

Advancing new insights on the challenges of governance in contemporary Tibet



Multilevel Governance and Tibet Policy Studies:

Exploring a New Framework for Research and Policy Dialogue

TGAP Seminar Briefing

7th Round of Meetings of the TGAP Convening Partners

November 12-17, 2014

Tibet Governance Project
Institute of Global & International Studies
Elliott School of International Affairs
George Washington University

TGAP Seminar 2014

Multilevel Governance and the Next Phase of the TGAP Process

Background of the TGAP Process

The TGAP initiative is the culmination of a research exchange process that began in Oslo in December 2008 as an exploratory meeting of international Tibet scholars. The core participants in the academic exchange have met on an annual basis from 2008 to 2014: in Oslo (2008 and 2010); Charlottesville, VA (2009); in Beijing (2011); in Québec (2012); in Shanghai (2013); and in Washington, DC (2014). The formative meetings from 2008 to 2011 provided a fact-finding process, one in which common ground was established and new parameters were set for a forum on the challenges of governance in Tibet.

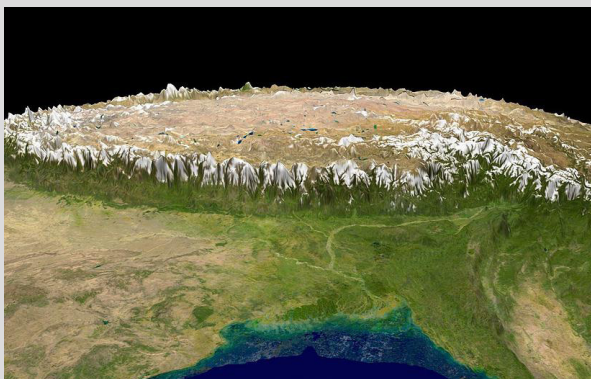
The first TGAP Forum was convened on the theme of **Language Policy and Practice in Tibet: Concept, Experience and Challenges for the Future** and was co-hosted in Québec in 2012 by Université du Québec à Montréal and McGill University. The second TGAP Forum was convened on **Conservation, Resource Management and Local Governance: Challenges and Prospects in Policy Perspective** and was co-hosted in Shanghai in 2013 by Harvard Fairbank Center and the Institute for Ethnic Minority Groups of the Chinese State Council's Development Research Center. Research briefings for both forums were released in the PRC and are available at www.tgapforum.org.



TGAP Forum co-hosted by Université du Québec à Montréal and McGill University in 2012

Objectives of the TGAP Forum

- Promotes the advancement of new research and scholarship on policy issues in contemporary Tibet
- Provides a platform for building global awareness and understanding of governance challenges in the Tibetan region
- Prioritizes Tibetan communities within the region as the primary stakeholders in the deliberation of policy challenges
- Defines the scope of “Tibet” under discussion for the TGAP Forum as the areas currently designated as Tibetan autonomous administrative units within the People’s Republic of China, a region broadly coterminous with the geo-physical extent of the Tibetan plateau
- Examines the nature and conditions of social-cultural, economic and other collective needs in the Tibetan region through the governance paradigm, enabling new lines of inquiry to better inform the regional, national and global public conversation on contemporary Tibet



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Overview

The Tibet Governance Project at the Elliott School of International Affairs hosted the 7th round of meetings of the Tibet Governance and Practice (TGAP) process from November 12-17, 2014.

The objective of the November round of meetings was to engage Chinese State Council policy researchers from Beijing in an exploratory discussion about “multilevel governance” as a framework for research exchange and policy dialogue on Tibet in the next phase of the TGAP process.

The meetings included joint TGAP briefings to US China studies faculty convened at the Harvard Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies in Cambridge; the Yale China Law Center in New Haven; and at the National Committee on US-China Relations in New York.

The TGAP Seminar on Multilevel Governance and Tibet Policy Research, convened at the Institute for Global and International Studies at George Washington University, engaged scholars of governance and political studies from Québec in an intensive discussion about the theory and practice of multilevel governance in comparative national, subnational and federal contexts.

The 2014 TGAP meetings indicated a common interest shared by Chinese and Tibetan policy researchers in exploring a research agenda for dialogue on macro-level governance and policy issues in Tibet.



Egil Lothe, Director, China Project, Oslo Coalition for the Freedom of Religion or Belief

As such, the 7th round of meetings marked a milestone in the TGAP process by advancing a shared stake in dialogue not just about particular substantive areas of policy research, but about comparative policy issues pertaining to systems and patterns of governance itself.



From left: Wang Hong, Vice Director, IEMG, State Council Development Research Center; Dr. Tashi Rabgey, Research Professor, Elliott School of International Affairs

About the TGAP Initiative

The Tibet Governance and Practice (TGAP) initiative is a research exchange and policy dialogue process that advances knowledge and understanding of governance challenges in Tibet. Now in its eighth year, the TGAP process convenes scholars, researchers and practitioners in a cross-disciplinary discussion of key policy issues shaping the region.

As a global platform for comparative research, the TGAP initiative provides academics and policy researchers an opportunity to discuss research on governance challenges with a diverse community of Tibetan civic leaders in fields such as education, language rights, social business, conservation and resource management. The TGAP process provides a unique platform for Tibetan practitioners, community organizers and civic leaders in Tibet to discuss policy issues directly with national-level policy research institutions.

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Harvard Fairbank Center

Faculty Briefing at Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University November 12, 2014

The November TGAP meetings began with a briefing for senior faculty at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies of Harvard University on November 12. Hosted by Prof Mark Elliott, director of the Fairbank Center, the meeting followed up on discussions concerning contemporary Tibet research and the challenges of governance begun in Shanghai in August 2013.

Harvard University has had an ongoing role in the TGAP process since it hosted the **2013 TGAP Forum on Conservation, Resource Management and Local Governance**. Held at the Harvard Center in Shanghai from August 10 to 12, 2013, the 2013 TGAP Forum provided a unique opportunity for Chinese and global scholars to discuss governance challenges in policy perspective with civic leaders and practitioners from inside Tibet.



Sarah Cornelison, Program Officer for East Asia, IGE, Wang Hong, Vice Director, IEMG, State Council Development Research Center, at Harvard University

Since then, the Harvard Fairbank Center has provided continuing interface for academic exchange regarding the TGAP process and scholarship on contemporary Tibet and governance challenges in the Tibetan region. The November briefing follows on that interface, and included senior faculty in both Chinese and Tibetan studies.



Prof. Joseph Fewsmith, Senior Fellow, Harvard Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies

Dr. Tashi Rabgey, Research Professor of International Affairs at George Washington University and cofounder of Machik, led with a discussion of the development of TGAP and its core principles as a platform for policy dialogue. Wang Hong, Vice Director of the Institute for Ethnic Minority Groups of the State Council's Development Research Center, gave a presentation on her institution's role in the TGAP process and current trends in ethnic minority policy in China.

Participants in the briefing discussed the recent challenges of the TGAP Forum in the PRC, and dynamics and prospects for China's minority policy, more generally. Mark Elliott proposed that Harvard University serve as host for the next TGAP Forum in 2016. Scholars in attendance included Leonard van der Kuijp, Janet Gyatso, and Joseph Fewsmith.



Prof. Mark Elliott, Director, Harvard Fairbank Center, Prof. Janet Gyatso (center), Prof. Leonard van der Kuijp (right)

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Yale China Law Center

Faculty Briefing at Yale China Law Center, Yale University November 13, 2014

The TGAP convening partners next met with senior staff and faculty at Yale University. Hosted by Jamie Horsley, Senior Research Scholar in Law and Executive Director of the Yale China Law Center, the Yale TGAP briefing provided researchers and scholars from at Yale an opportunity to discuss Tibet policy research and potential intersections with China studies and ongoing program development in China.



Jamie Horsley, Senior Research Scholar and Executive Director, Yale China Law Center

The TGAP briefing included scholars not only from the Yale Law School, but also a cross-section of faculty from gender studies, development studies, religious studies and sociology. The cross-disciplinary interest reflected the potential for growth in the TGAP initiative as a research endeavor.

For the TGAP convening partners, the Yale briefing provided an opportunity to present the outcome of the seven-year TGAP process to a new academic audience. The dynamic and extensive discussion that followed on the formal presentations provided an indication of how, and to what extent, the TGAP process might productively engage global academia.



TGAP briefing hosted by the Yale China Law Center

The Yale briefing also provided an opportunity for the TGAP convening partners to explore the possibility of growing relations between TGAP and the Yale China Law Center itself. As a premier US academic institution engaged in developing rule of law initiatives in the PRC, the Yale China Law Center has developed a unique expertise in advancing program initiatives in partnership with reform-minded legal institutions in China. Discussions took place on how the deep and extensive experience of the Yale China Law Center in advancing rule of law and governance might be applicable to Tibet through the TGAP process.

As such, the Yale TGAP briefing strengthened new institutional relationships with top US China scholars working on issues of rule of law and governance in China. In the years ahead, these relationships will in turn strengthen the global public understanding of governance and policy challenges in Tibet.



Dicky Yangzom, Yale University; Dr. Losang Rabgey, Executive Director, Machik; Tenzin Noryang, Director of Communications & Governance Initiative Officer, Machik

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National Committee on United States-China Relations

**Seminar on Ethnic Minority Research in China, NCUSCR, New York
November 14, 2014**

On November 14, the TGAP convening partners met with senior staff of the National Committee on United States-China Relations (NCUSCR), along with China specialists from other New York-based foundations and research institutions, including the Council on Foreign Relations.



Briefing at National Committee on US-China Relations, New York

Participants were interested in Vice Director Wang Hong's view of how to understand the positioning of minority policy research within broader Chinese politics. As a leading U.S. organization promoting dialogue with China, the National Committee was also interested in how issues pertaining specifically to Tibet might be productively addressed in the context of academic exchanges and in U.S.-China relations more generally.



Dr. Alex Gardner, Executive Director, Rubin Foundation

Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

**TGAP Seminar on Multilevel Governance and Tibet Policy Research,
Tibet Governance Project,
Institute for Global & International Studies
November 16, 2014**

Following the 2013 TGAP Forum in Shanghai, the TGAP convening partners tentatively identified “multilevel governance” as a prospective framework for advancing comparative study and research on governance challenges in Tibet. Accordingly, one of the primary objectives of the November 2014 round of TGAP meetings was to explore the feasibility of this new analytical framework for advancing policy research on Tibet and the possibility of it providing a broader conceptual basis for the next TGAP Forum.



Alain Gagnon, Canada Research Chair, Université du Québec à Montréal with Researcher Tseten Wangchuk

The November 2014 discussions therefore represented a significant departure for the TGAP process. Since its inception in 2008, the TGAP meetings provided an unprecedented annual platform for direct engagement between Tibetan and official Chinese policy researchers. Until 2013, the TGAP channel was focused on specific, substantive policy research areas, such as language, education and conservation.

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The **2014 TGAP Seminar on Multilevel Governance and Tibet Policy Research** represented, among other things, recognition of a common interest in developing a research agenda for the macro-level study of governance and policy challenges in Tibet. As such, the November 2014 meetings marked a milestone in the TGAP process by advancing a shared stake in an exchange and dialogue not just about a particular substantive area of policy research, but about comparative policy issues pertaining to systems and patterns of governance itself.



TGAP Seminar on Multilevel Governance and Tibet Policy at Elliott School of International Affairs

As director of the Tibet Governance Project at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, Dr. Tashi Rabgey provided a discussion of the analytical and conceptual innovations made over time through the TGAP process. She assessed the extent to which these developments advanced prospects for constructive dialogue on the challenges of Tibet policy in a broader context.

Vice Director Wang Hong provided a Chinese institutional perspective on the significance of TGAP in advancing Tibet policy research within China. Her discussion included an analysis of the emergence of "governance" as a key concept at the top-level of China's policy-making agenda following the 3rd Plenum of the 18th Party Congress. The shift from the vocabulary of "management" to "governance," she pointed out, signaled a new sensibility in the conceptualization of governing challenges in China as a whole.

Competing perspectives on the theory and practice of "multilevel governance" were provided by Dr. Alain Gagnon, Research Chair in Québec and Canadian Studies and Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Université du Québec à Montréal, and Dr. Luc Turgeon, Associate Professor of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. Both scholars discussed the framework of multilevel governance within the context of Québec, Canada and the European Union.

Findings. The 2014 TGAP Seminar participants made the following findings:

- multilevel governance provided a useful basis for examining and assessing comparative policy approaches to governance challenges
- further study of the practical experience of multilevel governance in comparative context was necessary; as such, future seminars should include more global scholars
- focused TGAP research seminars can play an important role in preparing for the TGAP Forums
- proposed topics for future study ranged from public health, religion and "community," to rule of law, regional autonomy law and co-governance

Next Steps. The TGAP convening partners agreed to convene the next TGAP Forum in 2016. Prospective sites include the Harvard Shanghai Center and the Yale Beijing Center. The 2016 Forum will be preceded by two research seminars, one to be held in the PRC in summer 2015, and one to be held internationally in late fall 2015.



Luc Turgeon, Associate Professor, Political Studies, University of Ottawa, with Tashi Rabgey, Research Professor, Elliott School of International Affairs

TGAP TIMELINE

George Washington University

2014



Elliott School of International Affairs hosts TGAP Seminar on *Multilevel Governance and Tibet Policy Studies* on November 12-17, 2014

Shanghai



Second TGAP Forum held on *Conservation, Resource Management and Local Governance in Tibet: Challenges and Prospects in Policy Perspective*, at the Harvard Center Shanghai on August 10-12, 2013

2013

Québec



McGill University and Université du Québec à Montréal hosts first TGAP Forum on *Language Policy and Practice in Tibet*. Québec TGAP Policy Workshop leads to development of policy recommendations on Tibetan language use, regulation and reform

2012

Beijing

Beijing meeting on *Inclusive Development and Tibet: Concept, Practice, Experience* leads to emergence of a consensus on a framework for dialogue on governance in Tibet

2011

Oslo

Second Oslo meeting in Holmsbu, Norway, explores governance as framework for regional economic development issues

2010

Dartsedo



IEMG participates in Machik Social Business Forum in Dartsedo, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

University of Virginia



In partnership with Machik, UVA Symposium explores governance as framework for education and language policy discussions

Oslo



Chinese State Council's IEMG requests Oslo Coalition, through IGE, to host exploratory meeting of international Tibet scholars

2009

2008