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# The State of Coal Mining in East Kalimantan: Towards a Political Ecology of Local Stateness

Anna Fünfgeld

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The article aims at expanding political ecology research towards the role and constitution of states by demonstrating how local stateness is negotiated within conflicts over natural resources. It draws on a qualitative field study on the conflict over coal mining in East Kalimantan's capital Samarinda, Indonesia, where certain characteristics of states, such as the monopoly of violence and the rule of law, are being affirmed, altered, or undermined through practices of state and non-state actors alike. These practices do not only challenge state representations, but also reveal the symbolic importance of ideas about the state. The theoretical framework is developed on the basis of Joel S. Migdal's state in society approach together with a later work of Pierre Bourdieu and Philip Abrams' thoughts about the nature of states.

**Keywords:** Coal Mining; Indonesia; Political Ecology; Practice Theory; State Theory

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## INTRODUCTION

Conflicts stemming from the extraction of natural resources are on the rise in many parts of the world. In Indonesia, which is known for its big variety of resources, the extraction and export of coal has been expanded remarkably over recent years, leading to the country's current standing as the world's largest exporter of coal by weight (Energy Information Administration, 2014). More than three quarters of the total extraction is exported, mainly to neighboring Asian countries (Andruleit et al., 2011; Energy Information Administration, 2014).<sup>1</sup> In the major coal production areas of East Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, and South Sumatra,<sup>2</sup> strip mining has had profound and alarming impacts upon environmental and societal change, such as the destruction of landscapes and agricultural land and the contamination of water and soil.<sup>3</sup> This is especially the case in East Kalimantan's capital, Samarinda, where mining concessions cover nearly three quarters of the total municipal area.

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1 For domestic purposes, coal is mainly used for power generation and cement production on Java and Bali, while East Kalimantan – the most important production area – still lacks energy supply (Ehrhardt, Kelter, & Lenz, 1999; Susmiyati, & Kotijah, 2007).

2 About 90% of the Indonesian coal is extracted in Kalimantan (Wedig & Battenschlag, 2008).

3 Usually, strip mining – used for coal beds close to the surface – is the cheapest and hence the preferred form of extraction, which accounts for most of Indonesia's coal production (Ehrhardt et al., 1999).

However, it is not only the natural environment and the connected livelihoods of locals that are subject to a massive transformation. Coal mining has come to play a major role in local politics and significantly impacts the appearance and functioning of the state. I argue that the practices of various actor groups connected to resource extraction add to the everyday enactment and de-enactment of basic political and social patterns that can generally be regarded as dimensions of *stateness*.

While political ecology has significantly contributed to the understanding of socio-ecological conflicts on a general level, I argue that blind spots remain when it comes to conceptualizing such basic political categories as ‘the state’. This is especially remarkable as political ecology approaches are generally dedicated to “unravel[ling] the political forces at work in environmental access, management, and transformation” (Robbins, 2012, p. 3). For example, in their fundamental writing on political ecology, Bryant and Bailey (1997) stress that “to appreciate the ways in which environmental change is politicized in the Third World is in considerable measure to understand how the state has sought to manage the peoples and environments within its jurisdiction” (p. 48). Yet, it is not only important to understand how states acquire power or how they influence environmental change, but as well as how they are constituted in the first place.

This article therefore aims to contribute to a better understanding of the importance of the concept of the state in political ecology research by grounding it in the socio-economic and political dynamics arising from coal mining in East Kalimantan. Even though the incongruence of formal regulations and practices on the ground is by no means unknown, little effort has been made thus far to consistently theorize this phenomenon from a state theoretical perspective. I believe that for micro-level approaches, such as those applied in most political ecology research in recent years, it is of great importance to better understand the appearance of states on the local level and their interplay with struggles over nature. When developing a political ecology approach to local *stateness*, I will therefore look at the social realities of *stateness*, which I believe result from the practices of various actors corresponding with or contradicting common representations of states. I argue that practice-oriented approaches to the state, as developed within political science, sociology, and anthropology – like the *state-in-society approach* (Migdal, 2001) – can significantly add to bridging this gap in political ecology. This is because they take into account the embeddedness of states within their societies, rather than looking for universal elements as a means to understand the functioning and appearance of the state on the local level.

I ask how the state appears on the local level in East Kalimantan, specifically in its capital Samarinda, in the context of coal mining, and what significance this has for the ongoing dynamics in this specific policy field. Moreover, relying on these findings, I show why *stateness* is an important category in political ecology research and how the complexity of the phenomenon can be better understood with a practice-oriented approach. A late work of practice theorist Bourdieu (1994) is especially useful for grasping the structural, practical, and symbolic dimensions of *stateness*. I use the term ‘*stateness*’ instead of ‘the state’ in order to emphasize the coexistence of various state-related elements, which may be subject to change due to actors’ practices and variance in their interpretation in public discourse. Furthermore, the concept

emphasizes that a state may take on very different appearances in different local contexts or time periods. Therefore, stateness is mainly geared towards analyzing a state on the micro level, where it finally emerges within concrete processes and practices. Hence, the concept of stateness is not about creating another definition of the state. It rather aims at developing an analytical tool for the investigation of the constitution of the state on the local level. Moreover, stateness emphasizes the complex and sometimes even contradictory nature of states, whose appearance on the local level very often is beyond the ideal type elements of a state, such as the monopoly of violence and the rule of law.

The article is based on an empirical field study in Samarinda between October and December 2011, which included participant observation, qualitative interviews, group discussions, and informal conversations. Altogether, I conducted 28 qualitative interviews. Most of my interview partners were inhabitants of Samarinda's sub-district (*kelurahan*) Makroman, NGO representatives, academics, administrative staff, and coal mining workers. I furthermore talked to local parliamentarians and representatives of a development agency and a coal mining company.

The article is structured as follows: After providing an overview of current coal mining processes in Indonesia and the different actors involved in conflicts connected to coal mining in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, I develop a theoretical approach of local stateness. In the third section, I discuss this approach against the empirical case study, before coming to a conclusion on the state of coal mining in East Kalimantan.

### COAL MINING IN INDONESIA

Coal mining in Indonesia dates back to colonial times. Between 1849 and 1945, comparably small quantities were extracted by the Dutch in Kalimantan and Sumatra that mainly served as fuel for the shipping industry. Large-scale extraction was significantly fostered by the Suharto regime through the implementation of new mining and foreign investment laws since the end of the 1960s. However, due to low oil prices and limited foreign investment in the sector, the take-off period of the Indonesian coal mining industry did not commence before the late 1980s (Lucarelli, 2010). On top of this increase, Indonesia saw an exponential rise of coal mining production since the introduction of democratization and regional autonomy reforms in 1998/9 (Down to Earth, 2010).

Today, the central regulation for coal mining activities is Mining Law No. 4/2009, which was implemented in 2010 and replaced its predecessor, Mining Law No. 11/1967. *Inter alia*, the new law, together with subsequent regulations, strengthened the position of the Indonesian state in relation to private mining enterprises and fostered the involvement of Indonesian-owned companies in the mining sector.<sup>4</sup> Before the implementation of the new Regional Autonomy Law No. 23/2014, district and mu-

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4 While according to Mining Law No. 11/1967 mining allowances were issued as contracts between the Indonesian state and the private company, Mining Law No. 4/2009 introduced a system of mining concessions, which provided the Indonesian state a stronger position, as it is able to impose sanctions on the companies in case of law-breaking. Still, the *Coal Contracts of Work* issued according to Mining Law No. 11/1967 remain in force. In particular, the large-scale PKP2B contracts (*Perjanjian Karya Pengusahaan Pertambangan Batubara*) still represent a large share of the concession areas (Susmiyati & Kotijah, 2007).

municipality governments were responsible for licensing the mid-sized mining permits, which accounted for mining production areas up to 15,000 ha (Mining Law No. 4/2009).<sup>5</sup> Depending on the location, it was either the district head or the city mayor who was responsible for issuing the concessions.<sup>6</sup>

Companies acquiring concessions are obliged to define development activities for the neighboring communities, assess the possible environmental impact (*Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan*, AMDAL), and set up a special fund for restoration after the closing of the mine (Mining Law No. 4/2009). Furthermore, the law lists several other obligations concerning health and security at the workplace, waste disposal, and community empowerment. All government levels are responsible for ensuring adherence to social and ecological standards as well as those concerning public participation, but the respective paragraphs remain vague and the distribution of tasks is often unclear despite further regulations and technical directives (Mining Law No. 4/2009).

According to the provisions of Indonesian regional autonomy, the framework law has to be complemented by local laws (*Peraturan Daerah*, Perda) in the districts and municipalities. In the municipality of Samarinda, it took more than four years for Perda 12/2013 to be issued. Until then, the local administration was still working with Perda 20/2003, which was based on the former framework law and therefore not in accordance with Mining Law No. 4/2009. These inconsistencies between the central and local administrative levels are not exclusive to the mining sector, but have cropped up in many different policy fields since the advent of decentralization. Similar to cases of dual legislation, an absence of local implementation laws or technical directives often leads to confusion and an unclear basis for administrative work (Fünfgeld, Lücking, & Platte, 2012).

### **MINING SAMARINDA: COAL MINING IN EAST KALIMANTAN'S PROVINCIAL CAPITAL**

Coal mining is omnipresent in East Kalimantan. At Balikpapan airport, there are no posters displaying the beauty of the island of Borneo to its visitors (similar to greetings common at other airports all around the world), but instead one runs into advertisements for heavy mining vehicles. When the airport bus takes local visitors to the province's capital Samarinda, one begins to grasp the physical reality of the fact that most of Indonesia's coal is extracted in this part of the country. Likewise, when

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5 According to Mining Law No. 4/2009, the central government was responsible for the issuance of large-scale special mining permits (up to 50,000 ha) and local governments for small-scale mining permits (up to 10 ha). As small-scale permits do not significantly add to the total coal extraction in Samarinda and large-scale concessions can no longer be issued in the metropolitan area due to a lack of available territory, it is the mid-sized concessions that are important for the situation in Samarinda. Furthermore, there are also some older large-scale concessions (PKP2B), which also still cover a significant part of the city.

6 Meanwhile, the new Local Government Law No. 23/2014 has shifted all competences from district and municipal authorities to the central and provincial governments. Provisions in Mining Law No. 4/2009 have not been adjusted to Law No. 23/2014 yet. However, Circular Letter No. 04.E/30/DJB/2015 issued by the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources stating that district heads and mayors have no authority to administer the minerals and coal sector as of 2 October 2014 is used for guidance (Cahyafitri, 2014; Hamidi, 2015).

sitting at the beautiful shores of Mahakam river in the city center, barges loaded with high piles of coal pass by every few minutes.

As in other parts of Indonesia, there has been a significant rise in the issuance of coal mining concessions since the implementation of decentralization laws. Presumably, this phenomenon is related to the shift of competences to local government heads, who gained control over the issuance of mining concessions (Down to Earth, 2010). These arrangements have obviously left space for self-enrichment amongst local authorities. Several NGOs have reported a considerable increase in coal mining-related 'money politics.' This holds especially true during local elections, when many political candidates receive financial support from mining companies, which are then rewarded with the issuance of concessions after the elections. This connection between the extractive industry and local politics is not exclusive to coal mining activities around Samarinda, but is ubiquitous in all areas of Indonesia where natural resource extraction takes place. For example, Berenschot (2015) has identified similar patterns for the palm oil business in Central Kalimantan. Furthermore, many government officials, parliamentarians, and administrative staff are directly involved in the coal mining business in one way or another, and so take advantage of their political positions. In Kutai Kartanegara, Samarinda's neighboring district, several officials, including the former district head, have been convicted of using their political positions for the benefit of coal mining businesses (Down to Earth, 2010).

Samarinda is currently covered by 4 large-scale and about 70 mid-sized concessions, which together comprise roughly 71% of its total municipal area. The number of mid-sized concessions differs depending on who is providing the information, ranging from 67, as stated by the local mining department, to 76, according to a local NGO. While the mining department's documents indicate that the last concession was issued in 2010, there is information suggesting that several post-2010 concessions have been predated in order to fit the regulations.<sup>7</sup>

The negative impacts of coal mining in the municipality of Samarinda include environmental problems such as the contamination of water, air, and soil, as well as the destruction of landscapes through forest clearance, general clearing, and mining work (Susmiyati & Kotijah, 2007). These developments further erosion and thereby contribute to an increase in both the quantity and intensity of floods. As a result, Samarinda has been dubbed *Kota Banjir* (flood city) (Down to Earth, 2010). Furthermore, the consequences of mining activities are particularly harmful in the city's outskirts, where many people make a living from agriculture. People in these areas are suffering from severe reductions of their harvests. Many inhabitants of the sub-district Makroman reported that their rice, fruit, and fish harvest had been reduced by up to 50% due to the accumulation of mud in rice paddies and fish farms. Besides that, water that was formerly used for watering, drinking, and washing is so badly contaminated that fresh water has to be purchased. These problems exist in both active and inactive mining sites, as only a minority of the latter have been restored after extraction

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7 Interview partners agreed on the fact that there was no opportunity for the legal issuance of concessions after 2010 but explanations differ. While some people argued that there was not enough free space to issue another mid-sized concession, which according to Mining Law No. 4/2009 needs to be at least 5,000 ha, others said that the new auction procedures still lacked concrete regulations because of the absent Perda.

stopped (Satriastanti, 2011). In theory, reclamation is supervised by local mining departments, but they lack funding and trained personnel (Faizal, 2011; Susmiyati & Kotijah, 2007). In Samarinda, only five trained and five untrained controllers are responsible for the supervision of more than 1,000 coal mines.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, insufficient funding of the department limits the objectivity of controllers as the companies not only provide transportation and accommodation for them, but also “little presents” (anonymous, 13 November 2011; Susmiyati & Kotijah, 2007).<sup>9</sup>

Despite several regulations stressing the right of local communities to access information about mining activities, it is rarely provided. Before commencing mining activities, companies are required to present a working and budget plan to the mining department, containing details of their intended commitment to community development. At the same time, they also have to present an environmental impact assessment (AMDAL) to the local community before mining activities begin. However, AMDAL usually lack context-specific evaluation, as one and the same AMDAL is used for multiple sites. Often, there is no presentation at all for the locals or it is held in technical language difficult for many to understand. In general, all of these processes are opaque and despite some promising articles in the mining law, many companies thoroughly neglect their responsibilities.

In response to these developments, local anti-mining groups have emerged in some parts of the city.<sup>10</sup> The largest and best publicized group of protesters in Samarinda has emerged in Makroman, a rural area located about 15 km from the city center. Makroman is predominantly inhabited by ethnic Javanese as it has been established as a transmigrant community since the 1950s. As most of the more than 7,000 inhabitants of the sub-district (*kelurahan*) make a living from farming and small-scale aquaculture, the immediate proximity of the mining sites to their residential and agricultural areas is a significant threat to their livelihoods. In order to stop the further worsening of their living conditions, about 50 people began anti-mining protests more than eight years ago, such as street blockades, demonstrations, and making inquiries to the local government. The group receives support from local NGOs, several local academics, and parliamentarians, and was able to gain nationwide recognition through media reports. Local protests against CV Arjuna, a company operating in Makroman with several sub-contractors since 2007, are thus embedded in nationwide and global campaigns primarily organized by the anti-mining NGO JATAM (*Jaringan Advokasi Tambang*).

Often, private or state security forces have inhibited protests such as demonstrations through threats of violence. Several cases have been reported in which the suppression of protests surpassed the level of threats and included physical violence. According to local activists, the involvement of local policemen and -women in these incidences was fostered as they were bribed by mining companies. The activists sug-

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8 The controller certificate can only be acquired through participation in training in Bandung, which is why in addition to the five people who have this certificate, the department is also sending out five non-certified people. Despite the financing of the workshop, it also seems to be a problem that the training is only offered once a year for about 35 people (Susmiyati & Kotijah, 2007).

9 Further problems include the assumed involvement of mining department staff in mining activities.

10 The problems are not the same for all parts of Samarinda. Where people are employed by the mining company and where the share of farmers is minimal, there is usually less resistance to mining activities.

gest that this may have led to the violent suppression of protests as well as to further threats and detentions. However, the companies are reportedly increasing the employment of private forces in order to safeguard their mining operations. These private forces include thugs (*preman*) and paramilitary groups, which are often registered as civil society organizations. The appearance of the paramilitary forces visually resembles the state military; they use military camouflage clothes together with jeeps and modern weaponry. Furthermore, they are often trained by retired or still active army personnel.

Still, the anti-mining mobilization in Samarinda has been able to gain significant recognition in local and national media and has thereby been able to exercise pressure on government officials. In 2010 and 2011, locals and JATAM supporters were able to raise their concerns at hearings at the local parliament and meetings with the city mayor. As a result of the meetings, CV Arjuna agreed to invest in infrastructure projects, an obligation they presumably have not met. However, facing the ongoing destruction of their livelihoods, many of the people in Makroman have little hope for a bettering of their situation in the near future. Some people view themselves as marginalized not only in terms of their economic situation, but also in political terms, as expressed by one interlocutor in her self-description as one of the “small citizens,” who are commonly ignored by politicians and civil servants alike until they actively engage in protests and demand their right to be heard as Indonesian citizens.

Mining conflicts in Samarinda seem to share many problems with resource extraction as documented in political ecology research elsewhere, such as the destruction of nature and connected livelihoods, which leads to conflicts over the access to and distribution of natural resources that are especially characterized by the opposition between involved companies and the local population affected by the changes within their territory. Hence, I do not simply aim to provide an analysis of the constellations and power relations among the actors involved. Rather, I want to specifically look at the interplay between this mining conflict and the practices related to the associated forms of political organization in the local context. I will thereby show, that what is generally considered to be ‘the state’ does not appear as a unitary entity anymore when investigating local practices related to it. Moreover, the example illustrates how states are essentially embedded in their societies, which leads to a blurring of the common binary distinction between the state and the society. In doing so, I try to reveal the functioning of the state ‘on the ground’ in order to show the extent to which it is shaped by, and negotiated through, conflicts over nature.

## ON STATENESS

There exists a broad range of state theories that seek to explain how states evolved and why a state is needed for the bettering of people’s living conditions.<sup>11</sup> However, these theories neither account for the difference between formal regulations and practices on the ground, nor for the impact of conflicts over natural resources, spe-

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11 In early modern times, for example, the evolution of states was viewed as a result of people voluntarily entering into a social contract, which would presumably weaken the negative impact of human nature (Thomas Hobbes), the introduction of money (John Locke), or private property (Jean-Jacques Rousseau), and thereby ensure more socially responsible behavior.

cifically the practices related to them, on the shaping of stateness on the local level. In order to theorize stateness from a political ecology perspective and to elaborate on a state conception applicable to ongoing struggles over nature and natural resources, I mainly rely on Migdal's (2001) state-in-society approach. Developed from the 1980s onwards, the approach has been applied to various fields within Southeast Asian studies (Gainsborough, 2010; Klinken & Barker, 2009). The state-in-society approach rests on the assumption that in order to understand what a state is in practice, it is important to look at the general representation of states (here termed their *image*) and likewise at the *practices* of state and non-state actors. The image of the state is understood as a universalized set of ideas about the modern state, which are challenged or reaffirmed by the practices of state and non-state actors on a daily basis. It can be described by notions of the state as the central rule-making authority and main body of representation of the people living in its territory, strengthened through the implicit and explicit threat of violence, which is challenged by actors' practices. Instead of weighing the influence of state and non-state actors against each other and viewing them as diametrically opposed, the approach rests on the assumption that states are fundamentally embedded in their societies. This means that in order to understand the functioning of a state, we have to look not only at government regulations and actions, but also at the practices of non-state actors. Therefore, it takes into account ongoing struggles continually occurring in every society over the arrangement of basic rules. From a micro-perspective, these practices can be found in daily practices and seemingly small actions such as passport controls, tax evasion, or the like (Migdal, 2001; Migdal & Schlichte, 2005).

In order to identify the universalized image of the state, Migdal draws mainly upon central characteristics developed in classical state definitions such as those formulated by Weber (1919/1992; 1921-2/2010) and Jellinek (1900/1966). The state image, therefore, mainly consists of the ideas of the monopoly of physical force, a defined territory (*Staatsgebiet*), a permanent population within this territory (*Staatsvolk*), and the bureaucracy. A defined state territory requires the existence of borders in order to delineate the state's domain internally as well as externally. Importantly, the state's rule applies to all people within its territory and not only to specific groups (Benz, 2001; Pierson, 1996). In contrast to pre-modern states (such as the Southeast Asian Mandala state), effective wielding of power is not limited to the center, but applies equally to the whole territory. The people within this territory are either viewed in terms of an (imagined) nation (Anderson, 1983/2006) or the definition is bound to the legal regulations of the respective state, which define who obtains citizenship of that state and who does not. Therefore, both the concept of state population and state territory are based on exclusion as they define who and what belongs to a state and who and what does not (Benz, 2001; Pierson, 1996).<sup>12</sup> According to Weber, the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force is the pivotal characteristic of states. It is geared towards the protection of territory and people against external as well as internal threats and guarantees basic state competencies: the definition of binding

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12 In contrast to the term 'citizenship,' 'nation' and 'nationality' do not rely on formal laws defining the membership, but are rather built on an imagination of 'belongingness'. A nation, according to Benedict Anderson, is therefore an "imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 1983/2006, p. 6).

rules and their implementation (Pierson, 1996; Weber, 1921-2/2010). State authority is only considered legitimate if it serves the realization of law. The rule of law, which therefore can be considered another constituting element of states, implies the indissoluble link between state authority to established law (Benz, 2001). The main basis for the state's exercise of control is the effective administration of its people and territory. States therefore rely on their bureaucracies to implement universal codes, classification systems, and measurements, as well as mapping processes that serve the gathering of information (Anderson, 1983/2006; Scott, 1998). According to Weber (1921-2/2010), it is the core of state rule, as only the bureaucracy possesses the competences required to exercise the state's functions.

One of the shortcomings of Migdal's approach is that by identifying universal elements of the state in classical Western state theory, he ignores alternative notions of the state from other world regions. In Southeast Asia in general, and specifically in Indonesia, a broad range of concepts and ideas about the state exist that are remarkably different from those developed in the Western world (though they have also been partly developed by Western scholars). The Mandala concept, for example, describes how pre-colonial political formations in Southeast Asia were based on the understanding that political power descends in concentric circles depending on the distance from centers of power (Wolters, 1999). The most vibrant discussions about the specific form of the Indonesian state went on after independence (Feith & Castles, 1970). During this time, integralist state concepts, most prominently introduced by Supomo and Sukarno, dominated the debate. Later, Suharto built on many of these early ideas about the Indonesian state and partly reshaped them to support and legitimize his rule. In recent years, the promises of democratization and the decentralization reforms are probably the most important narratives to take into account in this respect. Therefore, extending Migdal's approach, I understand the image of the state as a set of specific characteristics ascribed to the state, deriving from scholarly and everyday understandings of the term.

When looking at universalized state characteristics, it is furthermore important to understand how these images constitute the idea of the state as a seemingly unitary actor. Independent of their different emphases in the appraisal of specific state elements, state theories generally frame the state as an "ideological thing" (Abrams, 1977/1988) – in the sense that these approaches themselves contribute to a belief about the state as a politically institutionalized and coherent entity. "Behind the appearance of thinking it [the state], most of the writings devoted to the state partake, more or less efficaciously and directly, of the construction of the state, i.e., of its very existence" (Bourdieu, 1994, pp. 2-3). It is not only scholarly work, but also the act of thinking about the state in everyday interaction that contributes to its representation as a unified entity seemingly oriented towards general morality and common interests (Abrams, 1977/1988; Bourdieu, 1994).

This constitutes the symbolic dimension of stateness. The idea of the state is such a powerful construction because of the functioning of its image elements as well as because of the overall symbolic power it bears. Applying his basic practice theory concept of different forms of capital to the state, Bourdieu (1994) calls the state "the *culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital* [italics in original]" (p. 4). The construction of the state leads to the simultaneous construction of a *field*

of power, which is “the space of play within which the holders of capital . . . struggle *in particular* [italics in original] for power over the state, i.e., over the statist capital granting power over the different species of capital and over their reproduction” (p. 5). The different species of capital emphasized by Bourdieu are *capital of physical force*, *economic capital*, *informational capital*, and *symbolic capital* – albeit that they are interdependent and in sum constitute the *state capital (capital étatique)* (Bourdieu, 1994).

These forms of state capital can be related to the basic elements of states, as described above. The capital of physical force primarily rests on the image of the concentration of the means of coercion under one central unit. Furthermore, physical violence is only to be exercised by a specific group, which is clearly identifiable and disciplined. The monopoly of physical force has to be asserted internally as well as externally. This, in turn, is based on the economic as well as informational capital of the state, as both are needed for the exercise of state control. Informational capital, that is, the concentration, treatment, and redistribution of information through the state, is the basis for the functioning of the bureaucracy in general and for the establishment of a unified taxation system in particular. Economic capital, gained through the establishment of a centrally controlled fiscal system in combination with the creation of a common market, is, in turn, a prerequisite for the concentration of the capital of physical force (Bourdieu, 1994). The concentration of the means of coercion, the financial resources, and a large amount of information require and at the same time bring about the concentration of a *symbolic capital of recognized authority*. This means that the acknowledgment of the different forms of capital leads to their valorization. Thereby, they become *symbolic capital*. *Juridical capital*, which relies on the *symbolic capital* of the state and describes the assignment of rights to representatives of the state, is a sub-aspect of symbolic capital. It is fundamental to the authority of the state as it defines its power of nomination. It therefore enables the definition and implementation of laws. The state thus becomes a bank of symbolic capital, guaranteeing all acts of authority exercised by authorized personnel (Bourdieu, 1994).

Combining these assumptions, in the following I look at how the practices of state and non-state actors as identified before correspond with the described images of the state, and how stateness on the ground is shaped by these practices. Moreover, I show how the universalized images in turn influence these practices and what role the symbolic dimension of stateness plays in this respect.

### LOCAL STATENESS IN EAST KALIMANTAN

In accordance with the practice-oriented approach to local stateness, the first step of the analysis was to identify the various actors involved in the coal mining conflict and the practices they are carrying out within this policy field. In a second step, I now relate these practices to their impact on the ideal type state characteristics as identified in the previous section of the article. Hence, I explore how these practices possibly influence images of the state such as its monopoly of physical force, the functioning of the bureaucracy according to the rule of law, the idea of a *Staatsvolk*, and the promises of decentralization and democratization, which are especially important for the image of the contemporary Indonesian state. Furthermore, I ask how the actors make use of the symbolic forms of state capital described by Bourdieu when carrying out

practices. In doing so, it becomes clear that the state at the local level by no means appears to be as monolithic as prevalent state theories tend to suggest. Furthermore, it is evident that neither the confirmation nor the undermining of state characteristics necessarily depends on whether practices are carried out by state or non-state actors.

Various practices of private companies and state representatives in coal mining in Samarinda obviously challenge the state's monopoly of physical force. The inability of the state to implement its monopoly is most apparent in the companies' practices of bribing police officers in order to gain their support for the repression of anti-mining protests. However, some of the companies further employ paramilitary groups and thugs in order to safeguard mining sites and activities. These groups not only threaten the local community but also exercise violence against them. By making use of their visual similarity to the national army, and of the knowledge and information from the army generals training them, they draw upon state capital to legitimize these practices. Additionally, the formal registration of paramilitary groups as civil society organizations is an act of legitimization of their existence and actions as it evokes the idea of the rule of law and thereby rests on the juridical capital of the state.<sup>13</sup>

Within the power field of local stateness, where multiple actors are struggling over the arrangement of rules, the formal state is not always the central rule-setting agency. Rather, the state, as Bourdieu writes, in fact serves as a bank of symbolic capital. Yet it is not only state but also non-state actors who rely on this symbolic capital in order to enhance the legitimization of their practices. Paradoxically, state capital is thus used in order to undermine basic images (and the functioning) of the state. The state's security apparatus and its constitutional procedures are being exploited and actively used by the mining companies and their partners. By way of their visual appearance as state forces, paramilitary groups refer to state symbols and therefore represent some kind of legitimized rule, just as official police forces do. However, by their actions they interpret the symbolic elements – which eventually derive from the universalized idea of the state – in favor of the mining companies' interests. The universal idea of the state is thereby reversed as the symbolic elements are no longer employed in the name of the common good, but instead are used to protect and enact the individual interests of coal concession owners.

Quasi-institutionalized practices of corruption, reportedly ever-present from the allocation of mining concessions and the 'oversight' of mining activities to the (non-) recultivation of mining sites, are also closely related to state capital. Sometimes, they even influence lawmaking processes. State officials involved in these practices make use of the access they gain through their positions and thereby exploit the symbolic capital of the state, thus enabling themselves to contribute to a legitimization of these procedures. The subsequent mapping of illegally provided or predated concessions serves as a final symbolic enactment. Rule of law is thereby being reproduced symbolically, but it lacks substance.

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13 This aspect was similarly stressed by Bakker (2015), who observed that paramilitary groups affiliated with the New Order regime continue to play an important role and are closely intertwined with local political forces. According to Bakker, when exercising their power they significantly draw on their formal registration as civil society organizations and the threat of violence, thereby placing themselves between the spheres of the state and society.

The transfer of competences from the national to the local level under the decentralization reforms has not only fostered the self-enrichment of local elites, but has also opened up new opportunities for citizen participation. As the state has become more present, personal, and accessible on the local level, it is not only easier for coal mining companies to access local politicians and state administrators, but also for local communities to engage with their representatives. This constellation enabled a community located on a so-called 'outer island' such as the anti-mining group in Makroman, to directly engage with the responsible institutions and people – the local people's representative council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*) and the mayor of Samarinda. While the results of these negotiations remain unclear, the locals were at least able to make their voices heard. Their worries and wishes regarding the mining activities in their area directly shaped a policy paper by local parliamentarians and state officials, which was delivered to the parliamentary committee responsible for drafting the new Perda. Yet, although many promises of greater accessibility to state institutions through regional autonomy have not been followed up by institutionalized procedures, the practices of the anti-mining group appear to be at least a partial realization of the promises of regional autonomy. In this respect, non-state actors have implicitly enacted participation procedures in accordance with the image of the Indonesian state as a state that takes into consideration local needs. Therefore, notions of regional autonomy can be referred to as a form of symbolic capital, as the promises connected to it – such as bringing the state closer to the people and enhancing its responsiveness to them – have been the basis for their enactment by the protesting community in Samarinda. This indicates that locals suffering from the impacts of coal mining in their area are not entirely paralyzed and disenfranchised, but have the opportunity to make use of the state's symbolic capital, at least in some respects.

However, despite the anti-mining group's successful engagement with state representatives, many people in Makroman feel detached from politics and view themselves as 'small citizens' without access to state representatives, and whose needs are generally disregarded in political decisions. They feel marginalized to a high degree and believe that basic citizens' rights do not apply to them in the same way they do to others. This perception obviously challenges the idea of citizenship as a set of responsibilities and rights equally ascribed to the people living in a state's territory. Furthermore, it is remarkable that when talking about their living conditions and their access to basic services such as health service provision and education, many interlocutors from Samarinda do not regard the Indonesian state as having primary responsibility for fulfilling their demands in this respect. They rather emphasize their own responsibility for safeguarding their families' living conditions. This aspect does not relate to any particular image of the state, but reflects the partial absence of the state's responsibilities in the perception of some of the locals in Samarinda.

These examples not only indicate the manifold manifestations of stateness that are deployed on an everyday basis at the local level, but also the blurring of a clear distinction between so-called state and non-state actors. This is exactly one of the core characteristics of stateness, which reflects the profound embeddedness of states within their societies and thereby points at one of the main challenges for understanding stateness in Indonesia today. In accordance with the state-in-society and

similar approaches, these examples reflect the “uncertain” (Mitchell, 1991) or “blurred” (Gupta, 1995) boundaries which ultimately call into question the binary construction of states vis-à-vis societies in western mainstream political philosophy. The close entanglements of state and non-state actors, such as the mining companies and civil servants, reveal how grounded the Indonesian state is within its society, which is fundamental to the understanding of current political processes in the field of coal mining in Indonesia. Furthermore, the different practices described are by no means balanced in the sense that they equally contribute to the appearance of the Indonesian state at the local level. Rather, they are embedded in and therefore dependent on societal power relations, which means that their potential to shape stateness at the local level highly depends on the actors’ positioning in society and their ability to make use of certain resources (or capital in Bourdieu’s sense), such as their financial resources and political networks. For example, while the coal mining companies rely on their close ties to the bureaucracy and the security sector, the activists’ success is highly dependent on support from local NGOs and other civil society actors. However, all of these practices, no matter how influential they may be in the long run, add to the shaping of stateness.

## CONCLUSION

The conflict over coal mining activities in Makroman, Samarinda, is essentially a conflict over access to and control of natural resources. However, mining conflicts are not limited to the negotiation of access to and distribution of resources, and the connected implications for living conditions. In equal measure, fundamental aspects of stateness are constantly negotiated and renegotiated amongst various actors involved in these conflicts. The case study reveals that perspectives on the state as a unitary and static entity with specific sets of characteristics cannot hold true. Rather, stateness has to be redefined as a concept shaped by constant negotiations, which can be accessed through actors’ practices as well as through the images of the state to which they refer and which they reproduce or challenge. Thereby, conflicts over natural resources may exert considerable influence on one of the basic political entities today: the state.

However, the fact that many local practices appear to undermine state images and the resulting patchiness of local stateness due to the sometimes contradictory practices of different actors does not mean that the concept of the state loses significance. Rather, the article has shown that state and non-state actors (e.g., mining companies and civil society groups) alike make active use of state images such as the monopoly of physical force, the rule of law, and Indonesia-specific images connected to decentralization promises. They likewise utilize the symbolic capital of the state, which often adds to the blurring of a clear distinction between them.

The micro-level policy analysis has shown how the concept of stateness can add to the understanding of conflicts over nature. The symbolic dimension of stateness in relation to actors’ practices within the policy field appears highly significant and contributes to the theoretical understanding of the term in political ecology on a general level. Finally, I argue for greater commitment to the practice-oriented analysis of stateness in political ecology research and beyond as the state is

“not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is. It is, one could almost say, the mind of a mindless world, the purpose of purposeless conditions, the opium of the citizen” (Abrams, 1977/1988, p. 82).



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