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Title: Mission-oriented public policy and the new evaluation culture

Year: 2020

Version: Accepted manuscript

Please cite the original version:

Lähteenmäki-Smith, K., & Virtanen, P., (2020). Mission-oriented public policy and the new evaluation culture. In: Lehtimäki, H., Uusikylä, P., & Smedlund, A., (eds). *Society as an Interaction Space : a systemic approach*. Translational Systems Sciences, vol 22. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-0069-5_4

Mission-oriented public policy and the new evaluation culture

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Abstract

In this chapter, our aim is to develop a framework to improve public policy related evaluation practice for a more adaptive and anticipatory evaluation approach, better in tune with complex interactions and interdependencies that have emerged on our policy agenda today. One of the features of this space for interactions that is public policy is its mission-orientation. Such an orientation is accompanied by the evolution of public policy instruments, which in turn necessitate new evaluation approaches. We are convinced that this requires developing a conceptual framework, which can be taken forward to test and further operationalise in situations where similar systemic transformations for policy development are elaborated upon.

Based on our work on public sector leadership, we are proposing a framework for evaluation in a more mission-driven and systems-based perspective. The framework seeks to take better into consideration the diversity of policy interventions at our disposal, ranging from traditional budgetary or legislative instruments to experimentation and piloting. Changes are identified in the very characteristics of the societal problems we are trying to solve, as well as in the nature of policy, both subsequently requiring a more multi-faceted scope of evaluation, emerging practice being towards a more mission-oriented one, as well as a more nuanced approach depending on whether one is interested in the multi-organizational performance, policy service delivery or quality of outputs and impacts from policy initiatives and projects. The focus of evaluation in turn ranges from the accountability to evaluation criteria, time-scale, motivation, as well as type of intervention used.

Introduction

This chapter builds upon a new conceptual treatise about phenomenon-based and systemic evaluation practice. The authors argue that our society as an interaction space is full of complex societal phenomena, which are best approached in a more systems-based, holistic fashion, rather than through piecemeal, one-dimensional or sectoral solutions. The main idea of the chapter is to discuss the new approach and role of public policy evaluation practice and to link the theoretical, conceptual and practical reasoning concerning evaluation embedded to the practice of public policy in society. In this chapter, we maintain that evaluation is a part of a systemic public policy – when the more conventional policy instruments evolve to fit better in with experimental governance, so do evaluation practice as well. Public policy evaluation, in all its varieties, is an important nucleus in the value chain comprised of complex adaptive public policy systems where decision-makers, institutions, organizations, citizens and public

service users make sense and try to pinpoint the value of public interventions, increasingly bring about by various public, semi-public or market-oriented service ecosystems.

Societal complexity is also an essential driver of change from the perspective of public management doctrines and public policy evaluation ideals. As for the public management doctrines, the New Public Management (NPM) came into the scene during 1990s as radical and innovative insight, conquering the bureaucratic bastions of Weberian task-oriented public policy and administrative world. NPM´s promise was to put emphasis on effectiveness of public interventions. Soon after the turn of the new Millenia, the New Public Governance (NPG) started to replace NMP as the dominant public-sector management doctrine by providing new understanding about governance issues, societal power networks and putting emphasis on the effectiveness and financial efficiency of public interventions. The NPG has served its purpose as a conceptual and theoretical model of public policy making and public policy evaluation, yet from the current perspective it offers much less potential to practical challenges public-sector policy makers face in their everyday work, serving their citizens and administrations. It seems that societal complexity and related interconnectedness turned out to be too much for the NPG discourse and practice.

Phenomenon-based public policy offers an approach based on strategic agenda-setting and implementation through holistic, cross-sector thinking, familiar from pedagogy all through the 2010s, only recently having made a serious transition to policy-making, with themes such as social inclusion, circular economy or inclusive and sustainable growth becoming central themes on the government agenda (e.g. Cairney & Geyer 2017). These holistic and horizontal phenomena are also particularly well-suited for more mission-oriented policy design, as the interactions and interdependencies which emerge when policies are defined through mission-driven processes restructure the agenda-setting itself (e.g. Mazzucato 2018a; 2018b).

The potential and promise of a more phenomenon-based policy, better in line with mission-driven approaches to our societal agenda lies in three main characteristics of approaching policy: 1) capacity for better policy consistency and coherence, which can in turn be more effective in achieving policy impacts; 2) systems-approach: making the causalities, root causes and interconnections more visible and by so doing raising more attention to the knowledge- and evidence base of policies; and 3) more open and inclusive dialogue, across the sectors and policy spheres, which can be seen as having intrinsic value of its own and may lead to more inclusive policies and more deliberative-style public policy-making.

In this chapter, we ask *how evolving phenomenon-based public policy making and mission-oriented public policy governance consequently reshape the traditional landscape of public policy instrument and especially the existing public policy practices.* We intend to explore the idea *how evaluation fits in with phenomenon-based experimental governance.*

In the following, our approach builds upon multiple theoretical and conceptual research discussions, which cut across the domains of public institutions, public policy, public-sector leadership, public services, public policy evaluation and accountability. Among these discussions, which are of direct relevance for evaluation practice and culture, are fundamental themes such as: 1) **the decreased predictability and accelerating speed of change in public-sector leadership and the evolution of public policy instruments** (e.g. Van der Wart 2003; 2013; 2017; Van der Wal 2017; Doz *et al.* 2018; Bourgon 2017; Bähr 2010); 2) **the inter-connectedness of decision-making and the need for cross-sectoral collaboration, in line with the society as an interaction space; 3) mission-oriented public-policy** brought about by the complexity of the societal challenges and evolving ecosystems, touching upon the very public value notions themselves(from segregation to climate change

and digitalisation to platform economy; including new funding and investment methods such as alliances, impact investments and social impact bonds) (e.g. Mazzucato 2018a; 2018b; Mazzucato & Semieniuk 2017); 4) **innovative leadership methods and practices** (including experimentation, social innovation and co-creation) (e.g. Stephan *et al.* 2016; Bason 2017; 2018; Moussa *et al.* 2018; Mulgan 2013; 2018); 45) **digital, more customer-oriented services, citizen participation and deliberation in service development** (e.g. Greve 2015; Osborne 2018; Crosby *et al.* 2017; Virtanen & Stenvall 2018); and finally 6) **the transformation and crisis of representative democracy** (e.g. Haskell 2000; Micklethwait & Wooldridge 2015). Whilst we see these as part and parcel of the cultural shift from a centralised and sector-based approach to policy, our main focus will be on the changes brought about by complexity or interactions and how they are connected to a more phenomenon-based and mission-driven thinking.

This chapter is organized as follows. *Firstly*, we will discuss the complexities of society from the point of view of public policy evaluation, focusing on the systemic nature of societal problems today´s societies currently face throughout the globe. *Secondly*, we ´bring in´ new approach to public policy which draws heavily on the current discussions about the role of state, public institutions and public policy in targeting societal problems and implementing public interventions to alleviate the negative effects of these problems and especially so-called wicked problems. *Thirdly*, we propose a framework for public policy evaluation for a more phenomenon-based (e.g. climate change, social exclusion, loneliness) governance system. The proposed framework seeks to take better into consideration the diversity of policy interventions ranging from traditional budgetary or legislative instruments to experimentation and piloting. Policy target identification subsequently require a more multi-faceted scope of evaluation, emerging practice being towards a more mission-oriented one, as well as a more nuanced approach depending on whether one is interested in the multi-organizational performance, policy service delivery or quality of outputs and impacts from policy initiatives and projects. The focus of public policy evaluation in turn ranges from the accountability to evaluation criteria, time-scale, motivation, as well as type of intervention used. *Fourthly*, our analysis concludes with ideas for further research agenda around the subject.

Does societal complexity fit in with our administrative structures?

A more mission-driven approach to policy is necessitated by the inability of our sector-based policies to respond to our societal challenges. Diverse societal phenomena that we meet in the society today are complex (and in some cases wicked) by their nature. Their causes and influences, as well as the mechanisms they reflect are so multifaceted that they require more comprehensive and cross-border approaches if they are to be understood, analysed, let alone solved. They no longer cater for sector-based administrative solutions in policy practice. Their characteristics complicate any attempts to find suitable solutions for their evaluation, be in terms of impact or effectiveness, success and performance or perhaps more acutely still, in terms of legitimacy (e.g. Termeer & Dewulf 2018; Laakso *et al.* 2017). Examples of such phenomena include the effect of climate change on human behaviour and consumer choices, social exclusion of certain groups in our society, the new economic potential and activity brought about by circular economy or platform economy.

Conceptually *a phenomenon* can be a simple object of observation, something that is perceived, but the reasons or explanations for which are unclear and the fundamental causalities or determining factors cannot be directly perceived. Such phenomena thus need to be observed and understood more comprehensively, from various points of view, systematically and beyond administrative or disciplinary boundaries. The term "phenomena-based learning" has perhaps been the most often used one as educational approaches and

curricula has increasingly been approached in this way. Phenomenon-based learning as a concept refers to the holistic teaching of real-world phenomena, which crosses educational boundaries and takes the characteristics of the question, of the phenomenon in question as the starting point for the search of answers in the learning process.

From the perspective of learning and public policy implementation, complexity itself it is not the main problem. Harnessing complexity is a truism and impossible as a thought. Complexity becomes problematic only when we try to solve the drivers and consequences of complexity with old mindsets. As already referred to above, in order to respond to the needs of complex adaptive systems, we need to be increasingly curious about the new solutions for identifying policy tools and instruments able to respond to the system transformation needs, as well as capable of identifying the potential directions for action within confines of the possible (policy change/societal transformation), adaptive and reflexive policy-making and evaluation approaches to fit the needs of such a system (e.g. Shine 2015; Innes & Booher 1999; Thomas 2012). Phenomena can be seen as clusters of complex issues or conundrums, which need to be seen, understood and developed into policy interventions through a systems approach. At their most basic, a phenomenon is a policy challenge or development, which needs to be perceived as part of a wider system and subject matter, instead of separate individual parts.

At present, governance and decision-making deals with issues and phenomena such as the exclusion of young people, climate change or changing nature of work and economic dynamic of a society in a wide range of administrative sectors and through separate budget resources, making the coming to grips with the phenomenon more difficult, with policy measures losing effectiveness, efficiency and coherence, becoming even mutually counter-productive. The lack of a shared understanding of any issue at hand itself thus makes making decisions on such phenomena particularly difficult. When it comes to allocating public funds towards a phenomenon-based agenda, it is clear that without a more phenomenon-based budgeting, i.e. budget or at least part of the budget being designed in a phenomenon-targeted fashion, the organizational momentum or administrative sectors and their sectoral interests quickly win ground, with financial resources allocated to key strategic goals, which do not necessarily share a common understanding of the cross-sector issues to be tackled.

Mission-oriented public policies as a means of creating joint societal value

Mission orientation in policy can be useful for making societal value easier to grasp. We often hear that government does not create value in itself, rather it facilitates or enables its creation and redistributes value through taxation and by various re-distribution mechanisms such as welfare benefits and social and health care services. From the perspective of mainstream economic thinking – and austerity policies within the umbrella of public policies (the assumption that public dept is an extreme enemy for economic growth and individual wellbeing, which should be handled by cutting government spending) – the narrative that government should limit itself to addressing market-failure or restraining actions that may disrupt the market has been extremely powerful since the 1980s, and especially after the 1990s (e.g. Mazzucato 2018b). Most strikingly, perhaps, this discussion has related to the banking sector and its role in solving the financial crises over the last few decades. Mertens (2019), for instance, has argued that the European Investment Bank has become a centre of gravity in long-standing political attempts to increase the investment firepower of the European Union since the 1990s through gradual process of institutional innovation, network formation, market creation and depth management.

This narrative of the 1980s and 1990s has been interesting in many ways – also from a historical perspective. Reinert (1999) has analysed the role played by the government sector in promoting economic growth in Western societies since the Renaissance and his conclusion is that the antagonism between state and market, which has characterised the end of the twentieth century, is a relatively new phenomenon: since the Renaissance one very important task of the state has been to create well-functioning markets by providing a legal framework, standards, credit and creating an infrastructure for markets to function.

Summarizing, the role of government, public policy and public institutions has been debated over the centuries. According to Mazzucato (2018: 229-230), these public entities have been considered as necessary but unproductive actors (as spenders and over-reaching regulators) throughout the history of economic thought – rather than value creators. Recent economic crises have underlined the fact that ´government failure´ is not the "whole picture". Mulgan (2013: 45-46) refers to 2008/2009 finance crises and argues that governments step in when markets fail: when economy is in turmoil, people turn more to their families and communities.

The concept of public value is at the heart of mission-oriented public policies when we consider public sector´s role and capabilities in pursuing societal value and value creation as a process. From today´s perspective, it is important to note, that public good, public value and value creation are not synonyms, even though they may get easily conflated in media and in the everyday discussions. Whereas public good refers to outputs governments deliver (based on the public policy instruments), public value is then much broader term, referring also to co-creation processes (by various societal actors and partners), intermediate effects and networks providing and expressing them. Value creation, then, refers to ways in which different service-dominant ways of human, physical and intangible capabilities and capacities are established, mobilised and orchestrated in economic and social markets together to produce new goods, goods related services, aiming at individual wellbeing and ultimately societal betterment through the process of co-shaping and co-creation.

The new treatise about creating public value brings about new "big questions" about government and public sector. It is not the size, budget or regulatory power, which make the difference, but how public institutions involve themselves in the betterment of society. From today´s perspective, mainstream economic thinking of the 1980s and 1990s, especially Public Choice theory, appears somewhat too narrow for the challenges the world and governments are facing. This view holds the idea that – from the perspective of economic and social value creation – all societal sectors (government, business, the third sector) maintain the idea that all of these institutions reinforce, nourish and help each other in the pursuit of common goal. This requires the presence of finance from public sources across the entire innovation chain, the deployment of mission-oriented policies which create new technological, innovation, and industrial landscapes and ecosystems, and the entrepreneurial and lead investor role of public actors within the domain of public policies.

Summing up, more intelligent public policy is policy that is both appropriate to the task at hand, feasible, timely and proportional to the objectives set. It has also an internal dynamic that allows for a future-oriented, more anticipatory way of working. Anticipatory governance or policy here does not only refer to the ability of governments to design policies to meet the needs of the future by better anticipating problems before they occur, often with the help of big data and monitoring, or to the process by which governments ensure acceptance of their measures (or industry for their technological standards through the inclusion of the public in their introduction to the public sphere. It also relates to the ability, capacity and willingness of governments to engage and commit themselves to considering broader policy changes or individual policy measures with the help of a futures perspective, be it through foresight,

scenarios or public panels, where the shared understanding of policies and the options available to governments in designing them are opened to public scrutiny and deliberation, with the help of systematic futures methodologies and technologies (about this discussion from the perspective of governance in the framework of the fourth industrial revolution, see Schwab 2017).

Social impact and mission-orientation are means of achieving a more phenomenon-based thinking, i.e. of starting from the societal challenge and task at hand and working one's way from there, rather seeking to find the solutions through variable and flexible pathways than of basing the activity to a planning-based structure of steps and milestones. Here the phenomenon-driven agenda can also benefit from experimental culture and the policy tools and instruments at its disposal.

Mission focus in public policy has a close link to phenomenon because it is a way to build agenda, commitment and ownership to an identified policy challenge. Although the phenomenon-based societal challenges are not technologically solved, their solution can benefit from lessons learned from ambitious techno-logic missions such as the US Space Administration's Apollo program or Internet invention or various breakthroughs in bio- or nanotechnology. Similar thinking is now needed in implementing a new agenda for innovation and growth policy (e.g. OECD or EU visions to enable "smart", "inclusive" and "sustainable" growth). Examples of such societal missions include 100 non-carbon cities in the climate change area by 2030, the Clean Environment of the Marine Environment by 2025, and the Human Welfare Area, reducing the human burden of memory sickness by 2030 by 2030.

Societal missions in Mazzucato's (2018) approach combine the following features, which may be taken as essential also for phenomenon-based thinking, when it is perceived as a serious commitment to mission-oriented and societally relevant cross-sectoral leadership practice:

- Courage; significant societal relevance and potential impact and ability to achieve change, allowing for the mobilization of significant resources, actors and commitment across the society.

- Clear direction and measurability; despite its large scale and long-time span, societal missions should be able to be formulated into clearly measurable measures, which can be broken into steps and stages, milestone to be achieved through collaboration.

- Ambitious and realistic measures from the point of view of private sector; policy measures should be formulated in a manner that allows for the private sector to partake in the public-sector interventions. This type of collaborative effort would bring the added value of the public sector into the private sector sphere (and vice versa).

- Cross-border dimension; crossing the boundaries of disciplines, sectors and society is characteristic to phenomenon-based policy as a whole, and also for significant missions across the sectors.

- Partnerships; solutions bring together actors across disciplines and fields of expertise, also requiring new kinds of joint initiatives for development and ownership of them (Partnership orientation). In this respect, mission-driven innovation can also lead to systemic changes through ecosystem-formation.

- Diversity of possible solutions and bottom-up orientation; missions should not be achievable by a single development path, or by a single technology, rather they should

be open to being addressed by different types of solutions. A mission-based approach is typically very clear on the expected outcome, but the trajectory through which it is achieved is to be based on a bottom-up approach of multiple solutions, which can also be open to experimentation and adjusted along the way.

The variety of alternative paths and means by which the objectives (phenomenon-based or otherwise) can be achieved, requires a broad perspective on the evaluative options available. Policy diversity is paralleled by evaluation diversity, ranging from methods to data and rationale of evaluation.

Mission-driven policy accompanied by changing landscape of public policy instruments

As the logic of policy changes, so do the relevant instruments. It becomes increasingly important to understand which instruments are suited for which situation, context and purpose. The urgency to develop sustainable and relevant evaluating methods and frameworks for policy is exacerbated by the need that it is increasingly difficult to identify and differentiate the tools that are best suited for dealing with any policy issue (e.g. whether a policy challenge in fact is complex, wicked or in fact tame; Newman & Head 2017). The agenda for a more phenomenon-based governance model, which better responds to the trends referred to above, necessitates a fundamental re-thinking of evaluation methods, practices and cultures.

The ¨new public-sector landscape¨ should be seen in the context of public sector's role as a provider of stability, rule of law and democracy, seeking to ensure that the renewal and government reforms are firmly embedded in the pursuit of transparency and openness. Such radical re-thinking of the government requires a parallel re-design of the whole framework for evaluation, as it can no longer be sufficient to provide an evaluation set-up that simplifies the interventions to a temporally limited (ex ante/ex post) scale or sometimes artificial under-estimation of the importance of networks and their impacts (external – internal distinction).

Taken together, these perspectives can be summed up as promoting the role of central government as an enabler of phenomenon-based good governance in the future. The transformation of governance culture requires commitment and process ownership of the society as a whole, not only ideas and proposals from expert organisations. If there is to be an evaluation culture, it should be one owned by the public, at the heart of accountability and public policy ethos.

The evaluation framework is necessitated by the shift from a simple to a complex system in policy challenges such as the inclusion of the young and fighting segregation. The need for policy innovation and more phenomenon-based policy, is at the same time appreciative of relevant scale and small wins (e.g. Termeer & Dewulf 2018; Thomas 2012), rather than seeking to promote solutions for complex policy challenges and missions that defy easy solutions or one-dimensional frameworks and framing attempts.

Complex adaptive systems cannot be served by linear public policy intervention models, which only target one area of policy development, one agent or actor, or individual policy sector. This type of policy-design for complex systems in our view brings about a need for evaluation framework, which is at the same time experimental in nature at best Randomized Control Trial (RCT)-based or research driven, e.g. basic income experiment in Finland), strategically timely (both ex ante and on-going, e.g. sustainability experiments), multi-dimensional / perspective (e.g. municipal employment experiments) and learning-oriented (e.g. small-scale circular-economy experiments). (E.g. Annala and Berg 2017.).

In addition to the legislative route, there are numerous other ways of designing policy and public-sector intervention, as is indicative in the example provided by the UK Policy Lab (see below). The diversity of available options for any government, policy-maker or policy-designer is such that when faced with a phenomenon-based need for change or transformation, we often overlook the multiplicity of the options, at the expense of easy or familiar options. Throughout the OECD countries, the predominance of traditional roles such as funder, regulator or legislator has been very strong. However, in many cases the softer options of collaborator or stewards may be more effective in terms of promoting change.

Conceptually speaking, the UK Policy Lab model comes close to various models of government intervention which have adopted dialogic approaches to traditional decision-making processes. The UK Policy Lab model draws to a great extent from the idea of collective intelligence, which has been developed within the framework of Nesta in the UK (e.g. Mulgan 2013 and 2018) and consists of broad themes related to better understanding of facts and experiences, more inclusive decision-making and gaining better and more comprehensive oversight of what is done and accomplished by government, private and third sector organizations.

Table 1. Framework for government interventions (UK Policy Lab 2018).

STYLES OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION	Early stage intervention	Framing, piloting and market forming	Scaling, mainstreaming and market building	Moving in mature markets and policy ecosystems
Government as **COLLABORATOR** working with others to build evidence and develop ideas	*Champion*, i.e. build case for change and retain alliances for action	*Convening power*, i.e. draw together expertise from across system	*Connecting networks*, i.e. encourage government experts and citizens to co-create change	*Co-producing,* i.e. co-deliver by steering different actors from across the system to deliver outcomes
Government as **STEWARD** steering a sector through influence and information	*Agenda setting*, i.e. build awareness and confidence in new opportunities by providing thought leadership	*Strategy and skills planning*, i.e. prepare for changing workforce demands and consequences of change	*Educating and informing*, i.e. ensure regulation is sufficiently understood and citizens know what´s available for them.	*Giving a voice*, i.e. creating platforms for citizens and stakeholders to protect vested rights and interests.
Government as **CUSTOMER** buying goods and commission services	*Catalyst*, i.e. review, identify and invest in key opportunities with strategic value	*Standard setting*, i.e. develop standards for data collection and presentation	*User centred commissioner*, i.e. understanding citizens needs and contracting services that deliver best impact	*Levering buying power*, i.e. utilise public procurement to encourage investment and protect consumer rights.
Government as **PROVIDER** designing, providing, and modifying public services	*Innovator*, i.e. create test beds, sandboxes and trials in real world settings	*Service redesign*, i.e. establish legitimacy for more human centred services, harnessing political will for change	*Service provider*, i.e. provide services directly or indirectly through funding and target setting	*Choice architect*, i.e. nudging behaviour so that the default is both attractive and easy
Government as **FUNDER** stimulating or leading investment	*Early adopter*, i.e. invest in the early exploration of new opportunities with strategic value	*Fiscal incentives*, i.e. direct finance to stimulate new thinking that can drive future opportunities	*Grants and subsidies*, i.e. incentivise behaviour change through grants or other incentives	*Platform provision*, i.e. scale up proven ideas through existing infrastructure and public services
Government as **REGULATOR** regulating a sector and coordinating enforcement	*Encourage voluntary codes*, i.e. self-regulation, without legislation, allowing for greater flexibility	*Governance*, i.e. ensure regulation supports the conditions for change and delivers the policy intent	*Building a regulatory environment*, i.e. ensure regulation enables the intended policy outcomes	*Compliance*, i.e. support enforcement and harmonise regulatory compliance environment
Government as **LEGISLATOR** making laws and amending legislation	*Green papers*, i.e. publish proposals for discussion with stakeholders and the public	*White papers & draft bills*, i.e. publish proposals for consultation and pre-legislative scrutiny	*Primary and secondary legislation*, i.e. support a bill through parliament and enact legislation	*Amend rules*, i.e. statutory instruments (rules, orders) created by delegated authorities (e.g. secretary of state)

This type of more sophisticated way of identifying public sector intervention can also make visible the tension inherent in the political and policy time scale: whilst the political sphere seeks to proceed rapidly and view solutions in an electoral cycle perspective and therefore prone to (at least seemingly) "technical", "orderly" or even "simple" solutions, for policy making the picture is necessarily more nuanced. Here moving from an operational to a more strategically formulated policy rationalisation is necessary, and even further: the vision of any government can only achieve change in relatively short term, but by seeking to formulate vision in a longer strategic perspective, also the cross-generational perspectives comes to focus. Here the shift entails moving from a problem-or solution-based rationale to mission-based approach.

The plethora of available policy instruments necessitate new evaluation frameworks

Evaluation frameworks also need to adapt, because they need to respond to policy change, which comes with more experimental governance. If tradition policy instruments proliferate by nature, then how evaluation approaches evolve? This is the question we turn next. At the outset, governments are already increasingly developing and benchmarking instruments and new methods, which can provide them with new solutions. Policy experimentation represents one of the key facets of this new systemic approach to governance innovation. The type of policy trials and strategic experiments explored are diverse, thereby necessitating a multi-method evaluation approach. Main types include open-ended, though result or even mission-driven *experimentation* (most in line with the aspirations of traditional thinking for evidence-informed policy), *piloting for early implementation* (e.g. inspiring and facilitating cultural change), *piloting for demonstration* (more testing for validation purposes than open-ended learning) and *operationalising policy through experimentation* (e.g. 'trailblazing').

As such, the framework proposed (see annex 1) seeks to address the evaluation paradox discussed by for instance Termeer and Dewulf (2018), where evaluations seek to judge policies as solutions for problems that per definition defy solutions and in relation to which "one can always do better", i.e. additional efforts might increase the chances of finding a better solution. The framework thus seeks to address the usual responses to the paradox, namely paralysis (of doing nothing in face of finding the evaluation too daunting) and overestimation (the false assumption that a wicked problem can indeed be solved and addressing it through focussing on one single aspect or standpoint).

In terms of evaluation that is of relevance for pressing current phenomena, we are quickly faced with the conundrum of intervention and policy relevance. Can policy intervention make a difference in terms of policy change, systems change or impact? Here we are referring to the new role of the public sector and its role in enabling investment thinking in long-term systems change, as well as facilitating the problem-solving and mobilization of resources, where complex problem-solving is based on a very ambitious goal-setting and resource orientation. The mission is a social phenomenon-driven challenge, such as climate change, social segregation or platform economy.

As we put forward earlier, public policies are increasingly interconnected, many issues having become interdependent and having an influence or impact on each other. Typical example is social exclusion of young people and the phenomena around the so-called NEET group (young people who are outside education, employment or training). While there may be perfectly valid reasons for being in this position (e.g. taking a leap year), there are many among the young who end up in this position for reasons that are indicative of social

exclusion. The first indications of social exclusion may become manifest in lack of early year education, behavioural problems as small children etc., though on the level of evaluative knowledge only become visible (through indicators) once the problem has already lead to dropping out of education. In such cases the early symptoms and understanding the root causes could be decisive in better addressing the root causes, identifying solutions and implementing them through less costly and potentially more effective soft measures. As the indications of the core phenomenon involved are necessarily diverse and multi-faceted, identifying effective means of policy intervention can be particularly difficult, but also potentially powerful, if successful.

In what follows, we make a distinction in-between four evaluation scopes (i.e. where to focus evaluations). They are 1) mission-oriented public policy, 2) multi-organizational performance review in public administration, 3) public service delivery and 4) development initiatives, experiments and projects. Our suggestion thus is to make a distinction between different vertical levels in the planning and implementation of public policies and to build certain common elements in practical evaluation agendas at each level based on societal phenomena and vertical/horizontal accountability function and to take into account the new role of public organizations and service ecosystems.

In the proposed model, we address basically all conventional evaluation time-scales – ranging from ex ante to on-going and ex post (e.g. Scriven 1991) – but address special emphasis on on-going or process evaluation, where learning is prioritised over accountability. At the core of the proposed model is the utilization aspect of evaluative inquiry drawing heavily on Patton´s *Magnum Opus* published at the late 1990s (Patton 1997). This is partly because utilization-focused evaluation is still widely recognized as the most influential approach in current evaluation practice, but ultimately because the proposed model is a broader one through its disciplinary foundations, stemming from sociology of knowledge, diffusion of innovation, sociological perspectives on power and conflict, organizational sociology, and multiple use of different research methods.

One of the advantages for evaluation practice of such an approach is its ability to accept ambiguity and ill structured societal challenges, which escape easy answers and are very much dependent on the context, therefore inherently contingent (See for instance Schwandt 2013). For us, this is where the beauty and promise of the phenomenon-based approach to policy and evaluation lies: practitioners problems and questions (by their definition practical in nature) can be assessed and (to at least some extent) solved parallel with general societal dilemmas or complex (or even wicked) problems which by their definition we may not be able to solve, but in seeking the solution can shed light on multiple perspectives into both the practical and contextual conditions in which the societal problem is faced. By so doing even the most practical evaluation questions may lead to significant findings for deepening the contextual understanding of the complex systemic nature of the broader phenomenon itself.

Mission-driven policy and its implications for evaluation

The evaluation framework that is proposed in this chapter is based on the assumption that a shift from a simple to a complex system and its understanding both in terms of theory and practice is necessary, in order to better to come to terms with the current megatrends and societal conundrums (e.g. climate change, urbanisation, social fragmentation). The policy challenges societies are faced with are less linear and increasingly require more cross-sectoral focus, more innovative contextual framing and more phenomenon-based policy. Yet the solutions proposed seek to find systemic solutions through small wins rather than grand

universal solutions (e.g. Termeer & Dewulf 2018; Thomas 2012). They essentially defy easy solutions or one-dimensional frameworks and framing attempts and by so doing provide interesting learning opportunities cross sectors, disciplines and areas of professional evaluation activity.

Both experimentation and exploration are required in complex adaptive systems, which cannot be served by linear public policy intervention models, targeting only one area of policy development, one agent or actor, or individual policy sector. Therefore, we have found it illustrative and useful to approach such societal challenges through a "phenomenon-based" systems approach.

Our analysis in this chapter call for further conceptual focusing and clarification on the nature and role of government interventions and evaluation of public policies. It is easy to express the idea that ´the change of public policy´ is immanent, but far more complex to answer the question why and with what kind of consequences experimentalist governance is evolving. We are convinced that further scrutiny should be situational and system-based and focused on change (´transformation of public-sector, public institutions and public policies´). One possibility opens up by structural contingency theory which would help in explaining the structure and role of public policies and public organizations by analysing their adjustment to external factors, particularly changing circumstances that introduce uncertainty in decision-making. Contingency thinking might be useful because in it the assumptions concerning research subject – evolving role of government and public policy in this chapter´s case – must be made about starting premises, agency boundaries and system specifics. This enables conceptual scientific inquiry to reach known truisms about the role of government, for instance – in this kind of analysis it is evident that congruent arguments (e.g. ´the greater the task uncertainty, the more complex the structure´) and contingent arguments (e.g. ´task uncertainty interacts with the structure of public policy adopted´) are from the same kind of theoretical treatise but offer instantly different perspectives to the research foci.

Considering the multiplicity of intervention styles and possibilities for policy learning in any one decision-making event, the possibilities of using evaluative knowledge and information through feedback loops are almost endless. The challenges lie in making the porous nature of policy-making also better understood by both the evaluation knowledge providers and the knowledge users. Here the sharing opportunities for framing public policy issues should also be better used and more professionally facilitated. This allows for evaluation into policy-making to make a leap towards evaluation into transformation. This in our view is a leap every evaluator, as well as every public-sector decision-maker should be willing to explore.

Our analysis in this chapter sets out the following research agenda:

- The detailed cultivation of the role of evaluation culture in the making of mission-oriented public policy.

- The new understanding of policy and institutional evaluation as an integral part of policy cycle. This challenge includes the idea of analysing public organizations and public service as value creators at local, regional, national and supranational levels of governance.

- Further theoretical treatise of the new public policy evaluation culture closely linked with the chains of value creating. This view also includes the new role of evaluation from the perspective of societal decision-making.

- Further conceptual re-assessment of public-sector accountability. We maintain the view that accountability not only transfers to horizontal accountability, it also paves

way to new understanding of ¨classical¨ bottom-up performance review and reporting.

Synthesis – where does the mission-driven policy lead us in our search for new evaluation practice?

Our chapter has entertained the need for a more mission-driven approach, which could be better suited for the multiple interfaces and connections, which society as a multi-facted interaction space accommodates. Certain critical discussion topics arise from our analysis and they all relate to the evaluation practice as well as to evaluation culture.

First, we would like to emphasize that the shift from issue- or problem-driven public policy to a phenomenon-based one experimental governance entails an equally important shift in evaluation practice. If the aforementioned conclusion is valid, we need to pose a further question as to its implications for evaluation. What does the shift from sector-driven policy to strategy-driven policy, or the shift from regulation-driven intervention to enabling-driven role for the government bring imply for evaluation?

An important part of the shift was already referred to above, namely diversity, necessarily part of the phenomenon-based policy development. Parallel to diversity, interaction and methods of selection form what is called adaptive capacity (Innes & Booher 1999), which is also important in designing a new systemic approach to evaluation. As learning and tolerance of failure are an important part of adaptive capacity, phenomenon-based evaluation also prioritises possibilities for learning. As this is the case, learning – and not naming and shaping – constitute an essential ingredient as the motive to evaluate publicly funded interventions.

In order to design individual evaluations and transforming evaluation practice, better suitable of capturing the phenomenon-based transboundary or cross-sector policies, one has to be sensitive to the variable geometry of most of the evaluation elements, from diversity of timescales and perspectives to more variable portfolio of alternative methods and data, as well as the intended use and perceived usefulness of evaluation. Together these factors fit into a perspective of neo-institutionalist theory, where the traditional rationality assumptions are put under scrutiny, the role of actors (also collective ones) is emphasised, the relationships in-between organizational actors are made visible and interaction among organizations and organizational actors increasingly prioritised (e.g. Saks 2016).

Secondly, new understanding of time-scales is of particular relevance for the new evaluation culture. At the mission-oriented policy level, for instance, with the unit of analysis and the intended user of evaluation often being the national government, the tension between the required long-term perspective (of changing phenomena and their root-causes) and the realities of a short-term policy cycle (of individual governments) is most pronounced. The outdated model of policy cycle with a linear process of feeding knowledge into decision-making has already some time ago been replaced by a more fuzzy and complex picture of public policy, marked by fluidity and concentric circles and feedback loops. How to accommodate the political will to be seen to act swiftly and effectively with the necessary long-term perspective of many of the processes that transformation actually entail? How to ensure cross-generational focus when the need to act quickly and achieve results during one government term is hanging over head of politicians and policy-makers?

One reason could be found in framing evaluations around phenomenon-based themes that are more long-term and systemic in nature (e.g. Agenda2030 and the SDGs). Could they be included as a backdrop when farming individual, single policy initiatives and measures? Could the relevance or coherence of any set of policy interventions be assessed against the number (or degree) of adherence (or coherence) with the set targets in the Agenda2030? This has so far not been systematically explored, but there are attempts to this direction, such as

those undertaken by the Finnish government in its budget preparations for 2018 and 2019 budget. A more phenomenon-based budget could be in line with such a future-proofed focus of evaluative action.

A third issue to be considered is the perspective of knowledge deployment. The intended use and expected rationale for usefulness thus also needs reconsideration. Here we can refer to the variable intervention styles, as they clearly also necessitate a more varied toolkit of evaluation knowledge and data to be considered in decision-making.

Many of the situations where choices between alternative options for action and policy are made are marked by imperfect information, asymmetrical knowledge base and time pressure. In such situations it is essential also for the evaluators and producers of evaluation knowledge to acknowledge that without a counterbalance the risk of Big Data could be that organizations and individuals start making decisions and optimizing performance for metrics, derived from algorithms, whilst in many cases Big Data only makes sense and can be framed in an understandable way when it is put into perspective and sense is made of the optimization process, people, stories and actual experiences.

We hope that the model (see annex 1) we proposed in this chapter for evaluation of phenomenon-based policy makes room for adaptive capacity, more porous and multi-faceted evaluation designs and more attention to the narrative and framing of evaluative information. Our shares sense-making of what we have learnt through evaluation is as important as the numbers revealed by evaluative efforts.

Final note – implications for practice, theory and research

In our view, the systems thinking that the multiplicity of potential intervention styles and methods allows for calls for attention on professional practice or evaluators and policy-makers alike. Change that a more mission-driven and phenomenon-based policy entails is at the same time a cultural and functional one and it has implications for policy practice and evaluation activity. The more diverse architecture of policy-intervention that was presented allows for policy-makers to rely on a range of tools, methods and approaches, and by so doing thereby also allows and in fact calls for more variety across the evaluation approaches applied. This changes their practice, theory and professional understanding. This also has implications for all aspects of policy formation, from agenda setting to implementation and evaluation, as well as to the professional skills required of policy-makers, practitioners and evaluators alike. One of the fundamental potentials for transformative change that we see in this complex terrain of intervention, evaluation and learning lies in fact in its nature as a sphere of interaction and collaborations, as the understanding of single interventions or their dynamics becomes secondary to understanding of the interactions, causalities and interfaces between the various spheres.

In this shift towards a more systems- and phenomenon-based approach, evaluation does not lose its relevance or its pertinence, rather the shift enriches the role of the evaluator and his or her professional practice. Experimentation is an inherent part of the more multi-faceted intervention architecture and here evaluation is more needed than ever, as the whole notion of experimentation calls for constant and rigorous reflection on the criteria of success and failure and the standards of effectiveness. In such an environment, professional practice or evaluation, just as professional practice of policy planning and interventions becomes one where the interfaces, interactions, feedback loops and corrective actions are particularly important. This may also require more openness to the outside world and more interaction across the evaluation field as a whole, as no single perspective, method or professional

practice alone can determine the value or success of a systemically positioned and farmed intervention.

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Annex 1. Four layers of future evaluation in the domain of public policy and public organizations: a holistic perspective.

Evaluation scope	Evaluation focus	Accountability focus	Key evaluation criteria	Evaluation time-scale key focus	Evaluation motive	Public-sector intervention mode
1. Mission-oriented public policy	- Public policy - Policy coordination - Policy coherence - Policy deployment - Implementation	*Horizontal & vertical:* towards political decision-makers and the public	- Policy-goal attainment - Policy-goal re-focus - Deadweight effects - Misplacement effects - Counterfactual effects	- Ex ante - "Normal" ex post (after the intervention) - "Extended" ex post (+3-4 years after the intervention)	- Policy choice successfulness - Societal betterment - Public sector as value creator in society	Transformation roles (driving new markets, opening new opportunities, changing roles in the longer term)
2. Multi-organizational performance review in public administration	- Public administration institutions - Public service multi-organizational ecosystems - Interaction	*Horizontal & vertical:* towards decision-makers, stakeholders, service users and the public	- Multi-organizational "joint" efficiency - Resource deployment among various organizations - Multiorganizational effectiveness - Systemic change of public institutions	- Ex ante - On-going (performance reviews) - Ex post	Performance management of multi-organizational setting	Ecosystem roles (e.g. co-producer, choice architect, providing platforms and funding change processes)
3. Public service delivery	- Service-user engagement - Service (re-)design - Service co-creation	*Mainly horizontal:* towards service-users	- Service experience - Service need satisfaction - Participation to co-creation - Empowerment	Ongoing i.e. learning by co-creation	- Mutual learning - Societal engagement - Enhancing democracy	Service provider, service innovator, service re-design
4. Development initiatives, experiments and projects	Experimentation Nudging	*Horizontal & vertical*: Towards political decision-makers and the public, organisational peers	- Lessons learned from experiments - Scaling possibilities of delivered experiments	- On-going - Ex post	Testing new ideas and initiatives	Steward, giving voice and support to change makers, choice architect, rule-maker