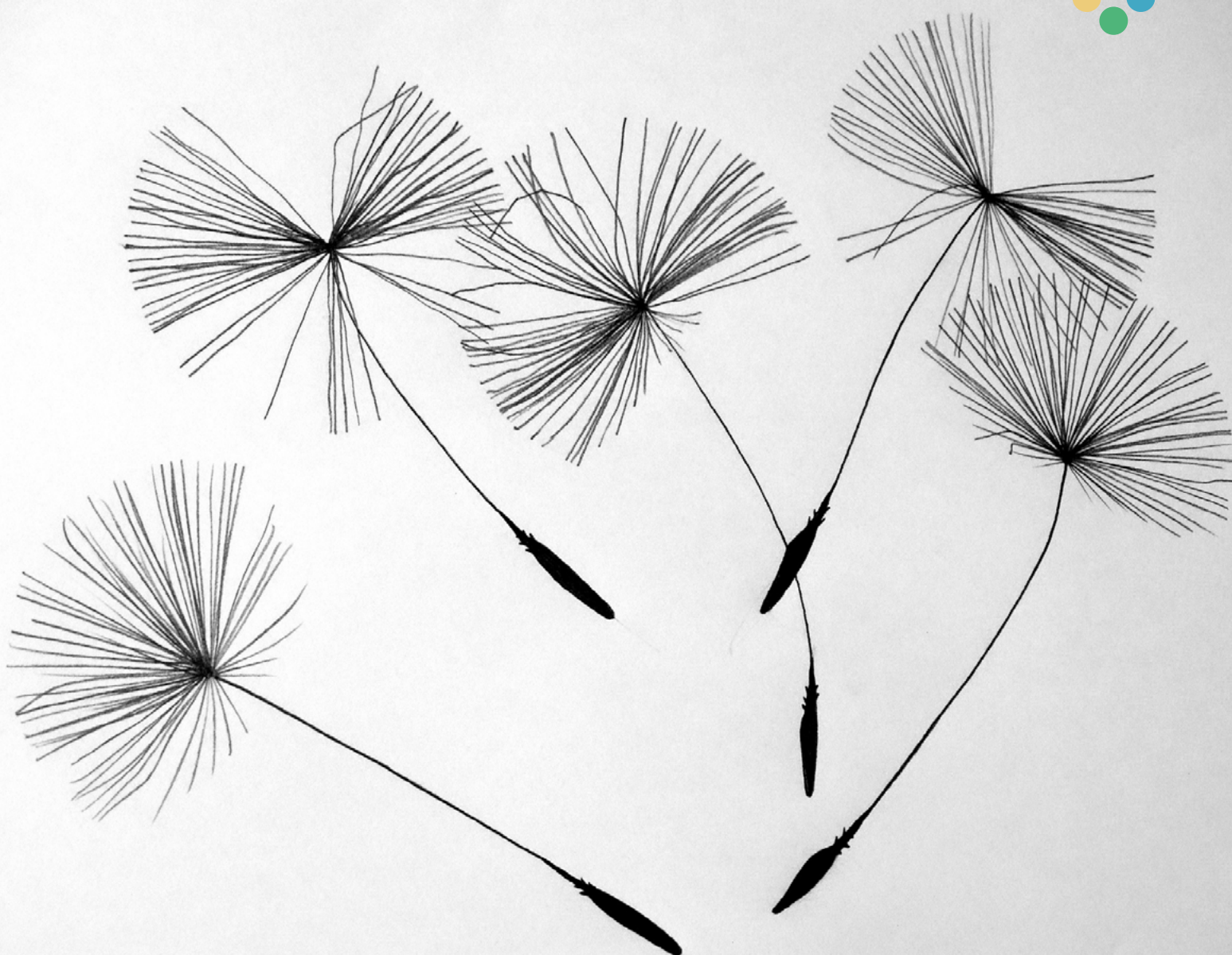# Evaluation of Complex Policy and Programmes

A CECAN module for future policy analysts and evaluators

About this course

This is a CECAN Module for future policy analysts and evaluators. The course was developed to support capacity building nationally and internationally in the evaluation of complex policy and programmes.

Level: Advanced
Audience: Social science postgraduate students
Length: 10 sessions of 2 hours each
Prerequisites: Knowledge of social science research equivalent to a first degree

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Evaluation of Complex Policy and Programmes

This syllabus outlines some of the strategies, approaches and methods that an evaluator or evaluation commissioner might want to use to tackle the challenges of complexity social science and policy evaluation. It examines complexity and its role in social science research, the methodological challenges this can pose for evaluation of complex policy and programmes, and provides a range of methods which can help in the understanding of complex causality, emergence and feedback loops.

Session Outline

1. Introduction and Motivation
2. Complexity and the Social Sciences
3. Policy Research and Evaluation
4. Evaluating Change and Continuity
5. Evaluation and Methodological Challenges
6. Qualitative Comparative Analysis
7. Systems Mapping
8. Agent Based Modelling
9. Working through Examples
10. The Future of Evaluation

1 | Introduction and motivation

This session introduces the course and ensures that everyone has a common basic understanding of policy, policy implementation, and evaluation.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:
- An overview of what policy making and policy implementation consist of, an understanding of what is meant by 'evaluation', and the different types of evaluation;
- An appreciation of the role of evaluation in policy making;
- An introduction to some of the typical challenges that evaluators have to face;
- An overview of the course.

Essential Reading

1. Manager's guide to evaluation. Better Evaluation. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/commissioners_guide
2. Hallsworth, M. with S. Parker and J. Rutter (2011). *Policy Making in the Real World: Evidence and Analysis*. London: Institute for Government. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Policy%20making%20in%20the%20real%20world.pdf
3. Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey, J. S. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. Hodboken: John Wiley & Sons. Inc.

Additional Reading

4. HM Treasury (2011). *The Magenta Book: Guidance for evaluation*. London: Institute for Government. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220542/magenta_book_combined.pdf
5. Norris, E., Marc Kidson, M., Bouchal, P. and Rutter, J. (2014). *Doing them Justice: Lessons from four cases of policy implementation*. London: Institute for Government. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Policy Implementation case studies report - final.pdf
6. Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*: 4th Edition. London: Sage.
7. Pawson, R. & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic evaluation*. London: Sage.
8. Robson, C. (2017). *Small-scale evaluation: Principles and practice*. London: Sage.
9. Vedung, E. (2017). *Public policy and program evaluation*. London: Routledge.
10. Weiss, C H. (1997). Evaluation, 2nd Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
11. Pressman, J. L., & Wildavsky, A. B. (1984). *Implementation: how great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland: or, why it's amazing that federal programs work at all, this being a saga of the Economic Development Administration as told by two sympathetic observers who seek to build morals on a foundation of ruined hopes*, Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press.

Exercises

1. Locate (in a library, or by searching a government website) a report on a policy evaluation. Review it critically did the evaluators do a good job?
2. Select a policy that has already been implemented. Using search engines, newspaper articles and government and other reports, try to track the policy from its genesis to its current state, noting particularly any changes of focus, scope or aims that occurred along the way. What were the reasons for the changes?

2 | Complexity and the social sciences

This session will introduce some of the main ideas associated with complexity and will consider the extent to which these ideas might be applied to a wide range of social phenomena.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:

- A basic understanding of some of the main ideas associated with complexity;
- A basic appreciation of the scope of applying complexity to a wide range of different social systems;
- An introductory level appreciation of the methodological challenge involved in studying complex systems in general and complex social systems in particular.

Essential Reading

1. Cilliers, P. (1999). *Complexity and Postmodernism*. London: Routledge. Chapter 1.
2. Reed, M. and Harvey, D. (1996). Social Science as the Study of Complex Systems'. In L. Keil & E. Elliott (Eds.). *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. pp. 295-324.

Additional Reading

3. Ball, P. (2012). *Why society is a complex matter: Meeting twenty-first century challenges with a new kind of science*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
4. Byrne, D. and Callaghan, G. (2014). Complexity theory and the social sciences: The state of the art. London: Routledge.
5. Gilbert, N. & Bullock, S. (2014). *Complexity at the social science interface*. Complexity, 19(6): 1-4.
6. Kiel, D. & Elliott, E. (Eds) (1998). *Chaos theory in the social sciences: foundations and applications*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
7. Lansing, J. S. & Kremer, J. N. (1993). Emergent properties of Balinese water temple networks: coadaptation on a rugged fitness landscape. *American Anthropologist*, 95: 97-114.
8. Morin, E. (2006). Restricted complexity, general complexity. Paper presented at the Colloquium "Intelligence de la complexite: Epistemologie et pragmatique", Cerisy-La-Salle, France, June 26th, 2005. Translated from French by Carlos Gershenson. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://cogprints.org/5217/1/Morin.pdf
9. Mowles, C. (2014). Complex, but not quite complex enough: The turn to the complexity sciences in evaluation. *Evaluation*, 20(2): 160-175.
10. Stacey, R. (2009). *Complexity and Organizational Reality: Uncertainty and the need to rethink management after the collapse of investment capitalism*. London: Routledge.
11. Strathern, M. and McGlade, J. (Eds) (2014). *The social face of complexity science*. Litchfield Park, AZ: Emergent.

Exercises

1. Select a social problem, topic or event. Explain how it may be considered to be complex.
2. 'All social systems are complex systems.' Discuss.
3. To what extent can insights from complexity science be applied to social systems?

3 | Policy research and evaluation

This session will introduce to the concept of evaluation in a government policy context, and key principles related to the planning and delivery of a high quality and useful evaluation.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:
- An understanding of the purpose and use of policy evaluation in current UK government practice;
- An appreciation of evaluation, appraisal, monitoring and research and their differences and similarities;
- An appreciation of participative evaluation approaches;
- An understanding of the process, impact and economic evaluation and their differences and similarities;
- Key principles (evaluation questions, programme attributes and available designs) that need to be considered when designing a policy evaluation;
- 8 steps in planning a high quality and useful evaluation.

Essential Reading

Key government documents related to policy evaluation
1. HM Treasury (2003). *The Green Book: appraisal and evaluation in central government: Treasury guidance*. London: Stationery Office. Retrieved 10 December 2017: from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220541/green_book_complete.pdf
2. HM Treasury (2011). *The Magenta Book: Guidance for evaluation*. London: Institute for Government. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220542/magenta_book_combined.pdf

Additional Reading

Texts on quality standards and good practice in evaluation
3. HM Treasury (2012). *Quality in Policy Impact Evaluation: understanding the effects of policy from other influences* (supplementary Magenta Book guidance). Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190984/Magenta_Book_quality_in_policy_impact_evaluation__QPIE_.pdf
4. Cabinet Office (2003). *Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence*. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/a_quality_framework_tcm6-38740.pdf
5. UKES Guidelines for good practice in evaluation - UKES - the UK. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.evaluation.org.uk/index.php/news-resources/ukes-publications/46-ukes-guidelines-for-good-practice-in-evaluation
6. UKES Evaluation Capabilities Framework - the UK Evaluation Society. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.evaluation.org.uk/index.php/about-us/publications/77-ukes-capabilities-framework
7. Participatory evaluation. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/ participatory_evaluation

Exercises

1. Consider the ROAMEF cycle (from the Green and Magenta books): discuss the difference between the appraisal, monitoring and evaluation stages in the cycle, and the challenges that a complex policy or programme might pose in implementing this cycle in practice
2. Taking a specific example of a complex policy intervention: consider the purpose and value of undertaking an evaluation of this, and identify 3 evaluation questions that the evaluation might address.

4 | Evaluating complex intervention

This session will introduce the challenge involved in evaluating complex intervention empirically. In particular, it will consider some of the key issues involved in measuring change and continuity specifically in relation to intervention.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:
- A basic appreciation of the challenges involved in evaluating change and continuity;
- A basic understanding of the empirical challenges of evaluating complex public policy interventions over time.

Essential Reading

1. Pawson, R. & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. London: Sage.
2. Guyatt, G., Walter, S., & Norman, G. (1987). Measuring change over time: Assessing the usefulness of evaluative instruments. *J Chronic Dis* 40: 171-178.

Additional Reading

3. Byrne, D. (2013). Evaluating complex social interventions in a complex world. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 217-228.
4. Bamberger, M., & Vaessen, J., & Raimondo, E. (2015). *Dealing with complexity in development evaluation: A practical approach*. London: Sage.
5. Burns, D. and Worsley, S. (Eds) (2015). *Navigating complexity in international development: Facilitating sustainable change at scale*. Practical Action Publishing.
6. Coffman, J. (2007). A Framework for Evaluating Systems Initiatives. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.buildinitiative.org/WhatsNew/ViewArticle/tabid/96/ArticleId/621/Framework-for-Evaluating-Systems-Initiatives.aspx
7. Johnston, L.M. & Matteson C.L., Finegood D,T. (2014). Systems science and obesity policy: a novel framework for analyzing and rethinking population-level planning. *American Journal of Public Health*. 04(7): 1270-8.
8. Norman, G., Stratford, P. & Regehr, G. (1997). Methodological problems in the retrospective computation of responsiveness to change. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 50(8): 869-879.
9. Preskill, H., Mack, K., Cook, J. & Gopal. S. (2014). *Evaluating complexity: Propositions for improving practice, foundation strategy group*. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.fsg.org/publications/evaluating-complexity
10. Small, K. & Song, S. (1994). Population and employment densities: Structure and change. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 36: 292-313.
11. Stern, E., Stame, N., Mayne, J., Forss, K., Davies, R., & Befani, B. (2012). *Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluations*, Working Paper 38. London: Department for International Development.

Exercises

1. What is change? What is continuity? How might you operationalise particular kinds of change and continuity?
2. Consider a policy intervention. What might you measure to evaluate the intervention? How might you design an evaluation to capture those changes?

5 | Evaluation and methodological challenges

This session will examine some of the challenges that complex situations pose for the planning, commissioning and undertaking of a high quality and useful evaluation.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:
- The methodological challenges of undertaking policy evaluation in a complex setting;
- Some key evaluation approaches or frameworks available (experimental, theory based, economic), the circumstances in which each of these are most appropriate and useful, and how each of these handle issues of attribution and complexity;
- Key choices and dilemmas in commissioning, managing and undertaking an evaluation in a complex setting, particularly in addressing the uncertainties that arise in a complex setting.

Essential Reading

1. DFID Working Paper 38. *Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluations.* Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67427/design-method-impact-eval.pdf
2. Bamberger M., Vaessen J. and Raimondo E. (2016). *Dealing with complexity in development evaluation.* London: Sage.
3. Vogel, I. (2012). *Theory of Change in International Development: Review Report* DfID. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a5ded915d3cfd00071a/DFID_ToC_Review_VogelV7.pdf

Additional reading

4. Befani, B. *Choosing appropriate evaluation methods.* Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/evaluation-methods-tool
5. Pawson, R. (2008). *Causality for beginners.* In: NCRM Research Methods Festival (Unpublished). Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/245/
6. Tavistock Institute and AECOM: *Guidance for transport impact evaluations: choosing an evaluation approach to achieve better attribution.* Department of Transport. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110203142641/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/evaluation/evaluationguidance/transportimpact/
7. Quinn Patton M (2010). *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use.* Guildford Press.
8. Pawson, R. (2013). *The science of evaluation: A realist manifesto.* London: Sage.

Exercises

1. Take an example (invitation to tender) of a complex policy or programme (that provides a description of the programme and the reason why an evaluation is to be undertaken)
2. Work (in small groups) to develop a logic or theory of change map for the policy or programme, and use this, and the information about the purpose of the evaluation, to consider what might be an appropriate evaluation approach and data collection methods to help address this evaluation purpose.

6 | Qualitative Comparative Analysis

This session introduces qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) - a case-based approach that relies on Boolean algebra, which crudely speaking is a way of sorting differentiating units or cases according to whether they share or do not share particular configurations of attributes.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:
- A basic understanding of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA);
- A basic understanding of the differences between necessary and sufficient causation;
- An elementary reading level of truth-tables;
- An introductory level understanding of the differences between case based and variable based methods.

Essential Reading

1. Ragin, C. (n.d.) What is qualitative comparative analysis (QCA)? Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/250/1/What_is_QCA.pdf
2. Ragin, C. (1989). The logic of the comparative method and the algebra of logic. Journal of Quantitative Anthropology. 1(2): 373-398.

Additional Reading

3. Cooper, B. & Glaesser, J. (2016). Analysing necessity and sufficiency with qualitative comparative analysis: how do results vary as case weights change? *Quality & Quantity*, 50(1): 327-346.
4. Cooper, B. & Glaesser, J. (2016). Exploring the robustness of set theoretic findings from a large N FSQCA: An illustration from the sociology of education. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 19(4): 445-459.
5. Cooper, B. & Glaesser, J. (2016). Qualitative comparative analysis, necessary conditions and limited diversity: Some problematic consequences of Schneider and Wagemann's enhanced standard analysis. *Field Methods*, 28(3): 300-315.
6. Meuer, J. & Rupietta, C. (2017). A review of integrated QCA and statistical analyses. *Quality & Quantity*, 51(5): 2063-83.
7. Ragin, C. (1987). *The comparative method*. CA: University of California Press.
8. Rihoux, B., & Ragin, C. (2009). *Configurational comparative methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and related techniques*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
9. Rohlfing, I., & Schneider, C. Q. (2016). A unifying framework for causal analysis in set-theoretic multimethod research. *Sociological Methods & Research*. doi:10.1177/0049124115626170
10. Roig-Tierno, N., Huarng, K., & Ribeiro-Soriano, D. (2017). Configurational comparative research methodologies. *Quality & Quantity* 51(5): 1921-1923.

Exercises

1. Consider examples of necessary and/or sufficient causation.
2. Venn Diagrams can be used to represent causation, for example where the intersection is the small area in the middle, represented by AND; the union of the two (or more) sets is the whole area circled, meaning EITHER-OR. Using this way of visualising causation, depict the following causal relationships:
   a. Y and X are necessary to cause Z.
   b. Y or X are necessary to cause Z.
   c. Y or Z are sufficient to cause Z.
3. Consider a policy domain (e.g. work and employment). Select a particular outcome variable within that policy domain (e.g. 'being unemployed'). Consider the possible configurations that might have led to that outcome variable (e.g. male, aged 58, redundancy). How might you depict the different configurations of necessary and sufficient causation that have led to that outcome variable?

7 | Systems Mapping

Dependency modelling, process tracing and Bayesian updating are methods for eliciting and formalising causality in complex systems. Dependency modelling is a family of graphical representation tools including quantitative approaches such as Bayesian Networks and qualitative approaches such as Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping. Process tracing is a case based method for causal analysis using a variety of mainly qualitative data. Bayesian Updating formalises causal connections through probability relationships. This session will cover the three methods, how they tackle complexity, their data needs and their application in the social sciences and policy research. Particular focus will be given to how these methods will be used in participatory approaches and how they contribute to policy appraisal and evaluation.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:

- An understanding of how dependency modelling, Bayesian updating and process tracing contribute to understanding causality in complex systems;
- An ability to use the methods for attribution claims in policy evaluation;
- An understanding of how these methods can be used in participatory and non-participatory evaluation designs.

Essential Reading

1. Befani, B., D'Errico, S., Booker, F. & Giuliani, A. (2016). *Clearing the fog: new tools for improving the credibility of impact claims*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://pubs.iied.org/17359IIED/
2. Stern, E., Stame, N., Mayne, J., Forss, K., Davies, R., & Befani, B. (2012). *Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluations*. Report of a study commissioned by the Department for International Development. DFID: Department for International Development.

Additional Reading

3. Befani, B. & Mayne J. (2014). Process tracing and contribution analysis: A combined approach to generative causal inference for impact evaluation, *IDS Bulletin*, 45(6).
4. Befani, B. and Stedman-Bryce, G. (2017). Process Tracing and Bayesian Updating for Impact Evaluation. *Evaluation*, 23(1), 42 - 60. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1356389016654584
5. Bennett, A. and Checkel, J.T.,(2012). Process tracing: from philosophical roots to best practices. *Simons Papers in Security and Development*, 21, 30.
6. Brady, H.E. and Collier, D. eds., (2010). *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
7. Collier, D. (2011). Understanding process tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44(4), 823-830.
8. Uprichard, E. (2016). *Dependency models*. A CECAN Evaluation and Policy Practice Note for policy analysts and evaluators, Note No. 4.

Exercises

1. What are the differences in dealing with causality between dependency modelling, Bayesian updating and process tracing?
2. How can prior probability, the Type 1 Error and the sensitivity in Bayesian Updating, be estimated?
3. Design a participatory and non-participatory evaluation that helps to understand the causal hypotheses or contribution claims in relation to a policy intervention.

8 | Agent-based modelling

Agent-based modelling is a computational simulation method for understanding complex systems. An agent-based model is a computer model simulating the interrelationships and interactions of components of a system over time. These models are particularly good at modelling heterogeneity of a population, tackling emergence and feedback loops and dealing with non-linear relationships. The module will cover aspects of data generation, data retrieval for modelling, calibration and validation of models with data and how to interpret and communicate modelling results in the social sciences and policy research.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, students will have gained:
- An understanding of the basics of agent-based modelling;
- An understanding of how agent-based modelling can tackle problems of complex systems;
- An understanding of how agent-based modelling relates to other social science methods relating agent-based modelling to policy modelling and evaluation.

Essential Reading

1. Bale, C.S., Varga, L. and Foxon, T.J., (2015). Energy and complexity: New ways forward. *Applied Energy*, 138, pp.150-159.
2. Squazzoni, F., Jager W. and Edmonds B. (2014). Social Simulation: A Brief Overview. *Social Science Computer Review*, 32 (3).

Additional Reading

3. Chattoe-Brown, E. (2013). Why Sociology Should Use Agent-based Modelling. *Sociological Research Online*, 18(3): 3.
4. Epstein, J. (1999). Agent-Based Computational Models And Generative Social Science, *Complexity*, vol. 4, no. 5.
5. Gilbert, N. (2008). *Agent-Based Models*. Number 153 in Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences. Sage Publications.
6. Gilbert, N. and Troitzsch, K. (2005). *Simulation for the Social Scientist*, OUP.
7. Hassan, S., Arroyo, J., Galán, J.M., Antunes, L. and Pavón, J., (2013). Asking the oracle: Introducing forecasting principles into agent-based modelling. *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation*, 16(3), p.13.
8. Janssen, M. A., and E. Ostrom. (2006). Empirically based, agent-based models. *Ecology and Society* 11 (2): 37.
9. Johnson, P.G. (2015). Agent-based models as "interested amateurs". *Land*, 4(2), pp.281-299.
10. Squazzoni, F. (2010). The impact of agent-based models in the social sciences after 15 years of incursions. *History of Economic Ideas*, XVIII(2).
11. Wilkinson, H. (2016). Agent-Based Modelling for Evaluation, CECAN Evaluation and Policy Practice Note for policy analysts and evaluators, Note No. 3.

Exercises

1. How can agent-based models contribute to understanding change and continuity?
2. Design a "bare bones" agent-based model for the evaluation of a policy intervention.
3. What data would be needed so that the model of Exercise 2 can be used in policy evaluation?

9 | Working through examples

In this session, students will work through a relevant evaluation brief (taken from an ITT) to consider the key features of complexity within the programme or policy being evaluated, and how the issues of complexity might be addressed in the evaluation design.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session, students will have gained:

*   An appreciation of the challenges of planning an evaluation for a complex policy or programme;
*   A basic understanding of the key factors to be considered in planning the evaluation (including consideration of the nature of the policy or programme, the purpose of the evaluation and evaluation questions being asked, and overall approach or design);
*   A basic understanding of the potential role in an evaluation of methodologies discussed in sections 6, 7 and 8.

Essential Reading

Treasury Magenta Book, Chapter Five: Section 5: The stages of an evaluation. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book

Better evaluation: steps in planning an evaluation. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/commissioners_guide

Sources for ITTs, or tender documents include:

1.   https://www.evaluation.org.uk/index.php/jobs-tenders/current-tenders
2.   www.tendersdirect.co.uk
3.   OJEC.com (the Official Journal of the European Community).
4.   Websites of individual government departments and their agencies
5.   Websites of key charities and funding organisations (e.g. Welcome Foundation, Big Lottery Fund) regularly post ITTs for the evaluation of the programmes they are funding.

Exercises

Take an evaluation brief chosen is in an area with which students are likely to have a familiarity, or chosen by students themselves from their own area of work.

General discussion: what are the main features of complexity in this policy or programme, and what would be the implications for its evaluation, given the nature of the programme, the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation questions posed.

Work in small groups:

*   If there is already a logic or theory of change map included in the ITT, consider how effective this is in capturing the potential complexity of the policy or programme;
*   If there is no logic or theory of change map in the ITT, spend 30 minutes broadly mapping the trajectory of the policy or programme from inception to impacts;
*   Discuss the overall approach that might be taken to the evaluation of this policy or programme and how any of the methods discussed in sessions 6,7 or 8 might contribute to its evaluation; General discussion: How were the complexity challenges identified address through the evaluation designs proposed? How well did these address the overall purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation questions posed?

10 | The future of evaluation?

This session considers other promising social research methods and approaches which evaluation practitioners are beginning to adopt, particularly in order to address the challenges of evaluating complex policies and programmes. These include (but are not confined to, since new methods are evolving over time) social media and other data mining, big data; citizen science; scenario modelling; the use of visualization.

Learning Outcomes

Students will have
- An appreciation of some of the other social science methods and approaches which are beginning to be used in the field of evaluation, and which can help address the challenges of the evaluation of a complex policy intervention or programme;
- Some initial information about social media, data mining, big data; citizen science; scenario modelling; the use of visualization (and any other methods which are currently being discussed in the evaluation fields);
- Knowledge of where to look for information, examples and discussions relating to the use of new evaluation methods and approaches.

Essential Reading

1. *Better evaluation: approaches.* Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/approaches
2. *Evaluation - The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice.* Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://www.tavinstitute.org/what-we-offer/journals/evaluation-the-international-journal-of-theory-research-and-practice/
3. *New Directions for Evaluation* On line journal: Each issue is devoted to a single topic, taking several forms, such as a series of related chapters, a debate, or a long article followed by brief critical commentaries. Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1534-875X

Additional Reading

4. *Evaluation and Program Planning.* Retrieved 10 December 2017 from: https://www.journals.elsevier.com/evaluation-and-program-planning/

Exercises

Find and review an article from one of the above journals or websites which presents an example of one of the newer evaluation approaches discussed during this session, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this approach and its application.