



The Politics of Protection Rackets in Post-New Order Indonesia: Coercive Capital, Authority and Street Politics (Asia's Transformations)

Ian Douglas Wilson

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Gangs and militias have been a persistent feature of social and political life in Indonesia. During the authoritarian New Order regime they constituted part of a vast network of sub-contracted coercion and social control on behalf of the state. Indonesia's subsequent democratisation has seen gangs adapt to and take advantage of the changed political context. New types of populist street based organisations have emerged that combine predatory rent-seeking with claims of representing marginalised social and economic groups.

Based on extensive fieldwork in Jakarta this book provides a comprehensive analysis of the changing relationship between gangs, militias and political power and authority in post-New Order Indonesia. It argues that gangs and militias have manufactured various types of legitimacy in consolidating localised territorial monopolies and protection economies. As mediators between the informal politics of the street and the world of formal politics they have become often influential brokers in Indonesia's decentralised electoral democracy. More than mere criminal extortion, it is argued that the protection racket as a social relation of coercion and domination remains a salient feature of Indonesia's post-authoritarian political landscape.

This ground-breaking study will be of interest to students and scholars of Indonesian and Southeast Asian politics, political violence, gangs and urban politics.

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