Forms and Functions of Participatory Evaluation in International Development: A Review of the Empirical and Theoretical Literature

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Background: Since the late 1970s participatory approaches have been widely promoted to evaluate international development programs. However, there is no universal agreement of what is meant by participatory evaluation. For some evaluators, participatory evaluations involve the extensive participation of all stakeholder groups (from donor to non-recipients) in every phase of the evaluation (from design to dissemination). For others, the participation of donors in the design constitutes a participatory evaluation approach. Participatory evaluation approaches are best considered on a continuum. In other words, there are many gradations to participation and evaluations should be classified accordingly.

Purpose: The lack of shared meaning of participatory evaluation approaches also impedes serious discussion on their use including their merits and demerits, suggestions for their improvement, and their overall effectiveness. The purpose of this article is to present an examination of the literature on participatory evaluation approaches to highlight commonalities and differences.

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Findings: This article clearly demonstrates how broadly participatory evaluation is conceptualized and practiced and underscores the clear need for specification and precision when discussing what is meant by participatory evaluation. Recommendations for how evaluators should describe participatory evaluations are provided.

Keywords: participatory evaluation; collaborative evaluation; empowerment evaluation; stakeholder-based evaluation
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The international development community frequently refers to and often advocates use of participatory evaluation approaches to assess development projects and aid (Cullen, Coryn, & Rugh, 2011). Even so, there is no universal agreement of what is meant by the term. Indeed, in both the literature and in practice, there is surprising variation on how participatory evaluation

is conceptualized, operationalized, and implemented. Some consider participatory evaluation to be any evaluation in which intervention recipients are interviewed or complete questionnaires; that is, by providing data such recipients are 'participating' in the evaluation process (Cullen, 2009). For others, an evaluation can only be deemed participatory if intervention recipients play an active role in all phases of an evaluation (e.g., question formulation, design, data gathering, data analysis, reporting, dissemination). In actuality, participatory evaluation is best considered as an umbrella term, under which a wide variety of approaches can be classified (King, 2006). Without a common, shared conceptual and operational understanding of what constitutes participatory evaluation, it is virtually impossible for members of the international development community to engage in critical discussion of its central characteristics, methods, and expected outcomes and consequences. Moreover, "For a theory [e.g., participatory evaluation] to be used in practice, it must translate into clear guidance and sensitizing ideas for practitioners, and its theoretical signature must be recognizable" (Miller, 2010, p. 391), otherwise, its use is not empirically justified (Coryn, Noakes, Westine, & Schröter, 2011).

In this article, a comprehensive examination and review of the various forms of participatory evaluation approaches is undertaken, including their intended functions. In doing so, definitions of participatory evaluation and a framework for distinguishing among the varied participatory evaluation approaches is presented first. Next, examples of participatory evaluation approaches are presented. Finally, a

discussion of the need for clarity and specification when discussing participatory evaluation is presented.

Definitions of Participation

Merriam-Webster (2003) provides two definitions for the word participate: (1) to possess some of the attributes of a person, thing, or quality and (2) to take part and to have a part or share in something. Participation is defined simply as the act of participating. Using the second part of the definition above, it can be seen that the literal definition of participation is the act of taking part. Although this definition seems obvious and self-evident, what does it mean to take part in an evaluation? And, who (i.e., which stakeholders) is it that takes part in the evaluation? A review of the evaluation literature reveals a multitude of definitions and interpretations of participatory approaches and methods. Given the vast number of definitions of participatory evaluation, in this section we will only highlight the most prevailing and influential.

The *Encyclopedia of Evaluation* defines participatory evaluation as "an overarching term for any evaluation approach that involves program staff or participants actively in decision making and other activities related to the planning and implementation of evaluation studies" (King, 2005, p. 291). This definition is overly broad and could include both evaluations where stakeholders are actively involved in data collection and analysis or where stakeholders are simply given a voice in deciding evaluation questions. This definition refers to stakeholders as program staff or participants and does not mention upstream or alternative stakeholders.

Cousins, perhaps the most well-known scholar on participatory evaluation, defines it as "applied social research that involves a partnership between trained and practice-based decision makers, organization members with program responsibility, or people with a vital interest in the program" (Cousins & Earl, 1992, p. 399). In simpler terms, participatory evaluation is merely "members of two different professional communities working in partnership" (Cousins & Earl, 1999, p. 311) or a partnership between someone who is trained in evaluation methodology and those who are not. The definition is so broad that stakeholders are neither excluded nor included because specific stakeholder groups are not mentioned nor are specific evaluation tasks detailed.

Adding to the confusion surrounding this issue, many evaluation theorists and practitioners use the terms participatory, collaborative, and sometimes even empowerment evaluation interchangeably (Cousins, 1996; Cousins, Dohohue, & Bloom, 1996; Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Fetterman, 1994, 2002, 2005; O'Sullivan & D'Agostino, 2002; Weaver & Cousins, 2004). O'Sullivan and D'Agostino (2002) note that "the term collaborative evaluation often is used interchangeably with participatory and/or empowerment evaluation" (p. 373) and cite the American Evaluation Association (AEA) Collaborative/Participatory/Empowerment Evaluation Topical Interest Group (TIG) as evidence of the synonymous nature of these terms. Cousins places participatory evaluation under the genre of collaborative evaluation (Weaver & Cousins, 2004). His definition of collaborative evaluation, "evaluators collaborating in some fashion with program practitioners and/or stakeholders (non-evaluators) to provide information to answer key evaluative questions of primary stakeholders" is virtually indistinguishable from his definition for participatory evaluation (Cousins, Donohue, & Bloom, 1996, p. 208). Participatory evaluation and collaborative evaluation also have been categorized as inclusive evaluation approaches (Ryan, Green, Lincoln, Mathison, & Mertens, 1998). Quite simply, in practice there is a lack of consensus of what is meant by "participatory evaluation."

Estrella and Gaventa (1998) conducted a literature review of global participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) approaches and discovered there is great variation in the way organizations, field practitioners, researchers, and others understand the meaning and practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation. In their review, they found that there is no single, coherent conceptual definition of PM&E; rather, there is wide scope for interpretation, as PM&E may mean "different things to different people" (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998, p.4.). Estrella et al.'s (2000) later work states that while participatory forms of evaluation should include a " wider sphere of stakeholders," (p. 10) there is great confusion as how stakeholders is defined and often results in the exclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., women, the poor, non-literate). The following passage from Cousins (2003) exemplifies the extent of the confusion surrounding participatory evaluation:

> Participatory evaluation (PE) turns out to be a variably used and ill-defined approach to evaluation that, juxtaposed to more conventional forms and approaches, has generated much controversy in educational and social and human services evaluation. Despite a relatively wide array of evaluation and evaluation-related

activities subsumed by the term, evaluation scholars and practitioners continue to use it freely often with only passing mention of their own conception of it. There exists much confusion in the literature as to the meaning, nature, and form of PE and therefore the conditions under which it is most appropriate and the consequences to which it might be expected to lead. (p. 245)

Forms and Functions of Participatory Evaluation

There are many different forms of participatory evaluation approaches. Typically, participatory evaluation approaches have been classified or categorized according to their ultimate goal or objective (Smits & Champagne, 2008). Weaver and Cousins (2004) identified three overarching goals of participatory evaluation approaches: (1) pragmatic justification (i.e., problem-solving or decision making), (2) political (i.e., promotion of fairness), and (3) epistemological (i.e., knowledge production). Given the prevalence of so many similar participatory evaluation approaches, having a means by which to distinguish such approaches is self-evident. Feuerstein (1986) argues that there are four categories of participation: (1) study specimens, (2) refusing to share results, (3) locking up the expertise, and (4) real partnership in development. Cousins, Donohue, and Bloom (1996) developed a widely cited framework for differentiating among types of participatory approaches which was subsequently modified by Cousins and Whitmore (1998) and later refined by Weaver and Cousins (2004). According to the original framework, all forms of participatory evaluation can be divided along three dimensions: (1) control of the evaluation process, (2) stakeholder

selection for participation (i.e., which stakeholders are included in the evaluation), and (3) depth of participation (i.e., in what capacity do stakeholders participate?). Accordingly, participatory evaluation approaches should fall somewhere on the continuum for each of these dimensions. As each of these dimensions is independent of the other, they are best imagined in a three-dimensional space (also see Cullen, Coryn, & Rugh, 2011).

In the following section, the most commonly used participatory evaluation approaches, paying particular attention to the Cousins and Whitmore's framework, are highlighted.

Stakeholder-Based Model

The Stakeholder-Based Model of Evaluation (S-BME) was developed to create support and agreement among various stakeholder groups (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). It originated in the 1970s as a governmental approach to refocus evaluation to include those individuals whose lives are impacted by the program (Bryk, 1983). Broadly speaking, stakeholder-based evaluations are those that "involve stakeholder groups, other than sponsors, in the formulation of evaluation questions and in any other evaluation activities" (Mark & Shotland, 1985, p. 606). In these evaluations, evaluators coordinate evaluation activities and maintain technical control of the evaluation. While all stakeholder groups are included, they have only consultative roles during the planning and interpretation phases (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). There are three objectives of stakeholder-based models of evaluation: (1) to increase the use of evaluation findings, (2) to diversify the

range of stakeholders having a voice of identifying evaluation questions, and (3) to give stakeholders more control of the evaluation process (Weiss, 1983). According to a 1996 poll of evaluators, most participatory approaches originating within North America fall under the stakeholder-based model (Cousins, Donohue, & Bloom, 1996).

Practical Participatory Evaluation

Practical Participatory Evaluation (P-PE) is based on the belief that the inclusion of stakeholders in the evaluation process will help improve evaluation utilization and improve decision making (Brisolara, 1998). It emerged as a practical attempt to increase the utilization of evaluation results by increasing ownership of the evaluation process (King, 2005). In P-PE, trained evaluators work alongside program stakeholders to support program decision-making. Stakeholders typically involved in P-PE are program sponsors, managers, developers, and implementers who share balanced control with the evaluator and participate extensively in all phases of the evaluation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998).

Transformative Participatory Evaluation

Transformative Participatory Evaluation (T-PE) is grounded in the belief that the evaluation process can help empower marginalized stakeholders, thereby realizing social change (Brisolara, 1998). T-PE began with evaluations of programs in Third World countries in the 1970s (Brunner & Guzman, 1989), particularly in Latin America, India, and Africa (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Based on radical ideologies of social change, T-PE

specifically targets marginalized and oppressed groups (King, 2005). By including disenfranchised stakeholders in the evaluation process, T-PE explicitly seeks to create social change and social justice. In T-PE, evaluators and all program stakeholders including program impactees work together extensively in all phases of the evaluation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). In some cases, evaluators serve more than a facilitator role as they provide stakeholders training on evaluation (Weaver & Cousins, 2004).

Collaborative Evaluation

Although many theorists and evaluators see Collaborative Evaluation (CE) as interchangeable with participatory evaluation, it is also viewed by some as a distinct standalone approach. Rodriguez-Campos (2005) argues that CE is more effective than traditional evaluation approaches because of collaboration with stakeholders. As a result of collaboration, stakeholders have increased ownership of the evaluation which, it assumed, increases both the quality of information gained as well as the use of findings.

Deliberative Democratic Evaluation

Deliberative Democratic Evaluation (DDE) uses the principles of democracy to assess a program's merit and worth. This approach is concerned with rendering an unbiased evaluative assessment through the inclusion of the interests and perspectives of all legitimate stakeholder groups (House, 2005). DDE is comprised of three key elements: (1) the inclusion of all relevant interests (and corresponding balancing of power issues), (2) dialoguing with stakeholders to determine relevant

issues, and (3) deliberation on the part of the evaluator to arrive at an overall evaluative conclusion. This approach strives to include all relevant stakeholder groups, through dialogue, in all stages of an evaluation (Ryan, 2005; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). By including a democratic aspect, this approach attempts to form valid conclusions even in instances where there are conflicting views (House & Howe, 2000). Ultimately, the evaluator holds technical control over the evaluation process as he/she weighs and considers which interests to value and give priority to.

Democratic Evaluation

Democratic Evaluation (D-E) is concerned with the public right to know and, as such, attempts to maximize evaluation usefulness (Ryan, 2004). As all relevant groups have a right to knowledge and are thus held equally accountable, power differentials are reduced (Ryan, 2005). In this approach, the evaluator tries to overcome power dynamics to ensure that there is a diversity of stakeholder values (MacDonald & Kushner, 2005). In D-E, a wide range of stakeholders (all legitimate groups) participate moderately, and maintain control over interpretation and reporting of evaluation findings (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). And, as the name would suggest, the evaluator and stakeholders share technical control of the evaluation process. D-E often takes place in the form of a case study in which the evaluator represents all stakeholder groups (Ryan, 2005).

Developmental Evaluation

In Developmental Evaluation (DE) "the evaluator becomes part of the design team, helping to monitor what's happening, both process and outcomes, in an evolving, rapidly changing environment of constant feedback and change" (Patton, 1994, p. 313). In this way, the evaluator not only is the facilitator of the evaluation but also becomes responsible for facilitating organizational development). DE is concerned with helping organizations develop and change (Patton, 2008). In DE, program developers and implementers work with evaluators to incorporate evaluation into the program (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). While evaluators and stakeholders share control over the evaluation process, stakeholders are mostly involved only in the design phase (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998).

Empowerment Evaluation

Empowerment Evaluation (EE) is designed to help empower stakeholders through evaluation and self-reflection (Fetterman, 2005). In empowerment evaluation, evaluation is an ongoing process of program improvement (Fetterman, 2001) and is focused on "helping people help themselves" (Fetterman, 1994, p. 1). An important part of EE is self-evaluation of the program as a system (Fetterman, 2005; Wandersman & Snell-John, 2005). Stakeholder groups involved in EE are usually limited to key program personnel, who maintain almost complete control of technical decision making and participate extensively in all evaluation phases (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Patton (2008) argues that EE works best when the program that is being evaluated is geared towards helping stakeholders become self-sufficient. In that way, the goals of the program and the evaluation are one and the same.

It should be noted that EE is perhaps the most contentious of the participatory evaluation approaches. Lively debate has emerged in evaluation journals and at evaluation conferences about the legitimacy of empowerment evaluation (Scriven, 1997; Stufflebeam, 1994, 2001). In August 2009, an online debate on empowerment evaluation with Fetterman, Patton, and Scriven was widely viewed and discussed (Donaldson, Patton, Fetterman, & Scriven, 2010). Critics of empowerment evaluation contend that it is a form of program intervention and, as such, should not be considered evaluation.

Responsive Evaluation

In Responsive Evaluation (RE), evaluators work with broad stakeholder groups to improve programs via evaluation. Its distinguishing characteristic is responsiveness to emerging program issues, particularly those identified by stakeholders (Stake, 2004). RE is more concerned with stakeholder concerns than program objectives (Stake, 2004; Stake & Abma, 2005). Stufflebeam and Stinkfield (2007) classify RE as a "Social Agenda and Advocacy Approach" or an evaluation approach that is aimed at advocating the rights of the disadvantaged and state that it strives to "promote equity and fairness, help those with little power, thwart the misuse of power, expose the huckster, unnerve the assured, reassure the insecure, and always help people see things from alternative viewpoints (p. 213)." Shadish, Cook, and Leviton (1991) offer three advantages of responsive evaluation: (1) allowing program issues to emerge, (2) encouraging change, and (3) increasing stakeholder control. Ultimately, RE evaluation is considered valid if it has increased stakeholders' understanding of a program (Fitzpatrick,

Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). In its emphasis on stakeholders, the connection between RE and other forms of participatory evaluation is readily apparent.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation

Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) rests on the belief that a meritous evaluation is one that maximizes the usefulness of its findings. Because evaluations are so often irrelevant to the needs of primary users and, consequently, not utilized, UFE is designed to ensure that the usefulness of findings is both planned for and facilitated (Patton, 2005). Patton (2008) argues that it is important to include only those stakeholders who are personally involved in the program in order to increase the usefulness of the evaluation findings. By its very nature, UFE is participatory in that stakeholders (at least key stakeholders) are actively involved in all phases of the evaluation.

Participatory Research

With the exception of T-PE, all of the participatory evaluation methods described above have their origins in the developed world. Participatory Research (PR), in contrast, emerged as a direct response to Western research methodologies that were deemed ineffective in developing world contexts (Chambers, 1994; Park, 1992). In the 1970s, researchers were frustrated with standard social science research methods for data collection such as survey questionnaires (Chambers, 1994; Townsley, 1996) and found that local researchers elicited better information using traditional data collection methods (Park, 1992). Criticisms of development

evaluation focused on a perceived lack of understanding of the cultural context of due to a lack of involvement of program impactees (Townsley, 1996). For development endeavors to be sustainable and effective, local voices and opinions needed to be included (Holland & Blackburn, 1998). Including local stakeholders in the evaluation process would help increase both ownership and their capability to evaluate and design the development program (World Bank, 1996).

PR is commonly defined as a process that combines research, education, and action (Hall, 1981). It has come to be an overarching umbrella term for many subsequent evaluation and research approaches in developing country contexts such as Participatory Action Research, Participatory Learning and Action, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Participatory Poverty Assessment, Poverty and Social Impact Analysis, Self-Esteem, Associative Strength, Resourcefulness, Action Planning, and Responsibility (SARAR), and Beneficiary Assessment. All told, there have been at least 29 types of participatory approaches developed since the 1970s (Holland & Blackburn, 1998). Given the prevalence of PR in the development context, greater detail is provided on its origin, implementation, and varying formats. As with the other participatory approaches mentioned above, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between types of participatory research. Indeed, Chung (2000) argues that "there are varying degrees and qualities of participatory research, and that there is no single definition of what is truly 'participatory'" (p. 42). In actual practice, researchers and practitioners tend to use some terms interchangeably (Scrimshaw & Gleason, 1992; Chambers, 1994; Townsley, 1996).

Paolo Freire's (1968) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is credited as the inspiration for the participatory research movement (Chambers, 1994; Park, 1992). Freire argued that the oppressed should analyze and create solutions to their own problems but can only do so through the development of their skills and education (Stoecker & Bonacich, 1992). To that end, Freire is also credited with "democratizing and radicalizing the knowledge process" (Stoecker & Bonacich, 1992, p. 8). Freire's 1971 visit to Tanzania with frustrated development workers and social scientists is largely thought to have precipitated the use of alternative forms of research methodologies (Hall, 1992; Park, 1992). Perhaps because of its ties to Freire, PR is most associated with education research (Chambers, 1994).

Participatory Action Research

It is difficult to separate Participatory Action Research (PAR) from PR. Chambers (1994) states that PAR and PR are parallel and overlapping forms of research, but that the former is most closely associated with industry and agriculture. However, most literature refers to either PAR or PR; if one approach is mentioned, the other is not. In other words, it appears to come down to the author's choice in which term to use. For example, the Encyclopedia of Evaluation (Mathison, 2005) does not have an entry for participatory research but defines PAR with Hall's definition of PR. Cousins and Whitmore (1998) present PAR as a type of PR, but while they discuss PAR in detail, they offer no definition or explanation of PR. However, in current practice and in the literature, PAR is used much more frequently than PR.

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Rapid Rural Appraisal

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a direct response to problems with outsiders' research in development contexts (Dart, 2005). Chambers (1994) cites three main origins of RRA: (1) dissatisfaction with the biases of urban professional toward poor and rural communities; (2) lack of confidence and interest in large survey questionnaires; and (3) a desire to develop more cost-effective methods of learning. It is this second origin that most closely connects PR with RRA. RRA was developed in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe and its methodologies were disseminated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London (Chambers, 1994; Salmen & Kane, 2006; Townsley, 1996). Simply put, RRA is a means of outsiders collecting information from local people in the most cost-effective manner (Chambers, 1994). Although there is not one set way of conducting RRA, it usually entails involvement of multiple stakeholder groups (program impactees) in data collection (Dart, 2005). RRA came to include a range of alternative research techniques including: Rapid Diagnostic Tools, Agro-Ecosystem Analysis, Participatory Learning and Action, Diagnosis and Design, Participatory Assessment, and Participatory Learning Methods (Townsley, 1996).

Participatory Rural Appraisal

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) emerged as a form of RRA. Where RRA was concerned with how researchers collect information from stakeholders, PRA focused on stakeholders collecting and interpreting data (Dart, 2005). Specifically, PRA was a movement towards the concerns of "insiders" versus "outsiders" in the development process (Townsley, 1996) and a shift away from top-down approaches (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2006, Rugh, 1986). Chambers (1992) defines PRA as a semi-structured process of learning from, with, and by rural people about rural conditions and says that it differs from RRA in that (1) the roles of investigator and investigated are reversed and (2) it focuses on developing rapport with stakeholders. In addition to understanding the perceptions and opinions of local stakeholders, PRA is geared towards providing them with tools to design and evaluate projects independently (Holland & Blackburn, 1998). As compared to RRA, PRA is associated mostly with agricultural projects (Chambers, 1994).

Beneficiary Assessment

Closely related to PRA is Beneficiary Assessment (BA) which is designed to incorporate the voices of beneficiaries in program planning (Francis, 2001). According to the World Bank (1996), "the general purposes of a BA are to (a) undertake systematic listening, which "gives voice to poor and other hard to reach beneficiaries, highlighting constraints to beneficiary participation, and (b) obtain feedback on interventions" (p. 195). BA aims to engage intended beneficiaries through in-depth discussion and dialogue about the program so that their perspective and values can help improve the program. By understanding the opinions of participants, program managers can make decisions that are better informed and relevant to actual needs. Salmen and Kane (2006) argue

that BA is an effective way building commitment, ownership, and accountability of international development programs.

Comparing Participatory Evaluation Approaches

Table 1 displays a comparative analysis of all of the participatory evaluation approaches described above. Such a presentation allows for commonalities and differences in terms of function, control of decision making, selection for participation, and depth of participation to be readily apparent. This table updates Cousins and Whitmore's (1998) comparative analysis. New additions are indicated with an *

One of the most prominent criticisms of participatory evaluation is that it is unbiased because the evaluator does not maintain control of the decision-making process. However, in only 4 (i.e., empowerment evaluation, emancipatory action research, cooperative inquiry, participatory rural appraisal) of the 16 participatory evaluation approaches listed is control of the decision-making process held by practitioners/participants. In half of the approaches, decision making is balanced between the evaluator and participants. Moreover, in 4 of the approaches (stakeholder-based evaluation, responsive evaluation, rapid rural appraisal, and beneficiary appraisal) decision making is maintained by evaluators.

There is a great deal of variation of which stakeholder groups participate among participatory evaluation approaches. In some of the approaches,

selection for participation is restricted to program sponsors or implementers (e.g., practical participatory evaluation, school-based evaluation, participatory action research). In others, a wider net is cast and all stakeholder groups are not only invited but encouraged to participate. Finally, some participatory evaluation approaches specifically seek program beneficiaries and local people to participate (e.g., transformative participatory evaluation, rapid rural appraisal, participatory rural appraisal, and beneficiary assessment).

In terms of how stakeholders participate, there are also many differences. In the majority of approaches (practical participatory evaluation, transformative participatory evaluation, school-based evaluation, empowerment evaluation, utilization focused evaluation, responsive evaluation, collaborative evaluation, participatory action research, cooperative inquiry, and participatory rural appraisal), participation is extensive with stakeholders participating in all phases of the evaluation. Other participatory approaches are more moderate in terms of depth of participation with stakeholders involved in data collection or reporting. In only one approach (stakeholder-based evaluation), is participation limited to just consultation at the planning and interpretation phases.

This comparison clearly demonstrates the great differences in how participatory evaluation approaches are envisioned and implemented. At the very least, this comparison highlights the breadth and depth of what is classified as participatory evaluation.

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Table 1
Central Characteristics of Forms of Participatory Evaluation

Form	Principal Author(s)	Function	Control of Decision Making	Selection for Participation	Depth of Participation
Practical Participatory Evaluation (P-PE)	Cousins and Earl; Ayers	Practical: Support for program decision making and problem solving; evaluation utilization	Balanced: Evaluator and participants in partnership	Primary Users: Program sponsors, managers, developers, implementers	Extensive: Participation in all phases of the evaluation
Transformative Participatory Evaluation (T-PE)	Tandon & Fernandes; Fals-Borda; Gaventa	Political: Empowerment, emancipation, social justice	Balanced: Partnership but ultimate decision-making control by participants	All legitimate groups: Especially program or project beneficiaries	Extensive: Participation in all phases of the evaluation
Stakeholder-Based Evaluation	Bryk; Mark & Shotland	Practical: Evaluation utilization; some emphasis on political aspects of evaluation	Evaluator: Coordinator of activities and technical aspects of the evaluation	All legitimate groups: Representation is the key to offsetting ill effects of program micropolitics	Limited: Stakeholders consulted at planning and interpretation phases
School-Based Evaluation	Nevo; Alvik	Practical: Support for program decision making and problem solving	Balanced: Evaluator trains school-based personnel who do their own inquiry	Primary users: School-based personnel, mostly program implementers	Extensive: Participation in all phases of the evaluation
Democratic Evaluation	MacDonald; McTaggart	Political: Legitimate use of evaluation in pluralistic society	Balanced: Evaluator and participants work in partnership	All legitimate groups: Representation among participants is pivotal	Moderate: Stakeholders control interpretation and reporting
Developmental Evaluation	Patton	Practical: Program improvement; evaluation utilization	Balanced: Evaluator and participants work in partnership	Primary users: Mostly program developers and implementers	Substantial: Ongoing involvement and participation
Empowerment Evaluation	Fetterman	Political: Empowerment, illumination, self-determination	Participants: Almost complete control, facilitated by evaluator	Primary users: Usually key program personnel; sometimes wider groups included	Extensive: Participation in all phases of the evaluation
Utilization Focused Evaluation*	Patton	Practical: Evaluation utilization	Balanced: Evaluator and participants in partnership	Primary users: Intended users of the evaluation	Extensive: Participation in all phases of the evaluation
Responsive Evaluation*	Stake	Political/philosophical: Promote equity and fairness, responsive to stakeholder concerns	Evaluator: Maintains control and authority	Primary users: Local/ nearby stakeholders	Extensive: Participation in all phases of the evaluation, particularly in identifying program issues
Collaborative Evaluation*	Rodriguez-Campos	Practical: Support for program decision making, shared ownership, increased quality	Balanced: Evaluator and collaboration members work in partnership	Stakeholders possessing "essential characteristics" that evaluator seeks	Extensive: Collaboration members work together in all phases of the evaluation
Participatory Action Research	Whyte; Argyris & Schon	Practical/philosophical: Improve practice while simultaneously advancing	Balanced: Researcher and practitioner as coparticipants in research	Primary users: Most often program implementers, although can be open to	Extensive: Participation in all aspects of the research

Form	Principal Author(s)	Function	Control of Decision Making	Selection for Participation	Depth of Participation
		scientific knowledge		beneficiaries and others	
Emancipatory (Participatory) Action Research	Carr and Kemmis; McTaggart	Political: Empowerment, emancipation, amelioration of social conditions	Practitioner: Exclusive control; researcher as resource person	Unspecified: Most often stakeholders who are disenfranchised or in some way marginalized by the system	Extensive: Participation in all aspects of the research
Cooperative Inquiry	Heron; Reason; Reason & Heron	Philosophical: Root propositional research knowledge about people in their experimental and practical knowledge	Practitioner: Participants are both co-researchers and co-subjects with full reciprocity	Unspecified: Most often participants are members of an inquiry group with all of the problems of inclusion, influence, and intimacy	Extensive: Participation in all aspects of the research
Rapid Rural Appraisal*	Chambers, Dart	Practical/philosophical: Cost-effective way of collecting information from local people	Evaluator: Although beneficiaries are involved in data collection, evaluator maintains control	Primary users: Most often local people and beneficiaries	Moderate: Participation mostly limited to data collection
Participatory Rural Appraisal*	Chambers, Townsley	Political/philosophical: Movement towards the concerns of "insiders" versus "outsiders" in the development process	Practitioner: Roles of investigated and investigator are reversed	Unspecified: Most often rural people who often don't have a say	Extensive: Stakeholders participate extensively in all aspects
Beneficiary Assessment*	World Bank	Practical/philosophical: Listening to marginalized people, program managers can make better decisions	Evaluator	Unspecified: Gives voice to poor and other hard to reach beneficiaries	Moderate: However evaluator spends large quantities of time getting to know stakeholder issues and concerns

Discussion

Participation has become a buzz word that evaluators ascribe to their evaluations but, in reality, has no practical significance (Cullen, Coryn, Rugh, 2011). The purpose of this article was to demonstrate how broadly participatory evaluation is conceptualized and practiced. Hopefully, this article underscored the clear need for specification and precision when discussing what is meant by participatory evaluation. When international development commissioners request the use of a participatory evaluation approach, they need to clearly state: (1) which stakeholders they expect to participate, (2) in what evaluation phase stakeholders should participate, and (3) in what phase they should participate. Similarly, evaluators need to be precise in their evaluation reports when discussing their use of a participatory approach. Finally, without detailing what is meant by participatory evaluation, we are doing little more than giving lip service to a very nuanced and broad evaluation technique.

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