

## **The Beacon of Amdo**

### **Reconceptualizing Tibetan Statehood through the Paradigm of Governance**

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Throughout the social sciences over the past quarter century, the study of governance has provided a critical lens for analyzing the discourse and meaning of statehood in complex systems. But the explosion of governance studies has been more adept at analyzing liberal democratic states than authoritarian frameworks of political power. Through the lens of the governance paradigm, the study of Amdo casts new light on the shape and form of contemporary statehood within the People's Republic of China. This lecture draws on the trajectories of past and present transformations of governance structures and state-building processes in the Amdo region to explore reconfigurations of Tibetan statehood within, beyond and at the limits of the Chinese state. Regarded as the paradigmatic 'Other' within the field of Tibetan studies, the distinctiveness of Amdo should be seen not as a subregion, *simpliciter*, but rather as a beacon and metonymic sign of the effects of statehood integral to Tibet as a composite whole. This governance-centric approach to examining the distribution of authority and the interplay of structures of power and decision-making in Amdo opens fresh new avenues for inquiry into agency and transformation within authoritarian states in the shifting global order.