



From Isolation To Integration: Internationalization, American Influence and the De-Sovietization Reform of Chinese Higher Education in 1980s and beyond

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October 18, 2018 (Thursday)

12:45 - 14:00

Room 205, Rume Shaw Building, HKU

(Chair: Dr. Anatoly Okeksiyenko)

Abstract:

The reform of China's higher education in the 1980s and beyond was part of the agenda of a greater political and economic reform and opening up. In a sense, this reform can be seen as a process of de-Sovietization, with major efforts made for integration to the international academic community and adaption to global model of higher education. Based on interviews with senior scholars, archival materials and relevant literature, this presentation analyzes the intertwined reforms of China's higher education in the 1980s. Key elements of the reforms include changing the over-specialized undergraduate education model, replacing the institutional structure formed in 1952 which copied the Soviet model, building the university not only as a teaching center but also a research center, embracing internationalization, and so on. At the same time, the university reforms were also shaped by geopolitics (the Sino-US relations) during this period. In particular, the American influences (e.g., policy transfer, Chinese American Scientists, etc.) played an important role in the de-Sovietization process. For various reasons, this reform has become only partially completed, meaning that the legacy of the Soviet model still continues to have an impact on Chinese higher education.

About the speaker:

Dr. Wenqin Shen is Associate Professor of Higher Education at the Graduate School of Education, Peking University. His research interests include history of higher education and sociology of higher education. His ongoing research projects include doctoral student mobility and the current history of Chinese higher education, among others.

*** This seminar is sponsored by the Tin Ka Ping Visiting Fellowship Scheme ***

~All are welcome~

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