Evaluation in Democracy
Public Hearing at the European Parliament

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Highlights from the Morning Session

Barbara Befani and Liisa Horelli

Board Members of the European Evaluation Society

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

Implications for Democratic Evaluation (2)

- 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 / tax payers 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?
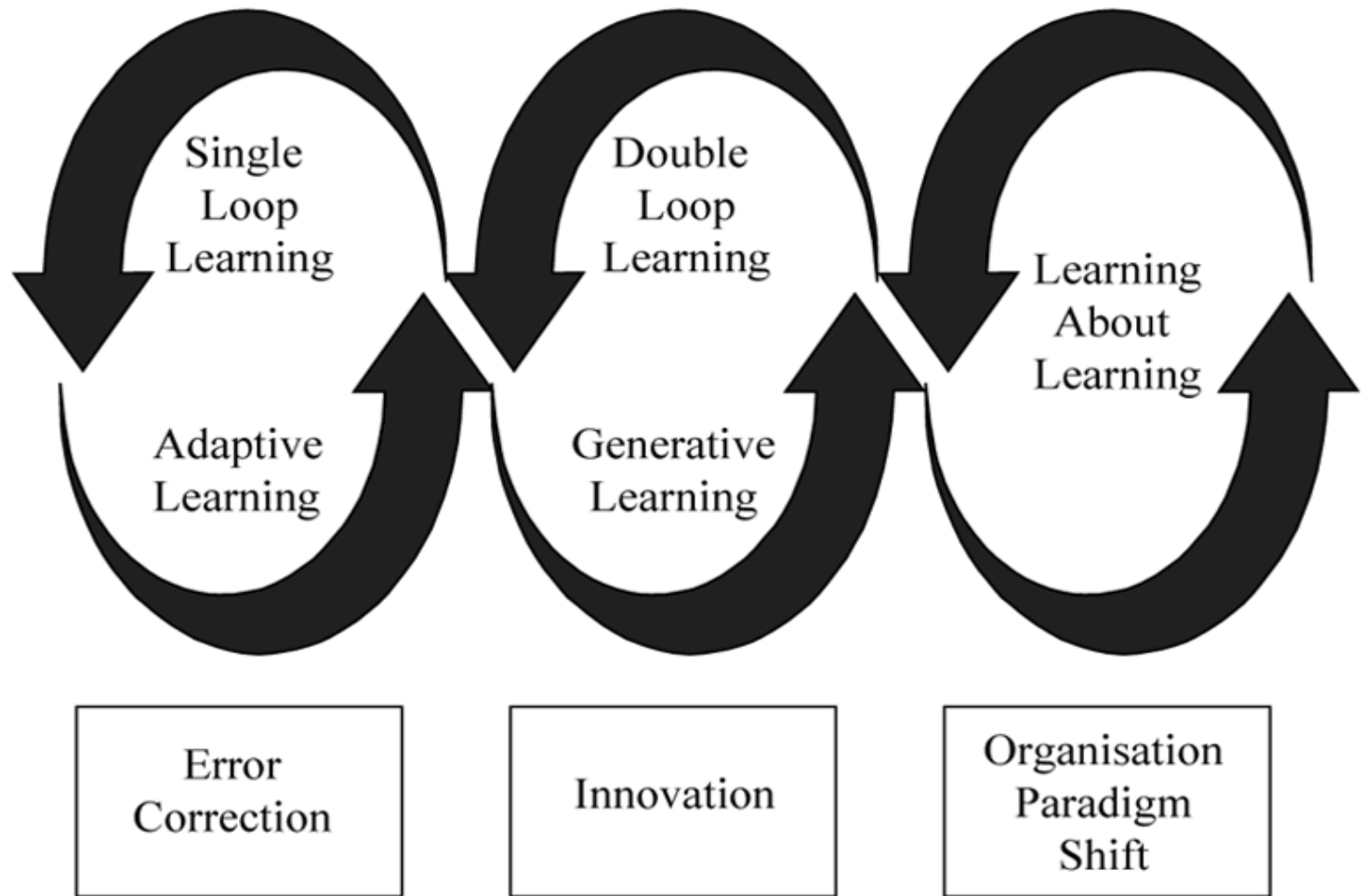
- Methodological debate
  - concern with establishing effects
  - attribution, causality, etc. : the basis on which we can say "that is working"
- Is there really a duality between accountability and learning?
  - Accountability currently "hijacks" learning and needs to be reframed as a learning paradigm
- "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

Three types of learning
(B. Williams, R. Hummelbrunner, M. Reynolds)

- 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

Is the European Parliament benefiting from evaluation? (2)

- 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