durably change their demands. This research demonstrates how Tibetan leaders frame their peoplehood movement through different mechanisms. In order to do this, the paper will build upon the writings on social movements to further understand the goals of the Tibetan community from the structural movements and processes of these social movements.

Keywords: Tibetan, social movements, March 10th, Dalai Lama, critical junctures, unrest, shock

March 10th: The Tibetan Peoplehood Movement

Tibetans have been under a constant state of marginalization—economically, socially, and legally—since the 1950s, either as a result of being internationally displaced and living within the host countries of Nepal and India or under the occupation of the People’s Republic of China in Tibet. The international displacement of Tibetans as a community and nation occurred as a result of the failed Lhasa Uprising in Tibet that began on March 10th, 1959, during which the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and other high-ranking Tibetan officials fled to India for asylum. Today, the People’s Republic of China exercises political control over what it calls the Autonomous Region of Tibet while incorporating other areas that were historically Tibet within the Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Sichuan. The majority of internationally displaced¹ Tibetans reside either in Nepal or India, with an estimated population of 20,000 Tibetans living in Nepal and an estimated population of 200,000 Tibetans in India. The Tibetan Government in Exile—The Central Tibetan Administration—also resides and governs from the city of Dharmasala, in Northern India; however, while acting as a government in exile, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)² is not officially recognized by India or any other nation. Though the Central Tibetan Administration has no legal jurisdiction over territory in Tibet or in exile, the government of India works with and allows the CTA to manage the internal affairs of Tibetans and their settlements within India (McConnell, 2016; Tibet Justice Center, 2016). The estimated population of Tibetans within the Autonomous Region of Tibet is around 3.6 million (See Map in Appendix A). The “Tibet Question” and the struggles and problems faced by the internationally

¹ The term internationally displaced or displaced will be used in this paper and not refugee because they are not recognized as refugees in these countries. Therefore I will not use the term refugee in this paper to refer to Tibetans who are living outside of Tibet. (Tibet Justice Center, 2016)

² The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is a parliamentary democracy consisting of a legislative parliament with members elected from the internationally displaced Tibetan population, a judiciary, and an executive body, the Kashag, in charge of seven governmental departments. The exile administration’s state-like functions include the organization of democratic elections, the provision of health and education services for Tibetans in India and Nepal, a ‘voluntary’ taxation system and the establishment of purported embassies abroad (McConnell, 2016, p. 4).

displaced Tibetan community have become increasingly more relevant, with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama currently being 87 years old³ and therefore leading to an increase in questions about what will happen to Tibetans as a community and nation when the Dalai lama, their spiritual and moral leader dies, and the possibility that the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is controlled or taken as a political prisoner by the Chinese, an external political power. These conditions draw analytical attention to the nature and resilience of the Tibetan social movement that is pressing the cause of Tibetan Peoplehood.

Today, the Central Tibetan Administration has only a small organizational power and is not recognized by any country or international organization as a government in exile or as any type of government institution. Therefore, with China being such a global power, the fate and the political possibilities of the Tibetan Peoplehood social movement are shaped within the context of that larger geopolitical reality. Given this larger geopolitical reality, this paper will explore the internal ways in which Tibetans sustain and bolster a robust sense of national cultural identity through the use of specific repertoires of action. The core argument is that despite their mass dispersion, Tibetans are able to sustain a sense of identity through the celebration of March 10th, a date that allows Tibetans to communicate their argument each year and change their demands over time.

The paper relates three stories. The first story shows how Tibetan identity is reconstituted over time through the use of repertoires. The second story is how these repertoires change over time, which can be seen in the timeline from 1959 to 2011 (See Appendix B). The paper shows the key shifts occurring in 1987 to 1989 and in 2008 (See Appendix A). The third story is how these repertoires allow for negotiations between national leadership and the masses over the framing and strategies for national mobilization. Social scientist Erving Goffman defines frames

³ The Dalai Lama was born on July 6, 1935.

as being a ““schemata of interpretations” that enable individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” various events and occurrences within their own life experiences”” (Drissel, 2008, p. 80). Drawing upon social movement literature and context analysis of the Dalai Lama’s speeches, these stories will be shown through movement framing, repertoire framing, and changes in tactics.

This will be placed in the context of social movement theory, showing in particular how the concept of critical junctures is useful to this understanding. Following this understanding of the literature, a background will then be laid out for one to better understand the placement of the Dalai Lama as a leader and as a symbol of Tibetan national identity. Following this background information, the date of March 10th will be looked at to show how March 10th commemorations become an occasion in which Tibetan identity is annually reaffirmed and reframed. Then this lays out these two strategies in conflict that the Tibetan movement draws on. The first strategy, used by the leaders, is based on diplomacy and international negotiations. The second strategy is based on grassroots mobilization. After this section on the two strategies in conflict within the Tibetan Peoplehood Movement, the next section will lay out the methodology of content analysis of the Dalai Lama’s speeches. The analysis focuses on the frequency with which the Dalai Lama used certain crucial terms. The terms that were chosen fall into three categories. One is political normative terms. Here the analysis focuses on the Dalai Lama’s use of the terms ‘autonomy’ and ‘independence’ in his speeches. The second category is the moral terminology of human rights. Here the analysis focuses on references to ‘violence’ and ‘peace’. The third category examines the Dalai Lama’s use of strategic and tactical terms to advance the cause of Tibetans. This analysis focuses on the terms ‘dialogue’ and ‘negotiation’.

The Research on Social Movements

The literature on social movements is vast, with many different viewpoints and theories. The three major theoretical approaches used today in studying collective action and social movements are structuralism, culturalism, and rationalism. Structuralists explain social movements as “outcomes of broad-change processes that shift resources and political opportunities” while culturalists point towards “disembodied discourses and shared meanings” (Aminzade et al., 2001, p. 127). Rationalists, although pointing towards “entrepreneurs in arranging the selective incentives that motivate individuals to participate, stress the configuration of individual costs and benefits as determining action and its results” (Aminzade et al., 2001, p. 127-128). This paper will employ aspects from each of these three approaches, events as structural, framing as cultural, and the input of followers as rationalist. These three along with the four temporal rhythms laid out below constitute the meso approach that will be discussed in the next section.

In their work, McAdam and Sewell discuss four temporal rhythms that occur in social movements. The two temporal rhythms that have dominated the study of social movements are long-term change processes and protest cycles. McAdam and Sewell make the argument “that by ignoring other temporal rhythms students of social movements and revolutions have painted an incomplete and overly deterministic portrait of popular contention” (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 100). Instead, they argue that this approach is incomplete because it ignores other temporalities that are crucial for the understanding of contentious politics, such as transformative events and cultural epochs of contention. Therefore without acknowledging other temporal dynamics, one is “left to conclude that long-term change processes lead inexorably to the kinds

of protest cycles or peak periods of mobilization we have come to equate with popular struggles” (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 101).

It is in her work on critical junctures and social movements that Della Porta references the edited work of McAdam, and Sewell (2001), and quotes their observation that “‘no narrative account of a social movement or a revolution can leave out events...But the study of social movements or revolutions—at least normally carried out by sociologists or political scientists—has rarely paid analytic attention to the contingent features and causal significance of particular contentious events such as these’” (della Porta, 2020, p. 561; McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 101). While a majority of research on social movements and their outcomes focus on external effects, Della Porta has suggested that one looks instead at the internal shaping of eventful protests “as capable of transforming relations within social movements and between movements and their contexts” (della Porta, 2020, p. 561). This focus on the momentous has led scholars to emphasize critical junctures.

Critical Junctures

The definition of a critical juncture is a single event of transformation during which an institution or movement undergoes a fundamental durable change with lasting consequences. These moments can last years, and the interruption they cause has profound implications on existing institutions by establishing the trajectory of the society from which it forms. The study and analysis of critical junctures are widely used in political science to explain eventful moments in the history of an institution or society. Furthermore, scholars argue that explaining these critical events is vital to understand how institutions develop (Kurian, p. 2022). Through neo-institutional approaches, critical junctures are often used to describe “times of deep change” at the macro level. “A critical juncture is defined as (1) a major episode of institutional

innovation, (2) occurring in distinct ways, (3) and generating an enduring legacy” (Collier & Munck, 2017, p. 2). In order for an event to be considered a critical juncture, changes must be reproduced and have a legacy. “The legacy is an enduring, self-perpetuating institutional inheritance of the critical juncture that persists and is stable for a substantial period” (della Porta, 2020, p. 565). If no legacy emerges from the event, it can not be considered a critical juncture. The legacy of an event is generated by mechanisms of production, while it is mechanisms of reproduction that create the legacy's meaning for the movement.

While the literature on critical junctures mainly is looked at through the lens of a macro perspective, with the “reflection on the importance of sudden shocks for institutional changes”, the micro perspective has “also been addressed within the tradition of collective behavior in which collective action is triggered by extraordinary events that mobilize existing social groups” (della Porta, 2020, p. 560). Della Porta argues and develops in her work a meso-level perspective, in that “some eventful protests trigger critical junctures, producing abrupt changes which develop contingently and become path dependent. While routinized protests proliferate in normal times, some protests—or moments of protest—act as exogenous shocks, catalyzing intense and massive waves of protest” (della Porta, 2020, p. 559). In this paper, I use the concept of critical junctures to examine the question of how the March 10th moment has been institutionalized and used by leaders and followers in the Tibetan Peoplehood movement to durably change Tibetan protests or demands. The question will be answered by looking at the mechanisms of mobilization through the means of framing, tactics, and organization mechanisms as well as shifts in these mechanisms over time, following critical transformation movements. To decide if these mechanisms are successful the moments will be considered further to see how these mechanisms have affected the trajectory of the movement.

This topic of research and argument is meaningful because social movement literature has been focusing on the micro and macro approaches of social movements while the work of della Porta focuses on social movements as critical junctures through a meso-perspective. It is this meso-perspective that can be seen in the case of the March 10th Tibetan social movement. The current need in the study of social movements is not the implementation of new methodologies but the exploration of different movements, and aspects of contentious politics that have not been sufficiently studied by Western social movement scholars. The new approach that has been put forth by della Porta is used in this paper as a basis for exploring the Tibetan Peoplehood movement and to show that these momentous events create their own consequences. Thus, the selection of which moments matter is itself an act of power and agency by the foot soldiers in any social movement.

The Lhasa Uprising of March 10, 1959, can be understood as a critical juncture in the formation of the Tibetan Peoplehood movement. Through its annual commemorations, it has become a repertoire for mobilization through which subsequent shocks are interpreted and set. While the case for the yearly protests on March 10th has become routinized and proliferated into normal times, the events of the 1987 to 1989 unrest in the Autonomous Region of Tibet and the 2008 unrest or uprising, which took place in all three historical provinces of Tibet (see Appendix A.) as well as outside of Tibet during the Beijing Summer Olympic Torch Relay, have acted as shocks, catalyzing intense and massive waves of protest. In the case of the 1989 protests, the Tenth Panchen Lama⁴ died in January of that year, the 1989 protests were taking place within

⁴ The Panchen Lama is the second most revered religious leader in Tibetan Buddhism, behind the Dalai Lama. The Panchen Lama also plays the important role of recognizing the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, who then, in turn, finds the reincarnated Panchen Lama. This tradition has endured for centuries. The current Eleventh Panchen Lama at the age of six was abducted by the Chinese government and has not been seen since. Shortly after, the Chinese government put forward their own candidate claiming him to be the “real” Eleventh Panchen, and thereby installing him as the Eleventh Panchen Lama (Where Is the Panchen Lama?, n.d.).

China including the Tiananmen Square protests and massacre, and the Dalai Lama was in the process of visiting the United States and establishing the “Five-Point Peace Plan.” These events, as well as the Dalai Lama’s address in Strasbourg, France, catalyzed intense and massive waves of protests that durably changed the tactics and mechanisms used by the Tibetan leaders⁵ and followers (See Appendix B, for a timeline of these events in the Tibetan Peoplehood movement).

In the case of the 2008 unrest, these moments of protests acted as shaping forces that led to a decline in the Tibetan Peoplehood movement's successful strategies as well as the stepping down of the Dalai Lama from his political role in the Tibetan government. The demonstrations and riots in March 2008 were the largest anti-Chinese protests in Tibet since the 1987-1989 unrest when martial law was imposed for a year. These protests took place in all regions of the Tibetan plateau, including many areas outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region, justifying its characterization as a Tibetan national uprising. The purpose of these protests was to remember the 49th anniversary of the March 10th Tibetan Uprising against Chinese rule, as well as to protest against the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. The March 2008 Tibetan unrest was much more widespread than the previous one in 1987-1989 in Tibet, spanning all three provinces of historical Tibet (See Appendix A). The 2008 protests also saw greater participation and involvement of different social classes and people, including lay people, farmers, nomads, and students. Protests in the form of self-immolations became more widespread after the Tibetan unrest of 2008, especially in Eastern Tibet and has become a repertoire that defines the Tibetan peoplehood movement today (Angmo, 2019, p. 6).

Background on the Role of the Dalai Lama

Dalai Lama is an honorary title that means Ocean of Wisdom and has been given to the prominent Buddhist reincarnation lineage of the Dalai Lama, the protector of Tibet. It was in

⁵ The Dalai Lama is often seen as the sole Tibetan leader. In fact there is a cadre of leaders who work with him.

1578, when Mongolian leaders bestowed this title upon the Third Dalai Lama. This title is a combination of the Mongolian word for ocean, Dalai, which signifies the profound knowledge of the Buddhist leader, and the Tibetan word lama, which means religious teacher. In addition to their religious roles, the Dalai Lama has secular powers over the Tibetan state as the head of government. This was the case until 2011, when the Fourteenth Dalai Lama relinquished his political power in order to establish a separation between the government and religion. The men who have bestowed this title are considered manifestations of the previous Dalai Lama, who has passed away, and the Buddha of compassion and patron of Tibet, Chenrezig (Wylie, 2005).

As of today, there have been fourteen Dalai Lamas. After the death of the reigning Dalai Lama, a group of Lamas under the direction of the Panchen Lama, the second most important religious leader to Buddhist Tibetans, next to the Dalai Lama, bear the responsibility of finding the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama (*Where Is the Panchen Lama?*, n.d.).

March 10th: a Critical Juncture in Forming the Peoplehood Movement

The March 10th Uprising, or as it is otherwise known, the Lhasa Uprising, took place from March 10, 1959, to March 23, 1959, in Lhasa, the Capital of Tibet. The cause of the uprising was fears by Tibetans of an attempted kidnapping of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama by the Chinese government. However, it was in 1949 when China invaded Tibet. In the years after the invasion, tens of thousands of lay and monastic Tibetans engaged in battles against Chinese troops with the support of the CIA. By 1959, tensions between Tibetans and the Chinese peaked, and there were fears that the Chinese might abduct the Dalai Lama on March 10 upon his arrival at the Chinese Military Headquarters that day (Angmo, 2019). While initially starting as a peaceful demonstration against the Fourteenth Dalai Lama going to the Chinese Military headquarters in front of Norbuling, the Dalai Lama's summer palace, it later turned towards

violent anti-Chinese rhetoric and a full-out uprising in Lhasa against the Chinese and their established rule over Tibet.

During the course of the protests, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama made no announcement or expressed a direct voice of disapproval towards the protesters, instead choosing to stay silent in hopes that no comment by him would lead to the protesters stopping over the course of time (Angmo, 2019). However, the act of not commenting on the event by the Dalai Lama gave grounds for the Chinese to see these actions of the Dalai Lama as silent support for the protests that were turning into anti-Chinese protests and an uprising.

Moreover, the Chinese saw these actions by Tibetans as them perceiving the Chinese as weak and, therefore, a successful uprising possible. As a result, the Chinese increased their military presence and force in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama became seen as a direct threat to Chinese rule and power in and over Tibet. It was on March 17 that the Chinese military began aiming artillery at the palace of the Dalai Lama. As a result of this action by the Chinese government the Dalai Lama was forced to flee into exile to India on March 17, 1959, with 80,000 Tibetans shortly following suit. On March 23, 1959, the Chinese defeated the attempted uprising by Tibetans and established repressive measures against Tibetans, executing thousands of Tibetans and banning all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism (Goldstein, 2019; Nowak, 1984, p. 34).

March 10, 1959, was a concentrated transformation that is now seen as a symbol for the entire Tibetan social movement. Following this historical moment, Tibetans around the world began to take part in a yearly ceremony to remember this occasion. This moment in Tibetan history, in which the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was a key actor, has become a metaphor for Tibetan nationhood. It is through this annual remembrance of the Lhasa Uprising, especially the protests

that took place on March 10th, that the events of that period for Tibetans have become the template for sustaining their meaningful yearly ritual. (Nowak, 1984, p. 33).

The annual ceremonies on March 10th by Tibetans, in essence, are a reenactment of the events that took place in Lhasa, Tibet, at the end of March 1959. There are displays of the Tibetan flag and photographs of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Tibetans gather in a public location wearing the Tibetan national dress, and sing the national anthem. Speeches are made, and demonstrations take place. Furthermore, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and other leading officials in the Central Tibetan Administration deliver annual public addresses in Dharamsala, India⁶. These speeches are followed by Tibetans marching from one significant location to another significant location in the city that they are in (Nowak, 1984, p. 34). For example, in New York City on March 10, 2017, Tibetans and others in support of the cause for a free Tibet marched from in front of the United Nations Headquarters to the Chinese Consulate. March 10, 1959 has become a date that symbolizes the whole Tibetan peoplehood movement and has had profound effects and catalyzed change. The critical juncture of March 10th, in this way and other ways, showcases similarities to Bastille Day in France⁷. Both events marked a massive shift and

⁶ The Central Tibetan Administration's headquarters is in Dharamsala and is treated and seen as the Tibetan Capital-in-exile.

⁷ "In the histories of movements, some events are especially transformative, catalyzing attention, and then outrage and resistance. Concentrated transformations—such as the taking of the Bastille for the French Revolution or the Montgomery Bus Boycott for the American Civil Rights movement—have been highlighted especially in those highly visible moments that end up symbolizing entire social movements" (della Porta, 2020, p. 561; McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 101). This is the case with the Lhasa Uprising, which has ended up symbolizing the social movement of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, an annual day of protests and remembrance of the events that took place on March 10th, 1959.

The taking of the Bastille marked an intervention by the everyday people of Paris, France, into the revolution, and "was recognized at the time as a major turning point and July 14th, the day the Bastille was taken, is still the French national holiday" (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 103). However, the National Assembly's initial response to the taking of the Bastille was not joy but despair; its members feared that Paris would dissolve into violence which they thought would play into the hands of the king. However, when it became clear that the taking of the Bastille was a victory for the National Assembly and their struggle with the king, its members began to shift their narrative on the capturing of the Bastille. In a few days, the National Assembly began claiming that the taking of the Bastille was an act of the people's sovereignty and thus legitimized the shift of power from the king to the National Assembly, which had taken place from July 14th to the 17th (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 105). This thus acts as a transformative event.

transformation. Much like the taking of the Bastille, March 10th, the start of the Lhasa Uprising, can be considered a transformative event. Transformative events are seen as “significantly disruptive, altering, or violating the taken-for-granted assumptions governing routine political and social relations” (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 110). As a result, these events serve to increase a sense of uncertainty and therefore fuel an escalation in the “mobilization of emotion by all parties to the conflict.” This, in turn, “heightens fear and anger on the part of movement opponents, while...hope and anger among insurgents” (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 110). With the Lhasa Uprising, the increase in uncertainty felt by Tibetans regarding the Dalai Lama’s safety fueled an escalation in the mobilization of emotion for both Tibetan individuals and the Chinese government. Furthermore, like July 14th, the day that the Bastille was taken, March 10th has become a national holiday for Tibetans to mark a transformative event where everyday people asserted their power over the movement as a whole, and the leaders had to follow.

Two Strategies in Conflict

Two key strategies helped to build Tibetan leverage over China in the late 1980s and 1990s and have continued to be used in some form until today. The first is the Tibetan leadership’s internationalization of the Tibet issue in the 1980s by aligning Tibet with Western countries, especially the United States. This strategy relied on the logic that Western democracies would pressure the Chinese government to negotiate with the Dalai Lama. Key actors in this strategy were the small but vocal network of Tibet advocacy groups in the West such as the International Campaign for Tibet and the Tibet Justice Center, legal experts, and Tibetan Americans who had immigrated to the United States in the 1980s and 1990s (Dorjee, 2019, p. 39; Drissel, 2008, p. 83). The second strategy is a nonviolent grassroots mobilization, both within and outside of Tibet, with grassroots organizations such as Students for a Free Tibet, and

the Tibetan Youth Congress starting to form and mobilize supporters (Dorjee, 2019, p. 39; Drissel, 2008, p. 83). It is this second strategy that has contributed the most to the Dalai Lama's leverage over China.

In the two decades prior to 1986 and 1987, Tibetan leadership in Dharamsala focused on institution-building, cultural preservation, and self-strengthening initiatives by consolidating its institutions and making its international displacement settlements in India self-sufficient (Dorjee, 2019; Tibet Justice Center, 2016). However, after 1987, the very start of the shock of the 1987 to 1989 Tibetan unrest, instead of pursuing an avenue through the United Nations, which previously was attempted in the 1960s and 70s, Tibetan leaders decided to leverage the citizens and governments of Western democratic countries, particularly the United States, to pressure China into negotiations or concessions. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, whose trips outside of India after his displacement were extremely rare, embarked on a series of international trips with the aim of building political support for the Tibetan movement. Between 1986 and 1999, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama made over 60 international trips. Before 1985, the Dalai Lama barely visited one country per year. However, between 1986 and 1999, the Dalai Lama visited an average of ten countries per year (Dorjee, 2019, p. 40-41). The sharp rise in the number of international trips shows the degree to which the Dalai Lama's activities reflected the new strategy. The Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leadership, "having realized in the mid-1980s that foreign governments had no strategic or political interest in raising the Tibet issue, decided instead to pressurize them by mobilizing popular support among their constituents" (Robert Barnett, 2001). On top of this increase in international trips by the Dalai Lama, Tibetan leadership made the concession of no longer seeking full Tibetan independence. This compromise was first announced in a 1988 address by the Dalai Lama in Strasbourg, France and was alluded to earlier in the Dalai Lama's

1987 “Five-Point Peace Plan”. In the Strasbourg address the Dalai Lama stated that he and his cabinet thought that in order to resolve the issue of Tibet “The whole of Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people for the common good and the protection of themselves and their environment, in association with the People's Republic of China” (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2023). The reason for this concession, Tibetan leadership stated, was that in 1979 Deng Xiaoping⁸ stated that “except for the independence of Tibet, all other questions can be negotiated” (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1994). This concession, which was passed by the Central Tibetan Administration’s parliament, started the fracturing of the unity of purpose between the two strategies.

While the second strategy, a nonviolent, grassroots mobilization, although sometimes confrontational and violent⁹, has raised the Tibetan leadership’s bargaining power in negotiating with China, Tibetan leadership has largely abstained from using this strategy of pressuring China. This was definitely the case in the 1990s when Tibetan grassroots organizations established campaigns against multinational institutions seeking to invest in China. In 1999, when China was approved for a World Bank loan of \$160 million to resettle 58,000 Chinese farmers into Eastern Tibet. “Vocal opposition from Tibet advocacy groups prompted the bank to commission an independent review of the project, which found that the bank’s staff had violated seven out of ten operational directives to get the loan approved...Following several months of continuous protest rallies and a string of media stories that slammed the bank for facilitating China’s oppression in Tibet, the contentious loan was finally canceled, causing China a

⁸ Deng Xiaoping was the paramount leader of the People's Republic of China from 1978 to 1989, the paramount leader is an informal term for the most important political figure in China.

⁹ Violent, in terms of committing violence against oneself through the act of self-immolation. This type of protest could therefore be seen as violent non-violence.

devastating loss of face” (Dorjee, 2019, p. 43). However, despite these successes as a result of the second strategy, the only time that the Dalai Lama openly decided to mobilize Tibetans, especially those within Tibet, was for the protection of wildlife.

The 2006 Call for the Protection of Wildlife

The only time that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama called Tibetan people to actively mobilize and participate in a boycott was in a January 2006 speech where he made a public call for the protection of wildlife. In this speech, the Dalai Lama asked Tibetan pilgrims who came to hear his teachings to stop wearing fur-trimmed clothing, stating, “When you go back to your respective places, remember what I said earlier and never use, sell, or buy wild animals, their products, or derivatives” (Dorjee, 2019, p. 47). This condemnation by the Dalai Lama quickly traveled to and throughout Tibet via word-of-mouth, and Tibetan social media, igniting a widespread campaign in Tibet to publicly burn animal pelts, with one man documented to have burned his own store where he would previously sell endangered animal pelts¹⁰. Within one month, an estimate of over \$75 million worth of animal pelts had been burnt in Eastern Tibet alone (Dorjee, 2019, p. 48; Topgyal, 2013). Upon the call from the Dalai Lama, Tibetans mobilized and generated a social stigma within the Tibetan community towards wearing any animal fur or skin. This moment speaks volumes of the Dalai Lama’s unparalleled ability to mobilize Tibetans and Tibetan’s vast loyalty to him. Moreover, this event showcases that the Dalai Lama has the ability, if he so chooses, to mobilize Tibetans against Chinese rule over the Tibetan plateau. However, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has never used this moral capital and directly called on Tibetans to mobilize or act in any form of national noncompliance or civil

¹⁰ A majority of Tibetans make a living either by working in agriculture or in the making and selling of handicrafts.

disobedience to Chinese rule; instead, he has chosen to use the strategy of diplomatic negotiations with the Chinese government.

Methodology

In order to analyze how Tibetan leadership, caught between the power of China on the one hand, and the resilience of the mobilized masses on the other, framed the Tibetan cause and social movement, a data set was created with all the Dalai Lama's Tibetan National Uprising Day speeches from 1961 to 2011. Content analysis is then used to pick out crucial terms and elements of the ways in which identity has been reconstructed through repertoires of language and action. These repertoires have changed over time and have allowed for negotiations between leadership and the masses through the use of the March 10th speeches. These speeches were collected from the Central Tibetan Administration's website under the webpage that contained all statements made by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2023). Using the online resource Voyant Tools, all 51 speeches by the Dalai Lama were put in as separate documents, which allowed for a temporal analysis of the top terms used by the Dalai Lama, and a comparison between the yearly speeches and the rhetoric used within them (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023f). From the original data set, the 51 documents were then broken down into groups of ten that roughly estimated the period of one decade, 1961 to 1969, 1970 to 1979, 1980 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and 2000 to 2011¹¹ (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2023e). Additionally, separate sets were made when a selected term for analysis on the original data set led to a result that called for further analysis at a more micro level. This was the case for Figure 1, which necessitated the creation of Figure 2 (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023h). Terms were selected to be looked at based on the different shifts in the Tibetan Peoplehood movement and

¹¹ The Dalai Lama started delivering speeches on March 10th, 1961, the second anniversary of the Lhasa Uprising and stopped after 2011 when he stepped down from his political role in the Central Tibetan Administration.

the shocks of the social movement. The terms that were chosen fall into three categories. One is political normative terms. Here the analysis focuses on the Dalai Lama's use of the terms; 'autonomy' and 'independence' in his speeches. The second category is the moral terminology of human rights. Here the analysis focuses on references to 'violence' and 'peace.' The third category examines the Dalai Lama's use of strategic and tactical terms to advance the cause of Tibetans. This analysis focuses on the terms 'dialogue' and 'negotiation.'

Results

While this is only a small degree of the information and data that can be looked at and analyzed, the small portion of terms chosen showcase dynamic relationships and give a better sense of the Tibetan peoplehood movement. Due to the Dalai Lama's speeches being translated into English from Tibetan there is the possibility of information being lost or changed in translation. The terms that were chosen fall into three categories. The first category examines the Dalai Lama's use of strategic and tactical terms to advance the cause of Tibetans. This analysis focuses on the terms 'dialogue' and 'negotiation'. The second category is political normative terms. Here the analysis focuses on the Dalai Lama's use of the terms; 'autonomy' and 'independence' in his speeches. The third category is the moral terminology of human rights. Here the analysis focuses on references to 'violence' and 'peace'.

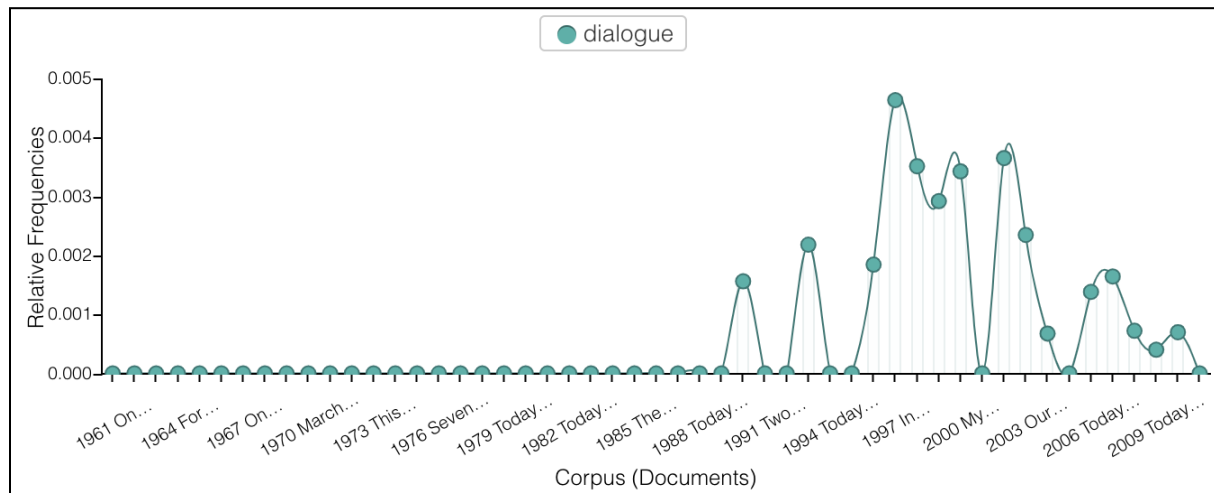
The terms 'dialogue' and 'negotiations', seen in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 2.1 on the separate pages below, were selected because, while not the words used most often by the Dalai Lama in his March 10th speeches, both were used at a relatively high frequency at a relatively equal amount and were tactical terms used to advance the cause of Tibetans while showcasing a shift in the framing of the movement. These terms were chosen under the hypothesis that a change in tactics would happen to some degree after the mass protests of the 1987 to 1989

Tibetan unrest. Moreover, the tactic of aligning with Western democratic countries in order to have them put pressure on China to negotiate took form in 1986 and 1987, and therefore, a change in the frequency of use of these terms in the Dalai Lama's speech should be present if his words are truly reflective of the Tibetan peoplehood movement. The first use of the term 'dialogue' by the Dalai Lama in one of his March 10th speeches was in 1990. Before that year, there was no reference to the term 'dialogue'; however, in 1989, the term 'negotiations' was used for the first time. The usage of these terms by the Dalai Lama in his March 10th speeches can be seen as a positive correlation, with the use of the term 'negotiations' having a higher relative frequency in the 1990s. Overall, the word 'dialogue' was used 51 times from 1961 to 2011, while the term 'negotiations' was used 47 times.

As Figure 1 shows the Dalai Lama began to use the term 'dialogue' in 1987, the year that the 1987 to 1989 unrest began to gain momentum. This indicates his shift in strategy. This repeated call for negotiations and dialogue in the years between 1994 and 2000 corresponds with the time period of when Tibetan grassroots organizations began to start campaigns against multinational corporations that were looking to invest in China (Dorjee, 2019, p. 43). Thus, further showcasing the second strategy's ability of creating leverage for the Tibetan leadership, and that at times it was used to push forward the first strategy of diplomatic negotiations.

Figure 1

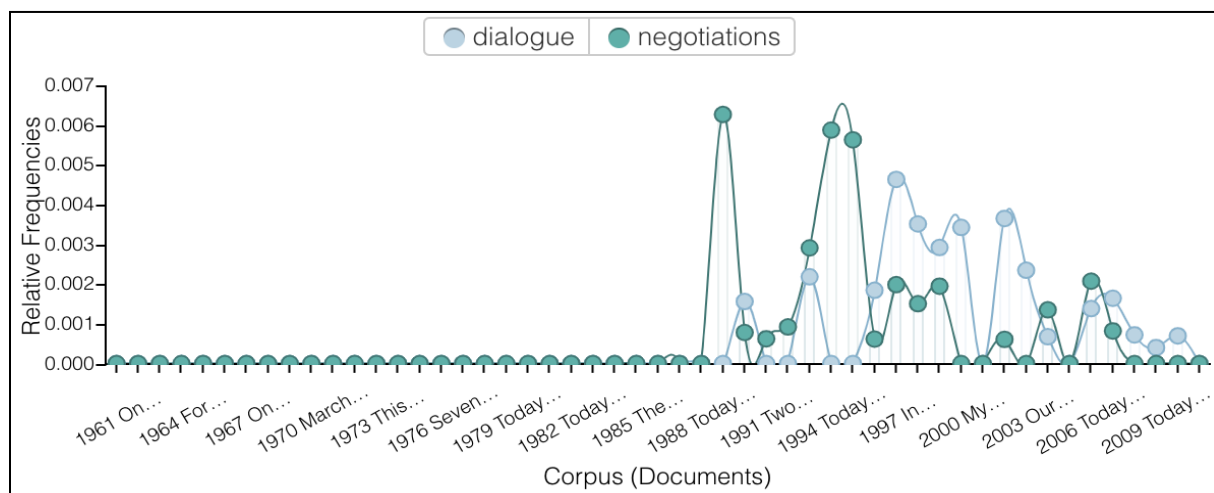
Relative Frequencies of the Term Dialogue in All of the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023g)

Figure 2

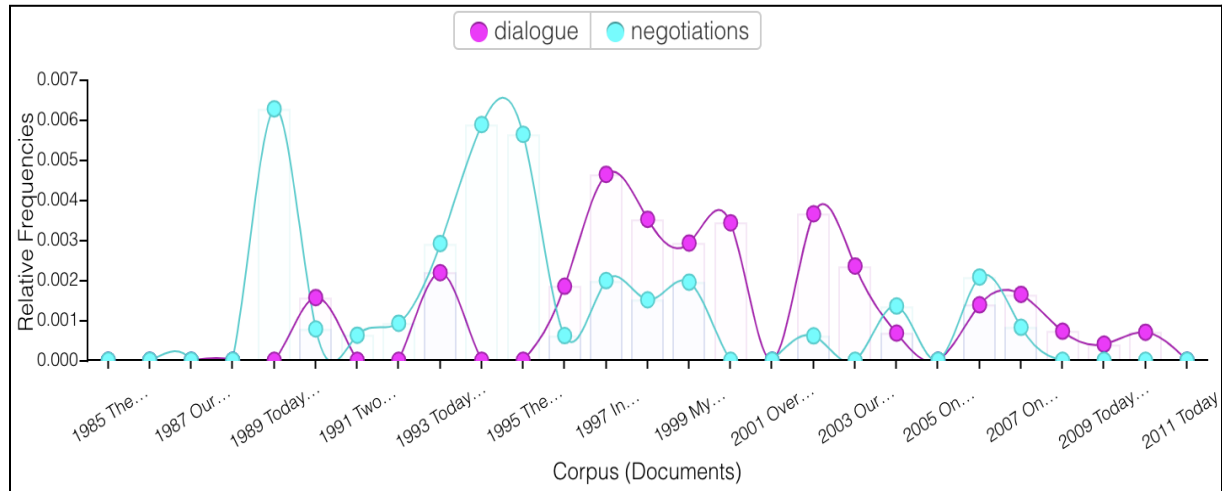
Relative Frequencies of the Terms Dialogue and Negotiations in All of the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023h)

Figure 2.1

Relative Frequencies of the Term Dialogues and Negotiations in the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches from 1985 to 2011



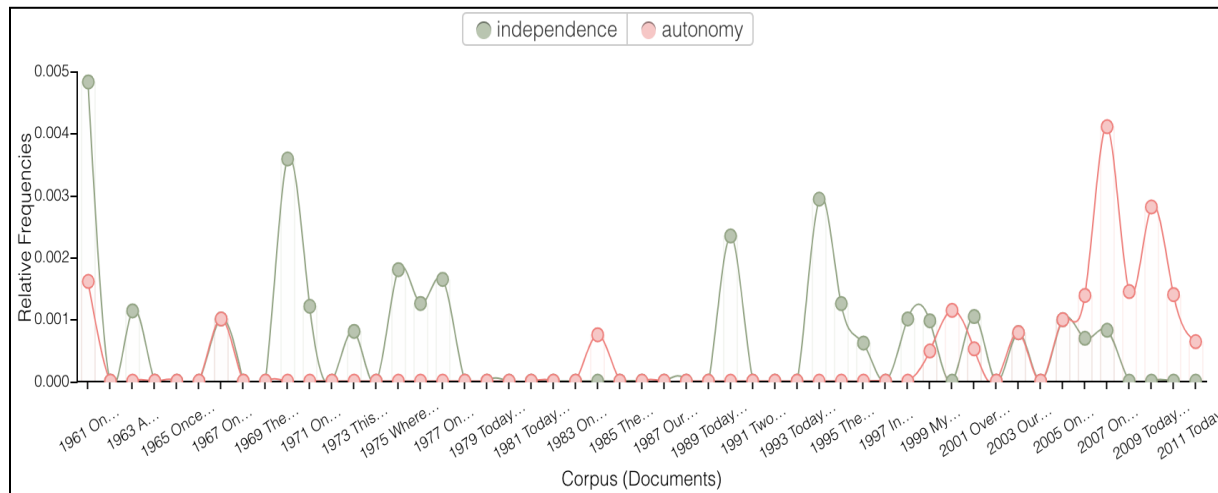
Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023i)

Figure 3 and Figure 3.1, on the separate page below, showcase the relative frequencies of the use of the political normative terms ‘independence’ and ‘autonomy’ in all of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama’s March 10th speeches. The first speech was in 1961, and the last was in 2011. The terms ‘independence’ and ‘autonomy’ were chosen because, in 1987, the Dalai Lama put forth his Middle-Way Approach that proposed Tibet having a genuine transfer of autonomy instead of Tibetan independence. Both the term ‘independence’ and ‘autonomy’ were used by the Dalai Lama in his first March 10th speech for the second anniversary of the Lhasa Uprising. However, the relative frequency of the term ‘independence’ in this speech is higher than the relative frequency of ‘autonomy’, thus illustrating that the original framing of the Tibetan Peoplehood Movement was one of self-determination, and independence, not autonomy. Overall, the use of the term ‘independence’ is higher than that of ‘autonomy’. The terms ‘independence’ and ‘autonomy’ have only had the same relative frequency three times: in 1967, both terms had a relative frequency of .001; in 2003, with a relative frequency of .0007; and in 2005, with a relative frequency of .00099. After 1967 and before 1998, the term ‘autonomy’ was not seen in the Dalai Lama’s speeches except for one time in 1984. After 1998, the use of the term ‘autonomy’ increased and had a relatively similar relative frequency to ‘independence’ until 2005, when the relative frequencies of the term ‘autonomy’ increased significantly. After the year 2007, the term ‘independence’ was no longer in use by the Dalai Lama in his March 10th speeches. This shows us that there was a significant shift in the framing and tactics used by the leadership of the Tibetan Peoplehood Movement, from one that demanded full independence to now making a concession of wanting to obtain genuine autonomy. This is specifically seen as the case when the term ‘autonomy’ was only used once during the years of 1967 and 1998, and that one time in 1984 showed “a clear indication that the administration of Tibet [under Chinese

control] is in the hands of an alien people who do not know the Tibetan language. The so-called freedom of religious worship and national autonomy through impressive slogans is simply empty talk” (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1984). From 1961 to 2011, the word ‘autonomy’ was used 29 times, and the word ‘independence’ was used 36 times.

Figure 3

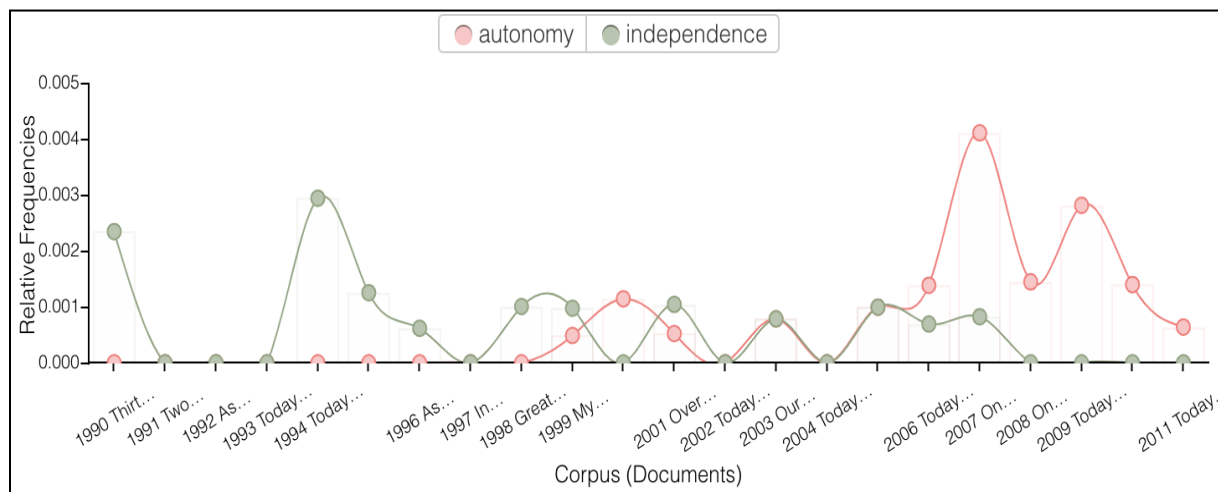
Relative Frequencies of the Terms Independence and Autonomy in All of the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023j)

Figure 3.1

Relative Frequencies of the Terms Independence and Autonomy in the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches from 1990 to 2011



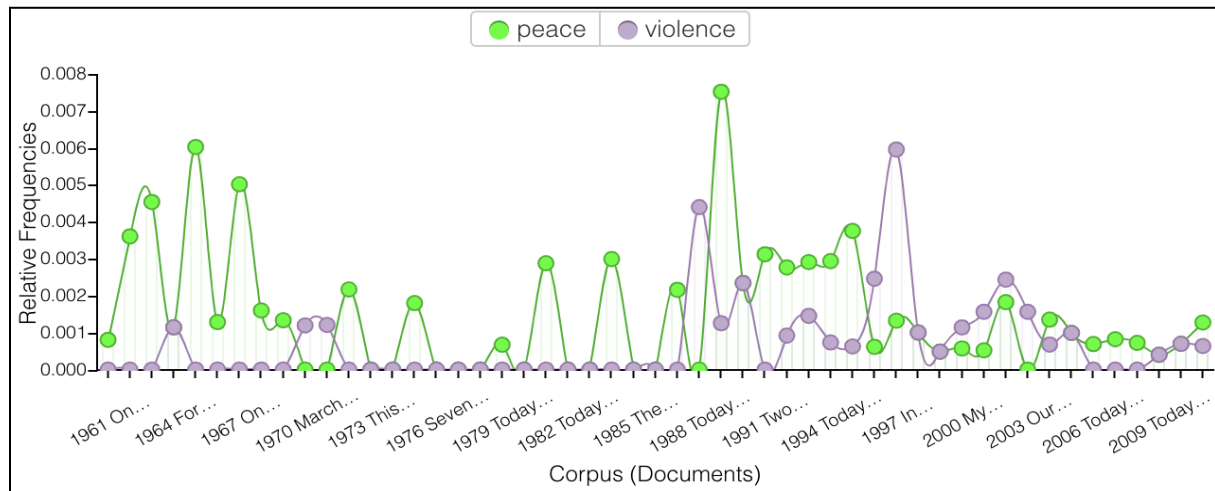
Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023k)

Figures 4, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 on the separate pages below depict the relative frequencies of the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’, which are moral terminology of human rights, in the Dalai Lama’s March 10th speeches. For the term ‘violence’, stop words were established for the terms non-violence, non- violence, nonviolence, and the phrase non violence without the hyphen. The words peace and violence were chosen for analysis on the hypothesis that the relative frequency of these terms would increase during times of massive protests or change. It was also theorized that both the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ would have similar relative frequencies each year because calls for peace would only take place when violence is also present. From 1961 till 2011, the term ‘peace’ was used by the Dalai Lama 88 times, while ‘violence’ was only present 48 times. The first use of the term ‘violence’ by the Dalai Lama in a March 10th speech was in 1964, while the first use of the word ‘peace’ in a March 10th speech was in 1961. The terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ only had the same relative frequencies in the same year seven times¹². In 1964, both had a relative frequency of .00114; in 1990, both had a relative frequency of .0023; in 1998, both had a relative frequency of .0010; in 1999, both had a relative frequency of .000486; in 2005, both had a relative frequency of .000992; in 2009, both terms had a relative frequency of .0004; and in 2010, both had a relative frequency of .00069. From 1986 to 1990, the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ had an inverse relationship. The drastic increase in the relative frequency of the term ‘violence’ in 1989 showcases the shift in how the Tibetan Peoplehood movement has been framed from one of self-determination to one of human rights in regards to the violations and suppression that Tibetans have been facing from the Chinese government.

¹² This is not accounting for the times when both terms were not present in a speech.

Figure 4

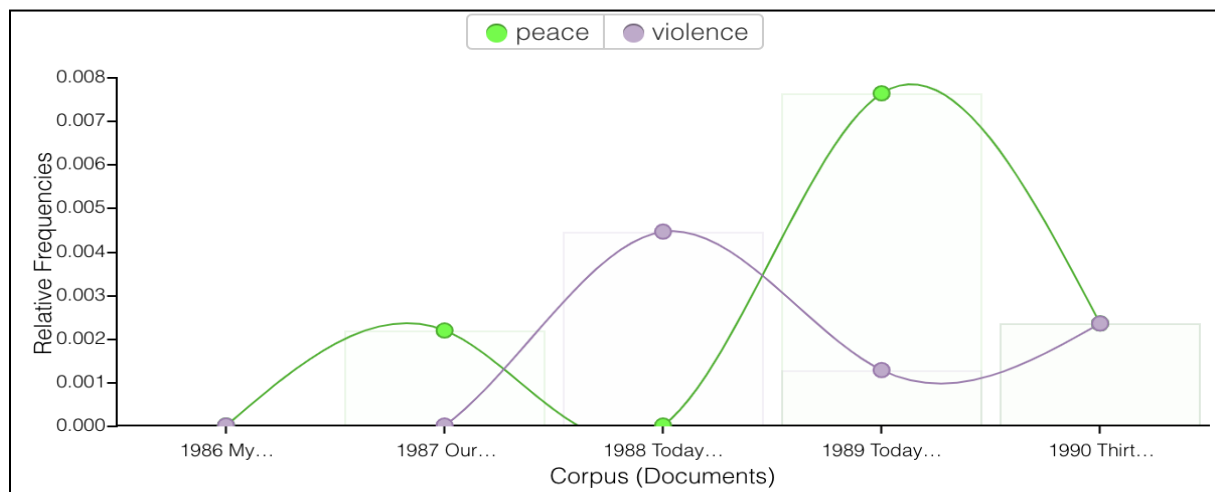
Relative Frequencies of the Terms Peace and Violence in All of the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023l)

Figure 4.1

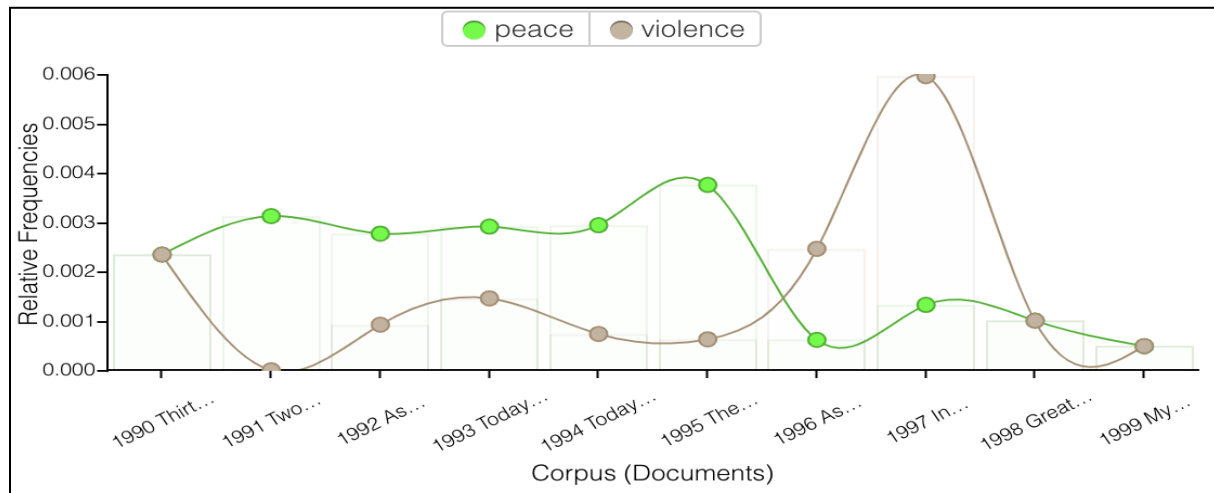
Relative Frequencies of the Terms Peace and Violence in the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches from 1986 to 1990



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023m)

Figure 4.2

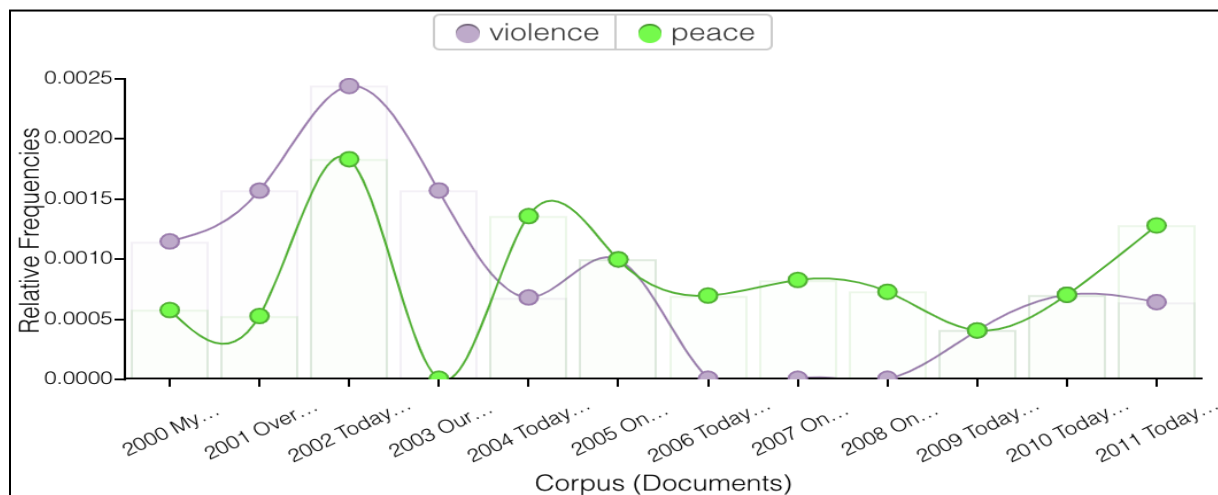
Relative Frequencies of the Terms Peace and Violence in the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches from 1990 to 1999



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023n)

Figure 4.3

Relative Frequencies of the Terms Peace and Violence in the Dalai Lama's March 10th Speeches from 2000 to 2011



Note. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2023o)

Analysis

Repertoires of contention are the “historically changing array of means available to a given population for making contentious political claims” (Sewell, 2001, p. 63). The routines composing these repertoires are “claim-making routines” that vary based on time and place and draw upon a history of past struggles (Tilly, 2006, p. 35). An example of some repertoires might be protest marches, hunger strikes, and sit-ins. The 51 March 10th speeches made by the Dalai Lama showcase the shifts in the different repertoires, framing, and strategies used by the leaders in the Tibetan peoplehood movement, as well as the acknowledgment of the feelings and actions of the Tibetan people to these strategies as well as their actions within the movement itself on both the micro, macro and meso-level. The fact that the first use of the terms ‘dialogue’ and ‘negotiations’ was in 1989 and 1990 showcases a prominent shift in the Tibetan peoplehood movement or at least a shift in the framing of the Tibetan issue by the Dalai Lama around that time. This shift can be seen as implementing the first strategy of calling on Western democracies to pressure the Chinese government to negotiate with the Dalai Lama or to praise those Western countries that have already done so. However, it is important to note that this shift, while following the first strategy of the Tibetan peoplehood movement of pursuing a dialogue with China, also corresponded with the rise in mobilization and protests that took place during the 1987 to 1989 Tibetan unrest and elsewhere in China, which put the Chinese government under scrutiny and therefore giving the Tibetan leadership leverage over China. Moreover, the repeated calls for negotiations and dialogue in the years between 1994 and 2000 corresponds with the time period of when Tibetan grassroots organizations began to start campaigns against multinational corporations that were looking to invest in China (Dorjee, 2019, p. 43). Thus,

further showcasing the second strategy's ability of creating leverage for the Tibetan leadership, and that at times it was used to push forward the first strategy of diplomatic negotiations.

The relative frequencies of the terms 'dialogue' and 'negotiations' can be seen rapidly declining in the early 2000s. This trend in the data showcases a normalization of popular pressure in the Tibetan peoplehood movement. After the eventful shock of the 1987 to 1989 Tibetan Unrest, the leverage that the Tibetan government in exile had over the Chinese government began to dissipate. This analysis is further supported by a statement by the Dalai Lama in his 1994 March 10th speech. In this speech, when addressing the overall response of Tibetans and China to his Middle-Way Approach, the Dalai Lama stated, "I must now recognise that my approach has failed to produce any progress either for substantive negotiations or in contributing to the overall improvement of the situation in Tibet" and that, "despite the growing support of the international community, the Chinese government has not responded constructively" (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1994).

However, it was in 2002 that Beijing reached out to Tibetan leadership in hopes of establishing a line of dialogue. Following 2002, Tibetan leadership and the Chinese government began to have a series of talks, this line of dialogue only lasted till 2008, the year China hosted the Summer Olympics, and it collapsed in 2010. As a result, Tibetan leadership forfeited any chance of using the second strategy of mobilizing Tibetans to protest, the one strategy that was effective in giving Tibetans leverage over China (Angmo, 2019; Dorjee, 2019, p. 47). As a result of agreeing to urge Tibetans not to protest against Chinese leaders (as seen in Figure 2.1, on the frequencies of the terms 'dialogue' and 'negotiations') a greater disconnect was established between the leaders and followers of the Tibetan peoplehood movement and an overall diminished international grassroots movement, and clarity that was present before and during the

shock of the 1987 to 1989 unrest. In an act of open defiance of the Dalai Lama's position that Tibetans should not protest against the Beijing Olympics, thousands of mostly youthful demonstrators marched in opposition to the Beijing Summer Olympics, both inside and outside of Tibet (Drissel, 2008, p. 88). However, despite this act of defiance against the words of the Dalai Lama, "the one slogan that was raised in every single protest incident was the call for the "return of the Dalai Lama" " (Dorjee, 2019, p. 47).

Along with the terms 'dialogue' and 'negotiations', the terms 'independence' and 'autonomy' showcase the shift in the framing of the Tibetan peoplehood movement, as well as changes in strategy. In his first March 10th speech in 1961, when referencing a 1959 United Nations resolution that appealed for the end of practices that deprived Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and their traditional autonomy, the Dalai Lama asserted "that it is not autonomy but independence of which we have been deprived" (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1961), showcasing that the goal of the Tibetan peoplehood movement originally was Tibetan independence from China, not genuine autonomy. Moreover, in the same speech, the Dalai Lama states, "I appeal to our sponsors and to the Assembly to get the Chinese to vacate their aggression and to help restore the independence of Tibet. Any half measures will be of little avail" (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1961). The use of the term "Assembly" by the Dalai Lama is a reference to the United Nations General Assembly. This supports the general strategy of the Tibetan peoplehood movement before 1986 of appealing their case for self-determination and their history of independence to the United Nations.

The first use of the term 'violence' by the Dalai Lama in one of his March 10th speeches since 1971 was in 1988, during the 1987 to 1989 Tibetan unrest, which is recognized as a moment of exogenous shock in the Tibetan peoplehood movement. The document with the

highest relative frequency of the term ‘peace’ was the 1989 speech which aligns with the ending of the 1987-1989 Tibetan unrest and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama for his moderate Middle-Way Approach and policy of non-violence. It was also during the shock of the 1987 to 1989 Tibetan unrest that there was a prominent shift in Tibetan leadership’s framing of the Tibetan peoplehood movement from one on the right of self-determination and a history of independence to an emphasis on the protection of human rights, culture, and environment, as well as for genuine autonomy. This was seen in the Dalai Lama’s “Five-Point Peace Plan” that he put forth before the United States Congressional Human Rights Caucus on September 21, 1987 (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1988). This proposal called for:

1. A transformation of Tibet as a whole—Greater Tibet, and the Tibet Autonomous Region—into an area of peace¹³.
2. An abandonment of China's population transfer policy, which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.
3. Respect towards Tibetan individuals' fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.
4. The restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of using Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.
5. A commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and the relations between Tibetan and Chinese people (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1988).

It was the loyalty to the Dalai Lama and the following villainization of the Dalai Lama and his “Five-Point Peace Plan” by the Chinese government that gave rise to the 1987-1989 Tibetan

¹³ The Dalai Lama argued that his concept of “a peace zone would be in keeping with Tibet's historical role as a peaceful and neutral Buddhist nation and buffer state separating the continent's great powers.” (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1988)

unrest, which culminated in the Tibetan protest of March 4, 1989, in Lhasa and with China declaring martial law.

What Kind of Movement is March 10th?

March 10th, being the day to remember the Lhasa Uprising, showcases that it is not the Dalai Lama but the Tibetan community and its nationhood that lies at the heart of the Tibetan peoplehood movement, thus illustrating the importance of the community in driving the social movement. It is the everyday people that the Dalai Lama follows and responds to. The March 10th movement is a people's movement. It is seen in the speeches made by the Dalai Lama each year for the Tibetan National Uprising Day: a holiday that remembers and reenacts the events that took place on that day in 1959. March 10th being chosen as the day to remember the Lhasa Uprising showcases that it is not the Tibetan leadership or the Dalai Lama who is important and drives the social movement forward, but the Tibetan community.

In multiple instances, the speeches made by the Dalai Lama follow the lead of the people by discussing what they have done the previous year. Moreover, the Dalai Lama, on numerous occasions, is seen deferring final decisions regarding the social movement and the government to the Tibetan people. One such example was the March 10th, 1989 speech when acknowledging the establishment of two different strategies in conflict; the Dalai Lama stated, "I am aware of the deep-felt disappointment of many Tibetans on the stand we have taken at Strasbourg. As I have stated before, the final decision will be left to the Tibetan people themselves to take" (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 1989). In the Strasbourg address itself, after making the concession of Tibetan independence for genuine autonomy, the Dalai Lama acknowledged that while many Tibetans would be disappointed by the moderate position but expressed that "whatever the outcome of the negotiations with the Chinese may be, the Tibetan people themselves must be the

ultimate deciding authority. Therefore, any proposal will contain a comprehensive procedural plan to ascertain the wishes of the Tibetan people in a nationwide referendum” (The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2023). This act demonstrates and showcases how the March 10th Peoplehood Movement focuses on the collective and the importance of the everyday people at the bottom, not political and state figures at the top like the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Instead, the Dalai Lama uses his voice as a vessel for the everyday Tibetan people’s demands, wants, and hopes.

Conclusion

Tibetan mobilization and the Tibetan peoplehood movement are fundamentally intertwined with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, which is evident in the critical juncture of the March 10 Lhasa Uprising and the two shocks of the social movement that followed. In 1959, it was concern for the Dalai Lama’s safety that triggered the Lhasa Uprising. With the 1987 to 1989 unrest, it was the villainization of him and his proposal that provoked the unrest, and in 2008 the one phrase that people raised in every single protest was the call for the “return of the Dalai Lama” to Tibet (Dorjee, 2019, p. 47). This collective loyalty to the Dalai Lama is a vast moral capital that the Dalai Lama can turn into political capital. The only time that the Dalai Lama used this moral capital to mobilize Tibetans was in 2006, when he made a public call for the protection of wildlife, asking Tibetans to stop wearing fur-trimmed clothing, stating, “When you go back to your respective places, remember what I said earlier and never use, sell, or buy wild animals, their products, or derivatives.” Within a month, over \$75 million worth of animal pelts had already been burnt (Dorjee, 2019, p. 45). However, the Dalai Lama has never directly called for Tibetans within Tibet to mobilize against Chinese rule or to act in nationwide civil disobedience.

The paper relayed three stories. The first story being how Tibetan identity was reconstituted over time through the use of repertoires. Through the use of the annual March 10th marches Tibetans were able to restore over time a sense of solidarity and nationalism. The second story seen in this paper was how these repertoires changed over time with the key shifts occurring in 1987 to 1989 and in 2008 (See Appendix B). The third story is how these repertoires allow for negotiations between national leadership and the masses over the framing and strategies for national mobilization. This story was seen in the 2008 unrest when young Tibetans and supports of the Tibetan Peoplehood Movement disregarded the wishes of the Dalai Lama, and protested against Chinese leadership and the 2008 Beijing Olympics all while still showcasing their loyalty to the Dalai Lama by continuing to call for the “return of the Dalai Lama” to Tibet (Dorjee, 2019, p. 47). The analysis was framed in terms of the notion of 'critical junctures' and the importance of spontaneous events (including exogenous shocks) in helping us to understand social movements.

The analysis shows 1959 as a critical juncture for Tibetans because it was a single event of transformation during which Tibetan institutions within Tibet and the Tibetan Peoplehood movement underwent a fundamental durable change with lasting consequences. In addition, crucial events such as the 1987-89 protests and the 2008 Beijing Olympics conflicts not only had an impact on the immediate political environment but had the effect of shifting the nature of the peoplehood movement in lasting and durable ways. Thus, the analysis shows how critical events can shape the trajectory of movements over the longer term.

Some future implications that may affect this social movement are leadership changes. Upon the death of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, a new cycle or episode may begin; therefore, some features or methods that are currently present in the movement's repertoire will disappear. This

will be due to the rapidly shifting political opportunities and overall instability. Moreover, with the death of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan strategies may turn more radical and follow more in line with the second strategy.

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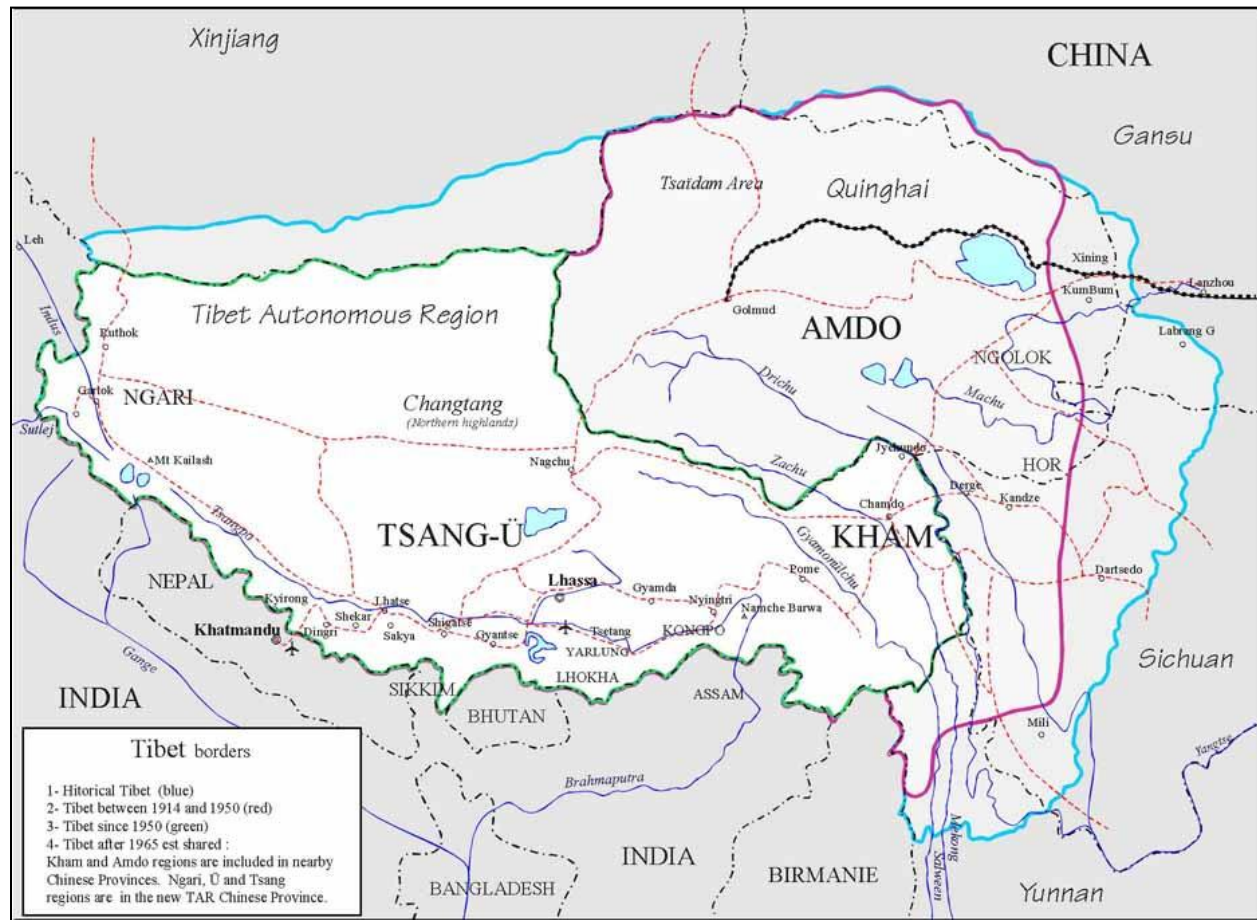
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Appendix A: Map of Tibet

Figure A. A map of the historical three provinces of Tibet (*Tibet21*, 2007)

Appendix B: Timeline of Events in the Tibetan Peoplehood Movement

