

## Learning from behavioural science to design migration policy

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### **Abstract**

Public policy has often relied, tacitly perhaps, on the assumption of rationality, based on the well-known assumption that human behaviour is shaped by a wide range of factors, and that individual rationality is, in general, contradiction with collective rationality. Yet, the limits of neoclassical economics perspective and good governance pressure, foster the governments in an expanding range of countries to turn their policy-making to behavioural insights. The bestseller *Nudge* is largely responsible for the popularity of applied behavioural science in policy circles today. Supporting a better understandings of policy actors, this approach gives an advantage for well-designed policies. Policies require action on many fronts and on diverse objectives, so a wide range of policy areas started to apply the behavioural insights. In a policy context, this approach makes sure policy-makers rely on evidence, not assumptions. It results in a more grounded policy-making process.

Viewing policy through a behavioural lens may help policymakers to discover that an existing policy has unintended consequences, which may lead them to modify or stop it. Also, the behavioral scientists have begun to develop powerful new tools that complement traditional approaches to policymaking, especially into policy areas such as health, consumers, tax, and environment so on.

In this sense, the goal is to analyse the migration policy, particularly the emigration side and to see if there are evidences of using the behavioural approach for creating this policy. In the last years, countries have been confronted with a massive emigration flows of highly qualified workers. Therefore this study try to identify the public interventions took for retaining or for attracting the return of highly qualified workers into the origin country taking into account the benefits and the opportunity for behavioural sciences for policy-making. Besides the goal, the main questions are when to apply the behavioural insights in migration policy-making? is this approach an appropriate option for migration area? and which are the common measures took by countries for foster the return of highly qualified workers that can be incorporated in this approach?

The methodological part takes the form of a qualitative analysis, using secondary data, and quantitative one, using questionnaires. The unit of analysis is the Romanian policy system, but the interpretation of gathered data will take into consideration if the findings are a domestic practice or a policy transfer result. Regarding the expected findings, this study will offer a view of understanding the advantages and limitations of behavioural insight for policy-making, particularly for migration policy and evidences of using nudges for policy outcomes. In the same times, the paper provides policy makers with potential megatrends of migration policy design.