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Andrew Whitford

University of Georgia

Robert Christensen

Brigham Young University

NETWORKS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

A Multilevel Framework and Systematic Review

Michael D. Siciliano

University of Illinois Chicago

Weijie Wang

University of Missouri

Qian Hu

University of Central Florida

Alejandra Medina

University of Illinois Chicago

David Krackhardt

Carnegie Mellon University



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Michael D. Siciliano , Weijie Wang , Qian Hu , Alejandra Medina , David Krackhardt
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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, 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,
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Networks in the Public Sector

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Michael D. Siciliano
University of Illinois Chicago

Weijie Wang
University of Missouri

Qian Hu
University of Central Florida

Alejandra Medina
University of Illinois Chicago

David Krackhardt
Carnegie Mellon University

Author for correspondence: Michael D. Siciliano, sicilian@uic.edu

Abstract: Networks contain complex patterns of dependency and require multiple levels of analysis to explain their formation, structure, and outcomes. In this Element, the authors develop the Multilevel Network Framework. The framework serves as (i) a conceptual tool to think more deeply about network dynamics; (ii) a research tool to assist in connecting data, theory, and empirical models; and (iii) a diagnostic tool to analyze and categorize bodies of research. The authors then systematically review the network literature in public administration, management, and policy. They apply the Multilevel Network Framework to categorize the literature; identify significant gaps; examine micro-, macro-, and cross-level relations; and examine relevant mechanisms and theories. Overall this Element helps readers to (i) understand and classify network research, (ii) use appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine network-related problems, (iii) understand how networks emerge and produce effects at different levels of analysis, and (iv) select appropriate empirical models.

Keywords: networks, systematic review, public administration, public policy, governance

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