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Cakrawala Penafsiran BUDAYA

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A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: TRANSFORMATION FROM ELITE INSTITUTIONS INTO MODERN ACADEMIA

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A. Introduction

As one of the closest and more developed neighbouring countries, Australia has experienced longer episodes of development in education including, more importantly, higher education. Simply speaking, Australia has undergone tremendous development of higher education systems, evolving from the Oxbridge oriented model as an English colony in its early age, to the Federation era of the twentieth century, and the modern neoliberal system of university nowadays (Forsyth 2014; Lawless 2012; Toncich 2008). Each of those grand periods of development provides different lessons and opens diverse perspectives on how higher education should be directed. Through evaluating such an evolution of higher education towards a more established system, this article seeks to provide a recommendation for future directions of Indonesian higher education.

Documents about various reforms of Australian higher education which have been publicly accessible in government reports, press releases, books, and other resources are thematically analysed to extract the information about Australian education development. Documents can take the form of printed materials, soft- copy files, or webpages (Hesse-Biber 2017). The information about such progressive trajectories is then presented chronologically with extra emphases on

key aspects of each episode. Arguably, a factor of importance is the aspect of "colonialism", that is, Australia was previously an English colony. Auspiciously, this fact that England has possessed a much longer tradition of higher education confirms the colonial influence on Australian higher education. This contextual situation of the country should serve as a basis of further analyses of their higher education development which is evaluated more closely in the next sections.

B. Discussion

1. Australian Academia in the Past

Even though Australia nowadays belongs to such notable groups of developed countries along with the UK, USA, and other European countries, such a high position does not come from nothing but has resulted from tremendous efforts of improvement during a long history of Australian nation. Simply speaking, Australian education has evolved from the Oxbridge oriented model of university as an English colony in its early age, to the Federation era of the twentieth century, and the modern neoliberal system of university nowadays (Lawless 2012; Ramsey 1987). These processes of development are explored in this article to inform the interaction of such a system and policies (as structure) with the life of the university and its academia (as agent).

The first exploration is on the divisions of higher education in Australia, comprising three sectors of what they call *university*, *technical and further education* (*TAFE*), and *advanced education* (Ramsey 1987). The three sectors are differently designed for their exclusive mandates of services. The University sector is primarily concerned with "knowledge and research". TAFE is directed to provide vocational education, training programs, apprenticeships, and other "skilled work qualifications". Advanced education is in between, "subdegree courses" by universities to equip the students with "practical world of industry and commerce". It is the duty of universities to focus on the development of knowledge and research, and it should be shared by the lecturers and students.

Secondly, across history, Australian higher education has advanced from the ideas of university as "small elite institution"

towards today's "mass system" of higher education (Forsyth 2014, pp.1-2). In the early period during colonial time, Australian university was perceived as an elite institution offered to limitedly chosen individuals as exclusive academic people (Collins et al. 2016; Forsyth 2014; Seddon & Angus 2000). It was understandable because the early new inhabitants of Australia were mostly convicts from England, with the first fleet arrived in 1788 (Ramsey 1988), and might not require higher education as much as modern people now.

After over sixty years of this colony settlement, the first Australian university (the University of Sydney) was founded in 1850, then the University of Melbourne in 1853, the University of Adelaide in 1874, University of Tasmania in 1890, University of Queensland in 1909, and University of Western Australia in 1911 (Ramsey 1987, 1988; Toncich 2008). Compared to Europe and the USA, Australian higher education – which was founded in the late 19th century – can be regarded as "new" since the University of Bologna (the first in Europe), for instance, was founded in the 11th century (1088), Oxford University in the 11th century (1096), Cambridge University in the 13th century (1209), and Harvard University in the 17th century (1636) (Toncich 2008). However, within Australian context, (most) Australian higher education was earlier than the Federation itself which was established only in 1901.

It means that by the early twentieth century (1911) a university was established in each of the six Australian States. The main reason of such establishments was that a "select group of leading citizens ... saw the need to establish a university to provide professional education, to prepare youth for positions of leadership in the future, and to provide a civilizing influence on the colonies" (Lawless 2012, p.17 quoting Coaldrake & Stedman 1998). In other words, universities were originally designed for leadership and the development of civilization in general. However, of these first six universities, four of them (Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Tasmania) were founded by different colonial governments of their time, while the other two (Queensland and WA) were founded after Australian federation but by state governments (Toncich 2008). They might be different in the early

stage of development but apparently not quite again in the modern era especially when the Federal government took over the governance of higher education starting with the Dawkins Reform.

2. European and American Influence on Australian HE

In terms of governance and administration, during English crown colonies, early Australian universities were inevitably influenced by the English Oxbridge university systems (the first two English universities: Oxford and Cambridge, which was founded in 12-13th century), "most particularly in terms of its values and belief systems rather than governance" where "autonomy, freedom and collegiality were highly valued" (Lawless 2012, p.15; Toncich 2008). Initially, this Oxbridge university system was originally derived from medieval European universities (University of Bologna and Paris) and the oldest American (Harvard University) whose administration was independent from the King's and court's interventions but governed by the Church (Lawless 2012; Toncich 2008). Elite people who wanted to join university (staff and students) should avow to Anglican Catholicism in this old time.

During this early period of European higher education, Cardinal Newman, through his publications of the "Idea of the University" in England in 1852, set the understandings of the university as "an autonomous and self-governing institution dedicated to learning. His groundwork was based on collegial and cooperative relationships between scholars devoted to knowledge." (Lawless 2012, p.17). This reasonably similar condition was also practised in Australian higher education.

Later, however, Australian higher education also adopted the open access system (for all backgrounds regardless of their religious faiths) inspired by the secular University College of London. In terms of management, Australian university governance "is managed through a professorial head of a department with leadership operating through persuasion" which was basically influenced by the system at the University of Berlin in the nineteenth century (Lawless 2012, p.16). Most significantly, Berlin's system also marked Australian higher

education in the form of the combination of teaching and research. In terms of its vocational, liberal education and valued community service, Australian higher education was also influenced by American model of university.

Thus understood, from its early period of English colony, Australian higher education has experienced and learned from the more developed university systems of mostly English Oxbridge, European universities, as well as the American prominent: Harvard University. As a result, Australian higher education has been managed, or at least mentored, by high quality academics and professors from Oxbridge universities of England as the mother country of Australian colonies (Ramsey 1988). However, at the same time, this fact can also imply that Australian academics might become so influenced by English academics that they tended to be single minded in their perspectives, at least at the early stage of Australian university.

The next period of development in Australian higher education was under Federation era in the twentieth century, more specifically after World War II (1939-1946), starting with the establishment of Australian National University in 1946. The expansion went bigger in 1960s through to 1970s with the significant rise of the number of universities in Australia: "from seven at the beginning of the 50s to nineteen by the end of the 70s" (Ramsey 1988, p.1). Even though Australian higher education has applied open access equally for all people, racial privilege for "white citizens" was still practised by Australian universities at least until 1950s before the next progress in Australian higher education, i.e., internationalisation, took place.

3. Internationalisation and Equal Access in Australian HE

Australia began to implement international education through the implementation of Colombo Plan in the 1950s, by which Australian higher education practised a real open access policy for international students of Asian countries in particular; such as China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc.; to enrol in Australian universities (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). Consequently, there has been a steady increase in the number of international students enrolling in Australian universities. The latest data from Australian Universities, for instance, shows that more than 150,000 international students have come to Australia to study during 2001 and keep increasing to over 350,000 students in 2015 (Robinson 2017). The same data says that the total number of international students has reached almost 35% out of domestic students in 2015 alone.

This open access policy also means that Australian higher education opens equal access for all people of citizenship, more importantly the Australians. However, indigenous people of Australia, the Aboriginal people, might still have experienced less opportunity to participate in higher education for different reasons. Based on the latest report by Universities Australia (2017), indigenous people of Australia is still "under-represented in the university system" due to several factors such as "financial pressures, social or cultural alienation". Nonetheless, compared to the data of indigenous Australians enrolled in universities in 2008, indigenous participation in HE in 2015 already increased by 74% (Robinson 2017). They are continuously encouraged to join higher education with government's aids.

Since 1960s Australian higher education has improved the function of university to help public necessities and being accountable to public, but still autonomous to public's intervention. In other words, since the second half of the twentieth century, Australian universities has incorporated the idea of the relations between higher education (idealism) on the one hand, and social worth and economy (pragmatism) on the other, and this goes on until present time of global-neoliberal world (Lawless 2012).

Simply speaking, during the period of 1911 to 1987 the development of Australian higher education showed "strong, steady growth in student numbers as a result of the growing nation; post-war activity, and increasing immigration" (Toncich 2008, p.21). In terms of number of students, for example, there was a big increase from 3,000 enrolled students in 1911 to 30,000 in 1940s and 50,000 in 1950s. Through this period, in terms of financial policy, university students should pay fees or received scholarships from government (usually the states), except those at the University of Western Australia (free),

and even by the end of World War II Australian government offered scholarships for former soldiers to go to university (Toncich 2008).

However, in terms of coordination and national perspective, the development of Australian higher education from 1911 (or even 1850s) through to 1950s was considerably "un-coordinated on a State by State basis" (Ramsey 1988, p.5). It was the State Governments that were in charge for Australian higher education in terms of both legislation and funding. Later then in 1959, the Commonwealth Government established Australian Universities Commission (AUC) and began to provide grants for universities to give financial support, in response to the review conducted by the government resulting that the universities were generally under-funded while students kept increasing (Lawless 2012). The grants inevitably requires those universities to meet certain conditions pre-set by the Australian government (Toncich 2008). In other words, the Federal Government began to take significant roles in Australian higher education policies (and especially funding), in addition to the State Government which had been in charge for Australian higher education since the beginning.

In response to a major review in Australian higher education in the early 1960s (Ramsey 1988), the development continued with the Federal Government's new policy to divide higher education into two complements (or the so-called binary system of higher education), i.e. Universities and CAEs (Colleges of Advanced Education) including Institutes of Technology (Toncich 2008). Universities can offer diplomas and degrees (Bachelors, Masters, and PhD), while CAEs should focus on vocational and professional education (but can still offer certificates, diplomas, and bachelor's degrees). Universities can also get government grants for research, but CAEs cannot. This binary system was effective for regulating Australian higher education.

In order to reinforce the growth of universities and CAEs, later in the early 1970s the Federal Government eliminated the fees (Toncich 2008). Funding for higher education became the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. While initially there was a Commission for each of the sectors, eventually in 1977 a single Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission was established to "incorporate those former Commissions" into a single body for legislating higher education including TAFE (Ramsey 1988). Much of this stage of development was initiated by PM Gough Whitlam who provided a stipend (Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme) to give more access for low income families to eliminate racial discrimination in higher education (Lawless 2012).

However, at this stage of development, Australian higher education became under two supervisors: the Commonwealth in terms of funding and the State for legislative matters (Toncich 2008). On the one side, the condition might benefit the universities especially in terms of the funding as the proposal could be sent to both the Commonwealth and the States. However, on the other hand, it might trouble the universities in dealing with two supervisors in terms of policy and system of operation. Ramsey (1988), for example, reported that the problems of the dual-supervision of higher education happened in the mid-1980s in the forms of tensions between the two governments in terms of priorities...

"...between institutional autonomy and the need for public accountability; between statutory independence and the need for co-ordination; between institutional goals and the national goal of achieving Australia's economic recovery saw considerable public debate as to the direction the country's higher education system should move" (p 3).

The problem might thus lead to difficulties of how universities should respond to overlapped policies, for example, or different reporting systems.

This kind of tension was doubled by the new government policy of quality assurance to maintain efficiency and effectiveness of higher education for public accountability (Lawless 2012). By the extremely vast increasing number of students (a tripling in a decade to reach 400,000 in 1980s) having "free" higher education, the cost was thus considered "unsustainable" and inefficient (Collins et al. 2016, p.585). It was due to the fact that during this period the amount of money given to the higher education institutions were basically based on the number of students enrolled (Commonwealth of Australia 2008; Toncich 2008). Public debates emerged on this policy of using taxpayer money for free higher education and initiate the government to review this policy.

Another problem was related to the binary system of higher education which was "breaking down" (Toncich 2008, p.24). CAEs pleaded and were granted privilege to offer postgraduate degrees (Graduate Diploma, Masters, and PhD), which should be the job of universities, and wanted to access research funds from the government (and to have research programs including postdoctoral research). In 1974, Victorian government even converted one of its CAEs, i.e., the Gordon Institute at Geelong, into a university (later called Deakin), which triggered other state governments to do the same thing for their CAEs in the 1980s. It made the binary system become irrelevant and impractical anymore, and the government required it be reviewed.

Beginning with initiative by Minister Susan Ryan (1983-1987) with the so-called Jackson Committee in 1984 to develop Australian higher education for international market (especially Asian) as well as to increase women participation in higher education (as students, lecturers, researchers, professors, top managers, and vice-chancellor), Australian higher education was shifted from the idea of "an aid" for under-developed or developing countries into "an export industry" (Lawless 2012, p.36). eventually in 1987 under Minister John Dawkins (1987-1991), the Commonwealth Government dispensed the binary system, created the Unified National System (UNS) of Australian higher education, which was officially operational on 1 January 1989 (Harman 1989), and merged most CAEs into universities resulting 36 universities (adding 17 from previously 19 universities) across the country.

4. Modern Policy: Towards Corporatisation of Universities

More recent developments in Australian HE policy have subsequently been existent following previous evolution. Most significantly, such developments affect Australian HE's funding system and performance indicators. Of all these reforms, the two most pivotal policies in Australian higher education are the Dawkins Reform (1988) and Bradley Review (2008). These two reviews are of such importance due to their big impacts on the sector as well as public attention.

The 1988 Dawkins Reform is popularly called so because it was done with the initiative of Minister Hon. John Dawkins. Most importantly, the policy re-introduced tuition fees with what is called the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS for Australian/ Domestic students) previously waived under PM Gough Whitlam, and the introduction of "Unified National System" of higher education resulting in the merger of CAEs into universities (Coombe 2015; Dawkins 1988; Dollery, Murray & Crase 2006; Pick 2006). The biggest result of this UNS was the emergence of 17 new universities across the country, becoming 36 in total (adding to the previous 19 universities).

Principally, Dawkins' ultimate purpose of his reform was to "provide greater institutional control and flexibility in course offerings and resource allocation, whilst simultaneously reducing the extent of government intervention" (Dollery, Murray & Crase 2006, pp.90-91). Each university was required to define its teaching and research strengths and how to develop those strengths in the future in the form of "educational profile" (Dawkins 1988, p.46). Nevertheless, educational profiles should be negotiated with the Government to secure a contract of funding as well as to ensure that each institution is capable of meeting community needs of higher education and contributing to national priorities. It means, to a great extent, that the government is still playing its controlling roles on universities. Dawkins policy also states that even though teaching is the predominant activity, all higher education institutions are encouraged to compete for both teaching and research resources (Government funding) on the basis of "merit and capacity" (Dawkins 1988).

Doubled with the Federal government agenda of increasing productivity and efficiency, Dawkins reform also demands Australian higher education to implement it in university life, including the teaching and research. Universities are required to rationalise their staff with the number of the students enrolled and to optimise their professionalism in terms of performance and productivity. Technically, several standards or measures are set by the government to be met by universities, which include:

> "...better use of teaching space, all year round teaching, greater use of performance indicators, changes in tenure and greater flexibility in staff arrangements, larger units to achieve economies of scale and hence amalgamations of institutions, and better management of equipment and physical plant" (Harman 1989, p.27).

Based on those measures of performance, universities are indirectly imposed to shift their management style of "Newman's Idea of University" into a "corporate university" similar to other business institutions (Dollery, Murray & Crase 2006). Apparently, this fact is not only a direct impact of efficiency and productivity slogan of the government but also the widespread influence of neoliberalism and capitalism policy of modern world that have eventually struck Australian HE. This aspect of Dawkins policy has brought about drastic changes that might be instigated by reformation of tenure, staffing, and workplace relations (Dawkins 1988; Harman 1989; Pick 2005).

Consequently, Australian universities were making big efforts to optimise and 'rationalise', a word probably derived from economic rationalism (Forsyth 2014), all their services including teaching and research, demanding academic staff (and those at management and leadership positions) to work much harder. Since the number of students were increasing and budget was cut, the workload of academic staff for teaching, research, and assessment became so overwhelming. Furthermore, the atmosphere of the university, to many of the Australian academics, has changed drastically compared to that before the Dawkins reform. There was even an informal label of "Pre-Dawkins" or "Post-Dawkins" academics in Australian higher education (Michell, Wilson & Archer 2015). They put it nicely in the following excerpt of their book.

> "Those who entered the academy prior to the late 1980s enjoyed a degree of intellectual freedom—that is, freedom to teach,

research, and/or simply think—that is little more than a distant memory in the modern academic ambience of fully quantifiable research and educational outcomes, increasing workloads and output accountability" (Michell, Wilson & Archer 2015).

As the standard of performance of teaching and research – the two main mandates of university – tended to be based on quantitative perspectives, universities and the academics were unsurprisingly evaluated by the government based on such quantitative measures of their outcomes and outputs. This shift of measures was doubled by the management of universities, which became more corporation-based characterised by a "top-down" and "free market" approach, not only in terms of institutional administration but also teaching and research (Biggs 2014; Michell, Wilson & Archer 2015). These 'corporatisation' and 'marketization' of Australian higher education under neoliberalism lens also required university staff (academic and administration) to serve and compete for the university's sake first to attract students and secondly to get research grants; universities were basically run for money and capital.

Seen from a positive perspective, Dawkins policy enabled universities to become more market-oriented, i.e. the ideal of university for knowledge development should also take 'market' and society's interests into ultimate consideration (Symes 2004). Knowledge is not only for knowledge but more importantly knowledge is for the society: universities should provide what the society needs most. This was the essence of marketization of higher education. Unfortunately, at the same time due to this strong market reliance of higher education, departments which trained students for popular jobs (such as hospitality courses, tourism, information technology, professional degrees, etc.) could survive but departments of less popular or lacking job-orientation (such as pure science, languages, mathematics etc.) became virtually extinct (Biggs 2014).

As universities were driven by such management, teaching and research were equally affected by this output or market driven system. Students as the main customers in higher education should be treated as 'the king' and thus served with best services (Michell, Wilson &

Archer 2015). Therefore, academics are even evaluated based on students' satisfaction survey conducted at the end of each course, which is quite reasonable and accountable from the perspective of this market system. However, at the same time, the academics may be too strongly influenced by this system so that most of them take actions for the purpose of getting the best feedback from the students at the stake.

Understood optimistically, this situation can encourage the lecturers to really take good care of the students in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. Unfortunately, this situation may at the same time inspire some lecturers to merely pay attention on the students' satisfaction in terms of their workload and grade, for instance. The lecturers tend to give less assignments but give generous grades to get high scores for their students' satisfaction survey evaluation by the end of the course. This fact is unsurprisingly doubled by the increase of the lecturers' workload due to the efficiency and effectiveness measures set by the government and university. It is confirmed with a survey by Harman (2006) showing that the academics worked longer after Dawkins for teaching, writing, research, and other jobs (editorial or reviewer for academic journals).

The first post-Dawkins major review of Australian higher education was conducted during PM John Howard government and popularly called West Review because it was delivered by a panel led by Roderick West AM; its report, Learning for Life, was released in April 1998 (Australia 2015). The panel anticipated that Australian higher education would face a range of pressures over the next two decades, including technological innovation, heightened community expectations, increased demand from both domestic and international students, and increased competition including the entry of new providers. They considered that the policy and funding framework at the time was inadequate to enable the sector to respond to these pressures. In particular, the panel identified:

• Inconsistencies in approach: the number of subsidised students, course mix, and funding rates per student relied on centrally determined government targets. As a result, institutions could not effectively respond to student needs and demographic movements. There was an inconsistent approach to eligibility, with separate arrangements for postgraduate fee payment, domestic undergraduate fee payment and overseas fee-paying students. Artificial boundaries existed between higher and vocational education that discouraged a strategic view of tertiary education as a whole.

- Inappropriate incentives: the funding framework meant institutions had more incentive to invest in research than quality teaching. With centrally determined targets, there was little incentive for universities to be innovative in teaching and administration. Institutions had strong incentives to solve funding issues by approaching governments rather than by improving the use of their assets, new delivery mechanisms or attracting new students.
- Management deficiencies: institutions suffered from outdated governance arrangements with insufficient experience and skills in the management of large organisations. Institutions had poor understanding of their own cost structures.
- Equity issues: despite improvements in the participation of equity groups, people from indigenous, low SES and rural and regional backgrounds remained under-represented.
- Barriers to competition: entry into the market for higher education remained heavily restricted, with access to government grants and income-contingent loans limited to public university students. This was a major disincentive for students wishing to study at private institutions, as they had to pay the full cost either up-front or through commercial loans. Private institutions also had limited access to self-accreditation. which gave existing universities a competitive edge.
- · Limited funding sources: there was a pressing need for Australian universities to invest in new technologies and other infrastructure in order to be competitive with overseas institutions. But compared to universities in the United States, Australian universities had small endowments and limited

access to private equity investment and capital markets. Legislative requirements hindered opportunities for universities to raise the funds they needed.

These recommendations highlight how the funding and other policies of Australian HE tend to be more capitalist-oriented, in that universities are required to gain revenues as much as they can with the smallest funding from the government. Reactions from universities might be different but this article does not portray the reactions from academia and public. Arguably, this situation is likely to be seen as a big challenge by many or even a setback from university ideal to enhance humanity.

C. Conclusion

The evolution of Australian higher education system is a good example portraying the progresses they have been through. Some may be applicable to Indonesian and other contexts such as the unification of the administration of HE under the government's coordination (through a single institution). Thus understood, the share of Indonesian HE coordination between two or more ministries may have to be reconsidered in defining the future avenues of Indonesian university.

On the other hand, Australian orientation to corporatize its higher education may have to be discouraged in Indonesia because Indonesians have less financial capital and hence leave the responsibility of public education to the government. It does not mean, however, that efficient and effective management of universities should be overlooked. In fact, Indonesian universities need to aspire to such a high quality of HE administration in Australia as a model to increase competitiveness in the global community.

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