

The Policy of Honoris Causa Doctorate in Indonesian Higher Education 2000-2020

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Abstract: This article examines the conferring of honorary doctorates in Indonesian universities, which has increased significantly in the last twenty years, 2000-2020. This research applies the document analysis method; data obtained from public documents from government, universities, magazines, and newspapers. Normatively, the university conferred the Doctor Honoris Causa to individuals with outstanding service or work and contributed to science, technology, culture, humanity, and society. The study reveals that the Indonesian authorities have issued three amended regulations regarding honorary doctorates between 2000-2020. This policy provides increased flexibility to universities in determining the awarding of honorary degrees compared to previous regulations. This research has uncovered an evolutionary trajectory of shifting away from awarding the honorary doctorates to the academic community towards non-academic and even political circles and public officials. Such a policy or practice invites criticisms that this signifies an exchange of interests between campus leaders and the power establishment in Indonesia. The analysis of this research reveals that with the decentralization of power during the post-reformation era, there is a transformation of institutional logic of higher education from recognizing knowledge advancement and scientific contributions of members of intelligentsia towards empowering the legitimacy of ruling establishments, especially among politicians and powerful public officials.

Keyword: *Honoris Causa; Higher Education; Regulations; Public criticism.*

INTRODUCTION

The conferring of the honoris causa doctorate has become part of the tradition of higher education in the world. The academic practise of awarding this honorary degree was first practised in the 15th century at the University of Oxford (Buxton & Gibson, 1935). The awarding of this academic degree is still ongoing today, albeit with different practice contextualisation. Higher education institutions confer an honorary doctorate on someone deemed to have significantly contributed to developing a particular discipline or contributing to society or the public (Dhondt, 2013). As a degree-granting institution, the University has ignored all general requirements for general doctoral students, such as attendance, course credits, writing research proposals, dissertations, and passing comprehensive examinations. All processes that a doctoral student takes typically are eliminated because the honorary degree recipient is considered to have privileges, advantages, and contributions in specific fields based on the considerations of a particular higher education institution.

In Indonesia, the conferring of doctor honoris causa has become an issue and has even become a polemic in the public sphere in the last five years (Bowo & Bernie, 2021). The climax was

when a politician who was also the former chairman of the Indonesian Football Association received a doctorate honoris causa from Semarang State University. The professors, lecturers, and university students spoke of the rejection of the honorary doctor's award (Kumparan, 9 February 2021; Tirta, 11 February 2021; Kompas, 15 February 2021). The plan has received the attention of the media and the public at large. Not only that, but the University Student also Executive Board held a demonstration so that the chancellor and senate of Semarang State University could cancel the plan (Kumparan, 11 February 2021). They think that the honorary doctorate recipient is not worthy because scientifically has no exceptional academic work; it does not even contribute to scientific development. They even highlighted the status of the recipient of this honorary title, who was a convict in a corruption case. Despite receiving the spotlight and criticism from various parties, Semarang State University still gave the honorary title (Tampubolon, 2021).

Previously, polemics and rejection of the awarding of honorary degrees also took place at Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ). The leadership of UNJ has planned to provide an honorary doctorate to the vice president and the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises simultaneously (Republika, 1 September 2020). The plan was presented by the university leadership openly to the mass media. In response, the UNJ Lecturer Alliance rejected the award plan. They argued that recent studies had also shown no positive contribution from awarding honorary degrees to officials to develop knowledge and campus. However, the practice of granting honorary titles has tended to be politically charged and transactional (Purnamasari, 2020). Then, the rejection of the UNJ Lecturer Alliance received wide coverage from the mass media. So that many parties also responded to the plan to award the honorary title. As a result, this honorary degree award was not continued by the Jakarta State University due to internal and external pressure on the plan.

The awarding of honorary doctorates has become a trend in higher education in Indonesia in the last ten years (Mudzakir, 2017). Some universities award honorary degrees to figures deemed worthy by the academic community and the public so that the awarding of this prestigious title did not get reaction and rejection. On the other hand, several universities award titles to figures deemed unsuitable and even inadequate based on academic criteria. As a result, this academic practice has caused turmoil and even polemics in tertiary institutions and public spaces (Rahadian, 2018; Riana, 2021). It is not surprising then those accusations have emerged against higher education institutions that tend to offer honorary degrees to elites in society (Sadiq, 2020). The practice of conferring this honorary degree is considered a means of social exchange, reciprocation, and building social networks between the university and the elites in society.

Studies on conferring honoris causa doctorates or honorary doctorates are still limited. Several scholars have studied honoris causa, such as Pollard (1941), Lady (1967), Haffernan and Jons (2007), Dhondt (2013, 2014), Mudzakir (2017), Badrun (2021) and Lee & Marshall (2021). These scholars mostly examine the giving of this academic practice using historical and sociological perspectives. In the United States, awarding honorary doctorates is based on university policy. Pollard (1941) and Lady (1967) trace awarding honorary doctorates in the United States from the seventeenth century to pre-Second World War. Selden (1990) concentrated on the study of awarding honoris causa doctorates at Princeton University. Meanwhile, Haffernan and Jons (2007) compared the policies of awarding honorary doctorates at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. They point out that both universities award honorary degrees to prominent figures, scientists, and civil servants from the UK and abroad to reflect and maintain their reputation as the foremost international learning centres. In the contemporary United States, Lee & Marshall, (2021) observed universities confer this honorary degree not only to wealthy philanthropists and public figures and celebrities. Awarding honorary degrees to entertainment celebrities has become an increasingly routine practice, a symptom of how easily the value and capital accumulated in the entertainment industry can be converted to value in other fields such as academia. In contrast to the UK and AS, in Scandinavia countries, Dhondt (2014) uncovers that honorary degree's function as expressions of political and cultural relations, not as academic degrees to honour certain people. In Indonesia, Mudzakir (2017) and Ubedillah (2021) see the practice of awarding honoris causa doctorates not only as an academic practice and as part of the political exchange between the academic and the political field, and vice versa.

From previous studies, Dhondt (2013) mapped out more comprehensively the practise of conferring honorary doctorates in the history of higher education. Based on his findings, the awarding of honorary degrees occurs in a variety of situations. Initially, the title was bestowed by popes and emperors – or their representatives – who wished to honour their 'disciple'. They are also awarded to meritorious professionals seeking a way out of the strict rules for academic promotion through promotion in absentia. In addition, they are awarded by universities wishing to take advantage of the prestige of their respected celebrity or offer this degree to professors without a doctorate, as a practical answer to academic ceremonial needs and/or as a thank you to their friends and benefactors. The appearance of the honour promotion can only be explained through the combination of all these factors.

Furthermore, research on the policy and practice of awarding honorary doctorates in depth has not been widely conducted in Indonesia. The policy and practice of awarding honorary doctorates in Indonesia have been in the spotlight of studies (Mudzakir; 2017; Matanasi, 2018; Sadiq; 2020; Ubedillah, 2021). However, these studies emphasize aspects of this academic practice, such as recipients, doctors who give honoris causa, interactions between them. These studies are published in popular media, not in academic journals, so more in-depth discussion is limited. In addition, this study has not explored further the relationship between policy-regulatory changes that impact the practice of awarding degrees in these higher education institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the literature gap in awarding honoris causa doctorates in Indonesia.

This article discusses the phenomenon of conferring honorary degrees in Indonesian higher education for twenty years, 2000-2020. This article attempts to explain how government policy regulation as formal legitimacy regulates academic practice. This study also tries to describe and explain how post-reform universities practice the awarding of doctor honoris causa. Equally important, this study also tries to uncover why the practice of this awarding has increased in the last twenty years, and more politicians or public officials have accepted it, resulting in rejection among universities and the public.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach in collecting and analysing research data. Researchers used document analysis as a data collection method. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents - both printed and electronic material (computer-based and transmitted over the Internet). Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to obtain meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge about a particular research topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007).

This study collected data originating from qualitative documents regarding the awarding of honoris causa doctorate in Indonesian higher education during the last twenty years, from 2000 to 2020. This research data emanated from internet sources such as online magazines, online newspapers, government and university websites as part of public documents. From these internet sources, researchers collect, sort, and classify data thematically and categorically about the practice of awarding this honorary degree in Indonesian universities. In answering the research objectives, this study categorises data related to regulations that are the basis of legitimacy, practices conducted by universities and the polemic of awarding honoris causa doctors in twenty years post-reform in Indonesia. Researchers analysed the data of this study using an interpretive analysis method to understand the phenomenon of academic practice in Indonesian universities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section describes three research findings about doctor honoris causa in Indonesia. First, this finding describes formal regulation as legitimacy for the academic practice of doctor honoris causa in Indonesia. Second, the development and distribution of honoris causa doctoral practice in Indonesia for twenty years. Finally, the polemic of rejecting doctors honoris causa in Indonesia.

Conferring Doctor Honoris Causa Before 2000

The awarding of honoris causa doctorates has been an academic practice at Indonesian universities since 1951. Universitas Gajah Mada (UGM) was the first Indonesian university to confer this degree. This campus awarded an honorary doctorate in law to the First President of Indonesia, Sukarno, on September 19, 1951 (Gusti, 2011; Matanasi, 2018). In the following years, other universities also began to follow in the footsteps of UGM. In the 1951-1998 range, it was recorded that ten universities in Indonesia gave 61 Honoris Causa awards to figures who were considered to have contributed to science and society. The universities consist of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Indonesia (UI), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad), Universitas Diponegoro (Undip), Universitas Airlangga (Unair), and Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), Universitas Hasanuddin (Unhas), and Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ), Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Jakarta (see Table. 1).

Table. 1 Conferring Doctor Honoris Causa by Indonesian Universities 1951-1998

| No. | Universities | Number | Fields |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------|---|
| 1. | Universitas Indonesia | 26 | 8 Medical, 6 Law, 3 Social science, 6 Humanities, 1 Psychology, 1 Public Health, 1 Engineering, |
| 2. | Universitas Gadjah Mada | 12 | 3 Law, 3 Humanities, 2 Social science 1 Philosophy, 1 Natural Science, 1 Agriculture, 1 Economics, 1 Engineering, |
| 3. | Institut Teknologi Bandung | 5 | 1 Engineering, 2 Civil Engineering, 1 Industrial Engineering, 1 Geology, |
| 4. | Universitas Padjadjaran | 3 | 2 Law, 1 History |
| 5. | Universitas Airlangga | 7 | 3 Law, 2 Medical, 1 Economics, 1 Social Science |
| 6. | Universitas Hasanuddin | 3 | 2 Law, 1 Economics |
| 7. | Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta | 2 | 1 Islamic Studies, 1 Law |
| 8. | Universitas Dipogenoro | 1 | 1 Law |
| 9. | Universitas Sumatra Utara | 1 | 1 Law |
| 10. | Universitas Islam Negeri Jakarta | 1 | 1 Islamic Studies |
| | | 61 | |

Source: compiled by the authors

Furthermore, the awarded fields amounted to 14 scientific fields: medical, humanities, law, social science, psychology, public health, engineering, philosophy, natural science, agriculture, economics, geology, history, and Islamic studies. The universities awarded honorary doctorates in law to 18 recipients, followed by 10 in medical, 9 in humanities, 7 in engineering, 5 in social sciences, 3 in economics and other fields, each receiving 2 or 1 (see Table. 1). Also, the university awards this honorary degree to recipients who come from diverse backgrounds. There are 14 types of professional backgrounds from the data collected - namely, Kings, Sultans, Presidents, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Politicians, Doctors, Writers, Scientists, Diplomats, State-owned enterprises officials, and cultural experts. This background is categorised into three broad backgrounds: scientists/academics, politicians/government officials, and writers (see Table. 2).

Table. 2 Background of Honorary Doctorate Recipients in Indonesian Higher Education Institution 1951-1998

| No. | Social Backgrounds | Period | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| | | 1951-1965 | 1966-1998 | Total Number |
| 1 | Scientist/Academics | 3 | 23 | 26 |
| 2. | Politicians/Government Officials | 21 | 10 | 31 |
| 3. | Writers | - | 4 | 4 |
| | Total | 24 | 37 | 61 |

Source: compiled by the authors

In 1951-1965 or the Old Order era, Indonesian universities awarded honorary doctorates to government officials and politicians 21 times and scientists/only three times. The total practice of awarding this degree is 24 for 14 years. Meanwhile, in 1966-1998 or the New Order era, this practice increased overall with 37 awards. Unlike before, universities awarded this honorary doctorate more to 23 academics or scientists during the New Order era and government officials or politicians only ten times over 30 years. If we look at it as a whole, in 1951-1998, universities in Indonesia have awarded 61 honorary doctorates to 26 academics/scientists, 31 government officials/politicians and four writers or writers. The collected data means that government officials are the favourite group to get this award at that time.

In two Orders period, the honorary doctorates were given to figures who contributed academically and services contributing to the Indonesian nation and state. Indonesian higher education institution conferred to figures from within and outside Indonesia, namely 33 awards to figures from Indonesia and 22 figures from outside Indonesia. The awarding of titles is carried out selectively by considering the various services they have provided, including the awarding of honoris causa doctoral degrees to figures from outside Indonesia who have made a positive contribution to Indonesia.

Regulation of Conferring Honorary Doctorate degrees in Indonesia, 2000-2020

Universitas Gajah Mada (UGM) is the first Indonesian university to confer a doctor honoris causa. This campus conferred an honorary doctorate in law to the First President of Indonesia, Sukarno, on September 19, 1951 (Gusti, 2011; Matanasi, 2018). At that time, the awarding of this honorary title had not been regulated by the new post-independence government. Until twelve years after that, the Government deemed it necessary to issue a regulation regarding the implementation of this academic practice. Then came the regulations regarding honoris causa doctors issued by the government in 1963, 1980, 1990, 1992 and 1993, respectively, as formal legitimacy (Effendi, 2016). Substantially, these regulations have the similar purpose: a normative basis regarding the objectives, prerequisites, and procedures for awarding prestigious degrees in Indonesian higher education institutions. All four have in common that granting honoris causa doctorates must obtain approval from the Ministry of Education as the highest education authority in Indonesia.

The arrangement for awarding honoris causa doctors has also changed as a basis for formal legitimacy. In the span of fewer than twenty years, the Ministry of Education has issued three regulations regarding the awarding of honoris causa doctors, namely the Decree of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 178/U/2001, Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 21 of 2013, and the last one used is the Regulation of Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Number 65 of 2016. However, the most recent rule has been used as the basis for awarding an honorary doctorate to date. The following is an explanation of the three regulations issued by the Indonesian government regarding honorary doctors (see table 3).

First, the Decree of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia in 2001 stated that the prerequisite for awarding honoris causa doctors must be done by universities having doctoral programs. Degree recipients are required to have an academic degree of at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, the recipient must have outstanding services or contributions in the development of a scientific, technological, cultural, social, or humanitarian discipline. The faculty senate proposes the recipient candidate to the university senate for approval and determination to confer the title. Furthermore, the awarding process is conducted following the procedures applicable at the university. The Rector reports to the Minister with complete consideration of the work or services of the recipient. It means that the university has the discretion to determine who will be awarded this honorary degree, while the ministry only accepts reports, not to decide whether to grant permission or not.

Table. 3 The Regulations of conferring *Honoris Causa* Doctorate in 2000-2020

| No. | Regulations | Grantors | Recipients | Procedures |
|-----|--|---|--|---|
| 1. | Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 178/U/2001 | Universities have organized doctoral programs following applicable regulations | The recipient has an academic degree of at least a bachelors. The recipient has made extraordinary contributions in developing a discipline of science, technology, culture, society and/or humanity. | Prospective recipients are proposed by the faculty senate and confirmed by the university senate. It is conducted following the procedures applicable at the university. The rector reports to the Minister of Education with considerations of the contribution or services of the recipient. |
| 2. | Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 21 of 2013 | The university has a faculty/department that is scientifically the same as the field of science that is the scope of services and/or work of the prospective degree recipient. The university organizes doctoral programs following applicable regulations. The University has permanent Professors in the fields according to which honorary Doctorates are awarded to recipients. | The recipient has a minimum academic degree of undergraduate or equivalent to level 6 in the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework. The recipient has good morals, ethics, and personality. The Recipient acts as citizens who are proud and love their homeland and support world peace. | The university senate assesses contributions or services of prospective recipients and submits the result to the Rector; to be forwarded to the Minister for approval. The Minister assigns the Director-General of Higher Education to examine the work or services and the suitability and feasibility of prospective recipient. The Director-General of Higher Education issues approval/refusal to grant an Honorary Doctorate. Then, the university confers an Honorary Doctorate in an open Senate session. |
| 3. | Regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Number 65 of 2016. | University has doctoral programs with accredited A or excellent ratings. | A person who deserves an award for outstanding contributions in Science and Technology and/or meritorious service in the field of humanity | The procedures and conditions for awarding honorary doctorates are regulated by each university autonomously. |

Source: compiled by the authors

Second, compared to the 2001 regulation, the 2013 Minister of Education and Culture Regulation provides more stringent requirements, both regarding prospective recipients and the procedure for awarding degrees. Recipients are required to have at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent to level 6 in the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework. The awarding procedure must also follow a longer submission stage, the Rector and the university senate must submit to the Ministry of Education first. Then, the Minister of Education instructs the Directorate General of Higher Education to evaluate the proposal and decide on the proposal for granting the title from the proposing university. On behalf of the Minister, the Director-General of Higher Education issues approval or refusal to grant an Honorary Doctorate. If approved, the university is allowed to award a doctorate *honoris causa* to prospective recipients.

Third, according to Regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Number 65 of 2016, the *honoris causa* title is an honorary degree given by universities to individuals who are deserving of awards in connection with outstanding services in science and technology or meritorious service in the humanitarian field. Under the new rules, not all

universities can award honoris causa doctorates. Only universities that already have an A or excellent accredited doctoral program are allowed to grant honoris causa doctorates. Procedurally, this 2016 regulation authorizes the procedure for granting Honoris Causa degrees to each university without asking for approval from the Ministry of Education and culture. This means that the 2016 regulation provides great convenience and opportunity for universities to award honoris causa doctoral degrees to desired figures or people according to their needs. However, this regulation states that the minister can revoke the honorary doctorate if he does not meet the requirements based on this Ministerial Regulation. The comparison in table 3 shows that in terms of recipients and the procedure for awarding honoris causa doctors, it is increasing giving leeway to universities. Based on the latest 2016 regulations, universities are not required to obtain approval from the Ministry of Education. Consequently, universities have more autonomy in determining the award of doctor honoris causa.

These regulatory changes bring up advantages and disadvantages in the Indonesian higher education environment. The advantage of this regulation is that higher education institutions have the authority to grant honorary doctorates without obtaining prior permission from the ministry if they have met the main requirement, namely that they have obtained "A" institutional accreditation. Consequently, they do not need a lengthy bureaucratic process to award someone an honorary degree; the process can only be decided at the university level. The authority is used differently by various universities. This opportunity is used by universities that have met the minimum requirements to award honorary doctorates to figures who are considered qualified, and reputations in certain scientific fields can also provide institutional benefits for the granting institution. With the autonomy of conferring honorary degrees, universities increase the awarding of these degrees to people who are considered to have made outstanding contributions to the development of science, technology, and society. As a result, many qualified people and contribute significantly will get recognition and appreciation from universities.

This policy's disadvantage or side effect is that universities easily award honorary doctors to people who are considered qualified as recipients of this honorary degree. In addition, there are symptoms of universities or university elites using the conferring of honorary degrees to build relationships with political and economic elites. The universities award honorary degrees to figures who are sometimes considered unqualified when viewed from a scientific contribution. Also, universities force themselves to confer honorary doctorates not based on contributions to the development of science but with other considerations, namely contributions to society when they become public officials as the main basis. Therefore, many public officials and politicians were conferred this title after the regulation changing of this honorary doctorate. As a result, there has been criticism from the university's internal circles and the public that universities trade honoris causa doctorates as part of social exchange. This condition makes the reputation of the university questioned by many parties.

The Conferring Honorary Doctorates in Indonesia 2000-2020

This study reveals that honoris causa doctorates in Indonesian universities have increased significantly in the 2000-2020 range. The number of universities that give honorary academic degrees is also increasing, not only public universities but also private universities. In two decades, public universities have awarded honoris causa doctors as many as 106 recipients spread across various scientific fields. Islamic Public Universities have awarded 31 recipients, and private universities have awarded 13 recipients. Overall, Indonesian universities have awarded this prestigious doctorate to 150 recipients in twenty years. Based on the data in table 4, the higher education institutions conferred the most honoris causa doctors in the fields of social and political science (28), economics (25), education (21), humanities (19) and law (15), and Islamic Studies (13).

Table. 4 Distribution of Honorary Doctorate Fields in Indonesian Higher Education 2000-2020

| Fields | Public Universities | Islamic Public Universities | Private Universities | Number |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Law | 11 | 1 | 3 | 15 |
| Medical science | 6 | - | - | 6 |
| Social and Political Sciences | 20 | 5 | 3 | 28 |
| Education | 13 | 6 | 2 | 21 |
| Islamic Studies | - | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| Humanities | 14 | 4 | 1 | 19 |
| Biology | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Physic | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Economics | 19 | 3 | 3 | 25 |
| Technological Studies | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Environmental studies | 4 | - | - | 4 |
| Engineering | 4 | - | - | 4 |
| Agricultural/ Fisheries Sciences/ Marine | 6 | - | - | 6 |
| Sports Science | 3 | - | - | 3 |
| Total | 106 | 31 | 13 | 150/150 |

Source: compiled by the authors

The Indonesia's public universities award honorary doctorates in five major scientific fields, namely 20 honorary doctorates in social and political fields, 19 in economics, 13 in education, 13 in the humanities, and 11 in law. Then this award was followed by other scientific fields such as medicine (6), agriculture, fisheries, marine (6), environment (4), engineering (4), sports science (3), technology studies (2), biology (2), and physics (2). Additionally, Islamic public universities awarded the most honorary degrees in Islamic Studies to 12 recipients. Meanwhile, public universities have never awarded an honorary doctorate in Islamic studies. This condition is understandable because Islamic public universities have an established focus and academic tradition on Islamic studies, and they also have many doctoral study programs in this field. Therefore, it is very natural that many Islamic public universities give honorary doctorates in Islamic studies because these higher education institutions tend to focus on this field. However, this Islamic public university also awards honorary doctorates in other fields, although in smaller numbers, such as in education (6), social and political science (5), humanities (4), Islamic economics (3), and law. (1).

Unlike the two types of public universities previously, private universities conferred fewer honorary degrees than public universities and Islamic public universities. Objectively, this condition is because not many private universities have doctoral programs. So, the opportunity to award honorary degrees is limited by the regulations of the Indonesian Ministry of Education. In the span of twenty years, 2000-2020, private universities only started awarding honoris causa doctorates in 2010. The university that started it was Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW) which was followed in succession by several other private universities, such as the Universitas Pelita Harapan (2011), Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (2012), Universitas Trisakti (2013), Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (2014), Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (2016) and Universitas Muslim Indonesia (2018). Based on data collected, private universities have awarded honoris causa doctorate degrees to 13 recipients in 6 scientific fields in seven private universities (see Table 5).

Furthermore, the awarding of honoris causa doctorates has increased sharply in twenty years (2000-2020). Public universities are increasingly conducting this academic practice, and in its development, it is followed by private universities. This study reveals a continuous upward trend. Based on the data collected, starting from 10 (2000-2005), 30 (2006-2010), 45 (2011-2015), to 65 (2016-2020) (see table 6).

Table. 5 Conferring of Doctor Honoris Causa at Indonesian Private Universities 2000-2020

| No. | Universitas | Number | Fields |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------|--|
| 1. | Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana | 3 | Management |
| 2. | Universitas Pelita Harapan | 1 | Law |
| 3. | Universitas Trisakti | 1 | Law |
| 4. | Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta | 2 | Education, Law |
| 5. | Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang | 3 | Social & Political Science |
| 6. | Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta | 1 | Social and Political Science |
| 7. | Universitas Muslim Indonesia | 2 | Islamic Economics, Islamic Political Thought |
| | | 13 | |

Source: compiled by authors

Based on recipient groupings, universities award honorary degrees to five categories of social groups: scientists/academics, politicians/government officials, entrepreneurs/businesspeople, religious leaders, and writers. Based on the data in table 2, Indonesian universities awarded the most honorary degrees to politicians/government officials (72). Scientist/academic (28), entrepreneur/businessman (19), religious leader (16), and writer (14).

Table. 6 Background of Honorary Doctorate Recipients in Indonesia 2000-2020

| Social Background | Year Period | | | | Number |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | 2000-2005 | 2006-2010 | 2011-2015 | 2016-2020 | |
| Scientist/ Academics | 1 | 10 | 5 | 12 | 28 |
| Politicians/ Government Officials | 3 | 9 | 26 | 34 | 72 |
| Entrepreneur/ Businessman | - | 2 | 6 | 11 | 19 |
| Religious Leaders | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 16 |
| Writers | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| Number | 10 | 30 | 45 | 65 | 150 |

Source: compiled by the authors

The conferring of doctor honoris causa to politicians/government officials in the span of twenty years has experienced a very significant increase, from 3 (2000-2005), 10 (2006-2010), 26 (2011-2015) to 34 (2016-2020). Furthermore, universities have also become increasingly interested in awarding honorary degrees to entrepreneurs and businesspeople in the last fifteen years. As a result, the number of entrepreneurs and businesspeople who have won honorary degrees has also increased in the last fifteen years. This condition can be observed in the 2011-2015 period; for example, universities awarded honoris causa doctorates to 26 politicians/government officials and 6 businesspeople. Meanwhile, at the same time, the university awarded this prestigious title only to five scientists/academics. It followed by giving to 4 writers and 3 religious leaders.

In 2016-2020 the awarding of honorary doctorates increased dramatically. All categories of recipients of this honorary doctorate, entrepreneur/businessman (34), scientist (12), entrepreneur/businessman (11), and religious leader (5), experienced an increase, except for writers (3) whose number decreased from the previous period. From these data, it can be interpreted that universities are more interested in awarding honorary degrees to politicians and government officials than to scientists. On the other hand, universities are also more interested in awarding honorary degrees to businesspeople/entrepreneurs than religious leaders and writers.

The Controversy of Conferring Honorary Doctorate

The awarding of honoris causa doctorates has become part of the academic tradition of higher education institutions in various countries, including Indonesia. Normatively, this academic

practice is allowed referred to the Indonesian ministry of education regulations and is also regulated in the internal regulations of universities regarding the more detailed procedure. However, in practice, the academic community and the public have different views on this academic practice, especially regarding the person who is entitled to this prestigious title. As a result, it often causes polemics and even rejection by certain groups in the process of awarding this honorary doctorate. In the case of Indonesia, there are several controversies or even polemics against the awarding of this academic honorary degree (see Table. 6).

First, a group of Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad) alumni rejected the honorary doctorate of Megawati Sukarno Putri, the 5th former President of Indonesia and the general chairman of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, Indonesia's current ruling party (Republika, 25 May 2016). They demanded the Rector of Unpad against awarding Megawati's honorary doctorate because it was deemed that she did not meet the qualifications to receive this degree. They launched an online petition to urge the Rector of Unpad to cancel the awarding of honoris causa doctors (Change.org, 20 May 2016). This group's refusal is based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) No. 21/2013 Article 3, point B, that recipients of honorary doctorate must have a minimum academic degree of bachelor (S1) or equivalent to level 6 (six) in the National Qualifications Framework Indonesia or "Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia" (KKNI). According to them, Megawati did not succeed in completing her bachelor's studies at the university, so the award violated existing regulations. If the main basis is related to her contribution to democracy, Megawati is considered by this group to have not shown an extraordinary contribution. On that basis, they rejected the title. Despite the rejection from some alumni, Unpad continued to award the honoris causa doctorate to the former Indonesian female President.

Table. 7 Controversies for Conferring Honorary Doctorates in Indonesia

| No. | Year | Recipient | Fields | Grantor | Opposition Group |
|-----|------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | 2016 | Megawati Soekarno Putri (Political Party leader/Formal President) | Politics and Government | Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad) | Alumni Group |
| 2. | 2017 | Megawati Soekarno Putri (Political Party leader/Formal President) | Educational Policy | Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) | Minangkabau Community Forum/Forum Masyarakat Minangkabau (FMM), West Sumatera |
| 3. | 2017 | Muhaimin Iskandar (Political party leader/vice chairman of Parliament/former minister) | Political Sociology | Universitas Airlangga | Lecturer Forum & Alumni of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Airlangga University |
| 4. | 2020 | Ma'ruf Amin (Vice President/ Former Chairperson of the Indonesian Ulema Council) | Islam and Politics | Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) | UNJ Lecturer Alliance |
| | | Erick Thohir (Minister of State-Owned Enterprises/Big businessman) | Sports Management/ Sports Science | | |
| 5. | 2021 | Nurdin Halid (Politician/former Chairman Indonesian Football Association) | Sports Education | Universitas Negeri Semarang (Unnes) | Student Executive Board of Unnes |

Source: compiled by the authors

Second, a group of people calling themselves the Minangkabau Community Forum or Forum Masyarakat Minangkabau (FMM) rejected the awarding of an honorary doctorate to Megawati Sukarno Putri by the Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP), West Sumatra (Republika, 22 September 2017). Their refusal also refers to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) 21 of 2013 in article 4 (a and b), which states that the Honoris Causa doctorate recipients must have an academic degree at least a bachelor's degree. According to them, Megawati is not yet entitled to receive the title. Therefore, they demanded that the Rector of UNP annul the award plan. FMM even protested at the West Sumatra Regional House of Representatives and threatened to protest when the doctorate awarding was performed the university.

In response, the Rector of UNP stated that presenting the Honoris Causa Doctorate was an academic matter. This conferment has nothing to do with politics. The university gave the title because of Megawati's meritorious role in education, namely the issuance of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which stipulates the state's obligation to allocate 20% of the APBN budget for education. Therefore, regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 21 of 2013, which requires recipients of the Honoris Causa Doctorate to have a bachelor's degree, is no longer valid; has been replaced with a new rule, namely the Regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 65 of 2016 concerning Honorary Doctorate. Thus, awarding an honorary degree to Megawati was deemed to have met the requirements of the new regulations. Therefore, despite the protests of a group of people, the awarding of the honorary degree continued.

Third, the rejection of the Airlangga University social and political science lecturer forum and alumni for the awarding of honoris causa doctorate Muhaimin Iskandar, a political party leader, former minister, and deputy chairman of the House of Representatives (Faizal, 2017). The Airlangga University lecturer forum rejected the award because it was based on several reasons (Arifin, 2017; Kumparan, 3 October 2017). First, Muhaimin is considered to have not met the criteria as a recipient of an honorary doctorate both academically and in the field of political pluralism. Second, this conferring is also considered not to fulfil the regulations of the Minister of Education and Culture and the rules of Airlangga University. Moreover, awarding the title seems rushed, ignoring the aspirations of the lecturers and not going through an academic process that follows the rules. Third, recipients are considered to have not contributed to scientific development and Airlangga University institutionally. Finally, the group refused to see that Airlangga University rectorate had conducted transactional practices that tarnished the campus's independence, autonomy, and objectivity.

In contrast, the rector of Airlangga University emphasized that the awarding of the title had gone through the procedure and met the requirements, both academic and administrative requirements (Tribunnews, 3 October 2017). The rector realized that the recipient happened to be a political person; it could not be denied. However, he disagreed that the award decision was not based on academic grounds. According to him, the academic Senate and professors as promoters have assessed that Muhaimin Iskandar has produced thoughts and policies. Most of Muhaimin's thoughts have been put into writing and books. They consider most of his books to be better than dissertations. In fact, according to him, many doctors and professors have not even written books (Farmita, 2017). Finally, the rejection of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences lecturer forum was unable to stop the policy of the Rector and the Senate of Airlangga University.

Fourth, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) plans to award honorary doctorates to Vice President Ma'ruf Amin and Minister of State-Owned Enterprises Erick Thohir at the end of 2020 (Kompas, 1 September 2020; Republika, 1 September 2020). Responding to the plan, however, this plan was opposed by the UNJ Lecturer Alliance for Academic Freedom. The Lecturer Alliance refused and asked for the cancellation of the award of the Honoris Causa Doctorate. According to them, awarding the title of Doctor Honoris Causa to figures who are in power and holding public positions has the potential to threaten academic freedom and higher education autonomy (Sindonews, 4 September 2020). In addition, there is no positive contribution from awarding honorary degrees to officials to the development of knowledge and campus. The practise of

awarding honorary degrees so far tends to be politically charged and transactional in nature. If this is the main reason, it is dangerous for university autonomy and academic freedom.

Contrasting the previous three cases, protests by critical groups against doctor Honoris causa's conferment did not change the university policy. The university continues to award honorary doctorates to politicians. In the case of UNJ, the refusal of the UNJ Lecturer Alliance was able to delay and even cancel the plan to award honoris causa doctors to the Vice President and Minister of SOEs in 2020. The UNJ rector's plan to give honorary doctorate to these two key government officials is not only in the spotlight of academics at UNJ but also public widely. Moreover, before the Rector rolled this plan out, UNJ had been in the public spotlight because of the alleged case of gratification of UNJ officials to the Ministry of education and culture (Media Indonesia, 20 May 2020). Even the Corruption Eradication Commission has arrested the person involved in the gratification, which is a subordinate of the rector of UNJ (CNN Indonesia, 22 May 2020). Thus, it is no wonder, then, the UNJ Lecturer Alliance linked awarding degrees as an effort by university leaders to attract sympathy to the political elite. On the other hand, also to get exchange and protection to them from gratification issue.

Fifth, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) awarded a doctorate honoris causa to Nurdin Halid, a politician and former General Chair of the All-Indonesian Football Association, involved in a corruption case (Prabowo and Barnie, 2021). He received an honorary doctorate in the field of Cooperative-Based Sports Industry on February 11, 2021. According to the Rector of UNNES, Fathur Rokhman, the title was given by Halid because he was considered to have played a role in advancing soccer in Indonesia (Kumparan, 11 February 2021). The awarding of the Doctor Honoris Causa title for Nurdin Halid was based on a study by the UNNES Sports Education Doctoral Program on the performance of national football during his leadership, which was considered to have contributed to the management of football based on the sports industry in Indonesia.

Nothing like the Rector, the Student Executive Board or Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (BEM) of UNNES thought Nurdin Halid was not worthy of being awarded the honorary doctorate. They refused, protested, and asked for the cancellation of the grant of the honorary doctorate (Suara Merdeka, 10 February 2021). They even held a demonstration when the honoris causa doctorate inauguration ceremony was held on the campus. According to the Head of BEM, seeing the giving of Doctor Honoris Causa to the former General Chair of the All-Indonesian Football Association is incredibly humiliating. Considering Halid's record, it cannot be said that he was worthy to receive this honorary title (Prabowo, 2021). Halid's leadership at PSSI has not achieved many achievements and has experienced many setbacks in football culture, which is not conducive to its athletes and the football mafia, rife in match-fixing cases (Farasonalia, 2021). Also, Halid engaged in a corruption case, which has served two times in prison. Therefore, students deeply regret the conferring honorary doctorate, which is believed to be full of political interests. In the view of students, the honorary title should be given to outstanding figures and outstanding contributions to the nation and state, not to former corruptors.

Although many public officials and politicians have received honoris causa doctorate, only five figures have received public scrutiny and opposition. This situation emerged because of open resistance from critical students, academics, and community groups. The figures given the award were popular figures who often receive widespread media attention, so it was natural to receive sharp attention from the public when they are granted this prestigious academic award. In addition, the controversy over the awarding of honoris causa doctorates arose because opponents view universities did not rely on academic standards as a benchmark in awarding them, and they use considerations of social exchange to gain access to power institutionally. However, the university denied the accusation, and they thought that the conferring of the degree was procedurally legitimate. These differences in viewpoints did not reach the common ground; as a result, protests and controversies emerged in the public sphere.

Furthermore, the university conferred honoris causa doctorates to recipients based on existing scientific fields in their institutions, and those scientific fields already have a doctoral program as a condition for a university to grant an honorary doctorate. The five controversies for conferring the honorary doctorate were in social sciences and education, scientific fields, which were

relatively looser when compared to natural sciences and engineering sciences, as an example, which require detailed knowledge and expertise. Eventually, the controversy arose not due to the scientific field given but instead on the figure who was granted the honorary title, which had already become a political figure highlighted by the public because of their political record.

Discussion

The awarding of honoris causa doctorates has been an academic practice in Indonesian higher education since 1951 until now. This academic practise aims to give awards to figures considered instrumental in developing science, technology and providing enormous benefits to the community. In Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University was the first university to initiate awarding this title, namely by awarding an honorary doctorate to the first President of Indonesia, Sukarno, in 1951 (Matanasi, 2018). Moreover, Sukarno was the first person in Indonesia to receive a doctorate honoris causa from a university in Indonesia after Indonesia's independence. Also, he was an Indonesian figure who has received the most honoris causa doctorate degrees, as many as 26 degrees from 7 domestic universities and 19 from overseas universities (Sukarno, 1984). Sukarno received the honorary doctorate because of his contribution as the founder of the Republic of Indonesia, the President, the leader of the non-aligned movement, and a national and humanitarian thinker. Naturally, many universities at home and abroad give honoris causa doctorates to this figure.

The conferring of honorary doctorate had not been regulated in 1951, although at that time this academic practice had begun in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has not structured the criteria and procedures for the award. Afterwards, the Indonesian education authorities considered it necessary to regulate it. The Ministry of Education issued regulations on conferring this prestigious title several times, namely in 1963, 1980, 1990, and 1993 (Effendi, 2016). The four regulations have something in common: universities are required to obtain approval from the Indonesian Ministry of Education before awarding honoris causa doctors to recipients. This change occurred when the latest regulations issued after Indonesia's reformation emerged, namely with the emergence of the Minister of National Education Regulation in 2001. This change cannot be separated from the spirit of reform in 1998, which impacted the realm of Indonesian higher education. The university wanted wider autonomy in managing the academic world. On the other hand, the Government also responded with policies that reflected the spirit of reform. Consequently, in the 2001 regulation, the government gave more flexibility to universities to give honoris causa doctors according to the needs of higher education institutions. Universities no longer need to seek approval from the Minister of Education. The university is only obliged to report the results of the university's institutional decisions regarding the award. It means that the 2001 regulation gives universities the flexibility to award honoris causa doctorate based on the reasons and arguments of scientists in the university environment.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education updated the regulations on doctoral honoris causa. The education authority has tightened the requirements for prospective recipients and the procedure for awarding honoris causa doctors. Previously, universities that awarded honorary doctorates were not required to have professors in the conferred fields. However, in 2013 regulations, universities are required to have professors in the same field of science as the recipient of the honorary doctorate. In addition, the university that will award the degree must apply for the award of an honorary doctorate to the Minister of Education. The application for the honorary degree was delegated by the Minister of Education to the Directorate General of Higher Education to assess the work and services of candidate recipients. Post-assessment, they decide to be able to give approval or rejection. Compared to the previous regulations, this regulation is more stringent, and the authority of universities is limited. Afterwards, the Government issued a 2016 Minister of Education and Culture Regulation concerning honoris causa doctors replacing the old 2013 regulations. In this new regulation, only universities with A-accredited or excellent doctoral programs can award honorary doctorates. Recipients of this degree are those who are considered to have outstanding services in Science and Technology and/or meritorious services in the field of humanity. In this latest regulation, the recipient requirements are more relaxed, and each

university regulates the procedure for awarding an honorary doctorate. Consequently, universities are more flexible in regulating conferring without having to consult with the authority of the ministry of education.

In practice, granting honoris causa doctors at Indonesian universities has increased significantly over the past 20 years. Universities awarding honorary degrees are increasing, not only from public universities and Islamic public universities but also from private universities. The types of honorary doctoral scholarships that are given are also increasingly diverse. The scientific fields that higher education institutions mostly give are social and political science, economics, education, humanities, law, and Islamic studies. In addition, the university gives this prestigious title to someone from a variety of backgrounds that is more varied than in the previous two decades. This honorary doctorate is not only given to scientists, politicians/government officials, writers, religious leaders, but also to entrepreneurs.

In the last ten years (2011-2020), the universities awarded 60 honoris causa doctorate degrees to politicians or government officials, 17 degrees to scientists, and 17 businesspeople. At the same time, universities also confer on entrepreneurs or businesspeople the same degree given to scientists. Then followed by religious leaders (8) and writers (6). These data show that universities are more interested in appreciating politicians than scientists. After that, entrepreneurs also received more honorary degrees than religious leaders and writers. Empirically, the findings of this study indicate that in 2016-2021, universities awarded more honorary doctorates to politicians and public officials than from other social groups. The new regulation objectively makes it easier for universities to be able to conduct this academic practice. This structural situation unwittingly encourages universities to compete in awarding honoris causa doctorates. On the other hand, politicians/government officials also need cultural and symbolic recognition or legitimacy. By obtaining honorary degrees, politicians and public officials gain the legitimacy that their record or performance is recognized as providing scientific benefits or providing benefits to the public. They also use the title of doctor "Honoris Causa" (Dr. HC) in front of their name formally as a symbol of recognition from the university.

The practice of this conferring did not initially cause a polemic, but in its development, it received criticism and rejection from social groups both inside and outside the campus. The rejections of the awarding of honoris causa doctors occurred in some well-known political figures in Indonesia. Megawati, general chairwoman of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, who is also the former fourth President of Indonesia, received the spotlight when she received honorary degrees from Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) (2016) and Universitas Padjadjaran (2017). A group of community organizations refused Megawati an honorary degree from Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP), and a group of people on behalf of the alumni of Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad) urged Unpad to cancel the honorary doctorate by making an Online Petition. In addition, rejection was made by people outside the university. In contrast to Megawati, Muhaimin Iskandar, general chairman of the National Awakening Party, received a rejection from the internal university awarding the degree. The lecturer forum in The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Airlangga (Unair), rejected the awarding of the honoris causa doctorate because the senior politician was deemed to have not shown any contribution to scientific development as a condition for obtaining the degree. However, the university still conducted the conferring honorary degree, even though it caused polemics in the university and public. Eventually, protesters think that the awarding of the title cannot be separated from Muhaimin's political contribution to the Minister of Higher Education and the university's elite.

The conferring of honoris causa doctorate Nurdin Halid, a senior politician from the Golkar Party at UNNES, received a firm rejection from the university's Student Executive Board. Before Nurdin Halid, Unnes had awarded these two honorary doctors to public figures who have strategic political positions in Indonesia. In November 2020, Unnes conferred an honorary doctorate to a member of the Presidential Advisory Council Lutfi bin Yahya in the field of da'wah communication and national history (Unnes, 9 November 2020). Afterwards, in December 2020, the Coordinating Minister for the Economic Affairs and General Chair of the Golkar Party, Airlangga Hartarto, also received a degree in sports (Unnes, 23 December 2020). Departing from the above, it is natural for

students to assume that their university is selling out the honorary degree to the political elite. The university does not provide base scientific considerations as the main basis for awarding but sees a person's socio-political position and opportunities to exchange interests as the dominant considerations for awarding an honorary doctorate.

In contrast to the rejections in the four previous cases, the protest the awarding of an honorary doctorate at UNJ succeeded in cancelling this academic practice. Initially, the UNJ Elite had planned to give honorary doctorates to the Vice President and the Minister of SOEs; however, they received strong criticism from internal and external parties. The plan was strongly rejected by the UNJ lecture Alliance because, at the same time, a corruption case emerged at UNJ. They view the awarding of the title as part of the university leadership's efforts to gain political support amid the corruption issue that plagues the university. On the other hand, prospective recipients do not want to get a negative spotlight amid problems that arise at the degree-granting university. As a result, the lecturer movement succeeded in cancelling the plan to award honorary degrees to two important Indonesian officials.

Based on the discussion, there are several reasons why universities award honorary doctorates to politicians more than other recipient groups. First, the university sees politicians as a strategic social group in making policies that have a broad impact on the public, including in matters of higher education, compared to other recipient groups. Hence, they prefer to give honorary titles to groups of politicians and public officials. This fact shows that there is a transformation of the institutional logic regarding awarding honoris causa doctors, which previously only focused on academic contributions towards accommodating considerations of practical, social, and political contributions and impacts. Second, all universities confer honorary doctorates normatively referring to existing regulations. However, in practice, universities also have objective considerations and subjective considerations in awarding honorary degrees intertwined. They are based not only on the interests of scientific development but also on the subjective interests of the university elites, personal and institutional, to benefit from the award. Subjective considerations often lead to protests from groups who hold firmly to the institutional logic that honorary doctorates should be based on objective academic considerations and nothing else. Third, university elites realize that politicians/public officials need academic legitimacy as part of the symbolic capital for politicians in the political arena in Indonesian society who still attach importance to academic symbols. In addition, university elites also need the support of politicians to access resources from the government. On the same occasion, there is also a tendency for campus elites to conduct vertical mobility in the government bureaucracy. They try to build strong relationships with politicians or government officials, seeking support in the process. This relationship of mutual need generates rise to the logic of the exchange of interests in awarding honorary doctorates. In short, through the conferment of this honorary title, both parties benefit from the social exchange.

CONCLUSION

This article examines the practice of doctor honoris causa in Indonesia in the last twenty years. After presenting and discussing the research findings, here are three conclusions from this study. Firstly, the conferring of doctor honoris causa has been part of the academic practice of higher education in Indonesia since the 1950s. After the reformation, policies, and arrangements for granting this honorary degree have experienced developments and changes, namely the introduction of multiple policy guidelines by the Minister of Education (2001, 2013 and 2016). This change in degree regulations provides more autonomous space for universities to regulate how and to whom the degree is awarded, in contrast to the previous one, which requires government's permission or approval. Nevertheless, this regulation has unintended consequences, namely the increasing number of universities awarding honorary degrees to public figures. This condition raises criticism among members of the academic community as well as the public.

Secondly, this study shows a tendency for higher education institutions to be more interested in conferring a doctorate honoris causa to politicians and/or public officials rather than scientists/academics. The number of politicians or public officials receiving this title has increased significantly during the twenty years after the Reformation, compared to scientists and entrepreneurs. This spike in the number of honorary doctorates granted to politicians has sparked criticisms from within the higher education circles. Some members of these circles argued that the awarding of this prestigious degree is not based on solid academic criteria. The current practice is based on the exchange of interests between campus elites and political elites.

Thirdly, the rampant conferring of honoris causa doctorates to politicians and public officials has generated criticism from students, academics, and the mass media. The difference in interpretation about who is entitled to this honorary degree has created a polemic and a degree of tension or even distrust between university leaders and critics. On the one hand, critics, many of whom are members of intelligentsia, reason that those who deserve the award are those who make major contributions to scientific development or knowledge advancement. On the other hand, the vested interests in these universities rationalize that those who have the right are not necessarily those with significant intellectual legacy but also those whose practical contribution to certain segments of society ought to be recognized. With such a rationalization, universities award more to politicians and government officials because, with their position of power, they can influence and create policies strategically and substantially to the public. Equally important, universities also hope to benefit from the roles and positions of the recipients of these honorary degrees. In the end, the rationality or the logic of exchange of interests is the main driving force for many universities to award honorary doctorates to politicians and public officials.

The fourth point of contention derived from this research is at the conceptual or theoretical level of institutional logic. The analysis of this research reveals that with the decentralization of power during post-reformation era, there is a transformation of institutional logic of higher education from recognizing knowledge advancement and scientific contributions of members of intelligentsia towards empowering the legitimacy of ruling establishments especially among politicians and powerful public officials. This institutional trajectory in universities may lead to the weakening of higher education itself. At best, it wins some favours for the particular universities, through a process of quid pro quo (kongkalikong), at worst it, disempowers and demoralizes working members of the academe while parachuting power-seekers into the academia, and arguably destroys the public trust in the institution of higher learning in Indonesia among Indonesians and perhaps the world. The ethics-based institutional logic is, thus, being replaced. The award is an honorary one, yet the consequence entails dishonouring the trust of academia and society.

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Regulations

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