

## Evaluating Multilevel Network Strategies

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### Abstract

Using *multilevel network strategies* for the design of public policy programmes is becoming increasingly popular. As the complex mechanisms of change and the effects of such strategies are not obvious, but call for empirical clarification and profound analysis, we can identify a high demand for evaluation. The features of multilevel structures and networks characteristics have essential consequences for evaluation affecting the conceptualization of an evaluation and its orientation. In this contribution we first focus on the challenges of multilevel structures and emphasize that the *evaluation purpose* has to be considered as level dependent and that the *causal chain* has to be attributed to a specific structural level. Second, we highlight the key problems of a network as evaluandum and suggest that the evaluation has to take into account an extended understanding of the *value added* of a network as intervention type. In order to solve these challenges we discuss two *approaches*: The fractionalising approach starting from the entire multilevel network strategy and the compositional approach which takes the individual elements of the strategy as its starting point. Thus, this article contributes to the discussion, how to design an evaluation of a multilevel network strategy.



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