



北大教育经济研究（电子季刊）
Economics of Education Research (Beida)
北京大学教育经济研究所主办
Institute of Economics of Education, Peking
University

第7卷第2期
（总第23
期）

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China's Academic Profession in the Context of Social Transition: Institutional Perspective¹²

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Abstract: China's academic profession is chosen as an object for this study. Its characteristics and relationship with changing social institutions are explored by historical approach and from institutional perspective, which includes two elements of government and organization. Major findings are summarized below. Firstly, in accordance with China's legal framework, public and private higher education institutions are categorized as different legal entities. This leads to favorable conditions for academic profession in public sector, and less favorable conditions for academic profession in private one. This also barricades personnel flow and competition between the two sectors. Secondly, personnel system has been changed significantly since reform and open up policy in 1978. The change is largely led by the central government. In faculty hiring and promotion aspects, qualification and performance instead of seniority are more emphasized. In compensation and benefit aspects, egalitarian is de-emphasized and performance-based income gains more weight than before. Lastly, various evidences show that China's higher education institutions evolve from so-called *danwei* under planned system to organization under the market system. Accordingly, academic profession evolves from *danwei* man to organizational man due to institutional change.

Key words: academic profession, social transition, institutional perspective, China

I. Introduction

The characteristics of academic profession are shaped by its social contexts. Economic, political and social factors exert influence on academic profession through

¹ Academic profession in this paper refers specifically to the faculty in higher education institutions in mainland China, excluding research fellows in independent research institutions.

² Hereby I want to express my sincere thanks to Professor Futao Huang at Hiroshima University for many helps to this study.

such institutional existences as government, market and organization. The relations between institutional existences and academic profession can be illustrated on Figure 1 as a general analytical framework. This paper is an attempt to elaborate the social and historical characteristics of academic profession in China.

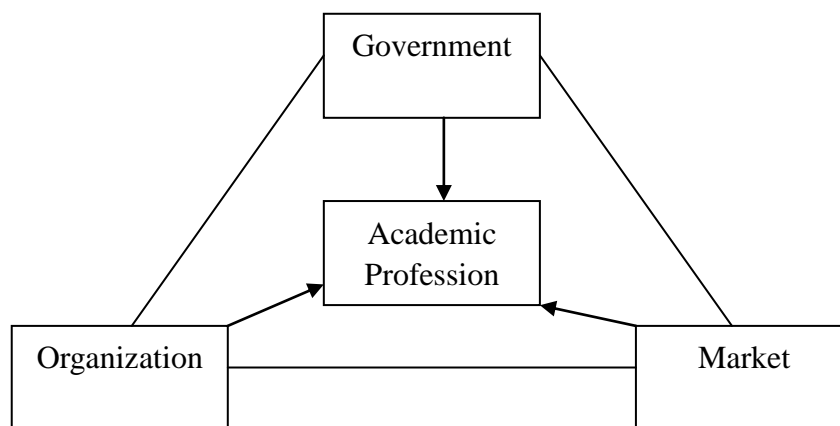


Figure 1: Three institutional elements and academic profession

Sociology of profession gives much attention to the relations between profession and political and economic backgrounds, which nevertheless have not been necessarily reflected in studies of academic profession. Many studies of academic profession emphasized on activities at individual level, but barely examined how academic profession is embedded in a large society (Rhoades, 2007). Individual approach is effective for a closed and static system, but not so for an open and ever-changing system. Since China adopted reform and opening up policy in 1978, drastic changes have taken place. Therefore, it's appropriate to analyze China's academic profession from institutional perspective.

The new institutional theory emerged in 1970s, has been applied to educational studies. It attempts to examine how institutional environment influence organizational structure and activities (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank and Schofer, 2007). The theory is often applied together with historical approach. In educational studies, the theory emphasizes on the deep structure of schools, as well as the connection between schools and embedding social system (Crowson, Boyd, and Mawhinney, 1996). However, there are few studies on academic profession from institutional perspective. This paper attempts to analyze how governmental policies and organizational arrangements influence academic profession.

In the past 30 years, fundamental changes have taken place in China's society. The changes are featured with transition from a planned economic system to a market-oriented one. The economic transition brought about rapid economic growth. China's GDP grew from RMB 364.5 billion in 1978 to RMB 24 trillion in 2007 at an

average annual growth rate of around 10%; its economic size rose from the tenth to the fourth in the world; it now accounts for 6% of the world's total economy compared to the previous 1.8%. ³Changes not only took place in economic spheres, but also in higher education. The enrollments of China's higher education expanded rapidly and achieved threshold of massification in 2002. ⁴The enrollment was 23 million, and the gross enrollment rate reached 23% in 2007. ⁵According to statistics, about 80 million students are receiving post-secondary education around the world in 2000 (Altbach, 2002, 2007). It is estimated roughly that China represents for one fourth of post secondary enrollment in the world. Accordingly, Chinese academic profession numbered 1 million ⁶also roughly accounts for one fourth of world's total numbered 3.5 million (Altbach, 2002).

Social transition exerts influence on academic profession through such institutions as government, organization and market. Before the reform, as China's universities were tightly controlled by the government, the scope and contents of their activities were highly determined by the government. Due to the same constraints, university faculty was also confined to campus space without reasonable cross-university-border exchanges (Yan and Chen, 2008). Some scholars entitled China's work unit in general and universities in particular as *danwei*, which is in sharp contrast to western organization, and the members thereof *danwei* man, which differs from organizational man (Walder, 1996).

During the reform of China's higher education, a guideline has always been to modify relationship between universities and government, and reduce universities' dependence on government. As a result, China's universities are gradually shifting from closed and dependent *danwei* in Chinese sense to open and independent organization in western sense. By the same token, academic profession is also shifting gradually from *danwei* man whose activities are constrained to *danwei*, to organizational man whose activities go beyond campus.

II. Legal framework, administrative system and academic profession

State laws and political system cannot be neglected when studying academic profession because they have much impact on academic profession (Enders, 2006). In most European countries, academic profession has status of civil servants. In the UK and the US, academic profession has professional status independent from government (Rhoades, 2007). How is university faculty defined by law in China? It is necessary to elaborate how Chinese universities are defined by law before answering that question. According to the *General Principles of the Civil Law of the PRC*, which was promulgated in 1986 and has been effective to date, China's institutions can be classified into four types including enterprise (*qiye*), state organ (*zhengfu jiguan*),

³ <http://www.huaxia.com/zt/tbgz/08-032/1264410.html>. 11th March, 2009.

⁴ http://www.edu.cn/jiao_yu_fa_zhan_498/20080901/20080901_321919.shtml. 11th March, 2009.

⁵ http://www.edu.cn/HomePage/Zhong_guo_jiao_yu/jiao_yu_zi_xun/shu_zi/jiao_yu_fa_zhan/index.shtml. 11th March, 2009.

⁶ See figures in Table 1.

public unit (*shiyè danwei*) and civil unit (*shetuán*). Enterprise, government organ and civil unit in China are comparable to for-profit organization, public organization and non-profit organization in western countries respectively, whereas public unit is a unique existence (Zhou, 2008). Based on legal specification, Chinese universities can be divided into public and private ones. Public universities fall into the public unit category while private ones are regarded as civil unit specifically entitled as private non-business entity (*minbān fèi qìyè*).

Depending on the legal nature of different institutions, faculty in public universities and private ones are treated differently. Those in public universities belong to the public unit staffing system. Any staff within the staffing system is paid by central or provincial governmental budget. Their basic salary and welfare including medical care, housing, pension and unemployment insurances, etc, are favorably secured. In comparison, faculty in private sector is employee of a particular university, whose compensation come solely from the university without any public subsidy. Moreover, their welfare is less favorably secured. Consequently, we observed less apparent variation in public sector and more apparent variation in private sector in compensation and benefit. The differences in compensation and job security lead to the fact that job opportunities in public universities are more attractive for talents than those in private ones. Due to different staffing systems, there are little movements of faculty between two kinds of universities. That is a general picture of faculty in public and private universities in China. Table 1 shows the arrangement for both institutions and faculty. Calculations depict that public universities account for 84.54% of the total number and faculty therein for 84.66%; and that private ones account for 15.46% and faculty therein for 15.34%.

Table 1: Academic professions in Chinese public and private universities (2007)

		Public university	Private university
Organization	Legal entity	Public unit	Private non-business
	Number of universities	1613	295*
Academic profession	Legal entity	Public unit staffing	Employment-based staffing
	Number of faculty	989140	179160

Source of data: *Yearbook of China Education 2007*, People's Education Press.

*Apart from 295 private colleges that are allowed to issue bachelor and associate degrees, there are 318 private independent colleges issuing bachelor degree and 906 education institutions providing services of self-taught exam. The latter two types are not included in the table.

When differences exist between public universities and private universities and among the faculty therein respectively, there is no denying that differences also exist within both public universities and private ones, as well as within the pools of faculty in public universities and those in private ones. In public sector, there are two types of universities: universities attached to central ministries including Ministry of Education

and universities attached to local governments. The former, funded by central budget⁷ boasts of abundant educational resources and higher quality while the latter, funded by local governments, provide less educational resources and lower quality. Faculties in the former enjoy higher income than those in the latter, generally speaking. The relation between administration and universities can be illustrated by Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of academic professions in different public universities (2007)

		Centrally-attached	Local-attached
Organization	Funding source	Central budget	Local budget
	Number of universities	111*	1502
Academic profession	Compensation	Decent	Poor
	Number of faculty	162423	826717

Source of data: *Yearbook of China Education 2007*, People's Education Press.

*Out of the 111 universities attached to central ministries, 73 are under direct administration of Ministry of Education and the other 38 under other central ministries.

In addition to the institutional and administrative factors listed in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively, niche also exerts influences on universities and faculty and have implications for the studies of universities and faculty. This paper cannot discuss all of these factors in detail. But the point is that we need to take organization and even environment into account to better understand academic profession.

III. Evolution of personnel system and academic profession

China's private university system was established beyond the existing public one in the 1980s. The higher education system reform was mainly referred to the public university system. The following section will discuss briefly the situation of private university faculty and then focus on analyzing public university.

Private universities enjoy freedom from the very beginning as they are never part of the public ownership system. They used to engage some part-time teachers from the public counterparts, because it was very hard for them to find full-time teachers (Yan, 2004). Compensation structures differ across private universities. For example, "basic salary+ performance-based payment" is adopted by some universities; "Teaching hour-based salary" determines compensation according to how many hours a teacher has taught, and this mode is mainly used for part-timers (Liu, 2008).

In the following paragraphs, we shall talk about academic profession in public sector. Academic profession in Chinese universities has experienced ups and downs since the late 1970s. Firstly, after the Cultural Revolution in late 1970s, new policies was adopted concerning intellectuals including university faculty, and their political status

⁷ Description in table 2 does not deny that compensation in some local universities, usually in developed areas with higher fiscal revenue, is better than in central ones

as a part of the ruling class was identified. Secondly, in line with the implementation of the reform and opening up policy, academic community began to have more chances of international exchanges. Statistics show that 78% of the university presidents attached to Ministry of Education and 62% of doctorate supervisors have either study or research experience overseas (Hayhoe and Zha, 2006). In the meantime, we also observed negative impact of brain drain. Thirdly, there was once significant outflow of faculty to business sector due to salary gap. Fourthly, since late 1990s, academic profession has become attractive, as faculty working conditions were improving and their income going up. These changes can be attributed to the national strategy of “rejuvenating the country through science and education” in general, 211⁸ and 985⁹ Programs in particular. The favorable changes can be exemplified by two cases. One case is that per capita income of faculty in a provincial university grew from RMB 977 in 1982 to RMB 5,879 in 1996, 5 times increase within 14 years (Zou, 2006). The other case is that per capita income in a national university grew from RMB 22,612 in 2000 to RMB 75,738 in 2008, 2.3 times increase within 5 years.¹⁰ In 2005, the State Taxation Administration listed university faculty as a high-income group.

During the evolution of academic profession, government policy plays an important role as public universities are public unit. Personnel policy in universities includes manpower recruitment and income distribution.

Reform of faculty management relative to manpower recruitment allows universities certain freedom to manage their own faculties. The government provides certain budget for personnel, but universities can decide how to use it. Past system is practiced in such a way as that, a teacher may be qualified for an academic rank and entitled to due compensation, however, whether he/she can be hired or promoted depends on whether there is a vacant post which is fixed by government. Current system is practiced in such a way as that, universities can determine independently positions and compensation. Furthermore, universities now determine hiring and promotion based on need and applicants' qualification. One practice found in some universities is to integrate appraisal with hiring/promotion (*pingpin jiehe*), as opposed to automatic promotion by service period (*pingpin fenkei*). For example, Sun Yat-sen University issued Measures for Faculty Staffing Check, Post Setup and Hiring Process, establishing a post-specific hiring mechanism and abolishing faculty title granting system (Qiao, 2008).

Income distribution is the other important part of personnel policy. Earlier after the reform and opening up, universities followed a unified sequential salary mechanism. Reform of salary system in the past 30 years has focused on decentralizing decision-making and abolishing egalitarianism. As a result, people got paid more for

⁸ 211 refers to a program aiming at building 100 prioritized university in the 21st century.

⁹ 985 is a plan announced by the Chinese government on 100 years anniversary of Peking University in May, 1998, in a bid to build several world-class universities

¹⁰ Data from Finance Office of PK university in March, 2009.

doing more work and income was linked to individual's performance (Qi and Wang, 2008). Some of the reform policies are elaborated below.

Ministry of Education, State Administration of Labor and Ministry of Finance made a joint announcement, allowing universities to gradually establish a bonus scheme in 1980. Some universities attached to Ministry of Education launched excess compensation program on a piloting basis in 1981, marking the first time that China added new staff expense in addition to basic salary, abolishing the past practice of everybody getting an equal share regardless of the work done.

After the Chinese government implemented the third salary system reform in 1985, public units including higher education institutions started to follow a structured salary system based on specific post. Structured salary included four parts: basic salary, post-related salary, salary based on length of service and bonus. Bonus was linked to individual performance and its proportion in total income expanded.

After the Chinese government implemented the fourth salary system reform in 1993, salary in public units included post-related salary and allowance. Higher education institutions started to follow a hierarchical salary system based on certificated specialty where faculty income included four parts: basic salary, allowance, welfare and other income.

After identifying a strategy of building world-class universities in 1998, the Chinese government expanded financial support into several universities. In 3 years' execution period of the first phase of the 985 Program, Peking University and Tsinghua University received RMB 1.8 billion respectively apart from regular budget allocation. Part of the RMB 1.8 billion would be used for post allowance to increase faculty compensation. The two universities' practice was adopted by others very soon and post allowance became an important part of faculty income nationwide. In order to better utilize the part of support, Ministry of Education released Advices on Deepening Income Distribution System Reform in Higher Education Institutions, requiring universities to link income directly with post responsibility, performance and contribution. Universities were allowed to determine allowance measures and criteria that fit individual university's reality.

The Central Committee Organization Department, Ministry of Personnel and Ministry of Education jointly announced Guidelines on Deepening Personnel System Reform in Higher Education Institutions in 2000, identifying the objectives of the reform, i.e., to gradually establish a new system that allows universities freedom in personnel recruitment, allows personnel freedom in choosing jobs, ensures government supervision; to gradually establish a budget allocation mechanism based on post salary, faculty compensation on what one does and better performance deserves higher compensation. As a result, an incentive mechanism stressing on high-caliber human resource and key posts was put in place.

Ministry of Personnel and Ministry of Education announced Guidelines on the Management of Post Setup in Higher Education Institutions in 2007, starting pilot programs in some universities. A post-specific performance-based salary system was put into place with a new round of salary system reform in public units. Faculty income included four parts: post salary, rating-based salary, performance-based salary and allowance. Post salary ensures a minimum income; rating-based salary depends on the length of service; performance-based salary indicates individual contribution; and allowance come from universities.

In summary, the reform of faculty income system in Chinese universities has been driven by government policy, featuring a shift from title-based fixed salary to title-based fixed salary plus performance-based salary.

IV. Evolution of organizational existence and academic profession

Remarkable changes have taken place in Chinese universities' organizational existence. The changes include a shift from centralization to decentralization, diversification of funding sources, increasingly efficient educational system and devolution of authority in human resources from government to universities. Detailed analyses are as follows:

1. Decentralization of higher education administration

China's higher education administration lingered back and forth between centralized and decentralized systems. As was stipulated in *Decision on Reform of the Education System* in 1985, a three-layered system is established including central, provincial and municipal governments. *Outline for Educational Development and Reform in China*, which was promulgated in 1993, further clarified that higher education needs to arrive at a new pattern where colleges are managed at two levels including central and provincial governments. However, reform of higher education administration was not really implemented until late 1990s, when some universities attached to central ministries were transferred to local governments, an event concurrent with a major reform of government to ensure simple and efficient governments. There were all together 1080 higher education institutions in China in 1994, among which 367 were under the administration of central ministries and all the rest 713 under local governments (Hayhoe and Zha, 2006). According to the data in Table 2, 111 institutions were under the administration of central ministries in 2007 out of the total 1613 public higher education institutions, accounting for 6.88%; the rest 1502 local governments accounting for 93.12%. Upon comparing the data in 1994 and 2007, we can find there is an obvious decentralization tendency.

China has expanded its higher education enrollment to realize objective of massification since 1999. During the massification process, central and local universities played different roles. Empirical analyses have shown that central institutions accommodate bigger share of postgraduates and have more per capita

educational resources featuring elite education; on the contrary, local institutions accommodate bigger share of undergraduates and vocational students and are major contributor to massification. Furthermore, local institutions have less per capita education resources featuring non elite education.

In the decentralization of higher education administration, more faculty members work in the local institutions, the major function of which is teaching instead of research. Specifically, Table 2 shows that faculty in central institutions account for 16.40%, while those in local institutions for 83.60%.

2. Diversification of funding sources

Beginning from the 1990s, Chinese universities had to explore diversified funding channels due to insufficient public budget, which included university-run business, training courses for enterprises, subject studies and research, consulting and donations (Hayhoe and Zha, 2006).

Table 3 shows the composition of funding for China's higher education institutions in 1996, 2000 and 2005. Statistics reveal a remarkable change that the proportion of government budget fell to 42.77% in 2005 from 80.34% in 1996 while the proportion of tuition and fees went up to 31.06% in 2005 from 13.66 in 1996.

Table 3: Composition of funding for China's higher education institutions in 1996, 2000 and 2005

(RMB million, %)

Year	Aggregate	Government		Civil contribution	Social donation	Tuition and fees	others
			Budget				
1996	32,679.29 (100.00)	26,255.24 (80.34)	22,997.18 (70.37)	56.67 (0.17)	369.61 (1.13)	4,462.37 (13.66)	1,535.39 (4.70)
2000	91,335.04 (100.00)	53,118.54 (58.16)	50,441.73 (55.23)	659.41 (0.72)	1,518.28 (1.66)	19,261.09 (21.09)	16,777.72 (18.37)
2005	255,023.708 (100.00)	109,083.684 (42.77)	104,637.34 (41.03)	18,013.154 (7.06)	2,107.963 (0.83)	79,192.49.3 (31.06)	46,626.411 (18.28)

Source of data: State Statistics Bureau website: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/>, March 8th, 2009.

Figures in the parentheses refer to the proportion of the item in aggregate.

Generally speaking, central institutions have more budget than local ones for at least three reasons. Firstly, per capita fiscal allocation at central level is higher than local due to better fiscal condition; secondly, there are several dedicated projects supported by central budget, funding from which usually go to central institutions; thirdly, central institutions receive more research funding due to their mission and stronger capacity. There is less discrepancy among central institutions, but more among local institutions due to local economic and fiscal imbalance. ¹¹

¹¹ The author went on a field study trip to Gansu, Hunan and Jiangsu provinces in September, 2008, and found remarkable discrepancies of budget allocations among the three provinces.

Schools and departments within universities can get research funding and generate resources by training programs, in addition to the regular appropriation from universities. Empirical analyses show that funding in different disciplines within one university varies remarkably. Research funding and the number of excellent faculty are positive in science and engineering department/schools; student size is an important factor of funding in liberal and social science departments/schools; funding is also to do with to what extent a department/school is market-oriented (Guo, 2007).

Market factors have adjusted distribution of academic professions in different disciplines. Table 4 shows the number of faculty specialized in different disciplines and their proportions. In the past 20 years, significant changes have occurred in two disciplines. One, the proportion of faculty in economics went up from 1.74% in 1980 to 12.78% in 2007; two, the proportion of faculty in sciences and engineering went down from 23.89% in 1980 to 12.11% in 2007. This is partially indicative of adjustment that universities have made to market demand.

Table 4: Faculty number in different disciplines and their proportion 1980-2007

Year	Aggregate	Liberal Arts	Economics	Law	Education	Science	Engineering	Agronomy	medical science	Others
1980	246862 (100.00)	56510 (22.89)	4280 (1.74)	802 (0.33)	12517 (5.07)	58985 (23.89)	70028 (28.37)	14655 (5.93)	24473 (9.91)	4612 (1.87)
1983	302919 (100.00)	72881 (24.06)	8084 (2.67)	2213 (0.73)	17191 (5.68)	72535 (23.95)	85070 (28.08)	17110 (5.65)	27835 (9.18)	0 (0)
1990	394567 (100.00)	100625 (24.50)	19226 (4.87)	5851 (1.48)	32299 (8.19)	81943 (20.25)	108493 (27.50)	18064 (4.58)	34066 (8.63)	0 (0)
1995	400742 (100.00)	85527 (21.34)	28489 (7.11)	9058 (2.26)	29139 (7.27)	79564 (19.85)	114969 (28.69)	16254 (4.06)	37742 (9.42)	0 (0)
2000	462772 (100.00)	108065 (23.35)	37772 (8.16)	14097 (3.05)	44416 (9.60)	78904 (17.05)	127758 (27.60)	15494 (3.35)	36266 (7.84)	0 (0)
2003	834342 (100.00)	216816 (25.98)	96187 (11.53)	34644 (4.15)	74222 (8.90)	113307 (13.58)	222009 (26.61)	22253 (2.67)	54904 (6.58)	0 (0)
2007	1168300 (100.00)	298506 (25.55)	149337 (12.78)	51518 (4.41)	97511 (8.35)	141527 (12.11)	318014 (27.22)	30966 (2.66)	80921 (6.92)	0 (0)

Note:

1980 and 1983 data are from *Achievement of Education in China Statistics 1949-1983*, People's Education Press, which made the following classifications of source data: forestry was included by agronomy; arts by liberal arts; physical education by education; finance and economics by economics; politics and law by law.

1990 data are from *Yearbook of China Education 1990*, People's Education Press, which made the following classifications of source data: forestry was included by agronomy; arts by liberal arts; physical education by education; finance and economics by economics; politics and law by law.

1995 and 2000 data are from State Statistics Bureau website, March 8th, 2009, which made the following classifications of source data: philosophy, literature and history were combined as liberal arts.

2003 and 2007 data are from *Yearbook of China Education 2003* and *Yearbook of China Education 2007*, People's Education Press, which made the following classifications: philosophy, literature and history were combined as liberal arts; management was included by economics.

We can conclude from the above analyses that market force has permeated into higher education institutions and academic profession. It has had much impact on academic profession in terms of distribution of academic profession across disciplines, funding discrepancy across institutions and disciplines, activities orientation, and so forth.

3. Rising efficiency of education

Student faculty ratio is an important indicator to measure efficiency of academic work. Enrollment in China's higher education institutions was suspended between 1966 and 1976, the Cultural Revolution period. Nationwide college entrance examination was resumed in 1977. In the following few years, enrollment was modest while faculty was relatively big. Later on, enrollment expanded continuously and even more drastically since 1999. Consequently, enrollment expansion has adjusted student faculty ratio. Table 5 shows that enrollment to faculty ratio in 1980 was only 4.6, but grew to 17.28 in 2007.

Table 5: Size of enrollment and faculty 1980-2007

Year	Number of institutions	Number of associate and bachelor's candidates (million)	Enrollment/institutions	Faculty (million)	Student/faculty ratio@
1980	675***	1.143712***	1694	0.246862***	4.6**
1985	1016***	1.703115***	1676	0.344262***	5.0**
1990	1075*	2.0627	1919	0.3946*	5.23/
1995	1054	2.9064	2757	0.4007	8.90
2000	1041	5.5609	5289	0.4628	16.3
2005	1792	15.6178	7666	0.9658	16.85
2006	1867	17.3884	8148	1.076	17.93
2007	1908	18.8490	9878	1.1683	17.28

Source of data: *Statistical Bulletin of Education Development in China 1990-2007*, http://www.edu.cn/HomePage/Zhong_guo_jiao_yu/jiao_yu_zi_xun/shu_zi/jiao_yu_fa_zhan/index.shtml, March 8th, 2009. *Yearbook of China Education 1990*, People's Education Press. State Statistics Bureau website: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj>, March 8th, 2009. *Achievement of Education in China Statistics 1980-1985*, People's Education Press.

Note: @ refers to the ratio of students' number to faculty number. / is 1991 figure as the figure for the year 1990 is missing.

The increase of student faculty ratio also indicates that academic profession has to take care of bigger classes, and more students. Moreover, student population has been changed when more students come to higher education institutions. Students have become more diverse than before in terms of academic achievement, interest, economic backgrounds etc. Academic profession is challenged by new cohorts and teaching task as well.

4. Greater independence in decision-making

Reform and development have been two paralleled themes for China's higher education after 1985. Delegating authority and allowing greater independence in decision-making among higher education institutions have always been an important part of higher education reform.

Public universities are allowed for greater independence in decision-making, including management of faculty, by the government. Independence in faculty management can be seen from the following aspects:

(1) Universities are allowed to decide independently on criteria, number, procedure and candidates regarding faculty recruitment as long as candidates have met minimum qualifications required by Teachers Law.¹² Nowadays more and more universities are coming to realize the negative impact brought about by academic inbreeding, and as a result some universities no longer retain their own graduates as faculty. Within the public unit staffing system, some universities have started a practice of HR Agency, meaning that newly hired faculty are registered with an external special organization, instead of being registered at the universities they teach in. The new practice aims at reducing mutual dependence between universities and faculty, indicating that universities are shouldering fewer responsibilities for faculty.

(2) New hiring and firing measures are taken. More universities are now able to decide independently on promotions of all ranks of faculty. Eligible universities are even allowed to grant titles such as chair professor. Peking University went through an HR system reform in 2003, putting into place mechanisms like tenure and up-or-out.

(3) Faculty's income structure includes funds generated by university and charges for the social service they do personally, in addition to government budget. There are a variety of income items for faculty, including post subsidies from special government-funded projects such as 985 and 211 programs, research projects, from

¹²*Temporary Measures on Management Responsibilities in Higher Education Institutions* announced in 1986 identified higher education institutions' 8 rights of decision-making, some of which are freedom to hire and fire faculties, permission for some designated universities to approve associate professor according to relevant regulations, permission for a few eligible universities to approve professor, independence in disciplinary setup at graduate studies level, and independence in adding doctorate supervisors.

Article 18 in the *Outline for Educational Development and Reform in China* announced in 1993 made it clear that it's necessary to expand independence for higher education institutions in budget allocation, titles assessment and approval, income distribution and faculty management.

Article 37 in the *Higher Education Law* approved in 1998 stipulated that higher education institutions hire faculties and other staffs with a specialty, adjust arrangements for allowance and salary distribution according to state regulations.

Article 19 in the *Decisions on Deepening Comprehensive Education Reform to Implement Education for All-round Development* announced in 1999 reiterated that higher education institutions recruit and hire faculties independently according to laws.

Article 5 of *The Teachers' Law* adopted in 1993, stipulated that teachers in higher education institutions shall at least be above bachelor degree and that schools and other educational institutions shall gradually carry out a teacher employment system.

university-run business, performance-based payment and bonus. Table 6 shows the income structure of faculty in a particular university in 2000 and 2008. It can be seen that incomes from government budget and from the funds collected by university accounted for 32.60% and 67.40% of their total income respectively in 2000; the figures were 21.25% and 78.75% in 2008 respectively. The proportion of income from government budget dropped by 11.35%, while that collected by university grew by the same percentage. Income also varies significantly among different universities or even among different schools and departments within the same university. These are indicative of how greater independence in decision-making changes faculty management reform.

Table 6: Income structure of faculty in a university in 2000 and 2008
RMB million, %

Income source	2000	2008
Government	65.32	177.43
	32.60	21.25
University	135.07	657.58
	67.40	78.75
Aggregate	200.39	835.01
	100	100

Source of data: Financial department of the university.

V. Conclusion

There have been a number of research literatures on academic profession, covering faculty recruitment and employment, compensation, performance assessment and turnover. The works were more intended to address specific problems. In recent years, some Chinese scholars are able to systematically compare academic profession in China with that internationally as they are involved in an international survey on academic profession. Latest publications include two papers by Chen Xianming (2005) and Shen Hong (2006). Chen gives an analysis into the status-quo of China's academic profession and the challenges facing it by case studies. Shen gives a comprehensive introduction to titles, degrees, age and gender of university faculty based on nationwide statistics.

I am arguing that it is meaningless to compare China's academic profession with international scenario without much attention to institutional analyses in which academic profession is embedded. Unlike the above-mentioned papers, this paper emphasizes more on analyzing how government and organization influence academic profession.

Some major conclusions can be made from the studies as follows:

1. When a new supply-demand-based market system has replaced the planned system, an important guideline for higher education reform in China is to increase efficiency with and despite of limited resources. Following this guideline, we can see that universities are now delegated greater autonomy. Government quitted from micro

activities and loosened its control on university and faculty.

2. Due to the impact of isomorphism exerted by government, universities used to practice similarly in personnel management. With greater autonomy, universities are encouraged to compete and are looking to different approaches to faculty management, resulting in a diversified personnel management patterns across institutions.

3. In the context of economic transition, universities are gradually shifting to organizations with educational independence from the past units largely controlled by the government, and academic profession is also shifting from “*danwei* man” to social man. Comparing academic professions in two different systems, we can come up with two typical scenarios: academic profession in a planned system features unified identity, similar and average income and limited scope of activities while that in a market-based system features independent identity, diversified income structure including from government, university and personal channels and varied income levels, broader scope of activities and a market of academic labor that is taking shape.

4. Government has played an important role in pushing forward the changes in academic profession, even more active than universities themselves in some cases. According to a series of government documents that have been issued, the government has always been focusing on avoiding egalitarianism in income distribution and linking compensation with individual performance.

5. The value of research rests on revealing the laws governing all changes rather than making an argument. Although this paper sees the changes in China’s society and in academic profession positively, it is undeniable that academic profession in China is facing some new challenges in a new existence. For example, China’s public units are undergoing further reforms, yet without a definite direction; faculty in public universities and those in private ones are not equal by law; enlarged income gap among faculty has yet to be bridged under reasonable level; how can good thoughts and measures for reform be implemented in reality such as unified crediting system for faculty titles and performance-based payment; and whether a market-based mechanism will be detrimental to the academic mission that scholars are supposed to follow.

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