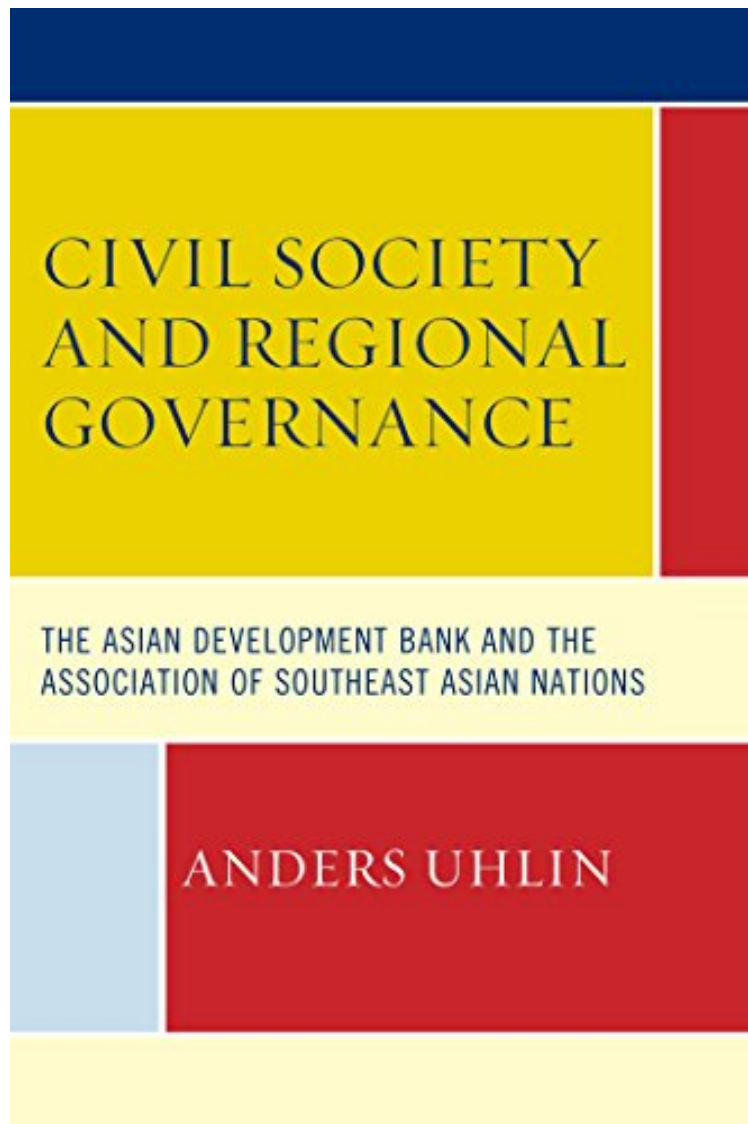


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Civil Society and Regional Governance: The Asian Development Bank and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Anders Uhlin

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Anders Uhlin : Civil Society and Regional Governance: The Asian Development Bank and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Civil Society and Regional Governance: The Asian Development Bank and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations:

Through detailed comparative case studies of civil society engagement with two major regional international organizations in Southeast Asia this book demonstrates the potentials and limitations of civil society actors as democratizing agents in governance beyond the nation-state. Drawing on previous research on civil society, social movements, transnational activism, and democratization, Uhlin develops an analytical framework focusing on a) how national and international political opportunities shape and are shaped by civil society advocacy; b) how civil society activists frequently combine inside and outside strategies when targeting international organizations; and c) how civil society advocacy can have a liberalizing impact on the targeted international organizations. Drawing on rich empirical data, including more than 100 qualitative interviews with civil society activists and representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the study demonstrates how civil society actors have contributed to pushing ADB and to a much lesser extent ASEAN in a political liberal direction, improving transparency, strengthening accountability, and introducing mechanisms protecting people from the abuse of power. With its innovative analytical framework, broad scope covering civil society activism across Southeast Asia, and in-depth analysis of civil society attempts to influence ADB and ASEAN the book makes important contributions to research on civil society activism in Southeast Asia as well as the more general field of civil society and governance beyond the nation-state.

This valuable contribution offers a most thorough, sharp and systematic assessment of civil society action beyond the nation-state, and does so with a unique deep comparative study of regional institutions in Asia. (Jan Aart Scholte, Professor of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg) In this careful and considered book Uhlin injects nuance into the scholarly debate over the democratic deficit of IOs. His analyses of how civil society organisations shape the political liberalisation of the Asian Development Bank and ASEAN is important for demonstrating how non-governmental groups mediate their opportunity structure as well as providing insight into which strategies can succeed in changing IO policies towards greater transparency and accountability. This book is important for showing how people can make a difference, influencing IOs in the world's most populous and economically dynamic region. (Susan Park, University of Sydney) This is an impressive book exploring an important theme. Uhlin enriches the literature on governance beyond the nation state by systematically focusing on the opportunity structures and the advocacy strategies of civil society organizations interacting with international organizations in Asia. He authored a theory-guided, highly context-sensitive and empirically rich book that in a nuanced way assesses the participatory space of non-state actors in a significant region of the Global South. The book benefits from the author's enormous expertise acquired in many years of intensive research on and with civil society organizations in the Asia-Pacific. (Jürgen Rühl, Freiburg University) About the Author Anders Uhlin is professor of political science at Lund University.