

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

Peter Drucker

The 5th wave: social impact evaluation

We are about to enter a new evaluation age.

How will the evaluation discipline adapt to a volatile, interconnected, market-driven operating environment?

Is it equipped to respond to emerging development priorities?

Will it rise to the challenges of unprecedented and growing inequality that is sparing few countries?

In a world where social impact has become a major preoccupation of public, private, and civil society actors, will the changed operating context drive new policy directions and elicit a transformational agenda for the evaluation community?

Robert Picciotto,
KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

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The four waves

In a seminal article, the eminent Swedish evaluation thinker, Evert Vedung, famously depicted the history of evaluation as a succession of four waves embedded in larger tides of political ideology. He described how each wave eventually subsides, leaving behind layers of intellectual sediment that invariably enrich evaluation theory and practice (Vedung, 2010).

Experimental wave

At the creation of the discipline in the 1950s and 1960s, evaluation was radically rationalist, positivist, and meritocratic – a transmission belt between social researchers and government decision makers. In 1969, the experimental psychologist Donald T. Campbell envisaged a new “experimenting society” served by evaluation at a time when central policy planning and government intervention held sway (Campbell, 1969). The new discipline was then widely perceived as a much needed antidote to the messy and irrational interplay of political forces.

Dialogic wave

The second wave was participatory and geared to multiple perspectives and social learning. This is when evaluation changed course and became constructivist, pluralistic, and deliberative. Surging from the left of the political spectrum, the new wave gained ground in the late 1960s and prevailed until the early 1980s. Fed by popular distrust of central authority and sceptical of the scientific pretensions of the first wave, it put stakeholders at the core of evaluation processes.

Neo-liberal wave

From the mid-1980s onwards, in reaction to mixed evidence about the effectiveness of public sector programs, a neo-liberal wave engulfed the evaluation discipline. Suddenly government was perceived as the problem rather than the solution. This is when the new public management movement introduced market thinking into government. It emphasized devolution, decentralization, and deregulation as well as strong leadership: “let managers manage.” Customers replaced stakeholders as the ultimate judges of public sector intervention.

Evidence-based wave

The evidence-based wave swelled in the mid-1990s. Its prime movers remained disillusioned with the performance of activist government. They sought a sharper edge in evaluation methods that would produce incontrovertible evidence of verifiable “results” as justification for public action. “Only what works matters” became the new mantra – a throwback to the science-based ambitions of the first wave.

In his seductive wave metaphor, Vedung acknowledged that countervailing currents and turbulent streams underlie all evaluation tides. Once new ripples acquire sufficient momentum and a tipping point is reached, a new wave begins to curl. This is where we stand again: a sea change is in the offing.

The 5th wave

Countervailing pressures are building up. A host of private sector and civil society players has joined the fray. Inequality and insecurity are on the rise. Environmental pressures are intensifying. A new development agenda is emerging. New international solidarity instruments have proliferated. As a result, a new wave of evaluation diffusion is about to break.

The new wave will put values at the very center of the discipline, induce a reorientation of evaluation policy directions, transform evaluation methods, and require mastery of the new information technologies. It will also spawn professionalization initiatives and pioneer governance models designed to protect evaluation from capture by vested interests. Thus, five years after Evert Vedung conceived his article, the shape of a fifth wave of evaluation diffusion is coming into view. It will focus on *social impact* within and across borders and sectors.

The new operating context

The operating environment is now characterized by shifting wealth patterns, inequality and systemic risk. This was spectacularly demonstrated by the 2008 financial crisis and its global repercussions which are still with us. The financial upheaval brought an end to the broad-based consensus about the ends and means of achieving peace and prosperity. It triggered a deep crisis in economic theory and, somewhat paradoxically, it opened a window of opportunity for the evaluation discipline. Now more than ever, context dependent, independent, and rigorous evaluations are in demand (Brett, 2009). The limits of experimental methods are more readily acknowledged and policy makers are looking for innovative and transformative ways of triggering social change.

The great convergence

Over the past two decades, the global economic system has undergone a remarkable metamorphosis. Instability still reigns and setbacks are frequent but, taking a long view, there is little doubt that the developmental states of the periphery have become the engines of global growth, and that the North-South model of international relations that lumped emerging middle-income economies together with low-income and vulnerable least-developed countries has become an anachronism.

“...policy makers are looking for innovative and transformative ways of triggering social change.”

Thirteen developing countries have been growing for 25 years or more at an average annual rate of 7 percent or more using export-led strategies. At this rate, their incomes double every decade. China's gross domestic product already exceeds Japan's (BBC, 2011).¹ By the year 2020, Brazil's GDP will overtake that of France, and Mexico will replace Italy as the world's tenth largest economy (Euromonitor, 2010).

¹ Japan's economy was worth US\$5.5 trillion at the end of 2010 while China's economy was closer to US\$5.8 trillion in the same period.

These extraordinary achievements would not have occurred without the increased interconnectedness of the global economy, and the energy and adaptability of the private sector. Underlying this success has been the dominance of the development idea in policy making within emerging market states. By contrast, Western economies have grown slowly. This process translates into gradual but inevitable economic convergence with the Western industrial economies (Olinto and Saavedra, 2010).

OECD countries are struggling to revive growth – but not just any growth. Combining growth, equity, and fiscal responsibility presents the same policy challenge long faced by developing countries. The adjustment processes that the highly indebted developing countries endured in the 1980s are now being experienced by many Western economies.

Development has come home, and development evaluation is merging into the evaluation mainstream.

With aid becoming less and less important relative to the other transmission belts of globalization, evaluation is going global. In 1990, about 90 percent of the world's poor (by both \$1.25 and \$2 income per capita per day international poverty lines) lived in low-income countries. Now, at least 80 percent of the poor live in middle-income countries (Sumner, 2012). Hence, the challenge of poverty elimination has become largely concentrated within countries that have the resources to address poverty reduction directly and on their own.

The scourge of inequality

The private sector has become increasingly dominant in the global economy. Its growth has been fuelled by highly profitable technological innovation and entrepreneurship. Public-private partnerships now dominate large segments of the international economy in sectors such as infrastructure and social services – sectors that used to be the privileged preserve of the state. Unfortunately, the benefits of innovation and growth have not been equitably shared.

The ghost of inequality is haunting the world. Inequality within countries is rising almost everywhere. The world's three richest people own wealth that is equivalent to the combined GDP of the world's poorest 48 countries. The world's 1,210 billionaires have a combined fortune of

\$4.5 trillion. This is equivalent to more than half of the net worth of 3 billion adults (*Forbes*, 2011). By next year, the top 1 percent will have more wealth than the remaining 99 percent of people (Oxfam, 2015).

To be sure, differences in income and wealth attributable to effort, skill, or entrepreneurship are not widely resented. On the other hand, social cohesion and trust in government are severely undermined when distorted rules of the game, predatory economic behaviour, or unethical business practices are richly rewarded.

Shrinking resources and rising insecurity

Current intensive energy and natural resources policies are not sustainable. Four to five planets would be needed to accommodate all countries at current Western standards of living (World Centric, 2015). Food demand is expected to increase by 50 percent by 2030, in a context where the easy productivity gains of the Green Revolution have already tapped out, and land degradation has accelerated. Demand for water will grow by 30 percent between now and 2025, while groundwater depletion and contamination will rise, and available freshwater resources will shrink. Climate change is aggravating all of these scarcities.

The world is hit by about 700 natural disasters a year. Insecurity is especially cruel to the poor, who increasingly find themselves in harm's way as a result of disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. Climate change is pushing the catastrophic trend upwards. Floods and storms rose 44 percent from 1980–1989 to 1994–2000. Drought affected more than 1 billion people between 1994 and 2013 (ReliefWeb, 2015).

Furthermore, the international security system has become far less effective than it was during the cold war. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) Global Peace Index (2014), global peace has deteriorated over the past seven years. Competition for resources, disputes over the jurisdiction of territories or peoples, demographic and environmental pressures, autocratic expansion, or sheer miscalculation present ominous risks to international stability. No wonder then that evaluation of humanitarian activities and evaluation of conflict-prevention and peace-building interventions have become growth industries.

A triple revolution

Equity-oriented and environmentally sensitive policies will require market-based instruments, given the inexorable rise of the private sector. In turn, this will call for broad-based participation in policy making by an expanded array of stakeholders. Inevitably these interconnected developments will reshuffle evaluation goals, actors, and objects.

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New goals

Evaluation assesses interventions relative to policy goals. The United Nations consecrated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. This is also the year when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cede ground to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new multifaceted and extraordinarily demanding SDG agenda reflects mounting public concerns about the social and environmental consequences of public interventions.

The increasing wealth imbalances within most societies and the prevalence of cross-border challenges such as violent conflict, natural disasters, climate change and resource scarcity were already highlighted by the far sighted Millennium Declaration at the turn of the century. Now, given the multiplicity of threats to human livelihoods, it is entirely appropriate and not at all surprising that the SDGs should be more complex and diversified than the MDGs. The number of global goals has risen from 8 MDGs to 17 SDGs and from 48 indicators to 169.

The SDGs call for a formidable expansion of monitoring and evaluation systems. A wide variety of evaluative approaches will be needed to assess the global, country, sector, and local strategies that will be used in pursuit of eradication of poverty, empowerment of women, quality education and lifelong learning, healthy lives, food security, universal access to water and sanitation, sustainable energy, effective natural resource management, good governance, peaceful societies, reduction of

inequality, and implementation of a global enabling environment for fair and inclusive development (UN, 2013).

New actors

Evaluation processes connect and inform diverse actors involved in the design and implementation of social interventions. An unprecedented market-led revolution has swept over the global system since the turn of the century. The number of private multinational enterprises headquartered in developed countries rose from 7,300 at the end of the 1960s to 65,000 around the turn of the century, and to at least 100,000 at the end of 2010. The foreign direct investment undertaken by these firms amounted to \$1.3 trillion in 2014 compared with around \$400 billion in the mid-1990s.

As private wealth expanded, so did the mobilization of individual giving and corporate resources directed towards socially responsible purposes. Foundations, the standard bearers of the new philanthropy, have operated in ways that have deliberately blurred the traditional boundaries between the public, private, and voluntary sectors. They have become active in international development and teamed up with civil society networks.

The devolution of power away from the state has also been facilitated by a looming “associational revolution”. Consumers and social activists interconnected on a global scale have become more influential. They are increasingly shaping the rules of the game in private markets. There were approximately 985 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in 1956. This number had grown to 14,000 by 1985, and to an estimated 21,000 by 2003 (Hammad and Morton, 2011).

The private philanthropic organizations have taken the lead in injecting fresh energy and ambition in the international evaluation domain (Foundation Center, 2015). Financial flows to and through INGOs have grown substantially. Between 1992 and 1993, for example, they supplied some 10 percent of all official development assistance (ODA). By 2008, they were supplying more than \$23.6 billion in aid, equivalent to over 19 percent of ODA. Six of the largest INGOs increased their total annual revenue from \$2.5 billion in 1999 to more than \$6 billion in 2007, an average increase of about 240 percent (Hammad and Morton, 2011).

The evaluation discipline, still wedded to traditional public sector program interventions, has not kept pace with this deep-seated transformation. It has yet to adapt its methods and processes to the dynamic pace of decision making favoured by the new actors. In particular, it has failed to find cost-effective ways to deliver adequate and timely evidence to decision makers about the likely development impact of interventions.

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New instruments

Numerous innovative social interventions and initiatives associated with the increased role of the private sector and civil society in the social sphere have so far escaped systematic evaluation. Tailor-made cocktails of evaluation methods will have to be created and promoted to unpack the social effects of an extraordinarily wide variety of policy instruments.

- **Social impact funding (G8 UK, 2013)** has become a major tool of resource mobilization for development entrepreneurship. It harnesses private capital and skills in pursuit of social inclusion and environmental protection objectives. How does one verify that doing good and doing well are compatible? Are the innovative funding mechanisms that feed social impact investing grounded in sound fiduciary rules?
- **Public-private partnerships** have soared and, in doing so, have put the spotlight on whether the contractual allocation of risks and rewards between private corporations and citizens is in the public interest. This implies a growing demand for effective and independent social and environmental impact assessments *ex post* as well as *ex ante*.

- **Ethical investments**, with the associated social value claims given them by individuals and organizations, need independent validation. The simplistic indicators embedded in current management systems should be supplanted by a triple bottom line that incorporates economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits. For example, it is far from clear whether consumer-oriented certification systems currently associated with fair trade, organic farming, and private supply chain labelling are valid and reliable.
- **Corporate social responsibility** claims and standards increasingly face calls for independent assessments. As foreign direct investment into developing countries has grown exponentially – from \$200 billion in 2003 to \$700 billion in 2012 – it has generated a pent-up demand for assessments. But they are currently carried out on a voluntary basis without systematic external oversight. Process auditing should be supplemented by periodic evaluation of actual impacts.
- **Market-based instruments** comprise a complex array of, for example, insurance products, advanced market commitments, “diaspora” and remittance-funded initiatives. They have yet to be subjected to rigorous evaluative scrutiny, yet they too are crucially dependent on the valid measurement of social and environmental impacts alongside risks and returns.
- **Prizes and challenge initiatives** are increasing rapidly, but the process of evaluating the exploding number is still in its infancy.

New evaluation policy directions

These instruments and the evaluation methods needed to assess them are the forces that will trigger the fifth wave. Three policy directions will characterize the new evaluation paradigm. First, the shifting wealth patterns described above will call for evaluation *internationalization*. Second, the dynamic market-led and associational revolution will require *diversification* of evaluation users and products. Third, the new actors will insist on more re-

sponsive and nimble evaluation methods and processes that will not come into being without *digitalization*.

The end result will be that demand for social impact evaluations will rise exponentially. Different kinds of evaluation products will be required to serve a broader, more highly differentiated and fragmented market. Maintaining a modicum of coherence across a rapidly expanding, far-flung, and competitive evaluation domain will constitute a major challenge for the global evaluation community. In pursuit of a new global evaluation agenda, the 2015 International Year of Evaluation has provided an opportunity to address this multifaceted challenge.

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Internationalization

As the centre of gravity of the world economy continues to shift towards the South and the East, evaluation-accelerated internationalization will become imperative. The process is well underway. Evaluation is increasingly working across borders. It is becoming more “international in the sense of being at the same time more indigenous, more global and more trans-national” (Chelimsky and Shadish, 1997). At the turn of the century, there were only 20 evaluation associations in existence, but since then, the number has exploded. The rapid expansion of the evaluation market has given rise to a patent need to coordinate evaluation capacity-building efforts by evaluation associations. EvalPartners (2015),² under the auspices of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), has identified a total of 158 associations or networks, of which 135 are at national level.

² EvalPartners is a collaborative partnership co-founded by IOCE and UNICEF to enhance the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) to influence policy makers, public opinion, and other key stakeholders, so that public policies are based on evidence and incorporate considerations of equity and effectiveness. Enhanced capacities also enable CSOs to engage in a strategic and meaningful manner in national evaluation processes, contributing to improved country-led evaluation systems and policies that are equity-focused and gender responsive.

As a result, evaluation has had to adapt to a wide variety of operating environments.

This said, evaluation is still an infant industry. Globally, all evaluation associations and networks surveyed by EvalPartners have combined memberships of 32,000, and this includes double counting of members who belong to more than one association. This is less than a fifth of the membership of a single association of internal auditors (e.g. the Institute of Internal Auditors has 175,000 members). There are some 1.2 million accountants and auditors employed in the United States alone.

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Diversification

At the same time as evaluation is crossing borders, it is expanding beyond the public sector, responding to private corporations and philanthropic foundations which are becoming major players in the public sphere, as well as to the growing social and environmental responsibility agendas of multinational corporations, and to the explosive growth of NGOs. Evaluation will have to undergo a cultural revolution to keep up with these new actors.

Since tight resource constraints are most likely to stay in place, the results agenda will remain highly relevant. Accordingly, impact assessments will have to be carried out *ex ante* as well as *ex post*. Furthermore, given the advent of the sustainability agenda, it also will have to attempt measurement of long-term, secondary, indirect, and unintended effects, and transcend the often fruitless search to specifically attribute outcomes to individual interventions. At the same time, social concerns (including recognition of future generations' needs) will acquire a privileged position within evaluative frameworks.

Greater agility will be required, and new practices will have to be devised to respond to the growing evaluation needs of multi-sector coalitions focused on the achievement of distinct global and regional goals, especially in public health, education, and environmental protection. Whereas the initial four waves emphasized project-level

and country-based programme evaluations, the fifth wave will give pride of place to the assessment of global and regional public goods delivery by ad hoc networks of like-minded development actors.

Such network-oriented evaluations will emphasize collective impact measures of multi-actor coalitions rather than effectiveness ratings of outcomes assessed one actor and/or one intervention at a time. This will bring the need to evaluate partnership arrangements into sharper focus (Liebenthal *et al.*, 2004).

Digitalization

Greater timeliness and responsiveness in delivering services will be required of evaluators. The transition away from the stodgy pace of public sector evaluation processes will be accelerated by another seismic and pervasive undercurrent within the fifth wave, which will emerge from the explosive impact of the new information and communications technologies. Following the main-frame and PC eras, it combines the social energies triggered by Web 2.0 and the analytical potential of “big data” associated with Web 3.0.

Together, this internationalization of evaluation and the new information order will reshape the way evaluations are carried out. Evaluators will have to come to terms with the fact that we live in a “plugged in” world. We have become inextricably intertwined socially, financially, and culturally across borders, and there is no going back. This may sound like hype, but it is the simple truth. We are right in the middle of a quiet, gradual, and irreversible global transformation of society, and this is bound to affect the evaluation discipline.

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Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 evokes the systematic use of social software at all stages of the evaluation process. It involves the growing use of computer and smart phone applications to help carry out evaluations. It relies on the

stakeholders themselves to create and publish evaluation content. It wires evaluators, program managers, and ultimate beneficiaries closer together and offers new ways of presenting evaluation results. Instead of long-winded and bulky reports, clients are presented with virtual presentations of brief texts summarizing comparative perspectives, vivid images, and video content, including hyperlinks that allow drilling into technical content and back-up evidence.

Web 3.0

The term Web 3.0 is still contested, but all definitions point to the potential of advanced search engines that whirl and sift through the torrents of data currently flowing through the world wide web. Huge amounts of digital data are constantly being created as a result of human activities. Millions of sensors are embedded in mobile phones, ATM machines, personal computers, pads, tablets, transport vehicles, and industrial machines. Individuals churn out a phenomenal and burgeoning volume of data as they move about, engage in commercial transactions, or connect with others through email, Skype, or social media. This data revolution will make evaluation more nimble and accurate.

Surfing the fifth wave

Navigating the troubled waters of the new evaluation era in the changed operating context and towards the new policy directions sketched above will not be safe without major collective adjustments within the evaluation community. Three major challenges will have to be tackled: *re-tooling* in order to meet the needs of the new actors, *professionalization* in order to compete in the evaluation market place, and *democratization* in order to respond to growing public dissatisfaction with metrics that do not incorporate social concerns.

Refurbishing the tool kit

Traditional development evaluation methods frequently rely on results chains and experimental methods that evoke linear, static, and predictable social phenomena. They are poorly adapted to dynamic operating contexts featuring complexity, non-linearity, and emergence. This is what the market for evaluation today looks like. It is

dominated by interventions that are vulnerable to rapid shifts in the operating environment, and to the unpredictable push and pull of a wide range of stakeholders.

To be sure, the demand for external, independent reviews of traditional development policies and programs using well-tested methods and tools has not disappeared altogether. But where social innovation, adaptation, experimentation, and exploration of new opportunities have pride of place, or where the operating environment is conflict ridden and uncertain, the traditional approaches need to be supplanted by new, complexity-sensitive methods and tools.

“...evaluation should be methodologically flexible, eclectic, and creative.”

First, especially where change is the only constant, ethical values will drive decision making more than pre-determined outcomes. Consequently, in the social innovation field, the new development evaluation agenda will be more value driven than results oriented, and learning loops will be short. Values clarification will not only help identify goals, it will help determine how those goals are to be reached, who should be involved in decision making, and what are the distinctive accountabilities and reciprocal obligations of partners.

Second, the social impact wave sweeping over a policy domain characterized by complexity and change will not recognize experimental methods as the gold standard. Mixed methods will be embraced through use of diverse evaluation tools, such as observation, experiments, models, surveys, focus groups, interviews, monitoring data, benchmarking, and expert panels. Social network analysis will draw on sociology, economics, mathematics, and computer science to map, measure, assess, and display relationships among individuals, groups, or other entities involved in a development intervention.

Randomized control trials, quasi-experimental methods, natural experiments, contribution analysis, process tracing, and qualitative comparative analysis will

be used when appropriate to help ascertain causality. But the fifth wave will also thrive on methodological diversity and put *mixed methods* at the service of tailor-made evaluation goals. It will adopt diverse evaluation designs – including realist, case studies, experimental and quasi-experimental designs – that will draw on quantitative as well as qualitative data. This will be greatly facilitated by systems thinking focused on perspectives, boundaries, and interrelationships (Hummelbrunner and Reynolds, 2013).

The social impact wave will draw energy from *developmental evaluation* (Patton, 2011). In particular it will be methodologically flexible, eclectic, and creative. It will call for evaluative inputs delivered just in time for decision making, and reject the arm's length role of the traditional development evaluator. Thus it will conflate monitoring and evaluation, incorporate evaluation within management processes, and respond to evolving needs.

But social impact cannot be equated with utilization-oriented developmental evaluation. Beyond its developmental features, social impact evaluation is results based, it promotes accountability along with social learning, and is beneficiary oriented and technology friendly. It also calls for a reinvention of democratic evaluation and visualizes ethics as the next frontier of the discipline. This fifth wave is already sweeping over the private sector, and the blowback is already being felt by the public sector.

“High quality evaluation education and training is scarce.”

Professionalization

The wider public is poorly informed about what evaluation stands for. Evaluators are regularly confused with auditors and social researchers. High quality evaluation education and training is scarce. The discipline has yet to reach universal agreement on guiding principles, ethical guidelines, and competencies for evaluators. Evaluators do not control access to the evaluation discipline and, as a result, the quality of evaluation work is highly variable. Anyone may posture as an evaluator.

In a nutshell, evaluators still lack the status, prestige, and autonomy of a profession. Looking to the future, evaluation associations will have their work cut out for them. They will have to initiate decisive actions aimed at generating a larger supply of competent evaluators through vastly expanded education and training programmes and, at the same time, move towards evaluation credentialing at national and international levels, defend the evaluation brand, and compete through advocacy directed to a much wider range of clients.

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Improved connectivity of development evaluators across borders will not be possible unless systematic links are forged among the topical interest groups hosted by evaluation associations. In turn, these epistemic communities will need to break out of their comfortable disciplinary silos, reach out to allied occupations such as public administration, management consulting and auditing, and do their parts to close the gap with social science theory and behavioural research (Vaessen and Leeuw, 2010).

Democratization

Values are the privileged core of the evaluation discipline. Without ethics, the evaluation institution is built on sand and cannot survive the rains that will inevitably come. Equity-based evaluation is becoming the norm, and evaluators will have to be politically savvy in a context where democracy is in retreat.

According to Freedom House, an independent watchdog organization, acceptance of democracy as the world's dominant form of government is under greater threat than at any point in the last 25 years. For the ninth consecutive year, its annual report (2015) showed an overall decline in freedom around the world. Nearly twice as many countries suffered declines as registered gains – 61 to 33 (Freedom House, 2014). Modern and meritocratic authoritarianism is on the march. Equally in

Western industrialized countries, vested interests are undermining evaluation independence. Indeed according to Ernest R. House, an eminent academic and evaluation thinker, “the capture of evaluation by its sponsors is the greatest threat the evaluation community has faced for some time. In fact, the credibility of the field is at risk” (House, 2013).

From a democratic perspective, the three currently dominant approaches to evaluation fall short. The first, which emphasizes *accountability and compliance*, examines how public resources are used to reach goals that are almost invariably set by the prevailing power structure. The second, which focuses on the pursuit of *knowledge* akin to social science research, emphasizes attribution-oriented evaluations that evoke the value free scientific approach. Similarly, the third approach, the *utilization-focused evaluation* model, is akin to management consulting and has contributed to the social timidity of evaluation agendas (Patton, 2008).

The democratic evaluation model was full of promise when it arose during the second wave (Simmons, 2010). Conceived by the late Professor Barry MacDonald of the University of East Anglia, a leading figure in evaluation history, it provides an information service to the community, tasking evaluators to act as brokers between differing groups. It offers confidentiality to informants and gives them control over the information. It does not draw recommendations from its findings (MacDonald, 1979). This works well in authorizing environments where communicative rationality prevails and ethical discourse influences decision making. But, given its neutral brokering stance, it is ill adapted to the very contexts where it is most needed.

To promote the interests of the least fortunate, House refined the MacDonald model. His model stresses three principles: *inclusion* (working with underrepresented and powerless groups), *dialogue* (getting stakeholders to understand each other), and *deliberation* (reasoned discussion of issues, values, and findings). In this revised incarnation, the “evaluator is not a passive bystander, an innocent facilitator, or a philosopher kind who makes decisions for others, but rather a conscientious professional who adheres to carefully considered principles” (House and Howe, 1999).

Undoubtedly, this activist stance is better adapted to authorizing environments that are partially democratic.

However traditional democratic evaluation approaches are hobbled in contexts that do not tolerate dissent or in assignments that are closely controlled by evaluation sponsors. In such situations, progress towards liberal democratic ideals calls for an alternative model: independent democratic evaluation.

Evaluators operating according to this model would take advantage of the growing clout of parliaments and civil society organizations in the social sphere. They would assume ownership of evaluation products and reject assignments that report to decision makers in charge of the intervention being evaluated, reporting instead to a supreme authority, such as a board of directors or parliament, or to entities that stand at arm’s length from the intervention, such as an NGO (Picciotto, 2015).

Conclusions

Social impact evaluation writ large will be the defining characteristic of the fifth wave. The evaluation agenda will become more diverse and complex given the pervasive insecurities of a multi-polar world, the proliferation of problems without passport, and the existential threats posed by climate change. A jungle of coalitions and partnerships will make the misleading equation of results with agencies’ performance obsolete. Citizens’ pressures for greater accountability of authority will require unbundling of collective impact assessments.

“...evaluation will expand into all sectors of society...”

As the boundaries between public, private, and voluntary interventions become more and more porous, evaluation will expand into all sectors of society. The protection of evaluation independence is relatively straightforward in public sector environments. However, by contrast, the hybrid coalitions associated with collective action and public-private partnerships will require different modes of evaluation governance and different rules of evaluation engagement.

Financial instruments designed to channel private giving towards philanthropic ends have mushroomed. A

myriad of private individuals, companies, and civil society organizations have become agents of international solidarity. A huge new market for real time, participatory, and collaborative evaluation services must now be served. Public demand to demonstrate results in the social sphere will not abate.

Only professionalization of the evaluation discipline, backed up by revised, value-driven, ethically sound evaluation guidelines, will provide the occupational autonomy needed to maintain the integrity of evaluation processes and avoid their capture by vested interests. Thus, as the social impact evaluation wave surges, evaluation internationalization, diversification, and democratization will have to take place simultaneously.

In order to fill rapidly expanding and increasingly specialized evaluation gaps, the tool kit will have to be augmented and evaluators' competencies will have to be upgraded. Since change is happening more rapidly, evalu-

ators will also have to become more nimble. Innovative approaches are needed, and tolerance towards long reports and protracted evaluation processes is wearing thin.

To meet all these expectations, evaluation will have to become embedded in social processes and management systems. The link between monitoring and evaluation must be tightened. Evaluation will be called upon to facilitate piloting, adaptation, and up-scaling of interventions within volatile operating contexts.

In turn, this will mean that evaluators will have to master social networking, crowd-sourced learning, and big data analysis. Cultural change will also be required in order to build bridges across currently segregated evaluation domains. This is a demanding agenda but, in the words of evaluation pioneer Carol Weiss (1998), "evaluation is not a stroll on the beach."

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About the author

ROBERT PICCIOTTO, Visiting Professor, International Development Institute, King's College (London), is a graduate of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs (Princeton University). A former member of the United Kingdom Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (2006-2010), he currently serves on the boards of the UK Evaluation Society and the European Evaluation Society. He is also a member of advisory committees including Wilton Park, a quasi-autonomous agency of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Emerging Markets Symposium of Oxford University. In the World Bank Group, which he joined in 1962, he was Director-General of the Independent Evaluation Group, a post which he occupied for two successive five-year terms (1992-2002) – after having served in other senior management positions including Director, Projects Department in three Regional Offices, and Vice-President, Corporate Planning and Budgeting. Since 2002, he has provided independent evaluation advice to a wide range of development agencies, think tanks, and philanthropic organizations, including The Rockefeller Foundation.

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