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Involving Stakeholders in the Evaluation of Community Alcohol Projects: Finding a Balance Between Subjective Insight and Objective Facts

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The role played by key community representatives in the evaluation of community alcohol projects differs according to the evaluation paradigm adopted. In evaluations that adopt a positivist, experimental design they are cast in the role of independent informants. In post-positivist evaluations they are seen as having an interest in the evaluation and accordingly are considered active stakeholders. However, the degree to which stakeholders can be actively engaged in an evaluation varies considerably along a number of dimensions. Four dimensions of the stakeholder role—stakeholder inclusiveness, participation mode, participation frequency, and evaluation role—are examined in the context of eight evaluation theories. This is integrated into a model that links these dimensions to an object-subject continuum of stakeholder involvement. The model facilitates systematic consideration of these dimensions and will assist evaluators in achieving their desired balance of subjective insight and objective fact.

Keywords alcohol; community; evaluation; theory; stakeholder

Introduction

The Community Mobilisation for the Prevention of Alcohol Related Injury (COMPARI) project that operated as a research demonstration from 1992 to 1995 was (within the Australian context) a significant investment in public funds aimed at learning about how communities can reduce alcohol-related harm in situ. Similarly, the Kalgoorlie Alcohol Action Project (KAAP) and its parallel activities (an interpretive garden, an Aboriginal hostel, and an alcohol and drug information unit) that commenced in early 2006 will be one of Australia's largest investments of public funds in community alcohol harm reduction (Midford, 2003).

The evaluation strategies utilized during the COMPARI project analyzed output quality and cost and highlighted the relatively high cost and low-quality yield of the pre and post community surveys and key informant interviews and the serial measures of objective data.

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Much of this was due to the changing nature of community concern during the course of the project. One of the four conclusions from the COMPARI demonstration phase was that:

> *There is limited value in using quasi-experimental evaluation designs to evaluate community mobilisation projects which emphasise a community development approach.* (Boots, Cutmore, Midford, Harrison, & Laughlin, 1995, p. 45)

Similarly, a review of papers from previous Kettil Bruun symposia on community prevention reveals that the COMAPRI project was not alone in identifying the limitations of experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation techniques when applied in real-world settings. A number of Kettil Bruun presenters have expressed a similar concern and frustration with the scientific paradigm and some have articulated a rationale for alternative approaches (e.g., Sulkunen, Maatta, and Rantala, 2003). Casswell (1999), after identifying her own papers within the 1998 symposium as associated with the experimental paradigm, noted that:

> *The past decade of evaluated community action projects have taken place in a broader context in which strong challenges to the positivist research paradigm have been mounted and evaluation-research in particular has developed to a stage where the consensus is clearly a post positivist paradigm.* (p. 36).

Community action can provide an addition or alternative to the linear, objective approach typified by a state-level intervention designed to achieve uniform effect. It incorporates local experience and local priorities and as a consequence has greater ability to respond to communities that are different to the norm or have particular needs. This produces a more specialized and focused intervention. The corollary is that evaluation has to be optimized to encompass the community's experience of the intervention, which means going beyond experimental or quasi-experimental designs. As Buscema (1998) indicated, using linear models to study nonlinear processes can produce misleading findings.

This article was written in order to update knowledge of evaluation practice and theory gained in the decade between the completion of COMPARI and beginning of KAAP. At a general level it is concerned with developing a systematic understanding of options for identifying and involving those who speak for the community. More specifically it aims to provide a rationale for positioning KAAP project researchers further into the post-positivist world in order to gain greater balance between subjective insight and objective facts than achieved during the COMPARI evaluation.

The role assigned to key community representatives in the evaluation process is the central issue here. After defining critical differences between the quasi-experimental concept of the detached key informant and the naturalistic concept of the engaged stakeholder, the article describes eight groupings of stakeholders involving evaluation theories and practices identified in current evaluation literature and proposes a model that indicates stakeholder participation in evaluation along an objective/subjective continuum.

Key Informants Versus Stakeholders

In the COMPARI context, the term *key informants* was used in two ways. Firstly, it described people who were uniquely in a position (due to locality, employment, etc.) of being able

to inform investigators in relation to processes, outcomes, etc., occurring within or as a result of a program/activity. Within the quasi-experimental model, the key informants are believed to be independent and objective, acting as, and relaying information to, those undertaking the experiment. That is, they are observers and recorders of phenomena (e.g., the (quasi)-scientist observing mice in the laboratory maze). For example, COMPARI key informants were asked during pre- and post-program intervention interviews about local attitudes toward alcohol and about local community* drinking patterns (Boots et al., 1995) and informed researchers accordingly.

In other quasi-experimental situations the key informants describe their own actions that are of interest to investigators. In this scenario the term *key informant* is used to describe the object under investigation. The second use of key informants in the COMPARI project involved key informants being asked for their views and experiences of the impact of the COMPARI project. Those of most significance (positive or negative) were described in the evaluation report as examples of program impact (Boots et al., 1995). In this role the COMPARI key informants were the objects under investigation (e.g., (quasi)-mice in the laboratory maze).

Thus, in the first role, the notion of key informants is one of information collection from objective observers looking into the program intervention laboratory, and in the second role, the key informants are the objects of program intervention within the laboratory[1] itself. Stakeholders, on the other hand, are people who are identified as possessing an interest in the subject, process, or outcome of an evaluation. Because they have a vested interest in the evaluation, their views are recognized as subjective, and their role within the process is acknowledged as active and possibly interventionist.

Stakeholder literature records the variety of roles stakeholders can play and how this impacts upon the definition allocated to the word. For example, Weiss (1983a) noted that in early stakeholder evaluations, stakeholders were information receivers and "*evaluation report audiences*" (p. 18); English (1997) compares the two stakeholders roles of "*by-stander*" versus "*cooperative partner*" (p. 49); Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsey (1999) describe stakeholders as "*potential participants*" or "*potential audiences*" (p. 55); Ayers compares "*stakeholder-informing*" versus "*stakeholder-collaborative*" roles (as cited in Mercier, 1997, p. 474); and Mercier (1997) compares stakeholder "*consultation*" with soliciting "*full collaboration*" of stakeholders (p. 474). Thus, the word *stakeholder* includes the passive observer/informant notion of the key informant at one end of a continuum, while the continuum also includes more involving and interactive roles toward its other extremity. Stakeholder legitimacy, in terms of personal involvement with the issue of concern, is also a factor according Shiner, Thom, MacGregor, Gordon, and Bayley (2004). Harpham and Few (2002) note this continuum and the relationship between participation and empowerment within the community context:

> *The most empowering forms of community participation are those in which citizens have direct control over all aspects of a project. Next come situations where community members play an active role in decision-making in joint*

*The term *community* has become something of a policy buzzword that has been attached to a diverse range of ideas and initiatives. It means various things to a range of individual and systemic stakeholders. *Shared geography*, as an often regarded simplistic, common denominator, minimizes the range of other sharing options, which range from actual objects to beliefs, values, membership in, identification with, association with, posited statuses, etc., from a micro- to a globalized macrolevel. Editor's note.

> *management with authorities. Less empowering are situations where communities take part in consultations—they are asked for their opinions and input on issues and initiatives. At a more basic level community involvement can simply refer to the dissemination of information or advice to communities.* (p. 116).

When one compares the terms *key informant* and *stakeholder* the distinction between them, while not mutually exclusive, is nevertheless clear. The roles are perhaps best seen as a continuum along an object-subject axis, where at one end the person involved is the object under investigation and the process is intentionally controlled with the aim of being free of bias (i.e., 100% objective). At the other end of the axis is a person fully involved to the point of having direct control over the investigation and the process (i.e., 100% subjective). The object-subject continuum proposed herein distinguishes between the various roles noted in the literature and places them on a continuum from least participatory to most participatory. The suggested continuum includes the sequential stages of object, audience, informant, user, participant, partner, and, finally, director. The stakeholder role will be discussed further during an examination of examples of stakeholder theories, methods, and practices and through identifying defining elements of stakeholder evaluations.

Evaluation Theories, Methods, and Practices

There are many evaluation theories and methodologies that include a role for stakeholders. Christie (2003), for example, notes after comparing eight evaluation theories that were selected to represent the widest possible range of theoretical positions that:

> *Regardless of the extent to which theorists discuss stakeholder involvement in their writing, results from this study show that all theorists involve stakeholders in the evaluation process . . . . This finding is notable, because stakeholder involvement is formally stated as central to only three of the theorists in this study.* (p. 30).

Eight groups of evaluation theories and practices are identified in this article. These groups were defined after reviewing evaluation theories and practices that specifically seek to involve stakeholders in evaluation activities. The groupings are not mutually exclusive and reveal both variety and conformity and illustrate key dimensions of the object-subject continuum.

The first grouping is entitled "action evaluation" and includes most investigative/evaluative activities that emphasize action. These include action research, action inquiry, action learning, action science, and collaborative action evaluation. Proponents of action evaluation include Wadsworth (1991) and Dick (1998) in Australia; Ovretveit (1998, 2002) in Europe; VanVlaenderen (2001) in Africa; and Argyris and Schon (1996), Friedman (2001), and the Action Evaluation Research Institute grouping in the United States (Rothman, n.d.). Key terminology includes *participation*, *reflexivity*, *integration*, *theories of practice*, *theory-building*, *emergent*, *critical reference group*, *action-reflection*, and *cyclic*. Critical concepts embedded in these words are that evaluation is a continuous and dynamic process that involves a cycle of action followed by reflection/evaluation followed by improved action followed by reflection/evaluation, etc., in an ever improving cycle of development. During this process new ideas and theories emerge, are built upon, and are

evaluated for further refinement or to be discarded. Feedback is continuous because the purpose of the evaluation is to create improvement in the program or service as soon as possible.

The second grouping is entitled "collaborative evaluation" and includes a range of evaluation methodologies that are focused on harnessing input and efforts (in varying degrees) of stakeholders within the evaluation process. Stakeholder-based evaluation was the first collaborative approach to evaluation that sought to "*explicitly both increase the use of evaluation results for decision making and to bring a wider variety of people into active participation in the evaluation process*" (Weiss, 1983a, p. 8). The variations of this early approach included within this grouping are practical participatory evaluation, community-based evaluation, and collaborative evaluation. Early proponents of stakeholder-based evaluation include Weiss (1983a, 1983b) and Stake (1983) and the main proponents of practical participatory evaluation are Cousins and Earl (1995). Key terminology used in collaborative evaluation includes *participation*, *responsive*, *pluralistic*, *consensus*, and *negotiation*. A commonality within this grouping is that each evaluation model has a similar methodology for involving stakeholders with a general non-discriminatory and inclusive approach to attempting to involve as many stakeholders as possible.

"Constructivist evaluation" is the third grouping[2] identifiable in the literature (e.g., Wadsworth, 1991; Stufflebeam, 2001). Guba and Lincoln (1981) are the primary authors of this approach. Key terminology used within constructivist evaluation include *naturalistic*, *value pluralism*, *case studies*, *facilitator*, *qualitative*, and *postmodern*. The role of stakeholders within constructivist evaluation is as its primary organizer. Guba and Lincoln (1981) note that responsive evaluation organizes its questions around "*the concerns and issues of stakeholding audiences*" (p. 23).

Of the stakeholder-focused examples of evaluation detailed in this article, the fourth, "empowerment evaluation" is the most recent and consequently has the least variations within the grouping. However, empowerment evaluation does not have sole claim to being empowering or transforming (Maguire, 1996). The main proponent of empowerment evaluation is Fetterman (1997, 2002), who, together with a variety of other authors, has developed the concept of empowerment evaluation such that empowerment evaluation is usually defined within its own niche (Rossi et al., 1999). Key terminology within the empowerment evaluation paradigm includes *self-determination*, *improvement*, *collaboration*, *advocacy*, *capacity building*, *theory of action*, *teaching*, *culture of learning*, *facilitation*, *training*, *illumination*, *coaching*, and *liberation*. This terminology conjures the emotion and language of Friere and his colleagues (Patton, 1997b) and the participatory evaluation genre, described below, but analysis of empowerment evaluation praxis suggests that the focus of empowerment evaluation is on providers and practitioners rather than consumers (Scriven, 1997). Empowerment within this context appears to be focused on stakeholders that initiate, develop, or manage projects or programs (Secret, Jordan, and Ford, 1999).

The fifth group, the "mixed-method" grouping, includes stakeholder involving evaluation that utilizes integrated or parallel naturalistic and quasi-experimental designs and methods. Additional labels identified by the author include multidimensional evaluation, some multi-site evaluations, and negotiated centralized evaluation. Key proponents identified in the literature are Greene and Caracelli (1997), Lawrenz and Huffman (2002, 2003) and Lawrenz, Keiser, and Lavoie (2003). Terminology associated within mixed-method evaluations includes *quasi-experimental*, *comparison*, *control*, *qualitative* and *quantitative*, *data synthesis*, *pragmatic*, *criteria of worth*, *participation*, and *objectivity*. The terminology reveals that mixed evaluations use standard quasi-experimental language overlaid

on to softer, participatory language. The underlying assumption is that findings from mixed research methods are more valid, because a fuller understanding of human phenomena is achieved. Dialectical researchers also consider it more ethical to mix methods to represent a plurality of interests, voices, and perspectives (Greene and Caracelli, 1997). Greene and Caracelli (1997) describe three approaches to mixing paradigms and their methodologies. The first is a purist approach that posits that naturalistic and quasi-experimental/experimental designs are fundamentally different and while both have their uses they should never be combined within the one evaluation. The second approach is pragmatic and allows the complete mixing and matching of methodologies even within a single inquiry. The third is a dialectical approach that embraces conflicting evaluation outcomes resulting from divergent methodological action as an opportunity for improved understanding.

The "transformative evaluation" grouping reflects the activities and ideals largely emanating from South America and Africa that find their roots in community development and agriculture, rather than the fields of education and psychology, from which much first-world evaluation theory and practice is derived. Terminology within this context generally includes the word *participatory*. However, there appears to be a significant difference in the use of this word between theorists and practitioners of the first and third worlds, with the latter often making reference to the work of Freire (1972) and Tandon (1996), who see participatory research as a methodology for involving disenfranchised people in seeking answers to the questions about their own well-being and that of their community. Consequently, all stakeholder-involving investigations that use the word *participatory* within their nomenclature where empowerment is the object of participation have been included within the grouping "transformative evaluation" for the purpose of this article.[3] This group includes participatory action research, transformative participatory evaluation, and participatory learning and action. Also included is some recent North American literature that uses the terminology *inclusive evaluation* (where inclusion is intended to ensure participation by stakeholders usually excluded; i.e., the disempowered; Mertens, 1999; Weiss, 1998). Key terminology used by authors associated with this grouping include *participative*, *authentic participation*, *critical analysis*, *advocate*, *transformation*, *empowerment*, *equity*, *action*, *education*, *social justice*, and *power*. The role of stakeholders within these transformative evaluations includes learning (deKoning and Martin, 1996), dialoging (Mathison, 2001), reflecting (deKoning and Martin, 1996), generating ideas (Okurut et al., 1996), controlling the evaluation direction (Martin, 1996), data analysis and interpretation (Cornwall, 1996), and collective problem-solving (Bradley, Mayfield, Mehta, and Rukonge, 2002).

The seventh grouping, "pluralistic evaluation," consists of work emanating from that of its English instigators Smith and Cantley (1985) and more recent evaluation activity such as by Hart (1999) and Hall (2004). This grouping, however, also includes the recently coined *deliberative democratic evaluation* of the Americans House and Howe (as cited in Stufflebeam, 2001). Terminology used by authors associated with this grouping includes *democratic*, *equity*, *pluralism*, and *objective*. Common to both these English and American authors is the development of a process of utilizing stakeholder ideas and analysis in such a way as to present all views objectively as stated by stakeholders. Consensus is not sought, as it is believed to result in a position associated with a dominant stakeholder, rather than the identification of merit and worth (Stufflebeam, 2001).

Utilization-focused evaluation is a specific term coined by Patton (1989, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c) and is the title of the eighth group. Christie and Alkin (2003) are also noted to have described a similar concept, the user-orientated evaluation, and Stufflebeam (2001)

records that Cronbach, Davis, and Salasin also advocated the approach. Key terminology used by the proponents of utilization-focused evaluation include *intended primary users*, *pragmatic*, *situational*, *dynamic*, *improvement*, *facilitation*, *active-reactive-adaptive*, and *synthesis*. The role of stakeholders is clearly defined by Patton (1997a): those who are likely to use the evaluation findings are described as *intended primary users* and are central to the entire evaluation, while other stakeholders are less relevant. After specifically defining the key stakeholders in utilization-focused evaluation, Patton (1997c) indicates that there are a number of process options in regard to implementation (Henry, 2002). Options include the type of evaluation, the methods used, and the uses for the evaluation.

Dimensions of Stakeholder Participation

The groupings identified within this article are intended to cluster various evaluation models according to how they address stakeholder involvement within the model and within real-world practice.

Four key stakeholder evaluation-related dimensions are identifiable through reviewing the groupings described. Firstly, differences exist between the groupings as to exactly who is identified as a stakeholder within the evaluation process. The mixed-method evaluations may only involve a small number of stakeholders or may seek to involve a large number. In each case there is no targeting generally associated with stakeholder selection. At the other end of the spectrum, transformative evaluations identify all stakeholders but then usually target only those most marginalized in terms of participation. Other groupings specifically target users, agency stakeholders, or a critical reference group. If one placed stakeholder inclusiveness on an axis of minimum-to-maximum stakeholder participation, it appears from the analysis noted earlier that the latter targeted evaluations are examples of maximum stakeholder participation and no or small numbers of general stakeholders being involved are the example of minimum stakeholder participation. In between are evaluations that involve large numbers of stakeholders, without differentiating between them in order to further participation.

A second identifiable dimension is one associated with the mode of stakeholder participation. An excellent nomenclature for this dimension is provided by Cornwall (1996), who identifies six stakeholder participation modes that illustrate a continuum of participation from that of key informant observation to full stakeholder control. The modes of participation continuum includes the six stages of co-option, compliance, consultation, cooperation, co-learning, and collective action. Key informants may act within the stages of co-option and compliance, and if they are also involved within the program committee reference group (or similar), may participate within a consultation framework. Stakeholders, however, are likely to participate within a wider spectrum of participation modes from co-option to fully engaged collective action. Within those detailed previously, the mixed-method again operates at one end of the continuum, while the transformative, empowerment, and action evaluations can be identified as at the other end of the continuum suggested.

A third dimension is that of participation frequency. Participation of key informants may not occur, while with stakeholders, participation in evaluations can occur on a single occasion (such as identifying the evaluation questions), may occur a number of times, or may occur at all times. Again, this dimension can be viewed as a continuum where the mixed-method model is more likely to be at the less participative end. In this dimension, collaborative and utilization-focused evaluations may also occur on only a single occasion and therefore cannot be differentiated from the mixed-method evaluations on this

dimension. In utilization-focused evaluations, once the evaluation user is identified, he is empowered to determine the frequency of his own participation. In a case, for example, where funding agencies are identified as the user group, it is possible that the group will not desire more participation than the initial establishment of the scope and cost of the evaluation. At the other end of this continuum are again the action, empowerment, and transformative evaluations, which generally involve participants continuously throughout the evaluation.

A fourth dimension concerns the role of the evaluator. Within the quasi-experimental model the evaluator's role may be that of the controller of the (quasi)experiment. The stakeholder evaluation groupings, as described, all allow a more inclusive role than that of experimental control, but variations are evident. Collaborative and mixed-method evaluators act as evaluation coordinators, while other evaluation groupings use the term *facilitator*, either with a teaching-facilitator emphasis (empowerment evaluation) or a co-learner-facilitator emphasis (action, empowerment, transformative evaluations). Utilization-focused evaluators will undertake any role required of them by the evaluation user.

These dimensions are listed in Table 1 and provide a helpful guide in understanding some of the issues that impact upon the role of stakeholders noted in the object-subject continuum described earlier. They provide answers to the questions when (frequency of stakeholder participation), how (participation mode), who (stakeholder inclusiveness), and with whom (evaluator role).

After reviewing the literature associated with each evaluation grouping, the author has assessed and assigned each a place (or places) on the four continua noted previously. The terminology used includes that from the nomenclature of Cornwall (1996; i.e., the participation modes: co-option, compliance, consultation, cooperation, co-learning, and collective action) and others derived by the author from the literature (i.e., the stakeholder inclusiveness: none, small, large, and targeted; the participation frequency: none, single, multiple, and all; and the evaluator role: controller, coordinator, catalyst, and co-learner).

In reviewing the stakeholder-associated evaluation methods and theories and their dimensions of participation it is instructive to note that Stufflebeam (2001), in his recent comprehensive review of evaluation approaches, rated all except the mixed-method evaluation highly when compared to North American program evaluation standards.

Stakeholder Evaluation Model

In this article, the various roles stakeholders can fulfill within evaluations have been linked to a proposed object-subject continuum. At one end of the continuum, it has been suggested, is the role of evaluation object; that is, as the object or focus of the investigation. The other end of the continuum is that of full participation and control of the evaluation and all its associated processes and actions.

The four dimensions noted in Table 1 (stakeholder inclusiveness, participation mode, participation frequency, and evaluator role) could be described as indicators of how evaluators actually regard stakeholders; consequently, they could be useful in evaluating stakeholder involvement within an evaluation. Conversely, within the development of an evaluation the dimensions could be seen as providing a menu of choices from which one can select influences that will result in an appropriate role for stakeholders within a given evaluation context.

The stakeholder role, together with the dimensions identified, is illustrated in Figure 1 as an object-subject continuum upon which the indicators/influences are overlaid. The figure illustrates a target environment intended to highlight the various dimensions that impact

Table 1
Dimensions of stakeholder participation by evaluation grouping

Grouping	Stakeholder Inclusiveness—Who?	Evaluatorrole—With Whom?'	Participation mode[a]—How?'	Participation frequency—When?'
Action	Targeted: Critical reference group	Co-learner	Co-learning/collective action	All
Collaborative	Large: All stakeholders	Coordinator	Consultation/cooperation	Single, multiple, or all
Constructivist	Targeted: Most marginalized	Coordinator/catalyst	Consultation/cooperation	Multiple
Empowerment	Targeted: Agency stakeholders	Catalyst/co-learner	Co-learning/collective action	All
Mixed method	Small–Large: Few–all stakeholders	Controller/coordinator	Cooption/compliance/ consultation/cooperation	Single, multiple, or all
Pluralistic	Large: All stakeholders	Coordinator/catalyst	Cooperation	Multiple
Transformative	Targeted: Most marginalized	Catalyst/co-learner	Co-learning/collective action	All
Utilization focused	Targeted: Evaluation users	Controller/coordinator/ catalyst/co-learner	Consultation/cooperation/ co-learning/collective action	Single, multiple, or all

Note. [a]Stakeholder role categories from Cornwall (1996).

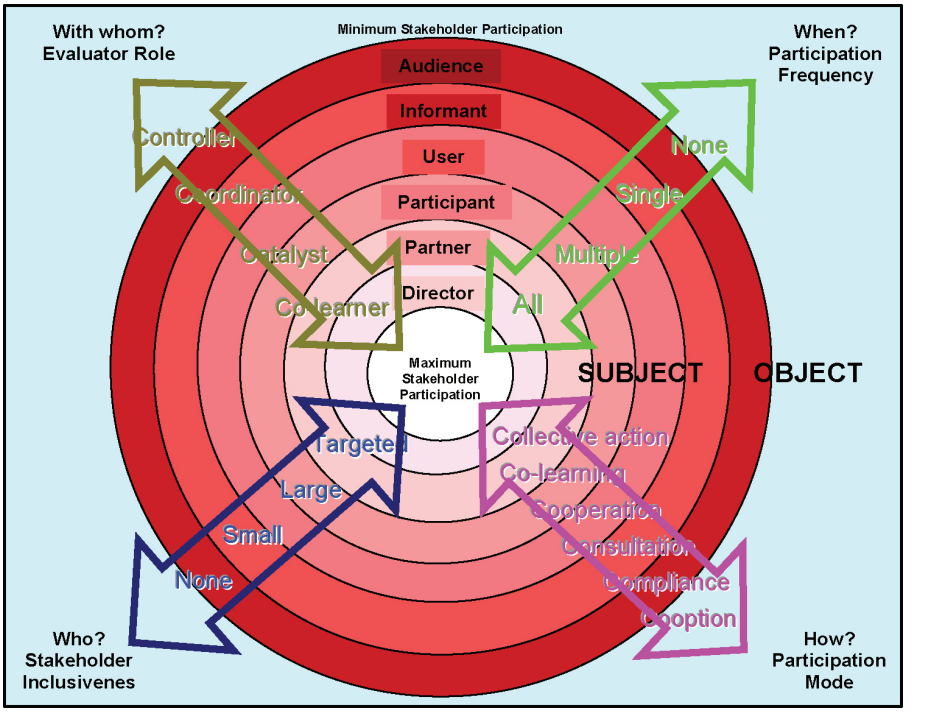

Figure 1. Stakeholder evaluation model.

upon achievement of maximum stakeholder participation within a given evaluation. As a model of stakeholder participation within evaluation, Figure 1 illustrates the range of opportunities evaluators have in designing stakeholder-involving evaluations. Whether one chooses low or high stakeholder participation frequency, inclusive or exclusive evaluator activity, inclusive or exclusive stakeholder activity, or targeted or broad stakeholder inclusion will indicate how the evaluator views (or will influence how the evaluator develops) the informant/stakeholder role.

Conclusion

It has been suggested that stakeholder involvement within evaluations is "*as close to being a received theory in effective evaluation practice as we have today*" (Henry, 2002, p. 241) or even evaluation "dogma" (Henry, 2002, p. 241). Nevertheless, this review of stakeholder involvement within evaluation identifies significant variation in the way this dogma is practiced. It is this variation that the stakeholder evaluation model seeks to illustrate.

The model developed in this article illustrates an object-subject continuum and the indicators/influences that impact upon stakeholder participation within the evaluation process. Consideration of these indicators during evaluation planning will assist evaluators in achieving their desired balance of subjective insight and objective fact.

With respect to the COMPARI and KAAP programs, this article establishes that a range of additional opportunities lie outside of the COMPARI quasi-experimental evaluation design, through increased stakeholder involvement within the evaluation process. The review of current evaluation research and practice supports the belief that active engagement of subjective stakeholders (such as within community-based, alcohol harm reduction projects) is likely to improve the quality of evaluation data and outcomes within naturalistic community settings.

RÉSUMÉ

Impliquer Toutes Les Parties Concernees Dans L'Evaluation Des Projets Communautaires Relatifs A L'Alcool: Trouver L'Equilibre Entre La Perception Subjective Et Les Faits Objectifs

Le rôle joué par les représentants clé d'une communauté dans l'évaluation des projets communautaires concernant l'alcool diffère selon le modèle d'évaluation adopté. Quand l'évaluation adopte une démarche positiviste, établie sur un plan expérimental, ils se retrouvent dans un rôle d'informateurs indépendants. Dans les évaluations post-positivistes, ils se retrouvent d'intérêt pour l'évaluation et deviennent de ce fait des partis impliqués actifs. Toutefois, le degré auquel les partis concernés peuvent être activement impliqués dans une évaluation diffère considérablement par rapport à un certain nombre de paramètres. Les quatre paramètres autour du rôle de l'impliqué: l'inclusion de l'impliqué, le mode de participation, la fréquence de la participation, et le rôle de l'évaluation, sont pris en compte dans le contexte de huit théories d'évaluation. Tout ceci est intégré dans un modèle reliant ces paramètres à un continuum objet-sujet attaché à l'implication du concerné. Ce modèle facilite la considération systématique de ces paramètres et aidera les évaluateurs à atteindre le juste équilibre entre la perception subjective et le fait objectif.

RESUMEN

La Implicación de Grupos de interes en la Evaluación de Proyectos Comunitarios de Alcohol: Descubrimiento de un Equilibrio Entre Perspicacia Subjetiva y Hechos Objetivos

El papel desempeñado por los representantes de la comunidad es clave en la evaluación de proyectos comunitarios de alcohol que se diferencian según el paradigma de evaluación adoptado. Las evaluaciones que adoptan un diseno positivista experimental, toman el papel de informadores independientes. En las evaluaciones positivistas posteriores, ellos son vistos como interesados en la evaluación y a consecuencia son considerados como un grupo interesado activo. Sin embargo, el grado al cual los grupos de interesados pueden ser activamente contratados en una evaluación varía bastante a lo largo de varias dimensiones. Hay cuatro dimensiones del papel del grupo de interes: la inclusividad del grupo de interes, el modo de participación, la frecuencia de participación, y el papel de la evaluación; son examinados en el contexto de ocho teorías de evaluación. Esto esta integrado a un modelo que une estas dimensiones con una serie continua de objeto-sujeto de la participación del grupo de interes. El modelo facilita la consideración sistemática de estas dimensiones y asistirá a los evaluadores a conseguir el equilibrio deseado entre perspicacia subjetiva y hecho objetivo.

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Notes

1. The word *laboratory* here is used to highlight the need to ensure a control over the environment that allows the bias-free identification and measurement of the dependent and independent variables within the quasi-experiment.
2. The word *grouping* is used here although it is essentially a group of one. That is, Guba and Lincoln (1981) are the primary authors identified in this article.
3. This grouping is different from that of Fetterman's empowerment evaluation partly due to its historical roots but mainly in that the focus of participation is grassroots community members (frequently marginalized) rather than paid program staff. The grouping also excludes the practical participatory evaluation described in Cousin and Earl (1995), which, like Fetterman's empowerment evaluation, is open to the charge of not being associated with program participants (Smith, 1999). Thus the practical participatory evaluation described by Cousin and Earl is referred to the grouping *stakeholder-based evaluation* in this article (Brandon, 1998).

Glossary

Naturalistic Community Settings: this is both a unit of individual and collective identity and a context for meeting a range of physical and social needs. It functions and is continually recreated through social interaction that is characterized by emotional connection between members, common symbol systems, shared values and norms, common interests, and responsiveness to shared needs.

Positivist Research Paradigm: this assumes that human society is subject to laws in the same way as the natural world and emphasizes obtaining objective, scientific data as the best way of understanding social relationships.

Post Positivist Research Paradigm: this acknowledges that social research cannot be objective as it is a symbolically mediated social practice. It incorporates a belief in some independent forms of reality, which can, however, only be imperfectly (or probabilistically) understood and is always subject to change.

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