

Evaluation GLOBE – Compendium on the Institutionalization of Evaluation. Volume IV: Africa.

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1. Introduction

Evaluation is a globally diffusing socio-political phenomenon of the second half of the 20th and the 21st century. It is a particular example of the importance of evidence in public policies and modern societies as a whole. Starting from developments in the Anglo-Saxon world more than 50 years ago, its application can now be observed on a global scale. In many nation states trends toward 'evidence-based' respective 'evidence-informed' policymaking and a shift toward results based or *New Public Management* can already be observed over longer periods of time, albeit with some fluctuations and specific regional patterns. The latter refers to a shift from input control to control via outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Such developments make reliable data increasingly important. In this context, evaluation is seen as a tool capable of generating the desired data and assessing it according to beforehand agreed transparent evaluation criteria. It is the climate of data-driven policy and an evidence-oriented society, why evaluation moved from sporadic application to solid institutionalization in a variety of country contexts.

Evaluation can be used due to three purposes: On the program level evaluation can provide steering information for the management and thereby contribute to more efficient and effective decisions, which is focused on sustainable impacts, and program implementation. In this context evaluation provides learning potentials and recommendations for action. Another purpose of evaluation is its contribution to good governance due to the provision of information about the impact and sustainability of policies. This improves political steering mechanisms and also increases the legitimacy and credibility of politics. The last important purpose of evaluation is the possible enlightenment of society. When evaluation's findings are fed into the public discourse they can contribute to the education of society and thereby allow a dialogue about sociopolitical developments (cf. Stockmann 2013: 74).

In parallel to the diffusion of evaluation as an instrument in the political sphere, there have been considerable efforts in the field of research on evaluation (Furubo et al. 2002, Jacob et al 2015, Rosenstein 2013, 2015, 2021 Meyer 2015, 2016, Stockmann/Meyer 2016, Widmer et al. 2009). These ultimately also led to the present research project, which aims to create a worldwide descriptive compendium of the institutionalization of evaluation, covering countries of all continents. Two books have already been successfully published: the first on Europe in 2020 (Stockmann et al. 2020) and the second on North- and South America in 2022 (Stockmann et al. 2022). The Asia-Pacific volume will be completed in 2022 and work on the Africa volume began in 2021. Since even after three volumes further comparisons with other regions of the

world promise to yield insights, the Africa volume aims precisely to give a voice to countries that have so far been little heard and thus to provide a rich store of knowledge for international comparative research on evaluation systems.

This concept note will first present an outline of the state of research to date (Chapter 2), then discuss the methodology and theoretical dimensions (Chapter 3), and then briefly highlight milestones reached (Chapter 4) and the road ahead - i.e., the timeline (Chapter 5).

2. State of knowledge

In the following, a brief overview of global comparative research on evaluation and the institutionalization of evaluation will be provided. The focus is on comparative country-studies.

The first volume of the Evaluation GLOBE dealt with the institutionalization of evaluation in Europe (Stockmann et al. 2020). It built on the findings of Furubo et al. (2002) and Jacob et al. (2015). Although these studies made a considerable contribution to the comparative research of national evaluation systems, they lacked a systematic conceptual toolkit. This is a basic methodological prerequisite for a valid comparison. Already in the book "The Future of Evaluation" (Meyer & Stockmann 2016), the editors provided a set of indicators for the analysis - however, the individual contributions of the volume focused to varying degrees on individual indicators and did not cover them all to the same extent, which somewhat reduced the systemic comparability of the findings. The Evaluation GLOBE provides such a toolkit by offering a theoretically derived analytical guideline. In this methodological tool, three theoretical dimensions are relevant across which the institutionalization of evaluation unfolds: the political system, the social system and the so-called professionalization system (see Meyer et al. 2020, Meyer et al. 2022 and Chapter 3).

The two previous volumes brought to light important findings on the institutionalization of evaluation in comparative perspective. In Europe, for example, evaluation is established in national laws in only three countries (out of 16; namely in France, Switzerland and the Netherlands) and in two of them even in the constitution. In contrast, according to the results of the Americas volume, only three countries – Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil – have no national evaluation legislation (out of 11). Furthermore, there are significant differences with regard to the role of national audit offices. While in Europe they also carry out evaluations in half of all countries, in the Americas this is the case in only three countries (USA, Canada and Colombia). Differences between the two regions can also be identified with regard to the use of evaluations. Thus, the sectoral dispersion (number of policy fields in which evaluation is applied) as well as the intensity of use (including frequency) shows that there is a certain implementation gap in Latin America. Consequently, it can be said that although there are far fewer legal and organizational evaluation structures in Europe, the degree of use there is much higher than in Latin America.

Conceptually, evaluation is also institutionalized in national parliaments. Here, a supra-regional

homogeneity becomes evident. Only in Switzerland and the USA does evaluation play a prominent role in parliaments.

Furthermore, the relation between institutionalization and evaluation use was examined more closely. For this purpose, an index on the institutionalization of evaluation in the political system is first generated from four indicators - both on the legal and organizational anchoring of evaluation. In addition, an index is created from the three variables on evaluation use. Finally, a correlation coefficient is calculated between the two indices. This shows a moderate correlation overall, which is somewhat lower in the case of Latin America ($r=.60$) than in Europe ($r=.82$). The authors conclude that „legislative and organizational anchoring supports the extent to which evaluation is used in the political system, but the institutionalization of evaluation is far away to guarantee its use.“ (Stockmann & Meyer 2022: 512)

With regard to the institutionalization of evaluation in the social system (civil society, the media and the public), both volumes of the GLOBE project provide further important findings. Anchoring evaluation has historically been difficult in many civil society organizations in the country studies. Only gradually did evaluation gain importance as a management tool for organizational learning. They developed evaluation systems, some of which were very specific and adapted to the respective organizational culture. These did not transfer in the form of independent institutionalization. In Europe and the Americas, for example, civil society demand for evaluation is not a decisive factor for institutionalization. This is true even for those countries where civil society organizations make an important contribution to shaping public life.

When it comes to the professionalization of evaluation, the first two publications of the global compendium have also brought to bear comparative findings that substantially enrich previous research (e.g., cf. Meyer 2015, 2016). This aspect is essentially about the supply side of the institutionalization of evaluation - namely the provision of evaluation services and the professionalization of the same. From a cross-regional perspective, it is striking that activities in this regard are mostly related to the academic system. In each country there are specific conditions for the establishment of new professions. From a global perspective, the professional institutions and networks of the historical pioneer USA have often influenced professionalization in other countries. Thus, actors from the USA often hold central positions in global evaluation networks. As early as the 1970s, disciplines such as psychology and educational science firmly incorporated evaluation into their canon, whereby it also diffused into Western Europe as part of global networks (especially in Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland and the UK) and then other subjects (such as public health, public policy and administration sciences, economics and sociology), which overall provided a positive basis for the establishment of evaluation in the higher education system. In both Europe and Latin America, this process is hardly linked to the demand side (supply of study programmes). Thus, although there is a considerable number of evaluation-specific courses of study, there is hardly any systematic demand for evaluation specialists on the part of the political and social system.

The first two publications of the Compendium also examined the importance of evaluation

societies for institutionalization. These are important because they organize and enable professional dialogue. Often the origin of the societies is academic. However, remarkable variations in the cases emerged. In Europe, the largest societies are strongly characterized by their academic affiliation and have a formalized image (e.g. DeGEval in Germany). If one compares these organizations with those in North America (Canada and the USA), it becomes apparent that the degree of organization is still to be assessed as lower; if one draws a comparison with the professional societies in Latin America, it becomes apparent that the organizations there are often rather loose and weakly formalized.

It should be emphasized here that there is certainly already a rich body of research on the institutionalization of evaluation in Africa (e.g., CLEAR 2012, Porter & Goldman 2013, Cherabi & Latreche 2018, Mapitsa et al. 2019, Goldman & Pabari 2021, Goldman et al. 2018, Chiarau et al. 2021). Looking more closely at research on individual national evaluation systems, relatively well researched cases (such as Zambia, South Africa, Benin, and Ghana) contrast with relatively rarely investigated ones (such as Nigeria, Cameroon, or Tanzania). Comparative research remains the exception, and when it does occur, it covers only a few countries or is often oriented toward language boundaries. Nonetheless this research lays an important foundation and provides a starting point for research that, *first*, approaches the topic with a systematic research approach ensuring comparability and, *second*, allows for a comparative view that opens the opportunity for both intra-regional as well as inter-regional comparisons. The fourth volume of the Evaluation GLOBE project addresses this gap.

Past research was able to identify different internal driving forces for the development of evaluation systems. Those are the political constellation, the fiscal situation and constitutional features. External driving forces might be significant external pressures by donor countries or organizations (cf. Stockmann and Meyer 2014: 27 f.; Furubo, Rist and Sandahl 2002: 1-22; 441-455; Jacob, Speer and Furubo 2015: 7-28). Also, the first two volumes of the Evaluation GLOBE presented findings on the enabling factors of institutionalization and thus contributed to understanding of the issue. Especially in the course of the rationalization of policy making and administration, a wide variety of instruments of finance control and New Public Management have become firmly established. In the course of this, evaluation as a practice also experienced a continuous increase in importance. Further comparative research is needed to better understand the mechanisms of institutionalization. In this sense, the Asia-Pacific and Africa volumes also tie in with the road markers that have been set by the previous volumes.

In the following chapter, the methodological approach is briefly presented.

3. Methodological approach and research dimensions

The goal of the research project is a worldwide description of the institutionalization of evaluation in different countries, followed by a comparative analysis of the history, current and future situation. The whole compendium will consist of four volumes, starting with America and Europe, proceeding with Asia-Pacific and Africa.

Each case study is expected to provide a detailed description of the situation, supported by as many quantitative and qualitative data as possible. Literature and document analysis are expected as database as well as the conduction of about 5 interviews with different evaluation experts. For guaranteeing comparability an obligatory analytical framework is provided by the editors, covering three dimensions elaborated from systems theory, namely the social system, the political system and the system of professionalization (see Table 1). Please note, contributions should be 15 to 20 pages maximum.

Table 1 Dimensions of the Institutionalization of Evaluation

Institutionalization of Evaluation in different Sub-Systems		
Political System: Institutional Structures and Processes	Social System: Societal Dissemination and Acceptance of Evaluation in Society	System of Professionalization: Professionalization of Evaluations
National laws, regulations and policies	Use of evaluations by civil society	Academic education and training practices
Parliamentarian and national audit structures	Public discourse	Journals and communication platforms
Organizational structure	Participation of civil society	Professional organizations
Evaluation practice	Demand for evaluations	Existence of and compliance to standards

Source: Stockmann 2016; Meyer, Stockmann and Taube 2020: 25.

As it can be seen above, three systems are considered relevant. Those are the integration in the political system, the dissemination and acceptance of evaluations in society and the professionalization of evaluations. While the first two systems are considered to be demanding evaluations the latter one represents the supply side. The authors of the case studies were asked to contribute to this framework in the first two volumes before the project began, as the editors believe that their expertise is and has been very valuable in developing a high-quality framework. For this occasion, a round-table took place at the European Evaluation Society (EES) conference in September 2017, where the analytical framework was discussed and finally agreed on. Following this conference, the European book will be the first to start. The analytical framework has been developed to be a lean and workable tool, on the one hand to keep the effort for the experts within acceptable limits, on the other hand to guarantee that the case studies are focused on the most relevant aspects and still keep an acceptable length. In this context, the

editors also see it as a pragmatic investigation tool that is subject to a learning process across the different volumes and is continuously optimized.

Thus, for the third volume, a further minimal adjustment of the analytical framework was made, based on the experience of the previous work within the GLOBE project. The goal was to improve the applicability of the framework and at the same time to provide even more adequate coverage of the relevant content without changing the essential dimensions or specifying the concepts differently, in other words without jeopardizing comparability.

Since qualitative assessments of individual categories are also required in the single case studies, it is always possible to add the case-specific and a certain interpretative dimension inductively to the given categories. In this way, the editors consider it possible to give special attention to the individual voices while at the same time not losing sight of comparability.

4. Brief summary and milestones so far

As described in the second chapter, the publications about the institutionalization, professionalization, future or culture of evaluation lack either the world-wide perspective – which also considers newly industrialized ('emerging') or developing countries –, or a systematic, theoretical and/or methodological approach. This is also true for the research so far on institutionalization of evaluation in the African region. Thus, the goal of the present research project is to close this gap and carry out a world-wide, comprehensive study of the institutionalization of evaluation. The methodological approach is based on country-case studies consisting of literature and documentary analysis as well as expert interviews. For approaching an understanding what institutionalization of evaluation means, three dimensions were further elaborated from modernization and institutional theory, namely the social system, the political system and the system of professionalization. Based on these dimensions an analytical framework has been developed that must be covered in the case studies.

The analytical framework was presented and opened for discussion at the 2017 EES autumn conference and subsequently optimized. All participating authors were then asked to start their work. The Europe volume was published in 2019 (Stockmann, Meyer and Taube 2020, [Link](#)), and the Americas volume was finished in 2020 and published in the second quarter of 2022 (Stockmann, Meyer and Szentmarjay 2022, [Link](#); a Spanish-language translation is in preparation). In addition, a German translation of the Europe volume was completed in 2020 and published in early 2021 (Stockmann and Meyer 2021). The research results available so far have already been presented at various international conferences. The Asia volume was started in early 2021 and its results are expected to be completed in mid-2022. In 2021, a research project website was established that provides information and news about the Evaluation GLOBE (www.evaluation-globe.com).

5. The road ahead: The Africa Volume

The launch of the Africa volume is scheduled for May 2022. By the end of 2021, systematic literature searches and expert inquiries had already been carried out to obtain a list of countries and suitable authors to be considered in particular. The aim was to identify countries in which evaluation plays at least a partially detectable role. In the course of this process, it became increasingly apparent that the North Africa region would have to be covered in another volume, as there were already many suitable and varying candidates within the Sub-Saharan Africa regions. It is also essential for the approach to achieve a check and balance of perspectives, which is why a diverse set of authors is sought and involved (international organizations, evaluation societies, 'evidence networks', national evaluation policy experts, young researchers, young and emerging evaluators). In order to promote further important insights into the institutionalization of evaluation, the Africa volume, like the previous volumes, will also include international organizations.

In early 2022, authors and author teams will be contacted to encourage them to take part in the project. In cases where no potential authors have yet been clearly identified, the evaluation professional society is first contacted during this time, or other scholars working in related disciplines (such as Public Policy Studies, Public Administration Research) are asked for advice. Authors are asked to respond to the request within two weeks, indicating their agreement to contribute and that they agree with the methodology and analysis grid of the 'Evaluation GLOBE'. From May 2022, the joint starting signal will then be given for the creation of the contribution. After six months, **by end of November 2022**, the contributors should submit their manuscripts, which the editors will comment on. All manuscripts should be there by then at the latest, as they will be subject to a multilevel review process from then on. The editorial revision will be done by the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. For final synchronization of findings, authors are invited to read the synthesized conclusion presented by the editors and provide feedback by early 2023 for the final publication of the volume, which is scheduled for mid-2023.

5. Key words

Public Policy, Comparative Politics, Governance and Government, Evaluation, Evidence-informed Policy-making

6. Literature

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