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Political Science and International Relations : Democracy

Poole, Avery

Democracy, Rights and Rhetoric in Southeast Asia

- Builds on renewed interest in ASEAN's successes and roles following its 50th anniversary in 2017 and on topical issues such as human rights violations in Myanmar
- Discusses the involvement of regional organisations in the domestic governance of member states, using an underexplored case study
- Serves as a critical reminder that democratic and human rights rhetoric is quite different to political reality

Southeast Asia is a vast, populous and diverse region. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) promotes democracy and human rights as central to regional order and cooperation, but most members are not democratic and have poor or questionable human rights records. This book explores why Southeast Asian countries have collectively adopted the rhetoric of democracy and human rights, and argues that they are motivated by their concerns about external regional legitimacy. It analyses ASEAN's references to democracy and the reality of backsliding in several countries; examines the adoption of human rights rhetoric; and considers the implications for how we understand regional cooperation. The book is relevant for students and analysts who are interested in regionalism in Southeast Asia and elsewhere – particularly given growing global concerns about liberal democracy and the gaps between rhetoric and political realities.

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