

The dissertation deals with the historical development of banditry and gangsterism in Indonesia against the background of its relationship with the ruling elite. The author argues that bandits, called jago, or modern gangsters, known as preman, represented the basic pillar of power of all ruling regimes in Java from the classical Javanese kingdoms and the

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Netherlands East Indies' colonial state to the Suharto's New Order. This pattern changed, however, with the onset of decentralisation and democratization of Indonesian politics – thugs for hire ceased to be agents of state and became a power tool of political parties and other competing interest groups. The author also shows that the regimes tried to eliminate the thugs' criminal activities by integrating them into their respective repressive systems. The general consequence of these integrational attempts was criminalization of security forces and the state administration.

The author further proves the existence of a direct historical and cultural connection between the jago and the preman. These controversial figures also share, despite a substantial time span, three essential features: cooperation with the patron on an ambivalent basis; criminal activities on the side outside this relationship, which secured profit for the elite in return for protection; intelligence and repressive functions in favour of the regime. The development of the jago from charismatic leader to power broker to agent of the autocratic regime is a reflection of the shift in the concept of power within the Javanese, and generally Indonesian society.

The contribution of the dissertation is both theoretical, as it is the first monography of its kind in the Czech Republic and indeed on an international scale, as well as practical, as it offers a complex analysis of a topical problem which continues to paralyze the Indonesian society across all its strata, preventing the country's full democratic development. ...