

## Rioting for Representation

Ethnic riots are a costly and common occurrence during political transitions in multi-ethnic settings. Why do ethnic riots occur in certain parts of a country and not others? How does violence eventually decline? Drawing on rich case studies and subnational analysis from Indonesia between 1990 and 2012, this book argues that patterns of ethnic rioting are not inevitably driven by intergroup animosity, weakness of state capacity, or local demographic composition. Rather, local ethnic elites strategically use violence to leverage their demands for political inclusion during political transition and that violence eventually declines as these demands are accommodated. Toha breaks new ground in showing that particular political reforms—increased political competition, direct local elections, and local administrative units partitioning—in ethnically diverse contexts can ameliorate political exclusion and reduce overall levels of violence between groups.

RISA J. TOHA is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale-NUS College in Singapore. Her work has focused on questions related to political violence, identity, and political economy, appearing in journals such as the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, and *Contemporary Southeast Asia*.

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*Local Ethnic Mobilization in Democratizing  
Countries*

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Risa J. Toha

*Yale-NUS*



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For David

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Growing up as a woman with a mixed ethnic heritage in the 1980s–1990s in Jakarta, Indonesia, I knew firsthand the generosity, warmth, and openness that many Indonesians regularly bestow on people outside their community. Thus, the waves of violence against churches and against ethnic Chinese minorities in the late 1990s came as a deep shock. I wanted to understand why and how people from different communities, who had previously lived a seemingly harmoniously, could so suddenly commit such horrific violence against each other. It took me many years to formulate my answer this question, and even then, only partially. I never would have gotten to this point without the long list of friends, allies, and mentors who have helped me along the way. My thanks in the following pages pale in comparison to the gift of time, insights, resources, and encouragement many people have shared with me.

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