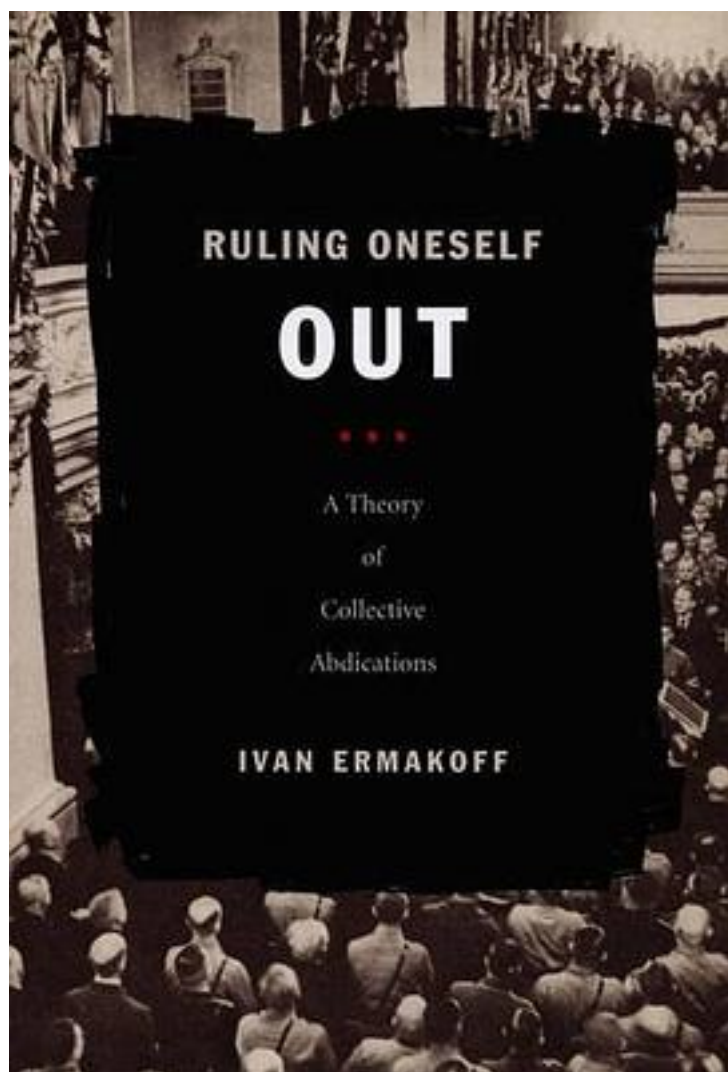# Ruling Oneself Out

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What induces groups to commit political suicide? This book explores the decisions to surrender power and to legitimate this surrender: collective abdications. Commonsensical explanations impute such actions to coercive pressures, actors' miscalculations, or their contamination by ideologies at odds with group interests. Ivan Ermakoff argues that these explanations are either incomplete or misleading. Focusing on two paradigmatic cases of voluntary and unconditional surrender of power - the passing of an enabling bill granting Hitler the right to amend the Weimar constitution without parliamentary supervision (March 1933), and the transfer of full executive, legislative, and constitutional powers to Marshal Petain (Vichy, France, July 1940) - "Ruling Oneself Out" recasts abdication as the outcome of a process of collective alignment.Ermakoff distinguishes several mechanisms of alignment in troubled and uncertain times and assesses their significance through a fine-grained examination of actors' beliefs, shifts in perceptions and subjective states. To this end, he draws on the analytical and methodological resources of perspectives that usually stand apart: primary historical research, formal decision theory, the phenomenology of group processes, quantitative analyses, and the hermeneutics of testimonies. In elaborating this dialogue across disciplinary boundaries, "Ruling Oneself Out" restores the complexity and indeterminate character of highly consequential collective decisions and demonstrates that an in-depth historical exploration can lay bare processes of crucial importance for understanding the formation of political preferences, the paradox of self-deception, and the make-up of historical events as highly consequential.

作者介绍:

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