

Collaborative, participatory, and empowerment (CP&E) evaluation

SESSION VI

Across cultures and ethnic groups in CP&E Evaluation

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Course index

Session I. Evaluation expansion and utilization in projects and programs

Session II. Evaluation models

Session III. Collaborative and Participatory Evaluation

Session IV. Empowerment Evaluation

Session V. Ethnography and the human instrument as a key tool for CP&E Evaluation

Session VI. Across cultures and ethnic groups in CP&E Evaluation

Session VII. Moderating meaningful focus groups in CP&E Evaluation



Session VI index

1. Introduction
2. Sympathy and familiarity
3. Future-oriented vs. Past/Present-oriented
4. Time limited vs. flexible time orientation
5. Lower context culture vs. Higher context culture
6. Monochronic vs. Polychronic
7. Low power distance vs. high power distance
8. Individualism vs. Collectivism
9. Conclusions



1. Introduction

- Thanks to globalization, evaluators are likely to work with **multiple ethnic groups with very different cultures.**
- People from different cultures **are different** in a variety of ways: different ways of looking at things; different beliefs, values, norms, customs, behaviours, knowledge and language; different ways of expressing personality or goodness.
- These differences **may cause difficulties in the evaluation work and in the interpretation of the data gathered through participatory techniques.**



1. Introduction

- Great influence of the Anglo-Saxon culture on evaluation - both in terms of its different evaluation methodologies designed and in the experience of its use.
- Spain and Latin America, for example, sit firmly within Spanish and Latin tradition, very different to the Anglo-Saxon tradition in terms of its rules, logic and language.
- Hispanics constitute one-seventh of all people in the United States: 16% of the total U.S. population or around 48,4 million people (2009 American Census Bureau).



1. Introduction

- Paying attention to cultural differences can give outsiders a better chance of acceptance.
- Evaluators are sometimes tempted to be led by culture generalizations - dangerous when accompanied by recommendations.
- We recognize the human need to categorize, but stereotyping can have intense negative effects, especially when evaluators - acting on some of these generalizations - make fewer attempts to involve those of other cultures because they have been taught not to expect participation.



1. Introduction

- A number of differences have been detected between Latin (e.g., Spanish, Hispanic) and Anglo-Saxon cultures.
- Much of these differences have to do with personality and cultural traits that show practical meaningful consequences for the evaluation participatory work.



2. Sympathy and familiarity

Latin culture value more sympathy and familiarity

Sympathy may be described as the need for interpersonal behaviours that promote smooth and harmonious relationships (avoid conflict). Latinos:

- Need more eye contact in conversation, and for that they face each other more; but they do not touch more and stand closer when they speak.
- Are more attached to (and identify with) local territory, the family, family values and familiar subjects.
- Might be less likely to buy into evaluation activities or participatory tools with which they are not familiar.



3. Future-oriented vs. Past/Present-oriented

- Anglo-Saxon culture - especially in USA - is more **future-oriented**, **optimism about the future**. They **rely on the future and on shaping it through their actions**. They view management as a matter of planning, doing and controlling (as opposed to going with the flow, letting things happen).
- The Latin culture is more **past or present-oriented**, more concerned with traditional values.
- They **tend to be conservative and slow to change** those things that are tied to the past.
- Important things to consider when the evaluator **interprets the results or makes recommendations**.



4. Time limited vs. flexible time orientation

- Anglo-Saxon culture is more **time-limited**. Time is seen as being a limited resource which is constantly being used up. **Punctuality** becomes a virtue and it is insulting to waste someone's time.
- Latinos have a more **flexible time-orientation**. Time is not so important and they tend to **rely on trust** to do business or participate in evaluation activities.
- A time-limited culture **don't have time to develop trust** and so create other mechanisms to replace trust (strong rule-by-law).
- Important when the evaluator **plans the evaluation activities and schedules the participatory work**.



5. Lower context culture vs. Higher context culture

- Anglo-Saxon culture is a **lower context culture** than Latin-American culture.
- A low context culture : **things are made explicit and fully spelled out**, there is considerable dependence on what is actually said or written.
- A high context culture: communicators **assume a great deal of commonality** of knowledge and views, **less is spelled out explicitly** and much more is implicit or communicated in indirect ways.
- In a high context culture, **more responsibility is placed on the evaluator** who interprets the results of the participatory work.



5. Lower context culture vs. Higher context culture

- **Interactions** in participatory work between high and low context peoples can be problematic.
- Latinos may feel that Anglo-Saxons **insult their intelligence** by explaining the obvious, while Anglo-Saxons can feel that Latinos **provide no direction**.
- Latinos can find Anglo-Saxons to be **offensively blunt**; Anglo-Saxons can find Latinos to be **secretive, devious** and confusingly unforthcoming with information.
- Besides, **high context cultures are vulnerable to communication breakdowns** when they assume more shared understanding than there really is.



6. Monochronic vs. Polychronic

- Anglo-Saxon culture is more **monochronic**, more likely to do just one thing at a time. Anglo-Saxons value a certain **orderliness**, there is an appropriate time and place for everything. **They do not value interruptions.**
- Latinos are more **polychronic** and like to do multiple things at the same time.
- **Interactions** between types can be problematic. An Anglo-Saxon evaluator cannot understand why the person he is meeting or interviewing is so interruptible by phone calls and people stopping by. When do they get down to business? Latinos are disturbed by all the closed doors, it seems cold and unfriendly.



7. Low power distance vs. high power distance

- Anglo-Saxon culture is more **low power distance**, is less likely to accept differences in power and allow this to shape many aspects of life. Bypassing a superior is not usually a big deal, superiors and subordinates often interact socially as equals, and you cannot tell them apart.
- Latin culture is more likely to accept power distance. **The perceived status differences in Latin cultures tend to create barriers.** In starting the evaluation work, the differences are bigger between the evaluator and the stakeholders, roles tend to be more defined and separated. An evaluator with this status differential will have to show, by word and action, that he values the potential contributions of those he works with.



7. Low power distance vs. high power distance

- At times, it may appear that some Latin people, especially when there are social or ethnic differences, **do not easily participate.** This is not because they do not have ideas to contribute, but rather, because they may **need a little convincing that their ideas would be valued.**
- In some situations in Latin cultures, once a person has given an opinion, others are **unlikely to contradict it.** That is why an evaluator should ask the least senior stakeholder to give an opinion first, as few will want to contradict the more senior stakeholders.
- **But breaking through status barriers can take time and effort.** The amount of effort will depend on many factors: the skill of the evaluator; how alienated and disenfranchised the person he is trying to reach feels.



8. Individualism vs. Collectivism

- Anglo-Saxon culture tends to be more **individualistic**; individual uniqueness, self-determination is more valued. A person is all the more admirable if they are a "self-made man" or "makes up their own mind" or show initiative or work well independently.
- Latin culture tends to be more **collectivist** and expects people to identify with and work well in groups which protect them in exchange for loyalty and compliance.



8. Individualism vs. Collectivism

- Latinos emphasize **interdependence** and the **importance of the social group** they belong to and identify with.
- Paradoxically, **individualist cultures** tend to believe that there are **universal values** that should be shared by all, while **collectivist cultures** tend to accept that different groups have different values.
- Important consequences when establishing the main values that should lead the evaluation activities.



9. Conclusions

- It is important to **reflect on cultural differences** and open up ideas for discussion.
- But there is no good substitute for **receptiveness to interpersonal feedback, good observation and listening skills**, and some **common sense**.



9. Conclusions

- Evaluators should **show interest for other cultures** and **ask questions**: most people respond very positively to inquiries about their culture.
- They also should make a **genuine effort to find the positive** historical, literary, and cultural contributions of a society; **learn a few polite expressions** in another person's language; and **show appreciation for the food and music** of another culture.
- All these things have especially **positive effects** and **ease the breaking** of cultural barriers.



9. Conclusions

- **Differences** between cultures and peoples are **real** and add richness to the fabric of life.
- At the same time, people everywhere **have much in common**; when the **exterior is peeled off**, there are not so many differences after all.
- **Certain basic aspects** (e.g. aspects of personality; aspects of conscientiousness or the desire to do what is right; need for affiliation and love, participation, and contribution) may prove to be culturally invariant, **universal** human ways of acting and experiencing.
- But **evaluators must deal with this peeling off**, and may not have time for it to be completed, what makes this cultural differences more important to their job.



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empowerment (CP&E) evaluation**

Thank you

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