Evaluation in Democracy
Public Hearing at the European Parliament

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Highlights from the Morning Session

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Outline

- What is democratic evaluation in a changing policy context?
  - New Policy Instruments
  - New Roles for Policy Makers
  - Implications for Evaluation

- How can evaluation help strengthen accountability and learning in the European space?
  - Learning to be accountable
  - Being accountable for learning
  - Three types of learning
  - Implications for Evaluation and EU Parliament

- Is the European Parliament benefiting from evaluation?
What is democratic evaluation in a changing glocal policy context?

- **Goals**
  - from material goals / service provision to behavioural change and innovation

- **Time Scales**
  - Short-term to long-term

- **Role of Citizens**
  - from passive recipients to active participants

- **Administration**
  - from centralized and legitimate public authorities to a decentralized, contested, variety of public and private actors
  - Trans-Scalarity
New Policy Instruments

- Deliberation, negotiation, coordination, self-regulation
- Bodies and Agencies as nodes and hubs that support circulation of information
- Inter-institutional cooperation
- Alignment between multiple levels of governance
- Inclusive policy making
New Roles for Policy Makers

- Governments are facilitators and ‘orchestrators’ of a less linear policy process
- Agenda setters for evaluation
  - e.g. by aligning the global, regional, national and local
- Enablers of ‘hubs’ that bridge fragmented evaluation knowledge
- Initiators of ‘joint’ stakeholder evaluations
Implications for Democratic Evaluation? (1)

- Subscription to specific political and instrumental values:
  - Justice, Empowerment, Equality
  - Access, Transparency, Accountability
- Macro-positioning requires: Independence & Autonomy
  - The Commission should be equipped with self evaluation instruments …
  - …while independent evaluation should report to the European Parliament and attest to the validity of self evaluation claims
The evaluator acts as:
- A facilitator OR
- Assumes full professional ownership of the evaluation product and reports to citizens’ representatives

The evaluator takes into account interests and perspectives of several stakeholders
- Engagement with multiple values and criteria
- Critical evaluation models, culturally sensitive evaluation approaches, participatory evaluation, empowerment evaluation
Implications for Democratic Evaluation (3)

- Understanding and tracking a dynamic and complex process
  - Iterative, real-time methodologies that help steer policy as well as measure outcomes
- Challenging the evaluation monopoly of administrations
- Evaluating the glocal village pump politics?
Closing the circle between Evaluation and Democracy

- The circle connecting Evaluation and Democracy closes when evaluation generates incentives for the policy makers to deliver what citizens / taxpayers want.
How can evaluation help strengthen accountability and learning in the European space?

- Classic accountability paradigm
  - “Obligation to account for a responsibility conferred”
  - “Policing approach”, leads to fear and ritualism
  - Answers the WHAT question
  - Fast-food metaphor
How can evaluation help strengthen accountability and learning in the European space?

- Methodological debate
  - concern with establishing effects
  - attribution, causality, etc.: the basis on which we can say “that is working”

- Is there really a duality between accountability and learning?
  - Accountability currently “hijacks” learning and needs to be reframed as a learning paradigm
  - “We should be accountable for learning, and learn to be accountable” (E. Stern)
Learning to be accountable...

- Broader definition of accountability: a progressive force contributing to good governance referring to the way evaluation systems are used to **resolve conflicts and make decisions**
- Not just WHAT, but also WHY, SO WHAT, FOR WHOM
- Several dimensions to accountability
  - Propriety, Quality, Efficacy, Policy Change, Sustainable Impact
- Accountability to whom?
  - Internal / institutional accountability
  - Transparency and fairness of policies and programmes
  - Direction of impetus (bottom up, top down?)
  - Accountable to values?
... And being accountable for learning

- Single Loop Learning
  - Adaptive Learning
  - Error Correction

- Double Loop Learning
  - Generative Learning
  - Innovation

- Learning About Learning
  - Organisation Paradigm Shift
Three types of learning
(B. Williams, R. Hummelbrunner, M. Reynolds)

http://www.ids.ac.uk/events/impact-innovation-and-learning-towards-a-research-and-practice-agenda-for-the-future

- Single loop – adaptive learning: (knowledge)
  - Are we doing things right? Error Correction
  - Interrelationships
  - Instrumental values

- Double loop – generative learning (understanding)
  - Are we doing the right things? Innovation
  - Perspectives
  - Intrinsic / personal values

- Triple loop – learning to learn (intelligence)
  - Is rightness supported by power? Organizational learning / paradigm shift
  - Norms / Rules
  - Political / Organizational / Public values
Implications

- For Evaluation:
  - IMPROVE rather than PROVE
  - Changing the mindset (learning mindset)
  - Methods: new recipes beyond fast food standards

- For EU Parliament:
  - From external control to democratic oversight
  - Ask questions about questions / values
Is the European Parliament benefiting from evaluation? (1)

- Library, Research for Policy Departments, Impact Assessment Directorate
  - Goals of IA: better lawmaking, identifying costs of non-Europe, added value of existing policy

- OPPORTUNITIES
  - IA Dir a sign of round-holistic attitude to policy process? From legislation to implementation to consequences (results)
  - Library is direct LINK to citizens, dissemination
CHALLENGES: What could be done to improve the integration of evaluation in the policy cycle?

- Study the evaluation system
- Tackling the barriers to use of evaluations (e.g. on behalf of citizens, language and skills needed, social capital, trust in institutions, etc.)
- Integrating, bridging, synthesizing, assembling different evaluations and research activities going on in different European institutions
Ideas for the Future

- Collaborative Workshops
- Meta-Evaluation of the Library Database