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State transformation and cross-border regionalism in Indonesia's periphery: contesting the centre

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how the decentralisation and fragmentation of the Indonesian state and resultant central–local dynamics affect cross-border regionalism in Indonesia's periphery. It argues that cross-border regionalism projects are best understood as sites for scalar contestation over regulatory control between central and local government. Moreover, scalar contestation around cross-border regional projects is characterised by the struggles to control relationships with transnational capital between elites operating at different tiers of the state. When elites at different scales have conflicting interests and strategies, this can cause policy incoherence, inhibiting the development of cross-border regionalism. Conversely, when they align, and intersect with the interests of transnational business, cross-border regionalism can succeed. To illustrate the argument, this article utilises the comparative case studies of the Batam free trade zone and West Kalimantan–Sarawak cross-border cooperation.

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Introduction

The Indonesian state in the post-authoritarian era (1999–present) has become more decentralised, with the devolution of many competencies to subnational governments, and more fragmented, with the proliferation of multiple government agencies that reduce the power of central government to exert authority over Indonesia's border areas. Moreover, although protectionist economic policies are still prevalent,[1] the impetus for development, coupled with the pressure from transnational capitalist interests, has pushed the government to transnationalise Indonesia's border areas in order to tap opportunities of a more interconnected economy.

Despite the abundance of literature in comparative politics and human geography examining these three processes,[2] there is a dearth of studies on how these transformations affect Indonesia's border areas. This article aims to fill this gap by examining how central–local dynamics, in light of a more decentralised and fragmented Indonesian state, has affected policies for managing cross-border regionalism in border areas. This endeavour is important given that mainstream literature on Southeast Asian regionalism within international

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relations (IR) largely assumes the state to be unitary and neglects political dynamics within the state that affect regional integration process.[3]

By mobilising the state transformation approach,[4] this article argues that cross-border regionalism projects are best understood as sites for contesting the authority of central government and capturing regulatory control by the local government, which is made possible by the increasing social and political space arising from the decentralisation and fragmentation of the Indonesian state. When elites at different scales have conflicting interests and strategies, this can cause policy incoherence, inhibiting the development of cross-border regionalism. Conversely, when they align, and intersect with the interests of transnational business, cross-border regionalism can succeed. To illustrate the argument, this article utilises the comparative case studies of Batam and West Kalimantan–Sarawak cross-border regionalism.

This article employs a qualitative methodology to understand the dynamics of scalar contestation in Indonesia's border areas. The data were collected by conducting interviews with relevant government officials as well as local business actors. Besides the interviews, the study also involved an analysis of official documents, regulations and reports.

This article is organised as follows. The next section discusses how the transformation of the Indonesian state affects Indonesia's periphery and the implications for development in the border areas. The third section provides a theoretical framework to understand the relations between state transformation and cross-border cooperation by situating it within the literature on the politics of scale. The fourth section illustrates the theoretical framework through the cases of cross-border regionalism in Batam Island and the border region of West Kalimantan province.

State transformation and Indonesia's periphery

This section discusses the transformation of the Indonesian state in order to understand its effect on cross-border regionalism in the border areas. Despite the abundance of studies on cross-border regionalism in Southeast Asia, most scholars focus on the national level, particularly central governments, as the drivers of regional integration.[5] Their analysis is also primarily contextualised through the notion of regionalisation as a process of relocating authority from the political realm to the economic one in which regional integration is mainly driven by multinational corporations that heavily rely on the interconnectivity of border regions. This article aims to contribute to the scholarship on Southeast Asian cross-border regionalism by paying greater attention to central–local dynamics in the analysis of cross-border regionalism through the experience of Indonesia.

In this article, I situate the central–local dynamics within a broader state transformation process. Following Hameiri and Jones,[6] I conceptualise the transformation of the Indonesian state in the post-authoritarian period by emphasising the process of decentralisation, fragmentation and internationalisation of the state, which affects the development trajectory and socio-political conflict in Indonesia's periphery. To elaborate on these processes, this article draws heavily on political economy literature focusing on the post-authoritarian Indonesian state, linking it to the discussion on Indonesia's cross-border regionalism projects in its peripheral territories.

The most important characteristics that define the Indonesian state in the post-authoritarian period are decentralisation and fragmentation, which have taken place alongside the democratisation process. Once a very highly centralised state, in the post-authoritarian period, Indonesia may be one of the most heavily decentralised countries, with district and municipal governments holding almost a majority of the authority in administering its territory. This has left the central government with only a few responsibilities in the areas of security and defence, foreign policy, justice and religious affairs.[7]

The decentralisation process has dramatically changed the local political landscape in the periphery. It has created a new space for local elites to struggle with the central government for regulatory control and authority over particular issues.[8] Indeed, the logic of decentralisation in Indonesia is to delegate the central authority to the lowest level such as city and municipality. However, this has not reduced the resentment towards the centre, particularly in regard to slow-paced development in the border areas. In fact, political decentralisation has provided new dynamics within the border areas, namely the ability for local government to voice their resentment towards central government by contesting the authority of the central government within Indonesia's legal framework.[9]

Besides decentralisation, the post-authoritarian Indonesian state is becoming more fragmented. As suggested by Aspinall,[10] state fragmentation has created 'a marketplace of potential patrons and enabled them to compete with one another without being constrained by a supreme patriarch, as they were under Suharto'. Thus, within Indonesia's democratic landscape, each particular state apparatus can be mobilised by elites to influence overall state policy to support their political and economic agenda. It stems from the nature of post-authoritarian presidential power-sharing in which different ministries are handed to different political elites. These posts are sometimes run as personal fiefdoms as a reward for their political support.[11] This has resulted in incoherent policy which involves multiple state agencies with differing political and economic agendas.

The fragmentation of the Indonesian state has affected the border areas in two ways. First, increasing administrative fragmentation in the border areas due to the decentralisation process have led to growing aspirations for political autonomy.[12] The expansion of autonomous regions, known as *pemekaran wilayah* (territorial split), is seen as an effective strategy to answer such aspirations. However, it also creates further fragmentation of the Indonesian state through the proliferation of newly established districts and provinces, particularly in the periphery. During Suharto's authoritarian regime, there were only 27 provinces and 306 district-level administrations, which were treated as an extension of Jakarta's bureaucracy.[13] Since l999, an additional 217 new subnational governments have been established: eight provinces, 175 districts and 34 cities.[14] This has made the policymaking process more complex, involving the changing of stakeholders and the time-consuming process of synchronisation and coordination between plans, policies and programmes made by the central government and local government.[15] Moreover, the fragmented policymaking process for managing cross-border issues can create legal uncertainty that blurs the line between legality and illegality where local authorities fail to enforce national laws at the local level.

Second, state fragmentation has created complex legal inter-agential dynamics when it comes to central government seeking to project control and authority over Indonesia's border areas. The overlapping distribution of responsibility can generate rivalry between different tiers of government, and lead to policy dualism and disharmony in the governance of regional integration.[16] Currently, there are at least 18 central government agencies actively involved in Indonesia's border areas. As a result, Indonesia's central state apparatus has become increasingly fragmented, with each of these ministerial-level agencies managing different aspects of cross-border issues.[17] Often they only prioritise their respective sectors, without coordination and cooperation with other relevant institutions in implementing their programmes and policies. This lack of coordination has prevented local governments from taking full advantage of the central government's development agenda in the border areas.

To address such fragmentation, the central government established the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) in 2008. This aimed to resolve the fragmentation of government agencies operating in border areas, which have no hierarchical chain of command over one another. However, in practice, the establishment of this institution has not reduced the chaotic regulatory governance of border areas, due to its lack of political authority to impose its agenda at both the national and local levels.

The third characteristic of Indonesia's state transformation is the reorganising of state and market relations. Despite undergoing governance reform with the aim to eradicate bad government practice, Indonesia's economy is still characterised by a predatory and illiberal mode of governance,[18] thanks to the oligarchic elite and cemented clientelist networks established under the Suharto administration, which have reorganised themselves to dominate the new democratic dispensation.[19] Indeed, the clientelist networks are becoming more diffused in post-authoritarian Indonesia. While under Suharto's authoritarian regime the alliance of capital and political elites primarily occurred at the centre, democratisation has diffused this process; such networks have become more localised and fragmented. This has a direct impact on political contestation in Indonesia's border areas.

In the post-authoritarian period, Indonesia's border areas have become sites for economic investment for many corporate actors, ranging from domestic firms to transnational corporations.[20] From the developmental point of view, nurturing cross-border cooperation is a part of the central government's strategy to produce new spaces of development in the periphery. This has provided the impetus for further internationalisation of border areas. However, given the reorganising of state and market relations, local elites in Indonesia's periphery are now empowered to construct new patron–client relations with transnational capital operating in their respective areas. This gives rise to competition between local- and national-level elites over who will establish lucrative ties with investors.

State transformation and cross-border regionalism

We now identify the implications of these transformations of the state and economic relations for the governance of cross-border regionalism in Indonesia. This discussion draws on the literature on politics of scale. Within the literature on human geography, scale refers to the nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing sizes, such as the local, regional, national and global.[21] Scales are not fixed or natural but, as argued by Neil Smith, are 'produced in and through a societal activity which, in turn, produces and is produced by geographical structures of social interaction'.[22] Thus, scale is defined not only as size and level, but also as a relational element.[23]

As suggested by Brenner,[24] the politics of scale refers to 'contestation over the construction of scales, as well as differentiation and ordering among various scales'. This contestation has increased as a result of the transformation of state institutions, which provides a space for the reconsolidation of territory in which control over territory is no longer clustered around a single predominant centre but has been differentiated among multiple institutions at many levels.[25] Thus, the notion of a 'politics of scale' emphasises 'rescaling' as a process constitutively involved in the quest for new forms of governance and regulation.[26]

While Brenner focuses on the devolution of power to cities and regions as a mode of experimental regulation designed to promote economic restructuring and capital mobility,[27] I contend that regional integration projects in border areas could also be a site for scalar contestation over regulatory control. In this article, I focus on how local actors seek to shift authority over cross-border regionalism from a national to a local scale in order to pursue their interests, particularly with the goal of rent-seeking rather than economic restructuring.

In employing the politics of scale, this article contends that the contestation between the local and the centre is not driven by technical problems, eg by limited local capacity in understanding and enforcing national laws. Rather, it is political. Local officials sometimes resist enforcing national laws because it is not in their or their allies' interests. Hence, most of the time, the local state apparatus, as mobilised by the local political and economic elites, may actively resist national policies.[28]

Local government contestation over central authority in border areas is made available due to two main issues arising from the transformation of statehood discussed in the preceding section: (1) the weak reach of central state apparatuses into Indonesia's border areas; (2) growing local patronage networks in the post-authoritarian era.

First, while post-colonial states like Indonesia still superficially adhere to Westphalian notions of sovereignty, in practice, Jakarta's practical control is increasingly weak in its territorial periphery. This is due not only to the central government's weak projection of authority to the border areas but also to the existence of close ties to similar ethnic groups on the other side of the border, the resistance towards officialdom, and a heightened sense of autonomy among people living in these areas.[29] From the central government's point of view, fostering cross-border regionalism can be interpreted as a way to assert its authority by enhancing state-led regional integration projects in the periphery. If these schemes succeed in producing local development due to the influx of transnational capital, the central government can also claim political credit. However, from local governments' point of view, authority over managing border areas as well as cross-border regionalism should be in their hands. By having more authority to manage such regionalism, local elites could acquire greater resources, avoid dependency on the central government, and gain political capital from voters.

Given the importance of non-state actors – particularly transnational capitalist enterprises – in driving regionalism in Southeast Asia,[30] we should note that these central–local dynamics are also linked to interactions between the state and transnational capital operating in the border areas. According to the literature in urban studies, subnational governments have become important spaces for neoliberalism around the world.[31] For them, attracting transnational capital may not only generate 'public goods' like economic growth and employment, or political credit; it may also help to sustain patronage networks. Local elites may be able to exploit their power to issue various forms of licences to receive kickbacks from businesses, or direct permits to their supporters.[32] Accordingly, another aspect of scalar contestation around cross-border regional projects may be struggles to control relationships with transnational capital between elites operating at different tiers of the state. For example, if only centrally located actors will benefit from regionalism, it may encounter weak support or opposition from local actors, and vice versa. The extent to which cross-border regional integration proceeds, therefore, may hinge upon the convergence of interests at different territorial scales. However, as suggested by Eaton, not all decentralisation is necessarily neoliberal, and not all neoliberalism is always tied to decentralisation outcomes.[33]

Although the politics of scale is typically about contestation concerning power and control over resources, this may rarely be explicit, and conflict is perhaps more commonly framed as struggles over legitimacy or territorial integrity. In light of decentralisation and democratisation, local elites' struggle to capture regulatory control from the central government can be justified by arguments that local governments enjoy greater legitimacy and accountability because they are directly elected to serve their subnational regions. Their position as elected officials also provides them with legitimacy to manage and exercise local state control and authority. Local elites may also make strategic use of the issue of territorial integrity in their conflicts with the central government. Arguably, while low-politics issues seldom attract central government attention towards the development of border areas, high-politics issues can be used strategically to demand central government concessions. Thus, local leaders may claim that unless they are empowered to manage cross-border regional integration projects, the local population will lose faith in the national government or come to identify with a neighbouring country.

Regional economic integration in the border areas

This section draws on the theoretical discussion above to examine the development of regional economic integration at two leading sites: Batam Island in Riau Island province, and the borderlands of West Kalimantan province in Borneo (see map below). Much has been written about Batam's cross-border regionalism, which predominantly involves investment from Singapore,[34] but cross-border cooperation between West Kalimantan and Malaysia's Sarawak is relatively less studied. The two cases show how competitive dynamics within the context of state transformation shape the outcomes of regional integration projects in the border areas. The Batam began under Suharto's central government in Jakarta in the early 1970s, while that in West Kalimantan was initiated after the post-Suharto decentralisation and democratisation process. Despite their different inceptions, however, both have been shaped by transformation processes after the collapse of Suharto's authoritarian regime. Both cases show how the deepening process of cross-border regionalism involves contestation over resources and authority between central and local governments. However, they differ in terms of the outcomes of such contestation. While in the case of Batam, contestation remains fierce because local elites' interests clash with those of the central government, in the case of West Kalimantan, there is a greater convergence of interests around oil palm development between central and local governments, and this convergence also overlaps with the interests of transnational capital. This explains the outcomes of subregional cooperation projects in both cases: growing policy incoherence in Batam is undermining subregional cooperation, while the convergence of interests in West Kalimantan underpins relatively successful subregional integration (Figure 1).

Batam regional integration project through a free trade zone

As the only area in Indonesia located on the sea border with Singapore, the premier world city in Southeast Asia, Batam has the potential to become one of the main regional growth centres in Indonesia's relatively poor border areas. In the early 1970s, the Indonesian central government generated a plan to develop Batam as an entrepôt to exploit its proximity to

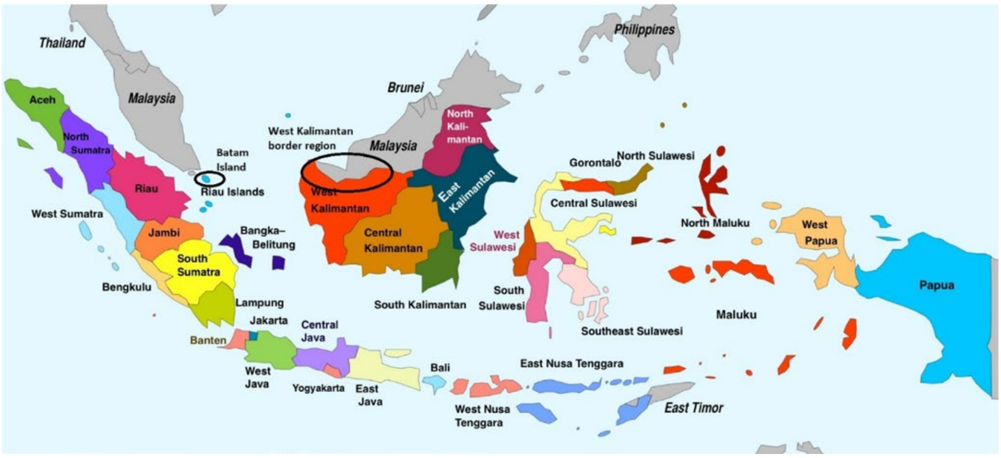

Figure 1. Batam Island and West Kalimantan border region. Source: http://www.geocurrents.info

Singapore by attracting foreign investors to establish industrial facilities. To provide legal certainty and cut bureaucratic red tape for investors, the government established *Badan Otorita* Batam (Batam Authority), later changed into *Badan Pengusahaan* Batam (Batam Enterprises Agency, better known as BP Batam)[35] as an anchor of Batam's development. This central government agency oversaw Batam's development into a *de facto* free trade zone (FTZ), though this status was only legally recognised in 2007.

To further transnationalise Batam, the Indonesian central government subscribed to the proposal of Singapore's deputy prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, to establish the Singapore–Johor–Riau (SIJORI) growth triangle in 1989, which lead to greater investment from Singapore in Batam.[36] In the early 1990s, the initiative was subsumed into a wider subregional interstate cooperation initiative, the Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore Growth Triangle (IMS-GT).

Initially, Batam's regionalisation was very much driven by the central government, reflecting the Suharto regime's ambition to develop Indonesia's border areas.[37] However, since Suharto's fall, state transformation processes have created a new institutional landscape that complicates the governance of this area. As part of the decentralisation process, in 1999, the central government established the city of Batam with greater autonomy, which later became part of the Riau Islands Province established in 2004. Furthermore, in 2007 the central government issued Law 44/2007 regarding the Amendment of Law 36/2000 on Free Trade Zone and Free Port, which formally changed Batam's status to an FTZ. This was part of the government's commitment to transform Batam as a driver for Indonesia's regional integration project by attracting foreign direct investment from other Southeast Asian countries.

However, reflecting the scalar politics discussed earlier, local political elites have increasingly contested the central government's control over Batam and have struggled to seize control of the area for themselves. Although a Batam administrative municipality had been established in 1984, it had very little autonomy and existed largely to help implement BP Batam's designs for the area. However, in the decentralisation process after Suharto's fall, Batam's local government was granted far more substantial autonomy and authority, through Law 53/1999. This gave local elites a reasonable claim to have some responsibility for the FTZ's development, and they soon began trying to assert their authority, leading to clashes with BP Batam.

In 2007, the central government responded to this growing contestation by passing Law 44/2007 and Government Regulation 46/2007, which reasserted BP Batam's legal authority over the FTZ. Although the recent regulations assert BP Batam's legal authority, it does not take precedence over Law 53/1999 that gave Batam greater autonomy in managing their own territory. This is because the recent regulations left out the mechanism by which BP Batam cooperates with the Batam government. What this actually meant in practice was dualism in governance in Batam Island, and so contestation has continued. Indeed, because the new regulations widened the FTZ to cover all of Batam Island, this created an even greater overlap between the two institutions, spurring even more contestation.

Given this dualism, the local government has tried to assert its right to manage the economy in this territory by emphasising its superior democratic legitimacy: while BP Batam is a relic from the authoritarian Suharto era, whose leader is appointed by the central government through the coordinating minister for economic affairs, the people of Batam directly elect the city mayor and the council members. Many local political elites thus argue that BP Batam ought to be subservient to the Batam city government, particularly with respect to regulatory authority over Batam FTZ.[38]

Accordingly, the two bodies are now locked into a struggle over the FTZ's governance, with the development company and the city administration and council issuing overlapping regulations, particularly with respect to licensing and permits, creating substantial confusion for investors. This is because the authority to give permits and licences for corporations to invest in Batam can be mobilised to generate income for the local government. Hence, many agencies of both the central and local governments want to maintain their authority in providing permits and licences. As a result, the procedure and time for licensing have become more complicated and longer, which is an additional cost for investors.

For instance, BP Batam has the authority to manage licences issued by central government agencies such as the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), import certificates from the ministry of trade, and so on. Meanwhile, the Batam local government handles permits devolved to local governments, such as those covering planning permission for buildings, domiciles, corporate registers and environmental permits. Businesspeople in Batam complain that this dualism has created confusion for potential investors.[39] In some cases, business licences issued by BP Batam are not recognised by the local government, which undermines its authority to manage the FTZ. In turn, the investment climate is steadily worsening, undermining the regional integration project.

Control over land is another focus of the scalar contestation of the Batam project. Law 44/2007 and Government Regulation 5/2011 on Free Trade and the Free Port of Batam grant BP Batam the authority to manage land development in Batam until 2071. BP Batam thus controls almost all of the land in Batam, including the international ferry port and Hang Nadim international airport. This is a very unusual situation, because land management is predominantly in the hands of Indonesia's local governments. Moreover, across Indonesia, land development has been a key means by which local elites have built patron–client relations with local business interests.[40] Unsurprisingly, then, these interests have strongly contested BP Batam's authority. Local business elites, through the provincial Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), have urged the central government to dissolve BP Batam due to their difficulties in gaining access to land. KADIN also applied to Indonesia's supreme court for a judicial review of BP Batam's land rights management, asking the court to revoke the company's authority. They have been supported by the local government, which argues that its local democratic legitimacy should give it the right to manage the FTZ.

In 2015, it seemed that the Batam local government was winning this scalar contestation, when the Indonesian Minister of Home Affairs, Tjahjo Kumolo, announced plans to dissolve BP Batam. However, this plan has not yet actually been implemented. The process of abolishing BP Batam is complex, requiring primary legislation, and careful planning to ensure continuity in the FTZ's management and avoid disrupting business activity. BP Batam may have exploited this to resist its abolition. Either way, the central government has instead moved towards a compromise solution. In February 2016, Coordinating Minister of the Economy Darmin Nasution declared that Batam would be transformed from an FTZ into a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), ostensibly because FTZs are no longer relevant in the era of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community. The old FTZ would therefore become part of a wider SEZ, including industrial parks and an export-processing zone, whose geographical remit extends beyond the original FTZ, incorporating other islands like Rempang and Galang. In an attempt to resolve the scalar squabbles, the old FTZ would remain under BP Batam, while the Batam local government would manage the rest of the SEZ. This gives local elites the rent-seeking opportunities they crave, which seems to have satisfied them for the time being, though they could easily restart their struggle. As of December 2018, the central government reiterated that BP Batam would not be abolished although the central government will design a new regulation in which BP Batam will be led *ex officio* by the Mayor of Batam. Given the history of the contestation, this solution might not be able to reduce the possibility of divergent or even competing regulatory environments within what is supposed to be a single subregional economic integration project.

West Kalimantan regional integration project through cross-border cooperation

Unlike Batam, the border area in West Kalimantan was never seen as a site for economic development by the Suharto regime; rather, it was treated as a buffer zone between Indonesia and Malaysia. Accordingly, despite this region being geographically and culturally connected, cross-border cooperation between Indonesian West Kalimantan and Malaysian Sarawak was not significantly fostered until the early 1990s. It has been driven primarily by the increasing development gap between the two regions, with goods and capital flowing from the relatively wealthy Sarawak into the more under-developed West Kalimantan, creating organic cross-border cooperation among business actors.[41] The post-Suharto transformation of the Indonesian state has also seen a stronger push for subregional cooperation from the newly empowered West Kalimantan provincial government, which has sought to cultivate direct ties with its counterpart in Sarawak in pursuit of local economic development.

Although Indonesian law strictly states that foreign affairs are still under the control of the central government, in practice subnational governments have been able to exploit platforms established by Jakarta to establish their own institutional linkages with foreign entities. In West Kalimantan's case, the relevant platform is a dialogue mechanism called Malindo Socio-Economic Cooperation between West Kalimantan and Sarawak, known as KK/JK Sosek Malindo West Kalimantan and Sarawak (*Kelompok Kerja/Jawatan Kerja Sosial Ekonomi Malaysia–Indonesia Kalimantan Barat dan Sarawak*). Through this platform, local elites at the subnational level enjoy a space for paradiplomacy, allowing negotiation and dialogue to take place alongside bilateral relations conducted by the central governments of both countries.[42]

Moreover, growing West Kalimantan–Sarawak cross-border regionalism is driven largely by bottom-up processes rather than top-down directives.[43] Fundamentally this involves two main dynamics. First, regionalisation builds on informal economic networks among people living in the border areas of both countries.[44] Secondly, and more prominently, regionalism has been driven by Malaysian capitalists' interest in expanding the palm oil industry into Indonesian territory. Malaysian firms dominate global supply chains in this important commodity, but since the 1990s they have faced a growing shortage of land and labour, spurring them to expand their plantations into neighbouring Indonesia and import Indonesian labourers to man their domestic plantations.[45] West Kalimantan has become a major site for the development of oil palm plantations, with Malaysian firms dominating the industry. Overall, Malaysian entities control 18–30% of oil palm plantations in Indonesia.[46] Accordingly, subregional cooperation in this area focuses heavily on the oil palm sector, including the use of Sarawak infrastructure to export Indonesian palm oil.[47]

As in the case of Batam, the rents accruing from the development of oil palm are contested between the central and local governments. At the central level, government agencies see the sector as a way of meeting national development targets and raising revenue through export taxes. The central government designated a 584-km border zone of West Kalimantan for 1.8 million hectares of oil palm plantations under the Megawati Sukarnoputri presidency (2001–2004), a policy continued under subsequent administrations. At the local level, however, subnational governments criticise this approach as only benefiting the central government, because the export duties levied on Indonesia's vast palm oil exports accrue exclusively to Jakarta.[48] Unsurprisingly, local governments, including those in West Kalimantan, are fighting for a share of this revenue, lobbying for the establishment of a special revenue-sharing mechanism through the revision of Law 33/2004 on Revenue Sharing Between the Central Government and Local Government, which limits revenue sharing to commodities that are non-renewable resources, such as oil, mining and gas.

However, unlike the Batam case, there is a greater convergence of interest around oil palm development because local governments stand to gain considerably more by exploiting their powers to allocate land permits and levy taxes on land, building, vehicles and other matters relating to plantations.[49] Due to the rescaling of state power through decentralisation, local governments have gained the right to issue land development and plantation permits. Unsurprisingly, local elites have exploited these powers to generate formal government revenue and illicit kickbacks.[50] In the West Kalimantan border areas, it is well known that local government bureaucrats extracted informal payments from plantation companies in exchange for permits, as well as enriching their clients by rapidly issuing licences in prime locations. This led to the issuing of permits for over 540,347 hectares of new oil palm plantations from 2013 to 2016.[51] The kickbacks and revenues from these plantations have provided a crucial resource for local elites competing for political power,[52] in Indonesia's fiercely contested and deeply corrupt local elections. Accordingly, despite ongoing contestation over export revenue sharing, local governments have been willing to encourage the expansion of foreign plantation companies into their domains.[53] Hence, as argued by Varkkey,[54] patronage politics has become the driver of economic regionalisation in Indonesia's oil palm sector.

This explains why cross-border regionalism between West Kalimantan and Sarawak has proceeded more smoothly than that in the IMS-GT. Indeed, cross-border cooperation has been possible even with respect to exports, the most fraught area of scalar contestation in this case. Since May 2013, oil palm companies operating in the border region of West

Kalimantan have been exporting crude palm oil directly to Malaysia thanks to the opening of the Badau Cross Border post (PLB). Although the revenues still accrue exclusively to Jakarta, for the time being, the development of direct exports is expected to encourage the development of oil palm plantations in the border region, thus attracting the support of the local government. In this case, then, despite struggles over resources between Indonesia's central and local governments, the intersection of their interests – and those of transnational business – has created a more coherent state policy in fostering cross-border regionalism in this particular sector.

However, this intersection does not necessarily extend to other sectors where, accordingly, subregional cooperation is considerably less well developed. Two examples illustrate this. First, in the mining sector, the local government has played on burgeoning 'resource nationalism'[55] and invoked supposed threats to Indonesia's territorial integrity to harass Malaysian companies active in the border region. For instance, in 2010, the West Kalimantan provincial government sent a letter to the Indonesian president alleging that Malaysian mining firms operating in the border region – specifically, in the Ketungau subdistrict of Sintang Hulu District – were stealing Indonesian coal. The governor urged the central government to respond quickly, claiming that the Malaysian government had engaged in the stealth occupation of Indonesian territory by moving boundary markers and making new ones, stating that this was highly detrimental to Indonesian sovereignty.[56] Thus, unlike in the oil palm sector, rather than encouraging Malaysian firms to enter the province, the local government has actively opposed their presence. This reflects the different economic calculations they make in this sector. Particularly in comparison to the mining sector in neighbouring East and South Kalimantan, activity is dominated by domestic, small-scale companies, with very few licences awarded to Malaysian firms. The local government is apparently keen to protect its local clients from Malaysian competition. Secondly, the government seems to calculate that the potential benefit from attracting more Malaysian mining companies is outweighed by the prospect of greater central government spending attracted by its alarmist claims about threats to Indonesian sovereignty. The provincial government has linked Malaysian predation to the under-development of the border areas, demanding more central investment in infrastructure projects, which has long been pledged but has been subjected to many delays under the Joko Widodo presidency.

A second, similar example is the electricity sector. Under the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) project, West Kalimantan and Sarawak are supposed to develop cross-border electricity grid connections, as part of a wider effort to ensure energy security by networking the Southeast Asian region's power supplies. This project is strongly supported by the central government, with the Indonesian Energy Enterprise signing an agreement to purchase energy from Sarawak Energy Berhad. However, local elites in the West Kalimantan provincial executive and parliament generally oppose this cooperation, branding it a threat to Indonesian 'energy sovereignty'.[57] What is actually at issue here, according to one provincial parliamentarian, is the development of Kalimantan's own local power sector. With imports from Malaysia, local power generation – notably hydropower, land-intensive and accordingly potentially very lucrative for local elites – will never get off the ground.[58] For this reason, the project is heavily scrutinised by the local elites in both the executive and legislature, which continually slows down the project. This example confirms findings from other studies of regional energy cooperation that understanding the actual outcomes of projects requires us to look beyond the interaction between 'nation states', paying attention to contestation and negotiation between different elements of state apparatuses and business interests.[59] However, this article also shows that local governments can be key players in these contested processes.

Conclusion

This article has argued that state transformation and politico-economic contestation within transformed state apparatuses are key processes in understanding the development of regionalism. It has shown how the state transformation literature can enhance the literature on the Indonesian state and cross-border regionalism in Southeast Asia by focusing on how inter-scalar, central–local struggles for power and resources shape regional integration projects. The empirical findings show that cross-border regionalism is not simply a site for rational cooperation among unitary 'nation-states'. Rather, they are sites of multilevel contestation, where subnational governments seek to capture regulatory control and resources from the central government. Where contestation is relatively low, and local and national elites' interests largely intersect, cross-border regional cooperation is more likely to succeed; where the opposite is true, it will encounter obstacles, which may hinder or even thwart cross-border cooperation where actors at either level can withhold crucial cooperation.

The empirical analysis has shown that, in the case of Indonesia, the increased fragmentation of state power and the contestation by local elites to capture authority over border areas have caused the emergence of defective decentralisation. Although the central government has tried to intensify development in the border areas by enhancing regional integration projects, as shown in the cases of Batam and West Kalimantan, central–local contestation has often – though not always – hindered these endeavours. The case of Batam elucidates how the emergence of competing authorities has created a stumbling block in enhancing cross-border regionalism through an FTZ. In the case of West Kalimantan, some cross-border regionalism projects are supported while some are not. These varying outcomes can be attributed to the extent to which there is an alignment of interests between local and central government elites, and transnational capital.

In other words, for cross-border regionalism to work in a state transformed by decentralisation, there is a need for the central government to give local government ownership of projects. Although in some regulatory areas local government may not have the power to contest central government decisions, in many they can issue contradictory regulations that may hinder cross-border regionalism projects. Success thus depends on sufficient 'buy-in' from those who can effectively act as veto players.

The findings also suggest that the state transformation undergone by Indonesia could undermine its bid to be recognised as a rising or 'middle' power, which involves the government taking greater responsibility and initiative at the regional and global levels. As our case studies show, the fragmentation and decentralisation of the Indonesian state make it very difficult to follow through on global and regional commitments, making Indonesia an unreliable partner. Even schemes promoted or agreed to by Jakarta may be implemented only partially at best. The case studies above illustrate this, as does the weak implementation of Jakarta's commitments to regional cooperation in the domains of non-traditional security, the environment, pandemic disease, and trade and investment.[60] State transformation can make Indonesia's claims to regional leadership appear fatuous at best.

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Notes

1. Chandra, "Regional Economic Building."
2. J. Smith et al., "Illegal Logging, Collusive Corruption"; Aspinall, "A Nation in Fragments"; Aritenang, *Impact of State Restructuring*.
3. Cf. Hameiri, "Theorising Regions through Changes in Statehood."
4. Hameiri and Jones, "Rising Powers and State Transformation."
5. Grundy-Warr, Peachey, and Perry, "Fragmented Integration in the Singapore–Indonesian Border Zone"; Dosch and Hensengerth, "Sub-Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia"; Nadalutti, "To What Extent Does Governance Change."
6. Hameiri and Jones, "Rising Powers and State Transformation."
7. Buehler, "Decentralisation and Local Democracy in Indonesia."
8. Eilenberg, "Negotiating Autonomy at the Margins of the State."
9. Wangke, *Kerja Sama Indonesia-Malaysia*.
10. Aspinall, "A Nation in Fragments," 31.
11. Slater, "Party Cartelization, Indonesian-Style."
12. Eilenberg, "Negotiating Autonomy at the Margins of the State."
13. Aritenang, *Impact of State Restructuring*, 68.
14. Kementerian Dalam Negeri, "Pembentukan Daerah-Daerah Otonom Di Indonesia."
15. Kimura, *Political Change and Territoriality in Indonesia*; Firman, "Territorial Splits (Pemekaran Daerah) in Decentralising Indonesia, 2000–2012."
16. Karim, "Institutional Dynamics of Regulatory Actors."

17. Karim, "Local–Central Dynamics and Limitations of Micro-Regionalism."
18. Hadiz and Robison, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia*.
19. Aspinall, "A Nation in Fragments."
20. Pangsapa and Smith, "Political Economy of Southeast Asian Borderlands."
21. Delaney and Leitner, "The Political Construction of Scale," 93.
22. Neil Smith, "Homeless/Global: Scaling Places," 96.
23. Marston, "The Social Construction of Scale," 221.
24. Brenner, "The Limits to Scale?," 599.
25. Eilenberg and Wadley, "Borderland Livelihood Strategies."
26. Gualini, "The Rescaling of Governance in Europe."
27. Brenner, "Urban Governance and the Production of New State Spaces."
28. Demirović, "Materialist State Theory," 44.
29. Eilenberg, "State of Fragmentation," 1350.
30. Jones, "Explaining the Failure of the ASEAN Economic Community"; Nshimbi, "Networks of Cross-Border Non-State Actors."
31. See Brenner, "Urban Governance and the Production of New State Spaces"; Sparke et al., "Triangulating the Borderless World"; and Grundy-Warr, Peachey, and Perry, "Fragmented Integration in the Singapore–Indonesian Border Zone."
32. Varkkey, "Oil Palm Plantations and Transboundary Haze."
33. Eaton, *Territory and Ideology in Latin America*.
34. Grundy-Warr, Peachey, and Perry, "Fragmented Integration in the Singapore-Indonesian Border Zone"; Sparke et al., "Triangulating the Borderless World."
35. At the beginning, BP Batam was officially named *Otorita Batam* (Batam Authority).
36. Grundy-Warr, Peachey, and Perry, "Fragmented Integration in the Singapore-Indonesian Border Zone."
37. Sparke et al., "Triangulating the Borderless World," 490.
38. Interview with officials from Batam local government, June 15, 2014.
39. Interview with KADIN Batam, June 16, 2014.
40. Hameiri and Jones, *Governing Borderless Threats*, 107.
41. Bapenas, "Seri Analisis Pembangunan Wilayah Provinsi."
42. Interview with official from West Kalimantan local government, January 24, 2013.
43. Karim, "Local–Central Dynamics and Limitations of Micro-Regionalism."
44. Eilenberg and Wadley, "Borderland Livelihood Strategies."
45. Varkkey, Tyson, and Choiruzzad, "Palm Oil Intensification and Expansion."
46. Brockhaus et al., "Overview of Forest and Land Allocation Policies."
47. The Star, "Malaysia, Indonesia Seek New Ways."
48. McCarthy, Gillespie, and Zen, "Swimming Upstream."
49. Priscilla, "Pemprov Perjuangkan Dana Bagi."
50. Brad et al., "Contested Territorialization and Biophysical Expansion."
51. Adinugraha, Hadijah, and Siahaan, "Tata Kelola Perkebunan Sawit Di Indonesia."
52. McCarthy, Gillespie, and Zen, "Swimming Upstream."
53. Brad et al., "Contested Territorialization and Biophysical Expansion."
54. Varkkey, "Patronage Politics as a Driver of Economic Regionalisation."
55. Wilson, "Understanding Resource Nationalism."
56. JPNN, "Dusun Camar Bulan Dicaplok Malaysia."
57. Interview with West Kalimantan regional MP, Pontianak, January 24, 2013.
58. Ibid.
59. Carroll and Sovacool, "Pipelines, Crisis and Capital."
60. Hameiri and Jones, *Governing Borderless Threats*, chap. 3–4; Jones, "Explaining the Failure of the ASEAN Economic Community."

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