

# Cambridge Elements

## Elements in Public Policy

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## POLICY FEEDBACK

### *How Policies Shape Politics*

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CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-108-94054-2 — Policy Feedback  
Daniel Béland, Andrea Louise Campbell, R. Kent Weaver  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108940542](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108940542)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781108938914

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781108938914

First published 2022

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-94054-2 Paperback  
ISSN 2398-4058 (online)  
ISSN 2514-3565 (print)

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## Policy Feedback

### How Policies Shape Politics

Elements in Public Policy

DOI: 10.1017/9781108938914  
First published online: May 2022

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**Abstract:** Although the idea that existing policies can have major effects on politics and policy development is hardly new, in the last three decades we have witnessed a major expansion of policy feedback scholarship, which focuses on the mechanisms through which existing policies shape politics and policy development. Starting with a discussion of the origins of the concept of policy feedback, this Element explores early and more recent contributions of the policy feedback literature to clarify the meaning of this concept and its contribution to both political science and policy studies. After exploring the rapidly expanding scholarship on policy feedback and mass politics, this Element also puts forward new research agendas that stress several ways forward, including the need to explain both institutional and policy continuity and change. Finally, the last section discusses the practical implications of policy feedback research through a discussion of its potential impact on policy design.

This Element also has a video abstract: [www.cambridge.org  
/PublicPolicy\\_Beland\\_abstract](http://www.cambridge.org/PublicPolicy_Beland_abstract)

This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core

**Keywords:** policy feedback, mass politics, policy change, policy design, public policy, politics

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ISBNs: 9781108940542 (PB), 9781108938914 (OC)  
ISSNs: 2398-4058 (online), 2514-3565 (print)

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