HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INSTITUTION-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract
The poor quality of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Indonesia is due in part to failures of governance at the institution level. Drawing on an analysis of conflict and contestation in three Indonesian HEIs, this article argues that these failures reflect the dominance of predatory officials and business groups in institutional governance and the relative marginalisation of elements who support improved research, teaching and community service in line with either neo-liberal or idealist conceptions of quality. It also argues that some degree of change in governance has been possible when reformist elements have gained control of a HEI and driven change from the top down or such elements have challenged predatory HEI management by leveraging support from external actors with influence. Instances of such change hold out hope for improved governance at Indonesian HEIs in the future. But they also indicate that even if the dominance of predatory elements within HEIs can be overcome, further struggle will be required to define the precise nature of governance reform given competing reformist agendas with markedly different implications for how academic quality and integrity are understood, measured and implemented.

Indonesia's higher education sector has undergone massive expansion in recent decades. Growing prosperity as a result of high rates of economic growth since the mid-1960s combined with substantial growth in the number of university-age people in the country have contributed to a dramatic rise in the demand for higher education. So, too, have government efforts to provide free basic education and, more recently, universal secondary education, both of which have made it easier for students to proceed through the school system. At the same time, government expenditure on higher education has increased significantly following the introduction of constitutional changes in 2002 requiring the central and regional governments to spend at least 20% of their budgets on education. The overall result has been a marked increase in both the number of higher education institutions (HEIs) and student enrolments (Rosser 2018a, 6-7). For instance, the country's gross enrolment ratio (GER)—that is, total enrolment regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the total population of the relevant age group—for tertiary education increased from 2.9% to 36.3% between 1970

and 2018 according to World Bank data.[1] The health crisis and economic downturn caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 threaten to stem and perhaps even partially reverse these trends in the short-term. But they are unlikely to alter the longer-term trajectory of expansion.

This trend towards expansion has not been accompanied by noticeable improvements in educational quality. Most importantly for our purposes, it has not been accompanied by the emergence of "world class" HEIs despite the fact that a succession of government strategic plans have expressed an ambition for Indonesia to elevate at least some of its HEIs to world class status (Rosser 2019, 81). The notion of a world class university is woolly, as Altbach (2003, 5) has observed: while "[e]veryone wants a world class university" and "[n]o country feels it can do without one," "no-one knows what a world class university is." Yet few would suggest that Indonesia has many, if any, HEIs that fall into this category (Royono and Rahwidiati 2013). Indeed, most assessments suggest that Indonesian HEIs fall well behind global and regional competitors on a variety of research and teaching indicators including levels of research productivity, citation impact, international collaborations, and staff qualifications (World Bank 2014; OECD/ADB 2015, 213; Rosser 2018a; Jarvis and Mok 2019, 11-12). They also indicate that there is a mismatch between graduate attributes and the needs of a growing and rapidly changing economy (World Bank 2010, 8). Further, Indonesian HEIs do not rate well in global university league tables, even the country's top institutions. In 2020, for instance, Indonesia had no universities in the top 500 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings or Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities and only three universities in the QS World University Rankings: the University of Indonesia (296), Gadjah Mada University (320) and Bandung Institute of

Technology (331). For some analysts, these results indicate a "perpetual crisis" of under-performance among Indonesian HEIs (Pincus 2015).

Comparative analysis has emphasised the effects of three main variables on HEI performance and in particular their ability to achieve "world class" status—abundant financial resources, high quality academic staff and students, and good governance—with the latter being given particular emphasis (see, for example, Altbach and Salmi 2011; Salmi and Liu 2011). This emphasis on governance is because it is a key determinant of the level of financial and human resources that HEIs have at their disposal as well as, of course, the way they use these resources. As Salmi (2009, 7) has observed, there are two "levels" of HEI governance that are relevant in this respect: the first is concerned with the role of the government and relates to the nature of higher education policy while the second is concerned with HEIs themselves and relates to "the necessary evolution and steps that they need to take to transform themselves into world-class institutions."

To a large extent, Indonesia's difficulties in creating world class HEIs have reflected failures of governance at the level of national higher education policy, as we will see in greater detail below. But they have also reflected failures of governance at the institutional level. Many Indonesian HEIs have expressed a commitment in their public statements and materials to enhancing the quality of research, teaching and community service—the three key pillars of higher education according to the 2012 Higher Education Law—and a desire to achieve world class status. But few, if any, Indonesian HEIs operate in a way that is consistent with these objectives. Indeed, in many cases, institution-level governance is completely dysfunctional, being characterised by internecine conflict, corruption, incompetence and in some cases, episodes of violence. In 2013, at a seminar examining "Strategies for Addressing

Conflict/Disharmony Between Higher Education Stakeholders," then Director-General of Higher Education Djoko Santoso gave an indication of the scale of this problem. The Ministry of Education and Culture, he said, was currently dealing with internal conflicts threatening academic activities in approximately *200* private HEIs (*Kompas,* February 19, 2013). Many state HEIs have also experienced problems of internecine conflict, corruption, incompetence and violence (Efferi 2012; *Antara*, September 5, 2018).

This article seeks to shed light on the reasons for institution-level governance problems in Indonesia's higher education sector in two ways. First, it identifies the agendas that have shaped institution-level governance and decision-making and the sets of actors and interests who have promoted them. Second, it examines how these actors, interests and agendas have come into play to shape governance and decision-making at three specific HEIs, each of which is among the top institutions of its respective type in Indonesia. On this basis, the article argues that the main institution-level obstacle to the emergence of world class universities has been the dominance of predatory officials and business groups in institutional governance. The dominance of these elements, it is argued, has made it difficult, if not impossible, for proponents of improved research, teaching and community service—whether in line with neo-liberal concerns to enhance the competitiveness of Indonesian HEIs in terms global performance metrics or idealist concerns to enhance intellectual freedom, democracy and social justice—to have much impact on how HEIs operate, even though they may win the occasional battle. This is notwithstanding the widespread use of rhetoric among HEI managers about achieving world class status. At the same time, the article shows that some degree of change in governance at the institutional level has been possible when reformist elements have gained control of an institution and driven change from the top down or such elements have challenged predatory HEI management by leveraging support from

sympathetic external actors (for instance, the media and the ombudsman's office). This is because such developments have disrupted, if only momentarily, the normal structure of power relations.

The article is organised as follows. First, it provides an overview of the higher education landscape, focusing on the types of HEIs that exist and the formalities of their governance arrangements. Second, it examines how failures of governance at the higher education policy level have impaired the development of Indonesian HEIs. Third, it outlines the analytical framework used in the paper to understand governance and decision-making at the institutional level. Fourth, it identifies the main agendas that have shaped institution-level governance and decision-making and the sets of actors and interests who have promoted them. Fifth, it presents the three HEI case studies. Sixth, it examines the implications of the analysis for the development of HEIs in the future.

INDONESIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Indonesia's higher education law recognises several different types of HEI differentiated according to the breadth of their disciplinary offerings and the level of qualifications they issue. These include universities, institutes, colleges, polytechnics, academies, and community academies (see Table 1). Overall, Indonesia had 4,621 HEIs in 2019, of which 2,501 were colleges, 909 were academies, and 633 were universities (the remainder being polytechnics and community academies). Although universities are small in number compared to academies and colleges, they are by far the largest providers of higher education, accounting for around two-thirds of total higher education enrolments. In 2019, for instance, they accounted for 5.8 million of the country's 8.3 million higher education students

(Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education 2019, 4). Another important distinction between HEIs relates to ownership status. Indonesia has both state and privately-owned HEIs, with the former generally being considered better quality than the latter. While state HEIs are far fewer in number than private HEIs, they both account for large proportions of higher education enrolments. In 2019, for instance, state and private HEIs accounted for around 40% and 60% of total higher education enrolments respectively and around 50% each of total university enrolments (Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education 2019, 4).[2] Finally, Indonesian HEIs vary considerably in size ranging from institutions with tens of thousands of students to ones with only dozens of students. In general, state HEIs are larger than private HEIs, with a large number of the latter essentially being "spillover" institutions that enrol students who are unable to gain entry into preferred state institutions.

Table 1. Types of HEIs in Indonesia

	Qualification Level	**Breadth**
Community Academy	Diploma (1-2 years)	One or several sub-fields of science and/or technology that reflect local advantage or fulfil special needs.
Academy	Diploma (1-4 years)	One or several sub-fields of science and/or technology
Polytechnic	Diploma (1-4 years)	A variety of fields of science and/or technology
College	Diploma, BA, MA	A single field of science and/or technology
Institute	Diploma, BA, MA, PhD	A number of fields of science and/or technology
University	Diploma, BA, MA, PhD	A variety of fields of science and/or technology

Source: Article 59, Law 12/2012 on Higher Education.

Formal governance arrangements at HEIs vary according to whether the institutions are privately or state-owned and, in the latter case, whether they are autonomous (that is, have *badan hukum* status, discussed below) or non-autonomous (that is, do not have this status). Private HEIs are typically units within charitable foundations (*yayasan*), making them formally subordinate to the latter. Rectors are typically appointed by *yayasan*s. In practice,

however, there is often tension between private universities and the *yayasan* that own them to the extent that university rectors and other managers, on the one hand, and foundation officials, on the other, may have different interests and agendas (*Kompas,* February 19, 2013). Space does not permit an extended discussion of governance arrangements at the different types of state HEIs. But, for our purposes, two points are worth noting. First, governance arrangements at autonomous universities include a Board of Trustees (BoT) as well as a university senate and a rector while at non-autonomous universities they only include the latter two. The functions of the BoT include formulating general university policy, appointing and discharging the rector, and approving university strategic plans, annual plans and budgets. Second, since the fall of the "New Order," the authoritarian regime that ruled Indonesia from 1966 to 1998, rectors at both autonomous and non-autonomous state universities have been appointed through electoral processes in which the Minister of Education and Culture (or from 2014 to 2020, the Minister for Research, Technology and Higher Education) controls 35% of the vote and the remainder is controlled by the university senate (in the case of non-autonomous universities) and the BoT (in the case of autonomous universities). Under the New Order, state university rectors were directly appointed by the Minister of Education and Culture, consistent with its authoritarian model of higher education governance (McRae and Robet 2020, 40-41). The fact that the Minister has retained a large share of the vote in the post-New Order period has ensured that the central government continues to exercise significant (and often a determining) influence over rector appointments.

Responsibility for managing Indonesia's higher education system has historically sat primarily with the Directorate General for Higher Education (DIKTI) within the Ministry for Education and Culture.[3] In 2014, the Jokowi government transferred DIKTI's powers to the

Ministry for Research, Technology and Higher Education before transferring them back again to the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019-2020. Several other ministries and agencies have also had a hand in managing the higher education system. These include: (i) the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which has been responsible for funding State Islamic Universities (UIN), and regulating matters related to religious education; (ii) the Ministry of the State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform and Civil Service Agency, which has set conditions related to civil service employment (of crucial importance given that many staff in state universities and some in private universities are civil servants); (iii) the Ministry of Finance, which has regulated the financial management of state institutions; and (iv) ministries that directly oversee HEIs within their portfolios.

FAILURES OF GOVERNANCE AT THE POLICY LEVEL

Indonesia's inability to improve the quality of its HEIs and in particular to produce world class HEIs has been due in large part to a failure of governance at the level of national higher education policy. A key problem in this respect has been the level of government funding for higher education. As noted earlier, government spending on higher education has grown significantly since the country's 1945 Constitution was amended in 2002 to require the government to spend at least 20% of its budget on education. But, despite this, government spending on higher education has remained low by regional standards. In this context, the country has struggled to make the investments needed to support high quality research and teaching, particularly given that there is also limited private sector investment in research. According to UNESCO data, Indonesia spent barely 0.2% of GDP on research and development in 2017, well behind neighbouring countries such as Thailand (1%), Malaysia (1.4% in 2016), and Singapore (1.9%). One consequence has been that the country has failed

to produce enough adequately qualified people to staff the growing higher education system: only 10% of academic staff in Indonesian HEIs hold a PhD (Jarvis and Mok 2019, 11-12).

At the same time, over the past two decades, the Indonesian government has failed to fully push through a number of market-oriented higher education policy reforms that have sought to enhance the quality of HEIs and propel the emergence of "world class" universities in accordance with neo-liberal conceptions of quality as captured in global performance metrics and reflected in concerns to enhance the fit between HEI activities and the needs of industry (Department of National Education 2005; Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education 2015; Ministry of Education and Culture 2020). These reforms have been promoted by technocratic officials in government and international organisations such as World Bank and underpinned, in some cases, by conditions in the latter's loan agreements (see Gellert 2015; Rosser 2016; and Rakhmani 2019). But none has so far been fully implemented because the policy itself has subsequently been overturned or because of problems in implementation. In both cases, this has reflected strong political opposition to the reforms from, on the one hand, predatory elites and, on the other, student groups, parent groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and/or other actors as well as, in the case of the latter elements their ability to access emergent policy spaces created by democratisation, particularly in the court system.

The most important of these reforms was the granting to state HEIs of greater autonomy to manage their own financial and other affairs. The government initially granted autonomy to seven leading state universities through a series of regulations issued in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It then gave autonomy a statutory basis in *Law 20/2003 on a National Education System* and *Law 9/2009 on Education Legal Entities*, the latter granting autonomy to state and

private educational institutions at all levels of the education system. In 2010, however, the Constitutional Court struck down this law following widespread protest and legal action from students, parents, NGO activists and the owners of private HEIs (Darmaningtyas, Subkhan and Fahmi-Panimbang 2009; World Bank 2010). The government and parliament responded to this decision by incorporating provisions related to the legal status of HEIs into *Law 12/2012 on Higher Education*. This law permitted the government to designate state universities as autonomous legal entities (*badan hukum*), a legal status similar to that envisaged in *Law 9/2009 on Education Legal Entities*. A Constitutional Court challenge to this law brought by university student groups failed, clearing the way for the central government to grant *badan hukum* status to a larger set of universities. But by early 2020, it had only given this status to a small number of state universities including those featuring in the QS top 500. It designated some other state universities "public service units" (*badan layanan umum*, or BLU), a status that gives them a modest degree of autonomy in the generation and retention of revenues. It allowed all other state universities to remain units within the bureaucracy (*satuan kerja*), a status that gives them little financial and managerial autonomy (Rosser 2016, 17). In January 2020, Nadiem Makarim, who was appointed Minister of Education and Culture in October 2019, announced a possible change in approach as part of a wider package of higher education reforms called "Independent Campus" (*Kampus Merdeka*). Henceforth the Indonesian government would make it easier for HEIs with BLU and *satuan kerja* status to become *badan hukum*. Doing so, he said, would not require changes to national laws or Government Regulations (*Peraturan Pemerintah*), the highest level of central government regulation, but could be effected through changes to ministerial regulations (Kompas.com January 25, 2020). This move, which is built into the Ministry's 2020-2024 strategic plan (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020), promises to see a larger number of HEIs attain *badan hukum* status. But it may also attract opposition

from many of the same groups that contested the BHP and Higher Education Laws. The outcome of the forthcoming tussle remains to be seen.

A second area of constrained reform has been permission for foreign universities to establish branch campuses. *Law 12/2012 on Higher Education* granted permission to foreign universities to operate in Indonesia so long as they collaborated with Indonesian partners, prioritised the employment of Indonesian nationals, operated in regions and disciplinary areas designated by the government, ran on a not-for-profit basis and met various other criteria. This provision could not be implemented for many years because the government did not issue the required implementing regulations. In late 2018, the government finally issued these regulations, in so doing, imposing additional restrictions on foreign universities: namely, that their branch campuses only operate in "special economic zones" and that they be ranked in the top 200 in the world or have disciplines ranked in the top 200 in the world in the view of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education (Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education 2018a). In the face of these restrictions—and widespread opposition to the establishment of branch campuses from HEIs, student groups and NGOs (Rosser 2016, 19)—only two foreign universities, both Australian, have so far established branch campuses in Indonesia: Monash University and Central Queensland University (Monash University 2020, *The Australian* March 17, 2020). It remains to be seen whether other foreign universities successfully establish branch campuses.

A third area of constrained reform is related to accreditation processes for HEIs. The government established a specialised agency to assess the quality of HEIs and their programmes in 1994 and in 1998 it made such assessments compulsory. But the agency has lacked the resources to adequately fulfil its responsibilities. According to the World Bank

(2014, 37), the agency's budget "only allows it to accredit 2,200 study programs per year" with the result that by December 2012, "9,638 study programs had been accredited and 7,132 were in need of accreditation." At the same time, "its resources have been so tight that its assessments have typically been cursory rather than thorough and rigorous" and appear in some cases, to have been "subject to manipulation, fraudulent behaviour, and corruption" (Rosser 2016, 20). As part of his *Kampus Merdeka* reforms, Makarim announced that the central government would automatically renew HEI accreditations when they expire every five years allowing the accreditation agency to focus its resources on HEIs applying for a higher accreditation rating. At the same time, the top accreditation rating for HEIs would be reserved for institutions that gained international accreditation (Kompas.com, January 25, 2020). These changes promise to address the problems that have bedevilled the accreditation system so far but, again, their impact remains to be seen.

In sum, then, an important reason for Indonesia's inability to produce world class HEIs has been the government's failure to fund higher education at a level commensurate with this objective and to push through a set of policy reforms aimed at reconfiguring the sector in accordance with neo-liberal conceptions of quality, the sole mode of state-endorsed higher education reform to emerge in recent decades. But as we will see below, these failures of governance at the policy level have not been the whole story. Another important reason has been governance failures at the institution level. In the following section, I lay the groundwork for understanding these failures by outlining a framework for understanding institution-level governance and decision-making.

UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTION-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

Scholars of political science/political economy have long recognised the political nature of governance and decision-making at the HEI level (Moodie and Eustace 1974). But they have so far done little to analyse how political factors shape them. Lowry (2007: 316) suggests that this is because it is difficult to test hypotheses about HEIs' objectives:

> First, given that decision-making within universities is highly decentralized, clearly defined institutional objectives might not even exist.… Second, university administrators and faculty are commonly thought to seek such amorphous objectives as professional prestige and increases in the stock of knowledge, the empirical measurement of which is difficult at best.

Whatever the case, studies of institution-level governance and decision-making employing the tools of political science or political economy have been rare, even in the USA and Western Europe where the disciplines of political science and higher education studies are most established. In recent years, there has, of course, been much analysis of the effects of neo-liberal managerialism on the operation of HEIs (see Jarvis 2014; McCarthy, Song and Jayasuriya 2017). But this has rarely translated into an analysis of the broader political dynamics shaping governance and decision-making in HEIs in general or in specific institutions.

To the extent that scholars have explored such dynamics, they have typically done so in ways that have construed the relevant conflict and contestation in narrow terms as being between HEI "managers"/"administrators" and "staff"/"faculty." Through an analysis of the reorganisation of biological sciences at Berkeley, Trow (1983, 2000), for instance, has argued

that HEI leaders such as chancellors, vice-chancellors and presidents can play an important role in shaping institutional priorities, even in the face of entrenched opposition from sections of academic staff and notwithstanding the fact that "the extreme division of knowledge in academic society locates much of the effective authority and power of the institution at the bottom, in the departments and chairs" (Trow 1983, 44). Similarly, Kaplan (2004, 204) has assessed the respective roles of managers and academic staff in internal decision-making in US universities, concluding that faculty "seem to have a significant role in governance at many institutions, and their participation appears to be valued." This is notwithstanding the concerns of some that university governance in the USA has become increasingly top-down in nature. Finally, Hammond (2004) has developed a set of propositions about how variations in internal institutional structures can mediate the relationship between academic staff and university management and, in so doing, influence the nature of decision-making processes and their outcomes.

The problem with such analyses is they tell us little about the broader agendas at work within HEIs, the actors who promote them and the interests they embody. The point is that conflict and contestation within HEIs is not simply about "who is in charge" (Ehrenberg 2004), understood in terms of a perceived divide between management and staff, but also the purpose of HEIs and the interests that they serve. As Pusser (2015, 51) has observed, HEIs should be understood as "politically constituted institutions of the state"—that is, sites for the exercise of power and contestation between competing political and social forces with distinct sets of interests with regards to the activities that HEIs carry out and the purposes they fulfil. Both public and private HEIs "are chartered by state action as sites for the production of key public and private benefits, outcomes central to broader state goals. The form of these benefits and the allocation of the costs that attend them are determined by

political and social contest" (Pusser and Marginson 2012, 92). Put simply, HEIs are not simply arenas of contestation between managers and staff for supremacy but also wider competing agendas and interests that have implications for the activities these organisations pursue and their impact on the polity and society.

To fully understand institution-level governance and decision-making, we thus need an analytical framework that focuses on the broad competing agendas at work within HEIs, the actors who promote them and the interests they embody. To this end, the "social conflict" framework developed by scholars such as Rodan, Hewison and Robison (2006) and Carroll, Hameiri and Jones (2020) is used. Detailed elaborations of this framework and how it differs from others in comparative and international political economy have been provided in the works cited above. Suffice it to make three points here by way of summary. First, the social conflict framework is concerned with the way in which "policy and institutional transformation take place within broader patterns of social and political power" and processes of political and social struggle (Rodan, Hewison and Robison 2006: 7). Applying it to the study of political, social and economic phenomena accordingly involves identifying the actors featuring in the relevant power relations and political and social struggles; understanding their interests, agendas and forms of leverage over policy-making and institutional governance; assessing the balance of power between these actors and how this changes over time; and assessing the impacts or effects of such changes in power relations. Second, it defines the relevant actors and their interests in structural and collective terms—for instance, as classes, class fractions, politico-bureaucratic strata, and/or popular forces and their collective interests—rather than in individual and organisational terms. These actors accordingly cut across specific institutional or organisational sites (say HEIs) to exercise influence widely across a range of institutions and organisations. Third, the social conflict

framework recognises the importance of the historical and international context in shaping the nature of these actors, and their interests and agendas, a recognition that they may differ by place and time.

As such, the social conflict framework implies that institution-level governance and decision-making is determined by the balance of power and processes of conflict and contestation between domestic political and social actors which operate beyond the institutional boundaries of HEIs but have interests with regards to institutional affairs. These actors operate within the context of specific relationships of power and distinctive historical and geo-political and geo-economic settings. HEI performance is thus viewed—not as a straightforward reflection of institutions' respective endowments of funding, human resources, and governance arrangements—but as the outcome of political dynamics that shape what HEIs do, how they do it, and the wider sets of interests they serve (Rosser 2019). More specifically, it reflects the balance of power between competing actors, interests and agendas in institution-level governance and decision-making and how this changes over time. An important implication of this perspective is that improved HEI performance is not simply about increasing levels of funding, improving the quality of human resources at HEIs through training programmes and/or establishing new administrative systems that accord with notions of good university governance. It is fundamentally about realigning power relations through processes of political and social struggle.

This framework does not deny the possibility that there may be tensions between HEI managers, on the one hand, and academic staff, on the other, nor that these may be mediated by internal institutional arrangements, as emphasised in the work of scholars such as Trow, Kaplan, and Hammond. It simply places such tensions in the context of wider contradictions

between political and social actors whose operation reaches beyond particular organisational domains to the broader political economy. Nor does the framework deny the importance of leadership in shaping institutional governance and decision-making. It just construes leadership in different terms. Rather than being understood as either good or bad, strong or weak (Trow 1983; 2000), it is understood instead in terms of the interests and agendas it serves. Accordingly changes in leadership can have important effects in terms of the power relations shaping governance and decision-making at particular HEIs if they serve to invest greater authority in particular sets of actors, interests and agendas and take them away from others within the context of that HEI.

In the following sections, this framework is used to analyse Indonesia's experience vis-à-vis the establishment of world class universities. The discussion begins by mapping the competing agendas that have been at work at the HEI level, the actors who have promoted them, and the interests they have embodied.

COMPETING AGENDAS

Regardless of which formal model of governance HEIs have adhered to, they have all been subject to the influence of three distinct agendas each of which is associated with a particular set of actors and interests and has implications for educational quality. For the sake of brevity, these agendas are: (i) neo-liberalism; (ii) predation; and (iii) idealism. Each embody wider currents within Indonesia's political economy (see Robison 1997; Chalmers and Hadiz 1997). Here, they considered in terms of what they entail *vis-a-vis* the governance of and decision-making within HEIs, particularly with regards to the broad purpose and orientation of these institutions. In the first and third cases, as will be shown below, these agendas are

underpinned by powerful ideologies but in all cases they are informed most centrally by the interests of specific sets of actors. It should be noted at the outset that this categorisation of agendas is not intended to imply that these agendas are entirely mutually exclusive—indeed, as the analysis that follows will show, they can have common elements and on occasion be promoted simultaneously by specific sets of actors. The categorisation is simply intended to be a heuristic device that draws out the broad pressures at work in governance and decision-making at HEIs, the contradictory sets of actors and interests underpinning them, and the nature of struggle at the HEI level.

Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism has been defined as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2005, 2). To this end, it seeks to "maximis[e] the reach and frequency of market transactions, and ... to bring all human action into the domain of the market" (Harvey 2005, 3). In the realm of public management – of particular relevance to Indonesia's state HEIs – it has entailed efforts to amend bureaucratic practice in line with the principles of the so-called new public management (NPM). As Hood (1995: 94) has explained, NPM involves reversing "two cardinal doctrines" of earlier public management systems—"that is, lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector and shifting the emphasis from process accountability towards a greater element of accountability in terms of results." As a global political and ideological force, neo-liberalism has proven remarkably durable despite periodic and often severe economic crises (Madariaga 2020).

With regards to HEIs, neo-liberalism has entailed two main changes. First, it has sought to enhance the performance of HEIs in line with notions of "world class" universities, particularly as measured by the metrics used in major global university rankings and in terms of producing skilled labour for the economic marketplace. It thus focuses on trying to enhance HEIs' ability to produce large volumes of high-quality research, attract large volumes of research funding (especially from government and industry), and produce "job-ready" graduates who go on to successful careers in government and industry (Rosser 2019). Second, it has sought to transform the internal management of HEIs to produce efficiencies and enhance effectiveness in the pursuit of these objectives. It has accordingly promoted the adoption of corporate forms of management—the setting of institutional and individual performance targets in relation to research output and teaching quality; the use of student surveys and other mechanisms to assess "customer satisfaction" with course offerings and teaching quality; an emphasis on the financial viability of degree/course offerings; the establishment of internal competitive mechanisms for allocating resources such as research funds; and the introduction of mechanisms to ensure accountability for the use of funds (Gaus 2019; Harun et al 2020).

Underpinning this agenda has been a view of HEIs as corporate bodies that provide research and teaching services (of greater or lesser quality and with differences in the balance between these activities) rather than institutions focused on scholarly endeavours of higher learning. As such it has constructed academic and administrative staff as workers (rather than scholars and colleagues), students as clients/customers (rather than students), and university rectors and other senior HEI office holders as corporate managers (rather than intellectual leaders). Its essence is a moral/ethical position that the demands of government and business (as

expressed, for instance, through research funding priorities and funding formulae) and student choice—or, more broadly, the market—rather than scholarly endeavour should determine what HEIs do. Rather than seeing education as being valuable because it produces better human beings and a more civilised society, it construes education as a product—something that is valuable only to the extent that government, industry or students are prepared to pay for it (Nugroho 2002a).

Neo-liberalism has exercised influence over HEI decision-making in Indonesia for three main reasons. First, and most fundamentally, it has done so because of the structural power of "mobile capital controllers" such as international financial investors and international donor organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF—that is, the power they derive from their control over scarce investment resources and ability to relocate these to other jurisdictions (Winters 1996). These actors, working in conjunction with key technocratic officials in government who are ideologically committed to markets, have sought to marketise Indonesia's higher education system to open up new opportunities for foreign providers and enhance the system's contribution to the emergence of a new knowledge economy, all the while maintaining constraints on new public spending. In so doing, they have recommended the use of measures at HEIs associated with the NPM (Jalal and Mustafa 2001; World Bank 2010). Fearing possible loss of investment resources in the long-run if Indonesia fails to develop the demanded system, the government has responded by promoting greater managerialism and the development of an audit culture in HEI management to lift research and teaching quality (Gaus 2019). The second reason neo-liberalism has exercised influence over HEI decision-making in Indonesia has been growing competition between HEIs for students as the number of these institutions has increased, a dynamic that has forced HEIs to become more responsive to student preferences. Given their privileged market position, this

dynamic has arguably affected state universities less than private universities but it has nevertheless had some effect on them. The third reason is the link between many private HEIs and private business interests. To the extent that private HEIs are run as businesses seeking to maximise profits (something that varies across the sector), they have often adopted neo-liberal/corporate models of internal management. Despite these factors, however, neo-liberalism has been a less influential agenda than predation because, with the exception of key technocratic officials, its principal proponents have not directly occupied the state apparatus in contrast to proponents of predation (see below).

Within HEIs, the principal agents of neo-liberalism have been senior managers who, in the case of all HEIs, have been responsible for implementing government policy and, in the case of private HEIs, have worked to promote the corporate interests that lie behind governing *yayasan* (Gaus and Hall 2015: 675; Burford and Mulya 2019). Such individuals have acted as "regulatory intermediaries"—that is, actors who act "directly or indirectly in conjunction with a regulator" (in the case of state HEIs, the state, and in the case of private HEIs, the *yayasan* owners) "to affect the behaviour of a target" (in both cases, university staff and students) (Abbott, Levi-Faur and Snidal 2017: 19; Jayasuriya 2015). Facing "both 'upwards' to the regulator and 'down' to those being regulated" (King, Griffiths and Williams 2007: 161), they have played a crucial role in mediating the extent to which neo-liberal imperatives have translated into change at the institutional level and been accommodated with imperatives associated with other the agendas described here.

Predation

The predatory agenda has sought to maximize political and bureaucratic control over budgetary resources, personnel and procurement processes so as to maximize opportunities for corruption and rent extraction, particularly for political and bureaucratic officials and their business associates. It has also sought to enhance these individuals' grip on power (see Robison 1997). With regards to state HEIs, it seeks to maximise opportunities for politicians, bureaucrats, and HEI managers to use government-provided HEI budgets and facilities corruptly or unethically to generate additional sources of personal income or funding to lubricate patronage networks or political party operations. With regards to private HEIs, it seeks to maximise the extent to which such figures can extract illegal payments, excess profits, or perquisites from these institutions. In contrast to neo-liberalism, predation lacks a vision as to what constitutes quality in higher education. But it can seriously undermine quality and efforts to achieve world class status to the extent that it steers resources away from teaching, scholarly research, and community service and undermines incentives for HEI staff and students to perform their roles effectively.

Predation entails a wide range of practices related to both: (i) the way in which HEIs interact with political, bureaucratic and corporate figures; and (ii) how HEI staff interact with one another and their students. With regards to the former, it entails practices such as: payment of bribes to government officials to secure Ministerial support in rector elections at state HEIs; the award by HEIs of supply contracts to particular private or state businesses in exchange for kickbacks to politicians, bureaucrats, and HEI managers; the payment of kickbacks to education ministry and other government officials for new programme approvals, variations to standard curricula, favourable accreditation ratings, approval of/support for senior management appointments, and the like; the award of degrees to senior officials without proper supervision or assessment in breach of academic integrity standards; and efforts by

HEI officials to use their institutions as support bases for political campaigns. With regards to the latter, it includes practices such as the appointment of family members to academic and administrative positions in HEIs without proper recruitment or promotion processes; the allocation of paid teaching opportunities and research funds by HEI managers to junior academic staff based on personal networks and promises of internal political support rather than academic ability; the extraction by senior academic staff of fees from research grants and consultancies won by junior staff; the shifting of administrative and teaching responsibilities from senior to junior staff without adequate compensation; and the payment of bribes by prospective students to HEI staff to gain entry into state HEIs through "special pathways" or *jalur khusus* (Sutrisno 2020; *Jakarta Post,* August 8, 2019; *Tempo*, June 9, 2020; *Tirto*, May 15 2019; Rakhmani 2019). It also includes academic staff prioritising consulting or other income-generating activities over scholarly research activities, attendance at lectures and seminars (especially to the extent that they do not arrange replacement teaching staff and classes consequently do not get taught) and "slackness" on the part of teaching staff in relation to the quality of their teaching.

The predatory agenda has exercised the dominant influence over HEI governance and decision-making in Indonesia because of the wider dominance of predatory political and bureaucratic officials and their business clients within Indonesia's political economy. As numerous studies have shown, such officials have long exerted control over the state apparatus and, in particular the bureaucracy and national and regional parliaments by virtue of their direct occupation of senior bureaucratic offices and parliamentary seats (see Robison and Hadiz 2004). Most importantly, they have also exerted control over the country's education bureaucracy in particular (Widoyoko 2011; Rosser and Fahmi 2016). In this context, state HEIs have become part of a larger franchise structure, the key feature of which

has been the purchase of government positions in exchange for access to the rents they generate (McLeod 2000; Rosser 2019). Meanwhile private HEIs have been treated as a source of rents for predatory officials able to trade various forms of permission for bribes and kickbacks. Important in this respect has been their engagement with Education ministry officials and the various regional chapters of *Kopertis,* a body formed by the Education ministry to monitor and guide private HEIs. Accordingly, at the HEI level, the main actors who have promoted the predatory agendas have been HEI managers and senior academics who have controlled internal patronage networks and the national and local state officials with whom they interact.

Idealism

The idealist agenda is rooted in traditional conceptions of the nature and role of HEIs—which see the purpose of HEIs as being to produce enquiry minds, promote intellectual development, and advance scientific and social scientific knowledge—and concerns to promote human rights, democracy and social justice in Indonesia. In accordance with these foundations, it emphasises the role of HEIs in promoting scholarship and learning and serving the wider community. Its central concerns in this respect are captured in the *tridharma*—the ideal that universities are mandated to engage in research, teaching and community service for the benefit of society. The *tridharma* is enshrined in *Law 12/2012 on Higher Education* as the means through which HEIs fulfil their function and mission (Article 58 (1)). It accordingly sees the purpose of HEIs as being to fulfil these objectives rather than produce a certain volume or quality of research, maximise research income, or enhance job outcomes for graduates as per the neo-liberal agenda. It supports efforts for HEIs to become "world class" but understands this less in terms of the metrics associated with global university

rankings than nobler scholarly or other objectives (Nugroho 2002b). Idealism also has a concern to promote equitable access to higher education and good governance in HEI administration, the latter understood in terms of notions of democracy, transparency and accountability. In this respect, it views higher education as a right, not a product to be sold in the market, and, as such, an opportunity that should be available to students regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. It also asserts that HEI administration should be clean and accountable and operate consistently with democratic principles (see Darmaningtyas, Subkhan and Fahmi-Panimbang 2009; Toha-Sarumpaet, Budiman, and Armando 2012).

Idealism is thus opposed to both neo-liberalism and predation, even if it shares some common ground with neo-liberalism especially in relation to good governance. At the national policy level, it has entailed opposition to policy reforms perceived to promote the commercialisation or privatisation of higher education. In particular, it has entailed opposition to the corporatisation of HEIs, a policy change that—since its introduction in the late 1990s in the form of increased autonomy for leading universities—has seen sharp increases in entrance and tuition fees at these universities (Nugroho 2002a; Darmaningtyas, Subkhan and Fahmi-Panimbang 2009). At the HEI level, it has entailed opposition to HEI-level measures that promote commercialisation, corruption in HEI management and academic misconduct, and support for fee waivers/discounts for poor or struggling students (Nugroho 2002b; Toha-Sarumpaet, Budiman, and Armando 2012; *Republika*, 26 September 26, 2017).

The idealist agenda has exercised influence over HEI governance and decision-making in Indonesia for two reasons. The first is that it has aligned well with the interests of popular forces seeking to promote human rights, democracy and social justice such as progressive NGOs, labour organisations and student organisations. The second is that such elements have

been empowered to some extent by democratisation because it has opened new policy spaces through which they have been able to influence policy. At the HEI level, the key proponents of the idealist agenda have been academic staff committed to academic scholarship and learning—in Bahasa Indonesia, such figures are often identified by the terms *cendekiawan* (literally, intellectual) or *ilmuwan* (literally, scientist); activist academics committed to notions of good governance, social justice and human rights; and student representative groups, particularly the student executive councils that exist at the faculty and university levels in most Indonesian universities (*badan eksekutif mahasiswa* or BEM). These elements have exercised relatively little influence over institution-level governance and management compared to proponents of predation and neo-liberalism, reflecting the fact that they have had little presence within the state apparatus and lacked structural leverage over the state. But they have been able to exercise some influence by virtue of their ability to mobilise for collective action and leverage support from key external parties. For instance, in some cases, these groups have received support from progressive NGOs involved in education-related advocacy (*Jakarta Post*, September 13, 2011; *Kompas,* July 6, 2012). They have also received some support from sections of the media. This has helped to publicise their concerns and mobilise public opinion in their favour.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEI GOVERNANCE

The influence of each of these agendas—and the actors and interests associated with them—and the way they have come together has varied significantly across individual HEIs. Below, we illustrate how they have come into play at three specific Indonesian HEIs—Jakarta State University (UNJ), Triskati University, and the University of Indonesia (UI)—in recent years to shape the nature of their governance and decision-making. These cases were chosen for

two reasons. First, they include two state universities (UI and UNJ) and one private university (Trisakti), giving the analysis reach across both state and private HEIs. Second, these institutions have all experienced moments of heightened internal conflict under particular rectors that have led to public exposure of the political dynamics at work in their governance. This has been an important factor in case selection to the extent that governance and decision-making at HEIs is usually imperceptible to outsiders because it occurs behind closed doors. The analysis of these cases is interpretive in nature—it is based on a reading of events and information as gleaned from secondary sources such as media reports, HEI websites, government reports, and books on the relevant cases. These sources include analyses seeking to report on events and partisan analyses and statements of position that have sought to influence the unfolding of events. These different sources have been interrogated for such biases.

As indicated earlier, these cases illustrate that, while all three agendas have served to shape institution-level governance and decision-making, predation has been the dominant agenda, reflecting the capture of these institutions by predatory political, bureaucratic and corporate elements. HEIs have predominantly been vehicles for rent-seeking on the part of these elements rather than the production of knowledge and skilled labour for the marketplace in line with neo-liberal conceptions of education quality or traditional scholarship, teaching and community service in line with idealist conceptions of education quality. This is notwithstanding government and market-based pressure for HEIs to evolve into world class institutions in accordance with neo-liberal precepts and management rhetoric declaring ambitions to head in this direction. At the same time, the cases show that some degree of reform in governance has been possible when reformist elements have gained control of an institution (the UI case) or challenged predatory HEI governance and management by

leveraging support from sympathetic external actors with influence (the UNJ and Trisakti cases). In such cases, however, the consequent disruption to power relations has proven short-lived, limiting the extent of reform.

Case Study 1: Jakarta State University (UNJ) Under Djaali

Established in 1964 as a teacher training college (IKIP), UNJ became an *universitas negeri* (literally "state university") in 1999, a status that gave it a wider educational mandate than just teacher training (UNJ nd). It is generally regarded as one of the country's most prestigious *universitas negeri*; for instance, it placed 19th in the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education's 2018 ranking of Indonesian HEIs just behind three other leading institutions of this type: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (11), Universitas Negeri Malang (14) and Universitas Negeri Semarang (16) (Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education 2018b). In 2019, it had over 31,000 students according to Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (2019, 13) data. In 2009, it became a BLU, giving it a limited degree of autonomy in the management of its own affairs (UNJ nd).

The university's senior managers have for several years expressed an ambition of transforming the institution into a "world class university," even apparently working at one point on a roadmap for how to get there (UNJ 2015). In 2017, the university's then rector Djaali stated in a public presentation that UNJ did not want to be a "second class" university but needed to position itself so it is on a par with other large universities and a "superior" (*unggul*) university within ASEAN (Djaali 2017). To this end, he mapped out a nine-point strategy that embodied many elements of the neo-liberal agenda including:

"good university governance"; improvements in the quality of research, scientific publications, and community service; improvements in the quality of teaching; improvements in the quality, quantity, and capacity of academic and professional staff; the introduction of transparent and accountable financial governance arrangements; and the introduction of quality assurance systems (Djaali 2017). Government has also pressured the university to improve research, teaching and community service outcomes, targets related to these outcomes being included in performance agreements between the two parties (UNJ 2019).

However, the university was soon embroiled in controversy related to academic misconduct, corruption and nepotism, reflecting the dominance of predatory elements within the institution. During 2016 and 2017, there had been growing tension between Djaali and UNJ staff over his appointment of several family members to academic and administrative positions (*Tirto* August 28, 2017). This tension led to a group of staff members calling themselves the "UNJ Lecturers Alliance United for Change" lodging a complaint with the national Ombudsman that the rector was guilty of abusing his authority and nepotism. In September 2017, the Ombudsman upheld the complaint. Shortly thereafter, the Ministry for Research, Technology and Higher Education suspended Djaali and appointed senior Ministry official Intan Ahmad to run the institution after a ministry-sponsored review uncovered manipulation of administrative records, excessive concentration of doctoral supervision responsibilities in the hands of individual supervisors and widespread plagiarism at the university. The plagiarism evidence raised questions about the university's award of numerous doctorates including to former presidential candidate and Co-ordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security, Wiranto, and five regional government officials, one

of whom—a former provincial governor—had been indicted and was subsequently convicted on corruption charges (*Tirto* 2018; Rosser 2018b).

In making their case against Djaali, the Lecturers' Alliance pointed not only to widespread plagiarism and nepotism but also to the negative impact that the scandal had on UNJ"s reputation and standing as well as that of the wider HE system. Speaking to the press in September 2017, Robertus Robet, a leading figure in the Alliance, stated that the affair "had tarnished UNJ's good name, damaged the dignity of the university in general, and jeopardised its future. If UNJ's rector is not sacked, it will be a bad precedent for the future of HEIs in general and UNJ specifically because it will inhibit university change and improvement" (*Republika*, 26 September 26, 2017).

For his part, Djaali denied any wrongdoing, appealed to the national parliament for support, reported a ministry official and UNJ staff member to the police for defamation, and challenged his sacking in the State Administrative Court (*Liputan6*, January 22, 2018). The five Southeast Sulawesi officials also made a report to the police alleging defamation. But all to no avail. In June 2018, Djaali lost his case at the State Administrative Court, ending his chances of rehabilitation (*Tirto* 2018).

However, it remains unclear whether his removal as rector and replacement with a Ministry official have diminished the extent of predatory activity within the university. The university's accreditation ranking was lowered from A to B while its ranking in the above Ministry list fell to 59 in the wake of the scandal, creating an incentive for the university to clean up its act (*Didaktika*, April 3, 2018; *Kaltim Today,* December 16, 2019). However, in September 2018, the Indonesian Anti-Corruption Committee, an NGO, called on the national

Anti-Corruption Commission (KPK) to investigate irregularities in the construction of the university's Training Centre building. And, in May 2020, the KPK arrested UNJ's head of staffing, Dwi Achmad Noor, after allegedly catching him in the act of paying illegal holiday bonuses to Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education officials (*Jakarta Post,* May 23, 2020). After the KPK handed the case to the police on procedural grounds, the police decided not to pursue it (*Antara*, July 10, 2020). The two episodes suggest that things may have quickly returned to a business as usual approach at UNJ or, in the framing of this paper, a reassertion of predatory dominance (*Suara Karya*, September 18, 2018).

Case Study 2: Trisakti University Under Thoby Mutis

Trisakti University has been one of Indonesia's leading private universities for several decades. It has an enrolment of more than 23,000 students according the data on *AyoKuliah*, a website that collates information about Indonesian HEIs to help prospective students choose universities and study programmes, as available in early 2020. Founded in 1965, Trisakti constituted a reincarnation of Res Publica University, a university closed by the New Order regime because of its owners' links to the Indonesian Communist Party. In 1966, it was placed under the control of Yayasan Trisakti, a charitable foundation associated with a group of ethnic Chinese intellectuals and businesspeople with strong connections to the New Order. Over the next two decades, these individuals turned the university into a successful business and, by the mid-1990s, it was widely regarded as Indonesia's top private university enrolling many students from Jakarta's elite (Lesmana 2016, 377-379; Yayasan Trisakti nd). The university was a key site of the student-led protests that contributed to the fall of New Order in 1998; the death of four Triskati students at one protest in May 1998 represented a crucial moment in this campaign, earning the university the moniker of *Kampus Pahlawan*

Reformasi or Campus of the Reformation Heroes (Maghiszha 2019). Perhaps for this reason, the university grew strongly in the immediate post-New Order period. According to *Tempo* (October 13, 2002) magazine, in 1998 the university's bank account contained Rp27 billion but by 2002, this had ballooned to Rp163 billion.

Like the other universities examined here, Trisakti has expressed ambitions of becoming a world class university in recent years. In 2008, for instance, Trisakti's institutional "vision" was reportedly "to become the leading private university and centre of excellence in the Asia-Pacific region and to develop an international reputation" (World Report International 2008, 15). To this end, a strategic plan envisaged the institution proceeding through an initial phase of "preparation for achievement of international quality" (2009-2014) and then a series of phases in which it would achieve ever higher scores in the QS rankings (Trisakti University 2014). In May 2017, media reports suggested that the university was working on a strategy to achieve world class status by securing maximum accreditation scores for all study programmes, gaining certification with the ASEAN University Network, and joining the QS Star ratings (*RMOL*, May 14, 2017).

During the New Order and early post-New Order periods, the university was effectively controlled and run by Yayasan Triskati. Among other things, the foundation appointed the university's rectors and oversaw the institution's finances (Lesmana 2016, 377-378). However, in 2002, then rector Thoby Mutis amended the university's statutes to remove the foundation's powers without the latter's knowledge or approval as his term as rector was coming to an end and it became clear that he would not be reappointed (*Tempo* October 13, 2002; Lesmana 2016, 377-378). This then triggered a series of moves by the foundation to remove him as rector. These moves included the appointment of an alternative rector, appeals

to various government ministers and President Megawati Sukarnoputri, legal action (*Okezone*, August 25, 2016; Lesmana 2016, 377-380), mobilisation of alumni (*Jakarta Post*, April 20, 2006), reports to the police (*Republika*, July 29, 2011) and four separate attempts to physically reclaim the campus (*Jakarta Post*, March 9, 2013). Thoby was able to fend off these moves because of: strong support from members of his management team and academic staff (*Tempo* October 13, 2002); an ability to mobilise protesters to blockade the campus when law enforcement officials sought to evict them (*Jakarta Post*, March 9, 2013); and support from some progressive elements in civil society concerned that the *yayasan*'s actions reflected the neoliberalisation and commercialisation of education (*Rakyat Merdeka,* May 14, 2011). Students also appear to have backed Thoby on many occasions, although the university's student council remained neutral in the lead-up to an attempt by the *yayasan* to physically reclaim control of the campus in 2012 (*Jakarta Globe,* February 27, 2012); some students clearly aligned themselves with the *yayasan* (*Okenews*, August 2, 2011).

To frustrate the *yayasan*'s attempts to regain control of the university, figures aligned with Thoby floated the idea that the government should nationalise Trisakti by changing its status to state university. Some of the university's assets, they pointed out, were in fact state-owned and should never have been placed in private hands (*Rakyat Merdeka,* May 14, 2011; *Bisnis Indonesia*, March 11, 2013). But while the government seemed open to the idea of nationalising the university (something it has done to a small number of other private HEIs), it did not progress in that direction.

Eventually, in 2016, the Minister of Research and Technology sought to break the deadlock by appointing Ali Ghufron Mukti, a senior official at the ministry, as rector bringing Thoby's tenure to an end. As with the UNJ case, however, the removal of the rector did not fully

resolve the problems. Tensions between the university and the *yayasan* have endured and been exacerbated by Mukti's sacking of some senior university staff for alleged corruption and nepotism, a move seen as favouring the *yayasan* (*Tempo*, January 7, 2018). In 2019, the university and the *yayasan* negotiated a peace deal in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (*rri.co.id*, December 20, 2019).

This conflict was essentially a war between, on the one hand, predatory and neo-liberal elements in the *yayasan* nurtured under the New Order and, on the other hand, elements among academic staff, students and civil society organisations championing idealist concerns (*Rakyat Merdeka,* May 14, 2011). Some media reports suggest that Thoby mobilised *preman* (street thugs) to help blockade the campus, an indication of predatory behaviour on his own part, although this has been denied by his supporters (*Tempo*, August 2, 2011). It is also possible that Thoby and his supporters were motivated in part by a desire to seize control of the patronage networks in which the university is ensconced. But, most fundamentally, this conflict appears to have centred on an attempt by idealist elements to liberate the university from its historical legacy as a creation of the New Order and a benefice of the predatory elites that it had nurtured.

Case Study 3: University of Indonesia Under Gumilar

UI is the country's oldest university, having been established during the Dutch colonial era. It is also one of the country's largest universities, with over 46,000 students (Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education 2019, 13). Importantly, it is the country's pre-eminent HEI in terms of status and one of the few to be granted autonomous

(*badan hukum*) status. But, as indicated earlier, it has been poorly ranked in the global league tables.

Gumilar Rusliwa Somantri was the youngest rector in university history and the first to come from its Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (*The Jakarta Post*, May 26, 2010). Beginning in 2007, he sought to improve UI's ranking through an extensive internal reform programme centring on: large investments in university infrastructure, including: the construction of a new library and IT facilities (Somantri 2012, 2-3; *Jakarta Post*, June 21, 2009); the appointment of staff with strong research track records to research-focused positions, complete with pay increases (Somantri 2012: 6); and the adoption of "a modern corporate management approach" focused on "efficiency and effectiveness" (as quoted in *The Jakarta Post*, May 12, 2008). He also centralised decision-making authority and financial control within the university, marginalising the faculties and reducing their autonomy (Somantri 2012, 4). Subsequently, he unilaterally appointed a new university senate and directly negotiated a key funding and performance agreement with the government, bypassing the Board of Trustees (Salim 2012, 226-227). These changes, he argued, would enable UI to become an institution producing research at the forefront of science, contributing to civilisation and humanity, and producing "diamonds," by which he meant, articles in leading scholarly journals, Nobel prizes, and graduates who would go on to become entrepreneurs and leaders (Somantri 2008).

However, these changes alienated large sections of UI's staff and student populations, including many faculty deans and its Board of Trustees. Things eventually came to a head in August 2011 when it was announced that the university had awarded an honorary degree to the King of Saudi Arabia. Coming shortly after a series of reports in the media about abuse of

Indonesian migrant workers in that country and the execution by beheading of an Indonesian maid for murdering her employer after allegedly suffering repeated torture, this announcement prompted several NGOs and a group of prominent university academics to visit the national parliament to demand that it summon the university's senior management (*Jakarta Post*, August 27, 2011). This protest quickly developed into one about the nature of the university's governance more generally and Gumilar's leadership in particular. Claims of authoritarianism, mismanagement, a lack of transparency and corruption soon became the focus of the debate with questions being raised especially about the university's investments in the library and IT infrastructure.

In March 2012, staff opposed to Gumilar's leadership formed an anti-corruption group called "Clean UI" aimed at "struggl[ing] for the values of honesty, truth, and justice as the basic values to be followed at UI" (Armando 2012, 13). Led by Ratna Sitompul, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine, one of the university's most powerful faculties and historically the principal source of its rectors, this organisation soon became the main vehicle for opposition to Gumilar's continued tenure as rector as new elections for the position approached. Gumilar—who appeared to be seeking re-election—responded by sacking Sitompul and, a few weeks later, seven other deans, sparking protest from staff, students and alumni (*Kompas,* August 2 and 3, 2012). The Minister was forced to intervene, appointing the director-general of DIKTI, Djoko Santoso, as acting rector upon conclusion of Gumilar's term in August 2012 until elections could be held (*Antara,* August 16, 2012). For his part, Gumilar initially registered for the elections but his candidature did not survive the initial stages.

For Gumilar's detractors, this episode was essentially about a power-hungry, corrupt and authoritarian leader being brought down by popular forces advocating for democracy, transparency and accountability (Toha-Sarumpaet, Budiman, and Armando 2012). But it can also be interpreted as a contest between forces seeking to transform UI into a world class university through the introduction of neo-liberal managerial changes and forces supporting the status quo. The point here is twofold. First, whatever else motivated Gumilar, he clearly had an ambitious vision of UI as a world class university complete with modern corporate management systems, high quality infrastructure, and world class researchers. Second, much opposition to Gumilar and his reforms emanated from powerful interests within the university whose authority and access to patronage resources were undermined by his reforms, most notably the faculty deans and senior professors. Gumilar may have had all the negative personality traits attributed to him by his opponents and been motivated by predatory instincts.[4] And opposition to his leadership was clearly framed in terms of notions of democracy, transparency and accountability, the concerns associated with the idealist agenda. But it doubtless also reflected the fact that his more corporate form of university governance redistributed power and resources within the institution away from powerful vested interests.[5]

CONCLUSION

This article has sought to shed light on the causes of poor quality research, teaching and community service in Indonesia's higher education system and the country's failure to produce world class universities by examining the political obstacles to improved governance and decision-making at Indonesian HEIs. Drawing on an analysis of three institutions' experiences, it has argued that the main obstacle to improved governance at the HEI-level has been the continued control of predatory actors and interests over HEIs, both state and private,

notwithstanding the political and administrative reforms unleashed by the fall of the New Order and the country's transition to a more democratic and decentralised political system. The continued dominance of these elements, it has suggested, has oriented governance at the HEI level towards activities that have generated private benefits for senior ministry and HEI officials and business groups connected to them at the expense of academic quality and integrity. The dominance of these elements has clearly been contested by, on the one hand, actors promoting a neo-liberal agenda seeking to enhance the competitiveness of HEIs according to specific metrics and, on the other hand, actors promoting an idealist agenda seeking to enhance intellectual freedom, democracy and social justice. Such actors have won occasional battles at the HEI level. But there is little evidence to suggest that they are winning the war.

Thus far, efforts to promote the emergence of world class universities in Indonesia have focused on the policy level and, in particular, on efforts to increase government spending on higher education, grant HEIs greater autonomy, create greater competition by allowing the establishment of foreign university branch campuses, and maintain standards through accreditation processes. As noted earlier, most of these efforts have so far largely failed in the face of resistance by predatory elements concerned that these efforts may undermine their privileged position in the higher education system, reduce access to rent-seeking opportunities, and tighten accountability requirements and popular elements concerned that these efforts will promote the commercialisation and privatisation of higher education to the detriment of poor students.

The analysis here suggests that, in addition to policy level reforms, separate efforts are required to reconfigure the balance of power between competing sets of actors and interests at

the HEI level—and in a manner that reduces the scope for predatory ministry and HEI officials and business groups to exploit their positions for private gain at the expense of academic quality and integrity. It also suggests two ways in which this may happen. The first, suggested by the UI case, involves reformist elements gaining control of an institution and then driving change from the top down. The second, suggested by the UNJ and Trisakti cases, involves reformist elements challenging predatory HEI managers or owners by leveraging support from sympathetic external actors with influence (for example, the media, the ombudsman office and civil society groups). At the same time, these cases also suggest two notes of caution. First, while such developments have altered power relations at HEIs sufficiently to make limited reform possible, their effects have ultimately proven short-lived, suggesting that these developments need to be sustained to be impactful. Second, these cases indicate that there are competing reformist agendas at work with markedly different implications for how academic quality and integrity are understood, measured, and implemented. Even if the dominance of predatory elements within the higher education system can be overcome, further struggle will be required to shape the nature and outcomes of reform initiatives.

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NOTES

[1] Figures are from the World Development Indicators database (see https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators).

[2] These figures relate only to HEIs then under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Research, Technology and Higher Education. They do not include those under other Ministries.

[3] The name of this ministry has changed over time. It is referred to here as the Ministry for Education and Culture for the sake of simplicity.

[4] At the time of writing (November 2021), Gumilar had not been formally accused of or put on trial for corruption, although he had appeared as a witness in the corruption trial of a former Vice-Rector. The former Vice-Rector was found guilty of corruption (*Detik*, July 22 2019).

[5] See Rosser (2019: 92-94) for a more detailed analysis of this case.