



The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy

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The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy From Brand: Princeton University Press

In recent years, remarkable progress has been made in behavioral research on a wide variety of topics, from behavioral finance, labor contracts, philanthropy, and the analysis of savings and poverty, to eyewitness identification and sentencing decisions, racism, sexism, health behaviors, and voting. Research findings have often been strikingly counterintuitive, with serious implications for public policymaking. In this book, leading experts in psychology, decision research, policy analysis, economics, political science, law, medicine, and philosophy explore major trends, principles, and general insights about human behavior in policy-relevant settings. Their work provides a deeper understanding of the many drivers--cognitive, social, perceptual, motivational, and emotional--that guide behaviors in everyday settings. They give depth and insight into the methods of behavioral research, and highlight how this knowledge might influence the implementation of public policy for the improvement of society.

This collection examines the policy relevance of behavioral science to our social and political lives, to issues ranging from health, environment, and nutrition, to dispute resolution, implicit racism, and false convictions. The book illuminates the relationship between behavioral findings and economic analyses, and calls attention to what policymakers might learn from this vast body of groundbreaking work.

Wide-ranging investigation into people's motivations, abilities, attitudes, and perceptions finds that they differ in profound ways from what is typically assumed. The result is that public policy acquires even greater significance, since rather than merely facilitating the conduct of human affairs, policy actually shapes their trajectory.

- The first interdisciplinary look at behaviorally informed policymaking
- Leading behavioral experts across the social sciences consider important policy problems
- A compendium of behavioral findings and their application to relevant policy domains

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Editorial Review

Review

"[*Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy*] is a master compendium of what we know."--**David Brooks, *New York Times***

"I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a comprehensive perspective on the potential and limitations of the behavioural insights popularized by Nudge and similar works. . . . Those in government, non-profits, and the private sector interested in empirically supported ways to motivate people to act in their own best interest will find a rich source of examples and exposure to underlying theory in *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy*."--**Jennifer Miller, *LSE Review of Books***

"[This] is a commanding summary of scholarly work testing some of the most influential theories of how and why people behave as they do, and will be a valuable resource for students, researchers and policy makers looking for a balanced and comprehensive discussion of what can work and what is not known."--**Manu Savani, *Political Studies Review***

From the Back Cover

"Roll over economists. We have always, pridefully, thought of ourselves as the major arbiters of good public policy: take it or leave it based on cost-benefit analysis. *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy* challenges that hegemony. In each interesting chapter--on topics ranging from discrimination and poverty to health, savings, and bureaucracy--the book shows the role of psychology in public policy. Only one word can describe this book: wow!"--**George Akerlof, Nobel Laureate in Economics**

"This book establishes that psychology has a great deal to contribute on public policy matters of great concern to everyone. I doubt whether so many superb psychologists and behavioral scientists have been found between the covers of a single book before. Their contributions do not disappoint and it seems certain that many policy issues are going to look different from now on."--**Richard Nisbett, University of Michigan**

"From well-documented biases to important discrimination and intervention policies, this amazing collection takes a systematic approach to behavioral aspects of public policy and gathers together the best in the psychology of decision making and behavioral economics."--**Uri Gneezy, University of California, San Diego**

"Behavioral public policy is an emerging field, with a great deal of interesting work just beginning to be done. This book is a compilation of perspectives by a truly stellar collection of leading researchers in a range of social science disciplines. For graduate-level courses on public policy, it is difficult to imagine any book that is better for learning about this field."--**Daniel J. Benjamin, Cornell University**

About the Author

Eldar Shafir is the William Stewart Tod Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs in the Department of Psychology and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

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