

Max Spohn

PhD Candidate in Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Evidence adoption in the public sector; Behavioral Public Policy; Judgment and Decision Making; Polarization

EDUCATION

Harvard Kennedy School Cambridge, MA
Ph.D. Public Policy 2022 - Present

- Judgment and Decision Making Track
- Advisors: Dr. Elizabeth Linos & Dr. Julia Minson
- Doctoral Research Fellow at The People Lab

University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA
Master of Behavioral and Decision Science 2019 - 2020

University College London London, UK
BSc Philosophy, Politics, and Economics 2016 - 2019

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

2. "A research agenda for making evidence useful, usable and used in policymaking" (2026). [With Elizabeth Linos, Pedro Rey-Biel, et al.]. *Nature Human Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-026-02593-3>.
1. "In science we (should) trust: Expectations and compliance across nine countries during the COVID-19 pandemic" (2021). [With Cristina Bicchieri, Enrique Fatas, et al.]. *PLoS one* 16(6).

WORKING PAPERS

"What policymakers want: Documenting a mismatch in policymaker demand and research supply" [With Elizabeth Linos]

[Link to Policy Brief](#) - Working paper available upon request.

- Winner Best Poster Award, Society for Judgment and Decisionmaking

"Underestimating the Ideological Complexity of Outgroup Members' Opinions Drives Partisan Animosity." [With Charles Dorison & Julia Minson]

[Link to Poster](#) - Working paper available upon request.

- Howard Raiffa Doctoral Student Paper Award, Harvard PON
- 3rd place Best Poster Award, Society for Judgment and Decisionmaking

"Bridge or Sink: Reducing Partisan Animosity with a Cooperative Game Show." [With Dilan Tulan, Julia Minson, et al.]

"The Prosocial Ranking Challenge: Reducing Polarization on Social Media without Sacrificing Engagement" [With Jonathan Stray et al.]

[Link to Working Paper](#).

CURRENT PROJECTS

- "PolicyBot - Increasing evidence adoption with AI-assisted chatbots"
- "How do organizations engage with research on gender pay gaps?" [With Iris Bohnet, Anne Boring, et al.].
- "PolicyVal - Evaluating LLMs for evidence-based policymaking" [With Elizabeth Linos, Teddy Svoronos, et al.].
- "Politicians' incentives and evidence adoption" [With Pedro Rey-Biel, Berkay Özcan, et al.]
- "Fight fire with fire: A politician's dilemma mapping of the reputational effects of conversational receptiveness" [With Molly Moore]

POLICY RESEARCH PAPERS

8. "What makes research adoptable at scale? A landscape analysis of policy research" (2026). [With Jessica Lasky-Fink, Elizabeth Linos, et al.]. *The People Lab Policy Brief*. [Available online](#).
7. "What policymakers want: Documenting a mismatch in policymaker demand and research supply" (2026). [With Jessica Lasky-Fink & Elizabeth Linos]. *The People Lab Policy Brief*. [Available online](#).
6. "Digital design for financial products and services: Consumer impact of sludge, deceptive design, timeliness and simplification" (2025). [With Daniel Bogiatzis-Gibbons, Cherryl Ng, et al.]. *FCA Research Note*. [Available online](#).
5. "To certify or not to certify: Decision points in the self-certification process" (2022). [With Cameron Gilchrist, Lucy Hayes, et al.]. *FCA Research Note*. [Available online](#).
4. "Going beyond 'capital at risk': testing behaviourally informed risk warnings" (2022). [With Dunvel Délias, Flo Farghly, et al.]. *FCA Research Note*. [Available online](#).
3. "Pausing, reading, and reflecting: Decision points in high-risk investment user journeys" (2022). [With Flo Farghly, Lucy Hayes, et al.]. *FCA Research Note*. [Available online](#).
2. "Sustainable investing: objective gradings, greenwashing and consumer choice" (2021). [With Patrick Sholl, Helena Robertson, et al.]. *FCA Insight Article*. [Available online](#).
1. "Discounts, Cashbacks, and Soft Toys: The Impact of Promotions on Consumer Decisions in the General Insurance Market" (2021). [With Flo Farghly and Cherryl Ng]. *FCA Research Note*. [Available online](#).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Research Fellow 2024 - Present
The People Lab, Harvard Kennedy School

Behavioral Economist / Lab Manager 2020 - 2022
Financial Conduct Authority, London, UK

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Fellow - Using Big Data to Solve Economic and Social Problems
ECON 50, Harvard University, Spring 2026

Course Coach - Fundamentals of Negotiation Analysis and Practice
MLD 220M, Harvard Kennedy School, Fall 2023 & Fall 2024

AWARDS & HONORS

2025 SJDM Best Student Poster Award (1st place)
2025 Howard Raiffa Doctoral Student Paper Award, Harvard PON
2024 SJDM Best Student Poster Award (3rd place)
2019 BSc awarded with First-Class Honors
2017 UCL Economics First Year Challenge Winner

GRANTS

2024 MBB Interdisciplinary Mind Grant \$5,000
2024 Berkman Klein Center (with Sid Srinivasan) \$60,000
2024 Weatherhead Research Cluster on Identity Politics Grant \$3,000
2024 MBB Interdisciplinary Mind Grant (with Sara Fish & Sid Srinivasan) \$5,000
2023 Shorenstein Center Research Funding \$1,600
2023 Harvard Kennedy School Dean's Research Fund Award \$5,000
2023 Harvard PON Next Generation Grant (with Julia Minson) \$10,000

SERVICE

- **Organizer** for the Judgment and Decision Making Graduate Student Workshop at Harvard Kennedy School
- **President** of the Harvard Kennedy School PhD Student Association

CONFERENCES & TALKS

What policymakers want: Documenting a mismatch in policymaker demand and research supply

2026 Society for Judgment and Decision Making (forthcoming)
2026 CHIBE - Behavioral Science and Health Symposium (forthcoming)
2026 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
2026 Economic Science Association, European Meeting
2026 Behavioral Science and Policy Association
2026 Public Management Research Conference
2026 Society for Judgment and Decision Making - Doctoral Symposium
2026 HBS NOM Graduate Student Workshop
2025 Society for Judgment and Decision Making (Poster)
2025 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
2025 HKS Graduate Student Workshop in Judgment and Decision Making

Bridge or Sink: Reducing Partisan Animosity with a Cooperative Game Show

2025 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
2025 Harvard Working Group on Political Psychology and Behavior

Underestimating the Ideological Complexity of Outgroup Members' Opinions Drives Partisan Animosity

2026 International Association for Conflict Management
2025 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (Poster)
2025 Academy of Management
2025 Society for Judgment and Decision Making - Doctoral Symposium
2025 Behavioral Science and Policy Association
2024 Society for Judgment and Decision Making (Poster)
2024 HKS Graduate Workshop in Judgment and Decision Making
2024 International Society for Political Psychology
2024 Behavioral Decision Research and Management (Flash Talk)
2024 Society for Personality and Social Psychology (Poster)
2023 MIT Polarization Workshop (Poster)
2023 Harvard Working Group on Political Psychology and Behavior