A Cross-Cultural Examination of Chinese and American Female Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations

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Abstract: The present study aims to explore the influencing factors of career advancement of female leaders in nonprofit organizations and to gain a greater understanding of their trajectory to executive or leadership positions. Through surveys and interviews of five Chinese and five American female leaders, the findings indicate that both Chinese and American female leaders are facing similar opportunities and challenges. However, for Chinese females, their concept of nonprofit organizations should be changed. This research also reveals that nonprofit organizations emphasize gender and race diversity. The scientific and reasonable institutional policy design can improve both the race and gender diversity.
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The environment for women in leadership positions has improved since the 1990s when women's leadership programs and diversity programs for leadership grew and attracted people's attention (Leatherwood & Williams, 2008). Women's roles in today's organizations are increasingly important. Gender diversity represents the organizations' capacity to sustain continuous innovation, competitiveness, and responsiveness to changing workforce demographics. However, women continue to face barriers and biases when seeking to advance in their organizations, which present subtle, but insidious obstacles to women's leadership. Leatherwood and Williams (2008) point out that the full impact of women's perspectives, contributions, and role modeling has not been felt due to the under-representation of women in leadership positions.

Most of the attention regarding female leadership has focused on business. *Fortune* has ranked the most powerful women in American business since 1998 and globally since 2014. *Fortune*'s 2016 annual list of 56 *World Greatest Leaders* includes 23 female leaders in government, business, activism, nonprofit, and the military. In 2016, the number of top female leadership positions listed in *Fortune* 500 was a dismal at 21— a paltry 4.2%. In spite of the low female leadership representation that is evident in a corporate business environment, the opposite is true when one examines women's role in nonprofit organizations where they occupy mission-critical positions (Mastracci & Herring, 2010). Even though there is greater representation of women as leaders in nonprofit organizations, they are still under-represented. A study conducted by the Women's College of the University of Denver and The White House Project in 2012 finds that among nonprofits with budgets in excess of $25 million, women constitute only 21% of leadership roles even though they make up 75% of the workforce (Lennon,

Spotts, & Mitchell, 2012). The Nonprofit Compensation Report by GuideStar in 2014 shows the number of female CEOs in nonprofit organizations is decreasing. This report lists that only 17% of organizations with budgets larger than $50 million had a female CEO, however, smaller organizations with a budget less than $1 million claimed to have the most women CEOs, the majority of which have women CEOs.

Eagly and Carli (2007) claimed that women's path to leadership positions remain difficult to traverse because of the barriers they face which can be more like a labyrinth than a glass ceiling. The labyrinth analogy suggests that women's career path can be like a maze making it difficult to follow a linear passage to the top executive position within the organization. O'Leary (2001) divides the factors affecting women's leadership into two categories: factors affected by culture and factors affected by both individual differences and culture. She puts ethnicities into the category of cultural factors and claims that both ethnicity and culture have important effects on females' career advancement. Heller (2011) provided several reasons that can be attributed to the shortage of female leaders. The obstacles they face in the labyrinth are as follows: (a) cognition-based causes—such as underlying prejudices, organizational buy-in, and the current leadership model; (b) technical causes, including the practices within organizations which relate to work/life balance, job placement, and networking.

Exploring the barriers and challenges outlined by O'Leary (2001) and Heller (2011) is a worthwhile endeavor given the meager representation of women in executive positions in nonprofit organizations. While culture is not mentioned as a barrier, it is unclear if the cultural background of a female may affect their potential to lead due to limited networking or underlying prejudices they may experience in an

organization. It is important to address the role of culture given the diversity that exists in the U.S. The American Community Survey data (2014) of the U.S. Census Bureau lists the immigrant population to be more than 42.4 million, or 13.3%, of the total U.S. population of 318.9 million. According to analysis of the projections of the Census Bureau in 2015 (Colby & Ortman, 2015), whites, which make up 62.2% in 2014, will make up 43.6% of the population in 2060, followed by Latinos at 28.6%, African Americans at 13%, and Asians at 9.1% in 2060. The US will have no clear racial or ethnic majority (Frey, 2014).

Although the number of immigrants and employees of color are growing, fewer than three percent of board directors at *Fortune* 500 companies are Asian, Hispanic, and African women (Catalyst, 2015). A study (Schwartz et al., 2012) conducted by Commongood Careers and Level Playing Field Institute reports that people of color are severely under-represented in the nonprofit world. According to the report, 82% of nonprofit staff is white, with the other 18% being people of color. According to the report of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Russell & Putman-Walkerly, 2013), nonwhites hold only 16–25% of leadership positions in nonprofits and only 10% of leadership positions among funders, although 60% of nonprofit organizations serve for people of color. The majority of employees in the nonprofit sector acknowledge their organizations have expressed that diversity is an essential value to management. However, only 25% of them agreed that diversity and inclusion practices are actively implemented by their organization (Hayes, 2016).

This research, based on the study of non-American born Chinese female leaders, as well as American female leaders, will describe and analyze the influencing factors of their career advancement in nonprofit organizations to gain a greater understanding of their trajectory to executive or leadership positions. It is unclear if culture is a barrier in labyrinth that limits the career advancement of women in an organization. The research will address the research gap and help to solve the problem about how organizations address leadership opportunities for women from a broader perspective, not simply a gender issue, to analyze, understand, and improve the situation of female leadership. First, the gender schema from different cultures will be discussed. Second, the definition of leadership and leadership traits will be described from the perspective of different cultures. Third, other influencing factors including the internal and external environment of nonprofit organizations will be discussed to address their roles on the leadership trajectory of women. Finally, limitations and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Through surveys and interviews of five Chinese and five American female leaders, the findings of this study indicate that both Chinese and American female leaders are facing similar opportunities and challenges. This research also reveals that nonprofit organizations emphasize the gender and race diversity, which are also positive to the development of nonprofit organizations. The scientific and reasonable institutional policy design can improve both the race and gender diversity.The findings will prove useful to women, specifically from diverse cultures, who aspire to be leaders in nonprofit organizations within the U.S.

Literature Review
Cultural identity and gender schema

Women's under-representation in leadership has been framed as a deficit in which something is holding women back from becoming leaders. Described as glass ceilings or labyrinths, barriers and obstacles to women's advancement that stymie or derail their progress still exist.

It is necessary to consider the role of culture on sex-role conception, attitude of women's competence, and the managerial model. The general question regarding the female leadership and culture is that "are there a universality of womanhood" (Blackmore, 2006). Because there is no universal right way to be a man or a woman, gender theorists argue that gender roles are shaped by social cues and influences(Zosuls, et al, 2011).

For women in China, the ability to reconcile occupation with motherhood and household duties is the determining factor in their self-perceptions (Chang & Lin, 2007). The traditional Chinese culture views the world to be composed of two complementary elements— "*Yin*" and "*Yang*". *Yin* represents the female element, which stands for all things dark, weak, and passive. *Yang* represents the male element reflecting all things bright, strong, and active. Therefore, women are kept in a subservient and obedient position in society and at home and are consigned to a lower status compared to men (Tsai & Zhou, 2015). Although currently Chinese women have had much more chances of education and employment, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2015 of The World Economic Forum, women were just 17% of all legislators, senior officials, and managers in China; only 18% of firms in China have women as top managers.

In contrast, women now represent 47% of the US workforce, compared to 38% in the mid-1980s (Haines et al., 2016). However, Haines et al. also find that gender stereotypes are as strong today as they were 30 years ago, and that people are even more likely now to believe that men avoid "traditional" female roles. The biggest difference in attitudes they found was that now both genders are judged to be equally responsible for

financial obligations, whereas 30 years ago they had not been. The belief that men should repair and maintain cars has not changed over the time, and the idea that men are less likely to look after the house and children has actually increased.

Do these values influence women to hold leadership positions? As a social phenomenon, culture is not static and always changing. Culture changes when there is contact between cultures (Walker & Fenton, 2011). Bass and Bass (2008) suggest that as globalization occurs individuals may move from one pattern of behavior or thought to another wherein ethnicity and culture become less significant. For individuals who have left their ethnicity behind, what kind of cultural and ethnic patterns become more significant in decision making processes to attain a leadership role? With the growing number of culturally diverse individuals being more prominent in the workplace, it is imperative to study all aspects of leadership across cultures.

Cultural identity and female leadership

Female leadership within nonprofit organizations is understood to be complex in terms of behaviors, linkages, group needs, and mission objectives. Especially the race and gender diversity make the situation much more complex. When the diversity and responsibility loads of nonprofit leadership co-mingle with the organizational context, complexity expands exponentially (Gajewski et al.,2011).

Researchers have begun to investigate how multiple identities mediate decisions to become leaders, styles of leadership and collaboration, and how women leaders perceive themselves and are recognized by others (Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2007). Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory has been used to investigate the correlation between national culture and female leadership and demonstrate the cultural influence (Chao & Tian, 2011; Claus, et al., 2013). Claus et al. (2013) used Hofstede's cultural dimensions to investigate a potential relationship between national culture and female leadership within European countries. They found a significant difference between organization type (nonprofit/for-profit) and organizational dominance (masculine/feminine) and noted the prevalence of for-profit organizations in masculine countries and nonprofits in feminine countries. In contrast, Chao and Tian (2011) find that national culture alone cannot account for the anticipated female leadership styles. They add that people anticipate female leaders who have a transformational leadership style to express more innovation and organizational changes.

Female leaders demonstrate their desire and effort to transcend barriers to leadership. The concept of leadership is shaped by a set of beliefs shared among individuals in common culture. Empirical evidence indicates that leader attributes, behavior, status, and influence vary as a result of the cultural forces in the countries or regions where leaders work. However, a research conducted by University of London in 2011 found that 80% of African, Asian, and other minority ethnic women believed their own cultural identity had impacted the way they lead teams within the organization, while white women leaders identified more with personality traits and leadership styles than with cultural identity, and did not see racial or ethnic identity playing any role in the notion of leadership, nor was any reference made to the need to understand other people's culture as part of being an effective leader.

Traditional Chinese values focus on family, relationships, achievement, endurance, and sacrifice of oneself to the group. They also include the ideal of harmony and hierarchy as the basis for social structure and interaction (Garrott, 1995). Chinese women's moving upward has been found to be still slow and unsatisfactory (Tsang, et al., 2011). For example, the proportion of Chinese women on corporate boards (8%) and in executive committees (9%) is much lower than that in the United States, which is 15% and 14%, respectively (Peus, et al., 2015). While the statistics suggested a rising status of Chinese career women today compared with decades ago, researchers have reminded us of the continuing challenges facing women in China in their pursuit for career advancement. Examples of these challenges include societal discrimination (Gao, 2006) and values (Peus, et al., 2015), longer period of unemployment (Du & Dong, 2009), lower pay (Chen, Ezzamel, & Cai, 2011; Xiu & Gunderson, 2014), heavy burden of family responsibilities (Cooke, 2003), fewer promotion opportunities (Granrose, 2007), and fewer developmental opportunities (Leung, 2002). The reality, as Cooke (2003) portrayed, is that while women may have reached the top of the organizational hierarchy, they remain at the bottom of the power hierarchy, with little real influence.

In the U.S., female leadership is traditionally associated with leadership styles such as transformational, collaborative, and participatory (Zulu, 2011). James M. Burns (1978) argued that transformational leadership involved mobilizing power to change social systems and reform institutions and raising the consciousness of followers by appealing to their higher ideals and moral values. Chrislip & Larson's study on collaborative leadership indicate that collaborative leaders usually have no formal power or authority and tend to exercise leadership in what is perhaps the most difficult context—when all parties involved are peers (Chrislip & Larson, 1994). Participatory leadership means that managers should give subordinates an opportunity to participate in organizational decisions which affect them (Argyris, 1955).

A number of researchers have speculated that there are gender differences in the use of transformational leadership though there is a notable lack of evidence for this premise (O'Leary, 2001). On one hand, research on female leaders shows that women tend to prefer collaborative and participative leadership styles and perceive themselves as having collaborative and people-centered styles of leadership and management (Coleman, 2003; Coleman, 2000; Rosener, 1990; Zulu, 2007). On the other hand, gender differences are not as prevalent given that males and females can have similar leadership styles. Scholars found that the gender differences are not as significant as the differences of position, which means that male and female at similar positions have more similarities on leadership style rather than differences. Kanter (1977) argues that organizational roles override gender roles when it comes to management or leadership positions. Powell (1990) argues that leadership differences between women and men are insignificant because they are cancelled out when looking at studies as a whole as both genders use equal amounts of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors. In general, they argue that when both women and

men take up top and equal roles in an organization they would closely display similar styles as they are confined to the guidelines of their positions rather than behaving stereotypically (Chaluvadi, 2015).

Barriers and challenges of career advancement of female leaders

Given the fact that women are still under-represented although the attention to gender diversity and equality in the workplace has emerged for decades, scholars still question the lack of equal representation in executive positions and wages for women (Coronel, et al., 2010; O'Leary, 1974, 2001). In 1974, Virginia E. O'Leary created a model to describe reasons why there are fewer women in leadership positions. She addressed two major reasons or barriers that account for this lack of female leadership representation: internal and external factors. External factors include sex-role stereotypes, male managerial model, and attitudes about women's competence. Internal factors include fear of failure, fear of success, low self-esteem, and role conflict (see figure 1).
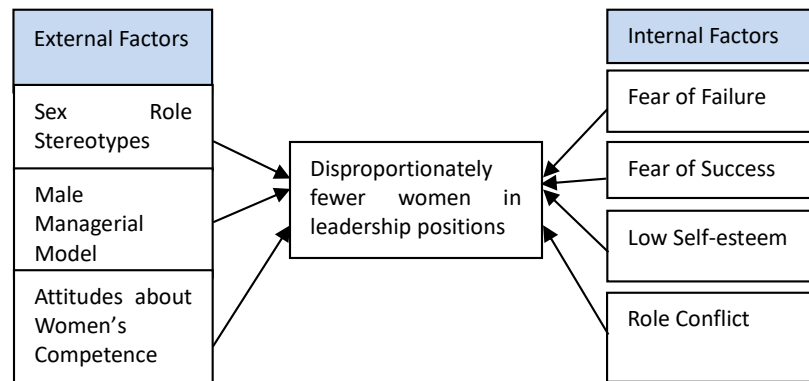

Figure 1. O'Leary's (1974) model of barriers to women in leadership positions.

Through reviewing the meta-analysis on gender and leadership conducted by Alice Eagly and her colleagues in the 1990s, O'Leary found that the past research have empirically supported the external barriers to women's leadership (sex-role stereotypes, attitudes about female competence,

and the male managerial model), but not the internal barriers (low self-esteem, fear of failure, fear of success, and role conflict). Therefore, she revised the model recognizing that the external factors are related with cultural influences (see figure 2).
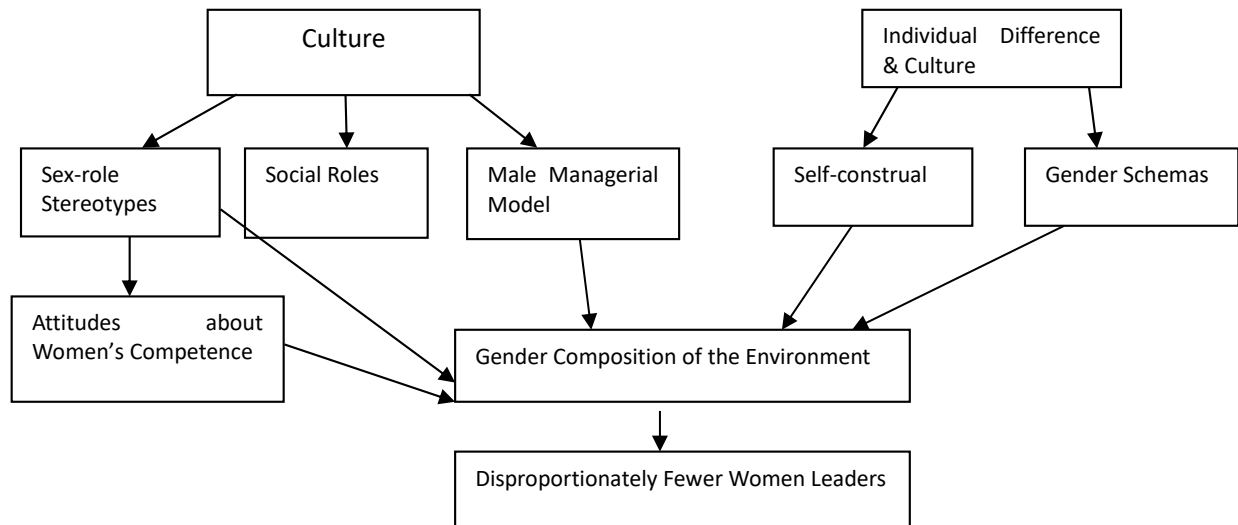
Figure 2. O'Leary's (2001) 21st century model of barriers to women's leadership.

O'Leary (2001) claims that gender differences in leadership represent a socially constructed phenomenon rather than based on behavioral differences. Her new model divides the factors affecting women's leadership into two categories: cultural factors and factors affected by both individual differences and culture. O'Leary puts ethnicities into the category of cultural factors and claims that both ethnicity and culture have important effects on the subjective importance as well as expression of sex-role stereotypes, social roles, and self-construal. In addition, based on the empirical findings that the proportion of women in a workplace affects women's psychological satisfaction and women's perceptions of their own efficacy and performance, O'Leary added the variable of work environment in the model.

Organizational culture and context

In O'Leary's model (2001), she emphasizes that the gender composition of the environment, which is caused by all the cultural factors, leads to the situation of disproportionately fewer female leaders. Nonprofit organizations "are self-governing organizations that do not distribute profits to those who control them and are exempt from federal income taxes by virtue of being organized for public purposes" (Boris & Steuerle, 2006, p. 3). A greater percentage of nonprofit employees are women (Hays, et al., 2009). Despite the large percentage of nonprofit employees that are female, they continue to be significantly under-represented and under-compensated in leadership positions. Statistics (Lennon, et al., 2012; GuideStar, 2014) demonstrates the dynamic of nonprofit organizations with the gender

diversity of leadership. Women are more likely to head smaller nonprofits. In a relatively small study, Hrywna (2006) showed that 92% of organizations with female CEOs had budgets of less than $10 million.

Overall, the literature review suggests further attention needs to be given to the role of female leadership, specifically in nonprofit organizations. Leadership style has been often associated with being gender specific. Attention has been given to the barriers and challenges women face in ascending to top positions within their organizations. Given the low number of female leaders, especially the female leaders of color, further attention must be given to cultural influences and organizational culture. Given the above, the following research questions will guide this study:

RQ 1: How does cultural identity and influences cause challenges or barriers to women in ascending top positions of nonprofit organizations?

RQ 2: Is gender in nonprofit organizations—even given the underlying values of nonprofit organizations—an impediment to attaining a management position?

RQ 3: How do these findings relating to the position of women in organizations pertain to cultural and social biases?

Method

Procedure

Ten participants have been recruited via researchers' personal acquaintances and connections, websites of nonprofit organizations, and snowball sampling. Prospective subjects were identified through initial contact by researchers and identified through knowledge of their role as leaders of nonprofit

organizations. Each person was contacted via e-mail or by phone and invited to participate in the study. First, a survey was conducted to address cultural identity, the perception of gender roles and leadership of female leaders. In-depth interviews, lasting 30-60 minutes with each participant, provide an opportunity to discuss at length the factors that influenced their career advancement. Based on the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA), this study explores different influencing factors on female leadership in the context of U.S. nonprofit organizations.

Participants

Participants must hold a paid or elected leader position in 501(c) nonprofit organizations. In the U.S., the top two countries with the largest immigrant populations are China and Mexico (Jensen, et al., 2015). The U.S. Census Bureau report, *The Asian Population: 2010* shows the Asian population grew by 46%, faster than any other race group from 2000 to 2010. A total of ten participants were interviewed: five Chinese, and five American females. All the five Chinese females were born in the mainland of China and have been in the U.S. for more than 10 years. Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) suggest that six has been a

good number, although anywhere between three and fifteen participants for a group study can be acceptable for the IPA. Given the nature of rich, thick description and depth of interviews in qualitative research, a phenomenology research hopes to understand the essence of individuals' experiences with a given phenomenon.

Among the five participants of Chinese female leaders, three of them are working at the nonprofit organizations serving Chinese communities or related with Chinese culture, such as Chinese school, church, and Chinese culture association. One Chinese female used to have a fulltime position at an organization not related with Chinese culture or Chinese community for two years. The other Chinese female has had a full time position at an international nonprofit organization not related with Chinese community and Chinese culture for almost 20 years. The five American participants are all from local nonprofit organizations including children service, women service, food bank, and organizations' support service. Among the five organizations, the gender distribution is from 60% of female employees to 90% of female employees; 85% of the employees are white (see Table 1).

Table 1. The list of research participants

Participants	Age	Type of Involvement	Age of organization	Years in organization
C1.	30+	Founder & Board member	5 years	5 years
C2.	40+	Board member	89 years	2 years
C3.	40+	Manager	38 years	10+ years
C4.	40+	Founder & Board member	13 years	13 years
C5.	40+	Board member	11 years	1 year
A1.	60+	President & CEO	125 years	5-10 years
A2.	60+	President & CEO	36 years	8 years
A3.	60+	CEO	43 years	5-10 years
A4.	50+	CEO	43 years	9 years
A5.	40+	CEO	41 years	20 years

Results
Culture, gender schema, and leadership

China and the U.S. both have more masculine culture, which refers to a society in which there is a differentiation between genders for emotional and social roles (Hofstede, 1980). The Chinese participants and the

American participants have almost the same opinion about the gender schema of Chinese and American culture. They all believe that gender roles of women and men are somewhat or slightly unequal in their cultures.

All the American female leaders talked about the progress or improvement of females in the work place.

From the 1970s to 1980s, women were facing more suspects, discriminations, and biases because of their gender. They were not believed to have the competence to be leaders. A1, A2, and A3 mentioned the challenge of fundraising for nonprofit organizations. As leaders, they have the responsibility of fundraising.

A3 said, "As a woman, I have been taught that don't ask for money from anybody. So it is very challenging for me to do things of fundraising for my organization."

A1 said, "I had never thought about career planning and development until I was 40s because I grew up from a family that mother always being home and taking care of family." A4 said, "Women need to work harder and are more required to demonstrate their abilities as leaders than men."

In contrast, the Chinese participants are facing the similar suspects and discrimination from their colleagues. C5 talked about her experience with a male employee. The male employee asked to record their conversation and express no trust and respect to C5. C5 said, "I am not sure he is acting like this because of his concept of gender differences or other reasons. All I know is that he is doing this with all his female colleagues."

Regarding the leadership, there is no significant difference between the Chinese and American participants. C2 said, "I don't feel my Chinese background is an issue at all." They all believe that the most important leadership characteristics include communication skills, passion, learner attitude, and inspiring others. More feminine leadership skills are apparent on them, such as listening and identifying everyone's strengths. A5 said, "I used my soft skills to deal with the challenges in my work. There are always challenges such as something was done wrongly. It is frustrating when things cannot be as your expectation. But I don't need to yell to let them know it is wrong. I just need to communicate and explain." Interestingly, not one of them think that traits such as authoritative and aggressive are necessary or useful for leaders.

Traditional perception of masculine-typed leadership is influencing female leaders as well. Ahmad (2001) states that women have to "continually negotiating and renegotiating their cultural, religious, and personal identities", which "operate in complex and sometimes contradictory ways" (p. 137). C3 mentioned an image paradox between being a woman and being a leader. She said, "It took me a long time to admit that I am a leader. At first I didn't want to admit the fact that I had been a leader. It was embarrassing for me to tell others that I am a leader." A4 said, "I have been told to learn from another guy about the leadership. So I

observed his behaviors and attitude, trying to compare the difference between him and me."

Gender schema and race diversity in nonprofit organizations

All the interviewees believe that there is no gender difference in nonprofit organizations. Women and men can get the same opportunities for career development. Only one of the ten participants thinks that gender will make it harder for her career advancement. All the others think gender will make no difference about their career advancement. The discrimination and bias are more from outside of the organizations.

Both Chinese and American female leaders mentioned that the most important thing for their career advancement is how to prove their ability and competence to the leadership position. Therefore, gender is not so important. They need to have the confidence, especially have a solid foundation, which means the accomplishments and ability, for the confidence.

For American female leaders, all of them think race diversity is important to nonprofit organizations. However, regarding the hiring policy, they all believe that the most important aspect is the skills and abilities the candidates have. A1, A3, and A4 all said that if there are two people of different race who have the same skills they need, they will think about the race diversity to see which is more helpful for it. A5 said, "I know that culture diversity is important. They will bring extra benefit for organizations. The problem is the limitation of the pool. There are not enough qualified candidates of color in the pool. So we need to work harder to ask for referral and to find the employees from diverse culture."

C2 said, "I am the only Chinese employee in my organization. But I didn't feel any uncomfortable because of my ethnicity. All what I do is finish my work and let my colleagues know that I can do all my works very well."

Career advancement for female leaders

There are some key words when the participants talked about their career development and career advancement: education, ability and competence, passion and initiative, mentor.

All the participants believe that they were promoted because of their competence and performance. In addition, one American participant (A2) said that, "if you don't have initiative, you will not get the advancement." She emphasized that passion, creativity, and initiative are necessary for people who want to work for the nonprofit, because "the pays are too low, the work is too hard", and that "the society doesn't value what you do."

Both Chinese and American participants stressed

that another important factor for them is taking care of themselves. As leaders they are required to dedicate more to their works. However, the balance of professional life and personal life is much more important for them. A3 is practicing yoga regularly to help herself relax and work harder. She said, "I feel much better after I start practicing yoga every week. Now every Friday I go to practice yoga. It makes me feel great when I come back to my work."

A4 has family meeting and meeting with her close friend regularly and is trying to have more personal time for reading her favorite books. She said, "I feel better coming back when I take care of myself. I like to walk, I like exercise, and I like to read. I just finished a whole book at the three days' weekend. That's what I did to take care of me, was read. Spending time with my family is another way to take care of myself. That's a balance."

The keyword of mentor is mentioned by both Chinese and American female leaders when they talk about their success of career development.Several of the participants talked about the importance of mentors. Through reviewing their own experiences, they suggested that mentors will be very helpful for career advancement of female leaders. Mentors can not only offer advice about working problems, but also be trusted friends and listeners to get mental support.

When answering the question of "what suggestions do you have for women who want to be the leader of your organization", C4 said "I would say get a mentor or a coach. People of nonprofit world should take a page from the for-profit world. They use job coaches. I have a job coach in another agency and one at here. It is somebody you can talk about anything and they won't go further than that person, and they can give you good advice." Given the career-related obstacles that may be present for women especially women of color, access to supportive mentors can assist individuals in negotiating the barriers that confront them in their path to career advancement.

Interestingly, a Chinese participant and an American participant became the leaders because that the organizations needed leaders due to the leave of previous leaders. They both said that at that time they thought they would be as leaders for a temporary time until the organizations found the appropriate person. The decisions of becoming leaders were not made by themselves.

Discussion
Culture change

Culture is always dynamic, hybrid, and never static. Culture change is a gradual and modest process regarding the change of social values and concepts. The feminist perspective has brought the increasing awareness of gender equality through diversity trainings and inclusion of gender/diversity issues. Therefore, the concept of equal access, opportunity, and pay for both women and men is accepted by more and more people, especially in the area of nonprofit organizations.

The change of O'Leary's model from 1974 to 2001 can demonstrate the culture change. The interviewees' examples and personal experiences demonstrate that in the 1970s, there were more suspects and discriminations about women's ability and competence. Due to the traditional cultural concepts of gender differences, a lot of women didn't think they had the ability to be leaders. After almost three decades of development, more and more women have realized that they are capable to do a lot of works which was seen as conventionally male-dominated.

During the interview, we have heard several times about the improvement of women's status in contemporary society. It is easy to see the confidence about their ability, experience, and ability as leaders among the 10 participants. In reality, women in the workforce are still doubly burdened by social expectations of family responsibility and a conventional organizational ideology that emphasizes devotion to work. However, due to the more chances of education and employment, women have increasing chances to be leaders. Two American participants said that compared to several decades ago when women were competitive and fighting with each other, now we can see more and more women support and help each other to get career advancement. The purpose for Chinese leaders to join the nonprofit organizations is to help more Chinese people or Chinese women get career development and personal support.

Institution design and the organizational commitment

It is critical for institution designers and implementers to continue identifying and removing institutional barriers to women and women of color's success and advancement. There has been a negative stereotype of women's lower commitment to paid work because of their duties of taking care of family. Compared to workplaces designed for men and on male terms, nonprofit organizations seem like having less gender problems. Or on the contrary, the problem is how to recruit more male employees. Leadership style such as relational-oriented, nurturing, and caring which are typically associated with women are more required in nonprofit organizations. Both Chinese and American leaders admit that one reason for lacking male employees might be the lower pay compared to for-profit organizations. From the interviews we can see a lot of institutional policies include paid maternity leave (e.g. two weeks), ability to bring a child to work, flexible work hours, flexibility to care for a sick child, ability to work from home, transformation of job classifications, and compensation based on knowledge

and skills rather than the status quo of gender biased tradition.

These kinds of institutional policies bring a modest change in societal gender roles. Paid maternity leave for both women and men employees enables them to make decisions based on whose career is likely to suffer less if they take this leave.

The suggestion of mentors reflects the problem female leaders are facing in their career development, the imperative of network. Mentors function is not only help them solve problems they have in their professional and personal life, more important, is help them to set up or expand their relationship or networks, and to create social capital through appropriate networking. In addition, providing positive role models and mentors might be one of the most effective strategies for helping women's career development. Mentors can serve many valuable functions such as role modeling professional values, assisting with career planning, networking, boosting self-esteem, and interpreting the organizational culture. The female leaders are behaving as role models in their organizations. When the leader goes to practice yoga and takes care of herself, she is telling her employees, especially female employees that it is acceptable or necessary to take care of yourself.

Culture diversity of nonprofit organizations

Compared to the bright future of gender diversity and gender equality in nonprofit organizations, the diversity of race and ethnicity is not the same satisfactory. Although the American leaders said that when they are hiring employees they would focus on the ability and experiences of candidates, the current situation is that people of color is severely underrepresented in nonprofit organizations. Although Chinese female leaders have the passion and initiative for the community service and social change, their work is mostly limited within the Chinese community. On one hand it is their advantage to set up and reinforce their networks within Chinese community, there is also an apparent gap between the Chinese nonprofit organizations and the American society.

More importantly, regarding the culture differences, we didn't find any culture differences about leadership style and gender related attitudes and behaviors besides that they are serving for the Chinese community. Therefore, for female leaders in nonprofit organization, the most important thing is empowering and strengthening themselves, which is based on the education and working experiences.

It needs to be noted that one interesting difference between Chinese and American female leaders is that for Chinese female leaders, most of them believe that nonprofit organizations cannot offer enough opportunities of career development and advancement. Culturally, most Chinese people don't value nonprofit organizations for career development. C1 said, "Nonprofit organizations are good for retired people or people who don't need to worry about his/her career development or earning money. I joined the nonprofit organization when I was at the gap time between my pregnancy and graduation from school. At that time, I had nothing to do, so I thought working in nonprofit might be interesting. When I could go back to school, I immediately quit my job and continue my study."

C4 said, "I never think about anything about career development in this organization. I work at here just because that I am a Chinese, and I hope I can do something to help Chinese people to have better life and less problems in the U.S."

In contrast, all the American female leaders value the chances in nonprofit organizations. Most of them have had working experiences at nonprofit organizations before they joined current organizations. A1 and A2 were both hired as the top leaders outside of the current agencies. They believe that their previous working experiences helped them to get the current leadership positions. They also mentioned that there are a lot of young talented employees in their organizations who have achieved great professional accomplishments.

Limitation and suggestion for further research

Limitations of this study should be noted. Due to the samples selection of this research, organizational types such as arts, health services, and human services, are not analyzed. Further researches can expand the samples' scope and quantity, to enrich and deepen the understanding of intersectionality in nonprofit organizations. Organizational culture plays an important role regarding the gender and race equality awareness and behaviors. This research has started the preliminary attempt to explore the intersectionality of gender and race in nonprofit organizations. However, as the literature review shows, the type and size of nonprofit organizations have reflected significant differences regarding gender composition in leadership positions. Given the dynamics of gender composition in leadership positions and annual budget of nonprofit organizations, further study should expand the sample size, analyze and compare the different type and size of nonprofit organizations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is discussing about the possible factors of raising the profile of women, especially women of color in nonprofit organizations. Our research suggests that both Chinese and American female leaders are facing similar opportunities and challenges.

From the perspective of institutional design, mentors and sponsorship can be institutionalized within organizations, which might be helpful and accountable

for the career development of more women. Institutional policies design such as both maternity and paternity paid leave and flexible work schedule can increase the organizational commitment for both women and men, and can deduce the negative stereotype of women's lower organizational commitment.

One possible reason of lacking Chinese female in American nonprofit organizations is the concept of nonprofit organizations for Chinese people. The existing perceptions about desirable and appropriate career alternatives do not include the nonprofit organizations. Therefore, for Chinese people, it is valuable to think more chances of career development within the nonprofit area rather than merely adhering with original culture and community. They will become more open minded, and it will change their conceptualization of career advancement. In contemporary world nonprofit organizations need more and more people from diverse cultural background; it might be another chance for career development and advancement of Chinese women in the U.S.

More than two decades ago, Bass and Avolio (1994) proposed that "women may make better managers." Through our interviews of Chinese and American female leaders we can see their proposal is partly becoming true. Today's nonprofit organizations require more and more talented employees no matter their gender and race. Although the rarity of women in senior leadership roles continues to be documented worldwide, the development of nonprofit organizations offers a bright future regarding the gender equality, and hopefully will be helpful for improvement of the culture and race diversity.

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