The politics of student mobility: What do the EU-bound vs Russia-bound international student statistics tell us about the democratic development of post-Soviet Eurasia?

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Venue: Room 205, Runme Shaw Building, HKU
Chair: Dr Anatoly Oleksiyenko

Abstract:
The study examined links between outbound student mobility and the levels of attained democracy in former Soviet countries. This is a pertinent topic in the context marked by serious concerns for democratic development of post-Soviet Eurasia and increasing numbers of mobile students from these countries choosing to study either in Europe or in Russia. The analysis of cross-sectional data on student mobility and attained democracy showed that former Soviet countries with higher proportions of students studying in Europe have achieved higher levels of democratic development. In contrast, countries with higher proportions of students studying in the most popular, authoritarian destination – the Russian Federation – have reached significantly lower levels of democratic development. A parsimonious regression model containing two explanatory variables measuring outbound student mobility to Europe and to Russia explains 66% of the variation in the democratic development of former Soviet countries. Thus, by introducing a new theoretical framework of studying abroad as apprenticeship in democracy this paper explains how internationalisation of European higher education can offer the potential of facilitating democratic socialisation, especially in environments where large proportions of students from less-democratic countries choose to study in a democratic context for an extended period of time.

About the speaker:
Maia Chankseliani is Associate Professor of Comparative and International Education at the Department of Education and a Fellow of St Edmund Hall. She has worked internationally in policy-making, the non-profit sector, and education consultancy. She serves on the editorial boards of Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, Research in Comparative and International Education, and Cambridge Journal of Eurasian Studies. She is also serving on the Educational Sciences Panel at the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia), http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/about-us/directory/dr-maia-chankseliani/

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