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Higher Education Reforms in Ethiopia: Consequence of Shifting of Priority of Knowledge for Academics at Addis Ababa University¹Abiot Desta²

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Abstract

This paper examines the consequence of shifting of priority of knowledge for academics that characterizes the post-1991 higher education reforms in Ethiopia. It offers a comparative account of two faculties at Addis Ababa University (AAU): Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (AAiT) and College of Social Science (CSS). Relying on Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) and Institutional Sociology of Professions (ISP) and employing mixed-method research, the finding indicates that the shifting of priority of knowledge has the effect of shaping academic governance more aligned to micro-level institutional set-ups that signify economic decisions and individualistic orientations. In contrast, macro-level institutional set-ups that signify normative rules and collective orientations tend to emerge less important. Inter-faculty comparison shows that though academics at the AAiT tend to emerge in favor of micro-level institutions more than the academics at the CSS, a result of t-test (-1.701 and sig.0.094) shows that the difference between the faculties is not statistically significant. The implications are that the shifting of priority of knowledge has the tendency to increase economic rationality of the academics, shape professional identities along individual lines, and undermine collective identities. The shifting of priority of knowledge finds a better explanation in RCI as contrasted to ISP. This implies that governance arrangements at micro-level institutions may work to address short term needs, which are largely economic. Nonetheless, for a more sustainable arrangement of academic governance and development of professionalism, government and concerned bodies should take measures to strengthen macro-level normative rules and reconstruct collective academic identity.

Key terms: Academic governance/Addis Ababa University/Higher education reform/Institutions/ Shifting of priority of knowledge/

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1. Introduction

Higher education reforms in the post-1991 Ethiopia brought about a paradigm shift in the functions of universities. The role of university shifted from a cultural function of knowledge creation to a production function of human resource development (Amare, 2007). This heralds a shifting of priority of knowledge in the higher education sub-system of Ethiopia. Macro-economic policies have shaped educational goals and the instruments to achieve those goals. Even if the origins of such shifts in educational goals and strategies may be traced back to earlier national strategies of poverty reduction and economic growth, a national plan put in place by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), that is, Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTP I), made an explicit commitment to prioritizing knowledge sectors and aligning them to conditions that a growing economy may demand. Projection is made to grow to a middle income country by 2025. The plan states that the education provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will be made compatible with the quantity, type, and quality of the human resources the economy and the labor market may require. It provides for enrolment in graduate and postgraduate programs in line with a quota-based admission policy of “70:30 University-Intake-ratios”, a seemingly disproportionate allocation of students into the science and technology and the humanity and social sciences (MoFED, 2010). In contrast, Higher Education Proclamation No. 650/2009, which repealed Higher Proclamation No. 351/2003, claims a “demand-based proportional balance of fields” (p. 4979). Yet, the national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy of Ethiopia enacted by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) emphasizes the training of more number of students in science and technology (Most, 2012).

The implication of these macro-economic policies for higher education is that universities are increasingly entrusted with the responsibility to produce human power to meet the demands of the labor market and the society. Certainly, the need to strengthening the link between higher education and economic growth has become a widely upheld agenda. The conviction is that “tertiary education can help economies keep up or catch up with more technologically advanced societies” (Bloom, *et al.*, 2006). At the same time, it is conceivable that changes present challenges to the system, in particular, to the institutions or the rules that govern the changing roles and the players of the roles or to the “rules of the game” and the “actors”, as North (1991) prefers to term. The challenge is that the shifting of priority of knowledge gives a much higher regard to science and technology, which is in a sharp contrast to the humanity and social sciences.

One visible consequence of the implementation of the reform is the occurrence of a significant departure from past trends in the quantitative structure of student enrollment in the respective disciplines. Prior to reforms, the humanity and social sciences historically admitted more number of students than the science and technology disciplines. For instance, in 2001/2002 academic year, a combined enrollment for the social sciences and commerce was 43%. It showed growing trend that increased from a 25% enrollment in the 1992/1993 academic year. During the same period, enrollment for the science and technology was 17%. It showed a declining trend that dropped from a 30% enrollment in the 1992/1993 academic year (World Bank, 2003). Following reforms, in a decade, a reversal in the system was observed. Admission for science and technology peaked at 74% in the 2012/2013 academic year, which is about 335% growth

whereas admission for the humanity and social sciences dropped to 26%, which is about 40% decline (MoE, 2013).

In meeting educational objectives and national development goals, however, the intertwining choices made-the primacy of technical-technological skills over foundational knowledge and the enrolling of more number of students in technology than in social sciences- are expected to be mutually reinforcing. In the meantime, such a choice carries with it conflicting interests. It is thus argued that these reformatory instruments which have institutionalized the shifting of priority of knowledge in higher education correspond to a shifting of priority of academics' role and expectations in the respective fields of study.

Literature shows a similar trend elsewhere, in developed and developing countries. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2007) identified that a sweeping change in socio-economic and political landscapes that inform policy changes in education bred increasing changes in academics' work, preferences, governance, and their professionalism. In particular, it is depicted that, as Kogan and Teichler (2007, p.8) point out, the academia is emerging as "a domain in transition which is characterized by tensions" largely driven by the expansion of students. It is further highlighted that whereas academic freedom and collegial relationships are upheld as not only strong but also nearly taken for granted values of the academy and universities, the changing contexts of knowledge production put these values under overriding pressures, subsequently endangering the survival of the core identity of academics and universities (Becher and Trowler, 2001; Maassen, 2003).

A corresponding change that may add complexity to academics' work is a shift from elite higher education to mass higher education, which is becoming evident in Ethiopia (Kedir, 2008). According to Clark (1996), mass higher education has adverse implication for, among others, a substantive growth of disciplines. As he points out, substantive growth is knowledge-led and generated largely by research. In contrast, mass higher education presupposes growth in faculty, facilities, and system size principally grounded in increases in student numbers. Mass higher education is "reactive growth" as it is "student-demand-led" generated by student enrollment. The implication for academics, as Clark (2001) contends, is that,

Faculty are intensely tuned to substantive growth, while system officials and university administrators are obliged to give high priority to coping with student expansion and to governmental and popular interest in increased access (p. 424).

The paper argues that changes in academics' work trigger a need for understanding changes in academic governance thereby making the academics one of the intriguing subjects of research in higher education. In its publication, *Key Challenges to the Academic Profession*, UNESCO (2007) emphasized the need for a serious analysis of the status of the academic profession, which is changing. Induced by the change, the academic profession is facing key challenges in the 21st Century knowledge society (Kogan and Teichler, 2007), which espouses the knowledge economy (Altbach, 2010). Presumably, different actors in higher education, notably academics, students, and universities as institutions are affected differently by the same reform policy. In particular, the researcher is motivated by the conviction that the ways in which academics

are governed determine the quality of professionalized services they offer and, conceivably, the meeting of the objectives of higher education (Bureau and Andersen, 2014).

Focusing on shifting of priority of knowledge and taking Addis Ababa University as a case, this paper analyzes the effect of policy changes on micro and macro-level institutions that shape academic governance and academic professionalism. Accordingly, it raises and answers an original question. To the best of my knowledge, studies were not conducted on Ethiopian universities from the perspective of the paradigm shift in the function of universities that espoused a shifting of priority of knowledge. This was not particularly done from the perspective of the academics. Notable researches done on, among others, educational policy, the state of academic freedom, and institutional autonomy of universities include Amare Asgedom (2007), Amdissa Teshome (2008), Baye Yimam (2008), Kedir Asefa (2008), Kassahun Berhanu (2010a and 2010b), Teshome Yizengaw (2007, 2003). However, none of these researches directly dealt with the shifting of priority of knowledge and its consequence for the academics.

1.1. Objective of the Study

The objective of the research in this article is to examine the consequence of shifting of priority of knowledge for academic governance and academic professionalism at Addis Ababa University. It offers a comparative account of two faculties: Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (AAiT) and College of Social sciences (CSS). Accordingly, the following three basic questions are addressed.

1. How does shifting of priority of knowledge affect micro-level institutional set-ups, which shape academics governance and academic professionalism?
2. How does shifting of priority of knowledge affect macro-level institutional set-ups, which shape academics governance and academic professionalism? and
3. What is the variation between faculties in terms of the consequence of shifting of priority of knowledge for academic governance and academic professionalism?

2. Theoretical Framework

Bureau and Andersen (2014) suggest that a combination of *rational choice institutionalism* (RCI) and *institutionalist sociology of professions* (ISP) can be used as a theoretical framework in the study of professions. They argue that how professionals are governed determine the quality of professionalized services such as teaching (p.264). But a “duality of actions in professional fields” co-exists in the form of individual professional actors and professions as collective actors (p.265).

The theories mutually contribute to explaining the behaviors of professionals as individuals and professions as collectives, and how they are governed at micro and macro-levels. The authors recognize several factors that would compel the use of the RCI and the ISP in the study of professions. They argue that the role of expertise in contemporary societies is changing due to various public sector reforms, which also changed their governance. The authors identify two major factors, both of which are associated with the New Public Management (NPM) reforms. They identify two dimensions whereby the NPM reforms tailored a changing role of expertise in contemporary societies.

Firstly, the increasing infusion of market values into the public sector has transformed professional identities from the more traditional collective-normative occupations to individual-rational actors. This indicates a moving away from the ‘profession’ status to the ‘professional’ status. The authors observe:

In the past, the individual professional was primarily a part of a profession, following the professional norms of the occupation; this type of professional tended to be less visible as an individual. Presently, professionals emerge center stage and increasingly make important economic decisions. Nevertheless, professionals are still very much part of a profession (Bureau & Andersen, 2014, p. 270)

Secondly, there is a challenge to professional autonomy as a result of the NPM measures such as intensified competition to meet standards and measures of performance. Imposed discipline tends to empower other actors over professionalized services, which may stand to the detriment of the powers of professionals. Hence, to capture a more complete understanding of occupational groups and their governance at micro and macro levels, the authors argue for the use of a triangulated version of RCI and ISP.

2.1 Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI)

“The rational choice institutional approach to public administration tries to understand public employee behavior based on microeconomic assumptions” (Bureau & Andersen, 2014, p. 265). The authors point out that the underlying assumptions are rooted in methodological individualism and micro-economic expectations. The theory assumes that:

... behavior reflects the choices made by individuals as they, constrained by institutions, try to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs. ... the main focus is on how micro-level institutions impact on individual behavior and outcomes (... Miller, 2000b, p. 535). ... Studies of employee behavior also reflect the approach’s microeconomic legacy. (Bureau and Andersen, 2014, p. 272)

The RCI draws on a utilitarian approach to explaining individual behaviors vis-à-vis economic interests. It considers individuals as utility maximizing persons whereby, essentially, employees get committed to their work in expectations of material gains. From the perspective of RCI, therefore, micro-level institutions such as remuneration schemes are key determinants of how professionals may be governed. However, the authors contend that RCI is not a strict or “canonical” rational choice theory that assumes persons as purely cost-benefit calculators, utility-maximizing beings or purely economic-rational-individuals. In addition, RCI considers professional traits that may be achieved collectively (e.g. expert knowledge, specialized education, code of ethics etc.). RCI recognizes macro-level institutional set-ups as equally important as the economic-rationality or utility maximizing behavior of individual actors. This approach is thus at a stark contrast with the ‘methodological individualistic’ rational choice approach, which does not include socially instituted patterns of behavior. Yet, RCI sticks to the core assumptions of rational choice theory. Also, it proposes sanctions for noncompliance in the interest to maintain a profession’s professional status at least in the long run. Generally, as the authors show, RCI “expects professional actors to act as individual

professionals, incentivized by personal gain, but constrained by sanctioned intra-occupational norm” (p. 275).

2.2 Institutional Sociology of Professions (ISP)

ISP adopts an institutionalist approach to analyzing professions and their dynamics (p.265). Its assumptions offer an explanatory power for understanding ‘collective actors’ which are treated as part of macro-level institutions. The authors maintain that ISP takes into account contextual factors for which it is so termed. “The focus on collective-actors and macro-institutions”, as the authors understand, “allows for ample analyses of the governance of professions, but not governance of professionals” (p. 271). ISP presupposes a strong link between professional actors and the social organization of power. Bureau and Andersen (2014) argue:

The expectation of the institutionalist sociology of professions is that professional actors act collectively as professions and that the activities of professions take shape through specific, institutionally conditioned struggles for power (p. 276).

Both regulative and normative institutions impact on how professions are governed. These regulative and normative rules constitute macro-level institutions that in turn embrace power positions and professional values and norms. In summary, as they state:

[RCI] expects professional actors to act as individual professionals and for their behavior to depend on incentives and norms sanctioned by other professionals. [ISP] expects professional actors to act as collective professions and for the profession’s activities to be contingent on the interplay among actors who have a stake in governance or as contingent on the specific organization of work (p. 278).

The theories have different assumptions about professional actors and professions. Taken together, they offer a more complete understanding of the professions. “The two perspectives”, according to the authors, “emerge as each other’s blind corners; ... they offer different yet potentially complementary insights; ... they lend themselves to theoretical triangulation” (p. 278). Triangulated, whereas RCI enables to analyze micro-level institutions such as economic decisions and behaviors of professionals as individuals, ISP offers a theoretical lens to view macro-level institutions such as power positions and the behavior of professions as collective actors.

In this paper, the triangulation of the two theories has provided a comprehensive insight into understanding academics’ choice of, and response to, various governance strategies at micro and macro-level institutions. In doing so, it has made possible to capture both sides of the same story by framing the analysis within the institutional incentives operationalized to understand the changing behavior of academics in response to a changing policy environment.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design and Research Approach

Cross-sectional case study design was employed. Whereas the data were collected at a single point in time (from August 2014 to September 2014), the study population was drawn from AAU as a case. The reason for the selection of AAU was one of feasibility in terms of time, money, and accessibility. Case study is also justified on the following conditions as Yin (2003, p.1) suggests, that is, when, for example, “how” questions are raised, “the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context”. The study employed mixed-method-research approach. The choice of the approach also emanated mainly from the nature of the research questions. These are ‘what’ and ‘how’-questions. As Creswell (2013) maintains, research questions of ‘what’ and ‘how’ nature are generally conceived from the perspective of the pragmatist world view. In their attempt to maximize the freedom of choice of methods, pragmatist researchers make use of a comparative advantage of the mixed-method research approach (Johnson et al., 2007). In this article, qualitative concepts transformed into quantified data and qualitative narrations were mixed. As suggested by, for example, King et al. (1994) and Johnson et al. (2007), the mixing occurred during the research design, the design of instruments, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of the results.

3.2 Data Types, Sources, and Instruments

The research relied on qualitative and quantitative data. Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through interview data questionnaire respectively. As Layder (1998) suggests, forms of data-collection and observations were guided by prior theoretical assumptions rooted in the RCI and the ISP.

3.3 Sampling Methods, Sample Size, and Response Rate

Faculty as the level of analysis was purposively selected. The reason was that the study makes a comparative analysis of two faculties wherein the shifting of priority of knowledge occurred. Judgmental sampling was employed to identify key informants. The bases of judgment were positions and relevant research experiences. Whereas it was expected that there were a large number of academic researchers with high research profile in the areas of higher education at AAU, it was tentatively planned to obtain interview data from three senior academic researchers. However, time allowed conducting interview with two of them. Snowballing sampling method was found important to determine the next most appropriate informant by asking the first person interviewed to suggest additional informant for interviewing (Babbie, 2010).

Accordingly, a total of five interviews were conducted. Four interviews were conducted at AAU. Two of them were conducted with heads of faculty, one from the ‘Dean’ of the College of Social sciences (Key Informant Interview-1) and the other from the ‘Deputy Scientific Director’ of the Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (Key Informant Interview-2). The other interviews were conducted with two senior academic

researchers, one from the Department of Political Science and International Relations (PSIR) (i.e. Key Informant Interview-3), and the other from the Institute of Educational Research (IER), that is, Key Informant Interview-4. Aiming at diversifying sources of information and strengthening a balance of viewpoints, one interview (Key Informant Interview-5) was conducted with an official at the Ministry of Education (MoE).

As stated earlier, questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. Participants in the survey were academic staffs in the two faculties. Hence, academic staff was used as a sampling unit. Lists of the names of academic staffs in the two faculties were used as sampling frames. This means that two sampling frames, one from the CSS and the other from the AAiT, were used as strata. Accordingly, a list of names of 145 academic staffs of the CSS and a list of names of 402 academic staffs of the AAiT constituted the sampling frames, accounting for a total population of 547 study participants in the survey. Homogeneity was assumed among the participants under each faculty and random sampling method was used to determine each sample unit. This makes it a stratified random sampling method. Initially, a random sample size of 55 participants out of 547 academics staffs was determined at 10% logical-minimum to ensure representation. This was informed by the conviction that a small sample size can be a representative sample for a relatively homogenous population. As Babbie (2010, p.196) suggests, it could even be possible that where, for example, there is an extreme case of perfect homogeneity, “any single case would suffice as a sample to study characteristics of the whole population”. In this research, the attribute of being an academic staff was the criterion to consider the participants as homogenous. Nonetheless, this is not to claim that the academics in question demonstrated a perfect regularity but showed a reasonable degree of homogeneity in a sense that they were all academics or faculty members in the respective disciplines.

3.4 Response Rate

Aiming at strengthening the above explanation offered in determining the minimum sample size for quantitative data collection, an attempt was made to increase the probability of response rate by administering 82 questionnaires, which accounts for 15% of the population. Accordingly, 22 sample units out of 145 were drawn from the CSS and 18 were returned while 60 sample units out of 402 were drawn from the AAiT and 48 were returned, accounting for a total sample size of 66 (about 12%) with 80.5% response rate.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

Analysis was made at organization level. Accordingly, it occurred at the faculty level. As per the Higher Education Proclamation No. 650/2009, the term “college” represents an academic unit that operates above the level of single discipline or departmental unit but below the university, and offers degrees in more than one but interrelated disciplines as a field of study. In practice, even if more than one institutes are found to constitute some colleges, the terms ‘college’, ‘institute’, and ‘faculty’ are generally considered as the same organizational levels. At Addis Ababa University, the social sciences are formally organized as a College and the technology disciplines are organized as an Institute. In this paper, where the term ‘faculty’ is used, it refers to the

College and the Institute, and where ‘faculty member(s)’ is used, it refers to an individual academic or a group of academic staffs.

The analysis and presentation of data involves the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data analysis was done on the basis of quantitative information obtained through five-points-scale attitudinal measure (Likert’s attitudinal scale) questions, which provided a ranked ordinal data. Statistical tools were applied in describing the data and measuring variations. The ranks of the ordinal data were distributed evenly from ‘1’ to ‘5’ on the likert-scale. Relying on this even distribution, a parametric test, that is, the difference between ‘mean’ of two sets of scores, is employed in place of a nonparametric test, the difference between medians of two sets of scores (Siegel, 1956; Agresti, 2007). But the use of ‘mean’ required a ‘rank transformation procedure’ whereby a parametric procedure is applied to the ranks of the data instead of the data themselves. Transformation was done by replacing the data with their ranks, and then applying the parametric t-test to the ranks (Conover & Iman, 1981, p.124). The use of mean was prioritized over the use of median to measure variations in the evenly ordered scores, making it possible to do computation by using numbers assigned to the ranks on the likert-scale, and apply the t-test as a statistical measure of variation (Agresti, 2007). Analysis of qualitative data was done by deciphering thematic categories of responses to semi-structured open-ended interviews and, in some cases, direct quotations of the words of informants’ were used with the intention to “presenting the results in participants’ own voices” (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009, p. 288). Generally, qualitative discussion follows from the quantitative analysis. The use of narrations and tables were the major means of data presentation.

4. Results

4.1 Characteristics of Research Participants

Table 2: Characteristics of Research Participants

Attribute		Faculty				Total		Majority
		CSS		AAiT		Within attribute		
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
Sex	Male	17	94.4	44	87.5	59	89.4	Male
	Female	1	5.6	6	12.5	7	10.6	
Age	18-35	5	27.8	25	52.1	30	45.5	35-64
	36-64	12	66.7	23	47.9	35	53	
	> 64	1	5.6	0	0.0	1	1.5	
Marital status	Single	5	27.8	22	45.8	27	40.9	Married
	Married	13	72.2	25	52.1	38	57.6	
	Divorced	0	0.0	1	2.1	1	1.5	
	Widowed	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Education	PhD	13	72.2	16	33.4	29	46	Master’s
	Master’s	5	27.8	32	66.6	37	64	
Acad. Rank	Professor	15	83.3	16	33.4	31	47	Lecturer
	Lecturer	3	16.7	32	66.6	35	53	
Experience	< 5yrs	0	0.0	12	25	12	18.2	5-10yrs
	5 -10yrs	11	61.1	25	52.1	38	54.5	
	> 10yrs	7	39.9	11	22.9	18	27.3	
Nationality	Ethiopian	17	94.4	48	100	65	98.5	Ethiopian
	Expatriate	1	5.6	0	0.0	1	1.5	
Average salary	Ethiopian	ETB 9,098		ETB 8,710		ETB 8,816		ETB 8,864
	Expatriate	NA*		NA*		NA*		

Source: Own Survey, 2014

NA*: Salaries of expatriate staffs was excluded with the intention to avoid data misrepresentation due to a different payment arrangement.

As it is observable from table above, the majority of the academics who participated in the research is male, aged between 35 and 64, are married, hold master's degree, lecturers in academic rank, worked for ten or less years, and are Ethiopian. Average salary is reported as 8,864 ETB or about 420USD.

4.2 Consequence of Shifting of Priority of Knowledge for Micro-level Institutions

Table 3: Comparison of micro-level and macro-level institutions across faculties

Faculty		Institutions	
		Micro-institutions	Macro-institutions
College of Social science (CSS)	Mean	36.33	26.278
	N	18	18
	Std. Deviation	5.258	8.1371
Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (AAiT)	Mean	38.81	19.375
	N	48	48
	Std. Deviation	5.278	6.1631
Total	Mean	38.14	21.258
	N	66	66
	Std. Deviation	5.349	7.3742

Source: Own Survey, 2014

The above descriptive statistics compares results for micro-level and macro-level institutions across faculties. The obtained mean value (36.33) of the preference of participants at the CSS for micro-level institutions is above the expected mean (30) by a value of 6.33. But it is below the maximum expected mean (50) by a value of 13.67. The obtained mean value (38.81) of the preference of participants at the AAiT for micro-level institutions is above the expected mean (30) by a value of 8.81. But it is below the maximum expected mean (50) by a value of 11.19. The result shows (i) participants in both faculties had a positive or high level of preference for micro-level institutions; and (ii) the preference of participants at AAiT for micro-level institutions was higher than the preference of participants at the CSS for the same.

4.3 Consequence of Shifting of Priority of Knowledge for Macro-Level Institutions

As it is observed from table 3 above, the obtained mean value (26.278) of the preference of participants for macro-level institutions at the CSS is slightly below the expected mean (27) by a value of 0.722. It is very close to the mean value which is described as "undecided", implying an indifferent position of preference for the macro-level institutional setups. The obtained mean value (19.375) of the preference of participants for macro-level institutions at the AAiT is below the expected mean (27) by a value of 7.625. The result shows (i) participants in both faculties had a negative or low level of preference for macro-level institutions; and (ii) the preference of participants at AAiT for macro-level institutions was lower than the preference of participants at the CSS for the same.

4.4 Variation between Faculties

4.4.1 Variation of Preference for Micro-Level Institutions between Faculties

The table below displays the result of *Independent Samples Test* for micro-level institutions, consisting of the statistics that are critical to evaluating the significance of variation between faculties.

Table 4: T-test Result of Variation of Preference for Micro-level Institutions

Independent Sample Test									
Micro-level Institutions	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.351	.556	-1.701	64	.094	-2.479	1.457	-5.390	.432
Equal variances not assumed			-1.704	30.689	.098	-2.479	1.455	-5.447	.489

Source: Own Survey, 2014

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated that the significance value (.556) is greater than the confidence interval (0.05). It suggests *Equal variances assumed* for the groups (considering CSS as group 1 and AAiT as group 2). Thus looking at the first row, the t-test value (-1.701 and sig.0.094) shows that the difference between the CSS and the AAiT is not significant.

4.4.2 Variation of Preference for Macro-Level Institutions between Faculties

The table below displays the result of *Independent Samples Test* for macro-level institutions, consisting of the statistics that are critical to evaluating the significance of variation between faculties.

Table 5: T-test Result of Variation of Preference for Macro-level Institutions

Independent Sample Test									
Macro-level Institutions	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	8.959	.004	3.703	64	.000	6.9028	1.8640	3.1791	10.6265
Equal variances not assumed			3.265	24.688	.003	6.9028	2.1142	2.5457	11.2598

Source: Own Survey, 2014

Under the *Levene's Test for Equality of Variances*, the significance value (.004) is less than the confidence interval (0.05). It suggests *Equal variances not assumed* for the groups (considering CSS as group 1 and AAiT as group 2). Thus, the t-test value (3.265 and sig. 0.003) shows a significant difference between the CSS and the AAiT.

5. Discussion

The finding indicates that academics tend to respond more to micro-level institutional arrangements than to macro-level institutional set-ups. Qualitative evidences consistently support the quantitative data. As a means and goals of pursuing academic career, the case at Addis Ababa University depicts that there is a growing tendency of the academics to align work more closely with better pay. Correspondingly, they tend to get discouraged principally by perceived or actual discriminatory economic incentives and disincentives. A remark made by one of the key informants can attest to the claim. Speaking about the prevailing condition at the university, he stated: "... this is a shift from the university function as a cultural institution to economic function. This can be done more by the science than the humanities" (Key Informant Interview -1, September 2014). Speaking about the dimension from which the academics may support or oppose the policy, he stated, "I would say [that] the perception of the university professors in the '30' category would be negative; do you know why it is negative? It is simply against their interest". Recapping what their interest may represent, he explained that,

If the problem were in the sciences, they would be critical; they would not go against the principle. They would, however, be critical because they believe that they are overburdened with student population. They would say they have less [inadequate] facilities, you know, they have all that kind of things. Then, I don't believe that people would transcend their interests, especially in Ethiopia; they would not go beyond their interests and hold positions irrespective of that interest. The policy affects the interests of professors who are working in the humanities and the social sciences, and obviously, they go against it. [...] I mean we can't go beyond the idea of rationality. (Key Informant Interview-4)

The reiterated views of the above key informant indicate that, in both of the faculties, economic issues emerged as outstanding concerns. It signifies that academics at the AAiT emerge critical of, among others, the growing student population, the inadequacy of physical facilities and the pressure thereon, and of their increasing work burden, which would mean that they consider revisiting the balance between their work and their pay. It is also implied that academics at the CSS have to cope with the feeling of discrimination and perceived loss and lack of benefits as a result of a relative reduction in the number of students. In confirming this assertion, the informant told, "[i]t is against my interest, against my employment; all you know, the benefits, I would be against it" (ibid). But this idea of reduction in student size at the CSS was discredited by most of the other key informants interviewed, most of them arguing to the contrary, stating that the absolute number of students actually increased at the CSS as a college due mainly to the increase in the overall intake of students. Other than reduction in the aggregate student size, an outstanding problem mentioned with respect to the CSS is a fear of closure of some disciplines, which made the respective academics worry about tenure security. Another challenge to the CSS is a jeopardized image of the social sciences as

reform policies sidelined its relevance (Key Informant Interview-3). As this informant contended, the effect could even go beyond the interests of the existed academics especially in its implications for the future of social sciences and social scientists, and for the generation of knowledge as a principal university mission. Put in his own words,

What happens in actual fact, for example, what happens in established university disciplines like geography, history, philosophy, the language, and so and so forth, they don't get students; students were not assigned to these fields. And this means that the younger generation enrolled in the higher education institutions, meaning if the country at the end of the day, if this trend continues, if it is not corrected, we don't have historians; we don't have philosophers; we don't have geographers; which create a serious crisis in knowledge creation (sic.). (Key Informant Interview-3)

It suggests that the trouble with declining disciplines which are considered the cornerstones of knowledge would rather be felt over time and in the long run. But declining professionalism would accelerate it. Emphasizing the importance of the issue, the informant posited that,

... to completely ignore university mission that revolves around knowledge creation, which are more or less centered in the fields of social sciences and humanities, [is to ensure that] it would be disadvantageous in the long run if it is seriously looked at. (Key Informant Interview-3)

The informant described the whole approach of the policy as utilitarian in nature. He pointed out that,

For example, if you take [disciplines like] philosophy in countries like Ethiopia, they don't fetch a penny in the market places. But these are the cornerstones of knowledge at higher education level. So you can't disregard it. So the grab is more or less utilitarian. (Key Informant Interview-3)

Where the grab is utilitarian as a system, the likelihood is that everyone else behaves accordingly. However, this is in a sharp contrast to what is fundamentally expected from academics in view of their traditional orientations toward intangible gains embedded in status, pride, dignity, professional integrity, and intrinsic merits apparently derived from the production of knowledge and the pursuit of truth. As these merits pass them by because they put it aside in exchange for their temptation for fetching more incomes through, for example, taking up fulltime employment in other industries and ministries while maintaining positions in the university, they would inevitably endanger the very basis of their profession-hood embedded in their academic identity. In cases where, for example, academics take a flight to industries by abandoning their position altogether or look for the narrowest possible get-out to flee the country or refuse to return from study abroad, the university situation would lend itself to a perpetual out flux of refugee academics. Increasing responsibilities and changing roles following increasing

number of students at the AAiT and the feeling of uncertainty of the future of social sciences following an official shift way of interest at the CSS do provide perceptible impetuses for revisiting and rationalizing one's position in the university as a viable employment option. To take to note of the particulars, workload increased and the focus changed from research to teaching, especially at the AAiT. But the most common reason provided was that a corresponding reward system had not been put in place, which is still about money, and not about the job of the academic. Indisputably, salary scales did not change corresponding to the shifting of priority of knowledge. Where there was a change in salary, it was not formally linked to the changing of roles and responsibilities that stemmed from the shifting of priority of knowledge.

The consequence of the shifting of priority of knowledge for governance arrangements varied only slightly from faculty to faculty. Whereas the variation between faculties in terms of macro-level institutions is considerable, faculties varied only slightly in terms of micro-level institutions. Analysis of indicators of both micro and macro-level institutional set-ups showed a growing importance of measures that have economic values whereby academics engage, in both faculties, in meeting economic needs and dealing with economic challenges. For example, academics took financial measures more seriously than intra-discipline norms as a means of sanctioning behaviors. When compared with, for example, a loss of pride, dignity, and other measures that may undermine professional integrity, academics instead desperately tended to avoid fine as means of sanctioning behavior. Trowler (1998) labels these academics survivors.

Explanations offered for the growing tendency of academics' preference for micro-level institutions are attributed to, mainly, the introduction of new and increased demands in the work environment. It is especially the case at the AAiT where increase in student number resulted in administrative overlapping, decline in resource base, increased workload in routines, and declining interest in a specialized education and expert knowledge. The system lends itself to academics' work that promoted a generalist kind of knowledge. For instance, academics not only pursued higher salaries outside the university but they also designed academic programs on the basis of utility, that is, marketability criterion. Under such conditions, as Henkel (2005) maintains, discipline-based goals, practices, and values tend to change in disorientation thereby changing professional identities in bewilderment.

As Clark (2001) points out, whereas specialty knowledge presupposes substantive growth, general education forestalls mass higher education. The challenge may be that as the academics gradually shift away from their specialty areas and dwell on pursuing a more generalist approach to teaching, research, and service, the potential for innovative engagement would be delayed or curbed at all. Further, as Burau and Andersen (2014) contend the need to conform to performance standards and imposed discipline constrains academics thereby challenging their professional autonomy.

The finding is more consistent with RCI than ISP. It conveys the message that academics are emerging more rational actors or self-interested individual professionals than they have become associates of the collectivity. In general, it is observed that the shifting of priority of knowledge tended to shape academics' preference whereby they prioritize economic gains over professional norms and values. Academics' interest, behavior, and their work tended to favor the rules and norms of the market. It is in line with the argument held by Burau and Andersen (2014) in a sense that the policy has had

the effect of presenting the same challenges brought about by the NPM reforms. A growing tendency of academics' economic rationality entailed a growing infusion of market values into the university system. A growing tendency to make important economic decisions independent of the academic profession meant that academics emerged center stage as individual decision-makers rather than as a part of the academic profession (Bliedie, 1994).

It has consequences for educational outcomes. The market-focused orientation of the regime in the creation of specialty programs and program expansion promotes general education suggesting that a gradually failing specialization makes the desire for producing qualified professionals such as engineers a myth (Key Informant Interview-3). Seen from the perspective of the social sciences, as discussed earlier, a closure of a discipline appears to be an extreme case. Whereas academics would find themselves worrying about tenure security, in disciplines whose prospect of survival is relatively higher, for example, political science and international relations, sociology, social work, and psychology, the imposed marketability-criterion creates a similar effect on program expansion, specialization, and research agenda, leading up to a declining specialty graduates, and with poor quality, ultimately downplaying academics' job itself. This further disorients academics' preference, complicates governance arrangements, and compromises academic professionalism.

6. Conclusion

Analyzing Addis Ababa University as a particular case, this research has shown a growing economic rationality and individualist orientation of academics in response to a shifting of priority of knowledge introduced by the post-1991 higher education reforms in Ethiopia. In other words, micro-level institutional arrangements are emphasized at the expense of the macro-level regulatory regimes embedded in professional norms. The academics emerged center stage as individual actors making important economic decisions and independent of the academic profession. This gravity by a ruthless pursuit of economic gains undermines professional values and norms. In a university context where autonomy is cherished in exchange for a trust built into professionalism, it is argued that an irresistible tendency of the academics to run after money and in a disregard for collectively promoted and sanctioned behaviors would mean, among others, a fragile academics' work, hastening a disorganization and powerlessness of the academics that would eventually be left ungoverned. Whereas the findings of the research can be explained by the RCI to some length, expectations of the ISP are seldom manifest. However, in light of the multifarious reform measures being taken in the higher education sub-system of Ethiopia, it should be noted that the factors and actors that affect the governance and professionalization of academics go beyond the scope of the reforms that introduced the shifting of priority of knowledge. In this regard, gaps and questions remain with which to grapple and continuously. One of such outstanding assignments that may stand out in sharp relief is, thus, the "how question" of positively coupling the shifting of priority of knowledge and academic governance not only at Addis Ababa University but also in Ethiopia in general.

The implication is that establishing governance arrangements at micro-level institutions may work to address short term needs, which are largely economic. But a

lesson to be learnt is that a whole scale reform that envisages success should come with a clearly spelt out instrument of implementation, economic incentive or otherwise, as a framework that governs change. In this regard, for a more sustainable arrangement of academic governance and development of academic professionalism, government and concerned bodies should take measures that help strengthen normative rules. These measures should help reconstruct and strengthen collective academic identity without relegating the role of the individual academic. In other words, measures should be taken to meet a balance between “economic-academics” and “professional-academics”, which should also be in a way that help address the perceived discrepancy in economic rewards brought about by the shifting of priority of knowledge between and among academics in the respective disciplines. Further implication for future research is that a comparative study of universities would help address the limitations of a single case study if that is also combined with a more rigorous scientific method by which to distinguish meticulously the influences of various reforms, including the effect of the global policy environment.

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Key Informants

- 1) Key Informant Interview-1, Deputy Scientific Director, Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (AAiT), Addis Ababa University, March, 2015, Addis Ababa.
- 2) Key Informant Interview-2, Dean, College of Social Sciences (CSS), Addis Ababa University, September, 2014, Addis Ababa.
- 3) Key Informant Interview-3, Senior academic staff, Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Social Sciences (CSS), Addis Ababa University, September, 2014, Addis Ababa.
- 4) Key Informant Interview-4, Senior academic staff, Institute of Educational Research (IER), Addis Ababa University, September, 2014, Addis Ababa.
- 5) Key Informant Interview-5: Director for Planning, Resource Mobilization and Education Management Information Systems Directorate, Ministry of Education (MoE), Addis Ababa.