

Rationality of Irrationality

Political Determinants and Effects of Party Position Blurring

Citizens in democracies complain that political parties' positions on major issues are too ambiguous for them to confidently understand. Why is party position ambiguity so common? Are party positions ambiguous because political parties fail in forming a clear policy position or because they deliberately blur their position? *Rationality of Irrationality* argues that political parties are motivated to strategically blur their position on an issue when they struggle with a certain disadvantage in the issue. Specifically, political parties present an ambiguous position when their own supporters are divided in their stances on the issue. A political party also blurs a position stance when voters do not acknowledge that the party has ability and integrity to solve problems related to the issue. Political parties blur their position in these cases because ambiguous party positions divert voters' attention from the issue. Voters support a political party whose policy positions on major issues are close to their own stances. However, voters cannot confidently and exactly estimate party positions on an issue when they are only ambiguous.

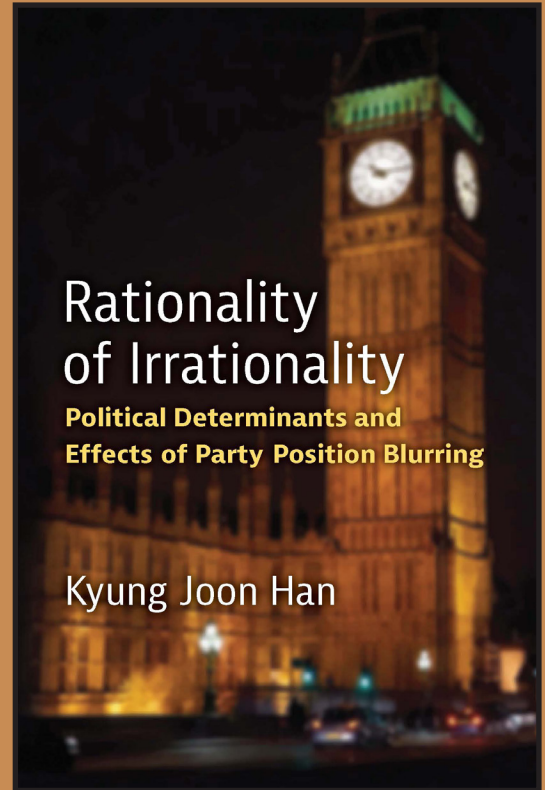
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"This is a great book for all political scientists eager to better understand how parties strategically act to ensure their vote share. Politicians and party elites could learn from the evidence here to think about their own choices."

—Sean McGraw, Boston College

"*Rationality of Irrationality* is a highly promising book on position blurring as a partisan strategy and how voters respond to this strategy. Han expands on this recent wave of literature on position blurring with original ideas and inspiring analyses. A must-read for anyone interested in party strategies and their electoral effects."

—Christoffer Green-Pedersen, Aarhus University



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