

CALL FOR PAPERS – “CAMPUS D’ETE 2010” PROGRAMME – DEADLINE: 7 MAY 2010

International Summer School on Evaluation Research

30 August to 3 September 2010

Lille, France

Research and Public Policy Evaluation

Theoretical and methodological links

Objectives of the summer school

The *International Summer School on Evaluation Research* is a forum for comparing and contributing to scientific research on public policy evaluation. This call for papers therefore aims at any type of research relating to public policy evaluation, provided that it studies evaluative practice, regardless of the angle or approach. Papers are expected to take a self-reflexive position, in particular, by distancing themselves from the simple narration or account of an evaluation experience.

All academic disciplines are invited to contribute their reflections and results. For instance, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary work in epistemology, economics, sociology, political science, geography, law, epidemiology, the management sciences, the educational sciences, philosophy and psychology is welcome. Our aim is to collect the broadest range possible of research “for”, “about” and “on” evaluation, regardless of the discipline it stems from, from an international perspective.

Topics discussed

Three key areas of investigation have been identified: (i) Evaluation research and development (ii) Interactions between academic disciplines and evaluation, and (iii) The epistemological and paradigmatic roots of the links between public policy research and evaluation.

Evaluation research and development

We are looking for work that can show **how research has contributed to public policy evaluation by creating specific tools, processes and protocols**. The evaluation of policies relating to employment, sustainable development, public health, development aid, education and research, to name but a few is increasingly influenced by social science. It is therefore worth looking at the resulting innovations and the difficulties encountered. What are the most innovative and/or “convincing” evaluation methods? How have research tools and methods adapted, to directly or indirectly contribute to evaluation exercises?

We also welcome proposals dealing with how research can contribute to/enrich reflection on the relevance of public policy evaluation, its limits, its factors of success and its constraints. Papers might thus consider the framework and terms of reference, the tools (social enquiries, statistics, econometrics, impact indicators, monitoring systems, etc.) or the processes involved. Analyses of the quality or weakness of the findings obtained with certain evaluations are welcome as well. Given the reflexive purpose of the summer school, we are also expecting studies addressing the institutionalisation of evaluation and the development

of meta-evaluations. What role do legislative frameworks, administrative cultures, research, evaluators' communities and scientific journals play in the development of public policy evaluation? Finally, we wish to bring in the analysis of the uses and usefulness of evaluations.

Academic disciplines and evaluation

The summer school intends to confront disciplines with one another, to analyse the links between scientific disciplines and evaluation. More and more academic disciplines have been showing an interest in evaluation since the pioneering work of political science in the United States in the 1950s. Analysing this history can shed new light on **the interactions between academic disciplines and evaluation**.

For instance, how far have sociology and political science come in their study of the history and institutionalisation of evaluation and the development of expert-knowledge? How do these academic disciplines understand the links between evaluation and new public management? How do they reposition evaluation within the context of growing surveillance power? How do they address the issue of evaluation cultures? Based on the work of management sociologists, it would be interesting to analyse the power and legitimacy issues crystallised by evaluation systems and to use these to analyse changes in contemporary public action. We are expecting papers discussing the links between quantification and evaluation, as well as work from the field of economics. This could relate to issues such as how evaluation has used counterfactual methods from the fields of epidemiology and experimental psychology. The interdisciplinary debate is a crucial space for exchange on the scope and limits of these approaches, and more generally on the role of econometrics in evaluation. Insights into the debates taking place between various schools in economics (institutionalists and mainstream) would also be enriching.

Contributions from the management sciences would be appreciated as well. Topics to explore include the links between evaluation and public management, information systems, survey methods (marketing research, data mining, consumer behaviour theories, etc.), or indicator-based management. The links with psychology, psychoanalysis and educational sciences also need to be explored to improve our understanding, for instance, of collective learning processes in the context of evaluation practice. Geography and the regional planning sciences also raise interesting issues for evaluation. The debates on the “relevant” scales for public action and its evaluation, and multi-scalar systems of adaptive management for evaluation relating to sustainable development are clear examples. Finally, issues pertaining to integrated evaluations and indicators, to the evaluation of territorial integration and to the integration of expert and lay knowledge in turn open up interdisciplinary debates which will need to be considered.

Ultimately the aim will be to adopt a cross-cutting approach to consider how the different scientific disciplines deal with and contribute to evaluation practice. How does evaluation raise new questions within disciplines with regard to concepts, theories and methods?

Epistemology and paradigms: links between research and evaluation

We welcome proposals addressing **the conditions of the development of public policy evaluation research**. What is the role played by specialised journals, the creation of research networks, the functioning of doctoral schools or research funding from public authorities? More broadly, we will seek to understand the limiting or developing factors of interdisciplinary approaches to evaluation. Are there central issues that can help organise research on evaluation? Does research on evaluation present particular problems when considered as an action science? Do systems of scientific knowledge production involve particular modes of exchange between researchers and practitioners?

Studying the links between research and evaluation also raises a number of epistemological questions. Above all, these concern evaluation itself. Which theory/ies should be used to understand the social and technical construction of evidence? Questions raised relate to the nature and ranking of evidence. This links back to the use of scientific knowledge for public action, as well as to the bridge between scientific and public judgements. Epistemological questions are also raised with regard to evaluation as a topic for research. For instance, debates need to be reviewed about method-based versus theory-based evaluation and the ensuing debates on theory-driven versus realistic evaluation in the broader context of the increasingly influential notion of evidence-based policy. The very existence of these debates begs to consider what peculiarities might structure the field of research on evaluation. Does evaluation entail a specific epistemological and methodological framework?

Finally, papers presented will **further our understanding of how the links between research and policy evaluation are structured.** Various terminologies are used: research “on”, “about”, “for” evaluation. These distinctions reflect the different stands taken in research on evaluation, a field whose borders remain fuzzy. These depend on the context (academic discipline, country, etc.) in which scientific work is carried out. Papers could take their reflection in several directions: science and its normative aim “for” public action – ethics of independence v. concerns over usefulness –; researchers’ reflexive position in relation to the object of study – evaluation – or even their freedom of scientific production when they themselves are involved in evaluative practices; the bodies of theory they use – from the field of evaluation or from their own field.

Format of the papers and deadlines

Papers presented can either discuss ongoing or completed research, or present upcoming research (for example PhD projects). A paper proposal (200 words) will need to be submitted by **7 May 2010** (sfe.universite-ete@orange.fr). From there the scientific committee will operate a selection process (reply to authors: 30 May), and successful applicants will have to submit their completed papers by 15 July 2010.

Guidelines for authors and selection criteria

- The papers submitted must respect the following guidelines: they must be written in French or in English and must not be over 30,000 characters long (6000 to 8000 words) including bibliographic references.
- Page layout: Times New Roman, 12 points, single spacing; titles in bold and numbered 1; 1.1; etc.
- Two pages before the paper¹: the first page must include the authors (specify the corresponding author + surname, first name, institution, function, academic discipline(s)), an abstract presenting the research subject(s), the research question and the results, as well as the methodology (500 words max.) and five key words. The second page is identical to the first, but must not contain the author references.

Papers will be assessed against the following criteria: correspondence to the themes put forward in the call for papers; quality of the research question and the approach; robustness of the empirical data used.

¹ These are not included in the 30,000 characters of the paper.

Scientific committee

Gilles Allaire, INRA Toulouse

Jean-Claude Barbier, Université de Paris I, Centre d'Économie de la Sorbonne (*University of Paris I, Sorbonne Centre for Economics*)

Maurice Baslé, CREM-CNRS- University of Rennes 1

Marielle Berriet-Sollic, AgroSup Dijon / CESAER

Geert Bouckaert, Public Management Institute, K.U Leuven

Annie Fouquet, President of the SFE

Pierre Mathiot, Sciences Po Lille, CERAPS-CNRS (*Political Science Institute of Lille*)

Jean-Pierre Nioche, IAE de Paris

Claudine Offredi, University of Grenoble

Patricia Rogers, CIRCLE, RMIT University, Australia

Michael Scriven, School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences, Claremont Graduate University*

Vincent Spenlehauer, Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées

Nicoletta Stame, University of Roma

Jacques Toulemonde, IEP de Lyon – EUREVAL

Frédéric Varone, University of Geneva

Organisational Committee

The summer school is hosted by the IEP in Lille. Logistical support is provided by the Société Française de l'Évaluation, and the organisation is supported by the Réseau des Chercheurs en Évaluation (*Network of Researchers on Evaluation*).

Stéphanie Breton, SFE

Sophie Chevillard, Entrepreneurship Research Centre (EM Lyon)

Marion Laurenceau, UMR Cemagref-ENGEEES Public Services Management

Nicolas Matyjasik, CERAPS-CNRS/University of Lille 2

Ludovic Méasson, AgroParisTech – Clermont-Ferrand, UMR METAFORT

Maryline Revaud, IEP de Rennes - UMR CRAPE

Frédéric Zahm, CEMAGREF Bordeaux - unit ADBX

Contact

Web site : <http://www.sfe-asso.fr>

Contact : sfe.universite-ete@orange.fr

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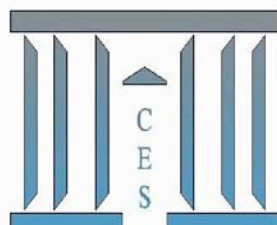
SCIENCES PO
LYON

Ceraps

UMR 8026

CERAPS-Université Lille 2

Centre d'Economie de la Sorbonne



Université Paris 1 - Panthéon-Sorbonne
CNRS - UMR 8174



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