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NETWORKS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

*A Multilevel Framework and
Systematic Review*

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Networks in the Public Sector

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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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