



Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God (Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series)

By Chris Wilson

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Ethno-religious violence in Indonesia illustrates in detail how and why previously peaceful religious communities can descend into violent conflict.

From 1999 until 2000, the conflict in North Maluku, Indonesia, saw the most intense communal violence of Indonesia's period of democratization. For almost a year, militias waged a brutal religious war which claimed the lives of almost four thousand lives. The conflict culminated in ethnic cleansing along lines of religious identity, with approximately three hundred thousand people fleeing their homes.

Based on detailed research, this book provides an in depth picture of all aspects of this devastating and brutal conflict. It also provides numerous examples of how different conflict theories can be applied in the analysis of real situations of tensions and violence, illustrating the mutually reinforcing nature of mass level sentiment and elite agency, and the rational and emotive influences on those involved.

This book will be of interest to researchers in Asian Studies, conflict resolution and religious violence.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Chris Wilson's fine study of the pattern of communal violence witnessed in North Maluku in 1999-2000 makes an important contribution to the rich and growing body of scholarship on the patterns of communal violence that accompanied Indonesia's transition to democracy at the turn of the twenty-first century...Although he is refreshingly honest in making clear the limitations of what he definitively knows--his narrative is peppered with phrases like 'it is likely that...', 'it is very possible that...', and so forth--he has provided the most comprehensive and empirically rich account of the violence in North Maluku likely ever to be written." -- *John Sidel, The London School of Economics, UK*

"It is a rich and insightful study. Wilson makes a significant contribution to the literature on conflict in Indonesia by undertaking a regional analysis of the conflict in North Maluku from August 1999 to June 2000. In doing so, he draws on upon a remarkably extensive range of interviews and other sources. The hallmark of Wilson's study is the close attention he pays to locality, specificity and even particular personalities involved in the North Maluku conflict." - *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*

"The ingenuity of Wilson's book lies in the way Wilson uses different theoretical perspectives to analyze how the conflict gradually escalated. On each phase he applies a different perspective, familiarizing the reader with resources mobilization theory, instrumentalist theories of violence, identity-related theories and the concept of security dilemma. These different perspectives make sense: Wilson shows how the earlier phases can be understood in the light of power struggles between elites, while in the later stages the fear for the other was so intense that, according to Wilson, people engaged in violent 'pre-emptive' attacks to regain a sense of security. It is this application of a broad range of theories on violence that makes Wilson's book valuable for readers whose interest lay beyond North Maluku or Indonesia: Wilson's theoretically informed case-study can stimulate thinking on the conflict dynamics behind many other cases of ethnic or religious violence." - *Inside Indonesia, 2010*

About the Author

Chris Wilson completed his PhD at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.

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