Book Reviews / Comptes rendus de livres

David M. Fetterman, Liliana Rodríguez-Campos, Ann P. Zukoski, et al. (2018). *Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation: Stakeholder Involvement Approaches*. New York, NY: Guilford Press. Softcover, 172 pages. (ISBN: 978-1-4625-3282-7)

Reviewed by Sandra Sellick, Evaluation Consultant

Stakeholder involvement approaches in evaluation constitute an evolving field. In 1991, Scriven's *Evaluation Thesaurus* offered definitions for "stakeholders" and "evaluation" but none for "approaches," "stakeholder involvement," or "collaborative, participatory, or empowerment evaluation." In this new book, Fetterman, Rodríguez-Campos, Zukoski, et al. identify that 20% of American Evaluation Association (AEA) members belonged to the AEA's Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Topical Interest Group (CPE-TIG), from which this book emerged (pp. vii, 9). With a population of 7,300 members in over 80 countries (American Evaluation Association [AEA], 2018), this is significant.

The underlying research for the book is excellent, with 180 sources: 23% published prior to 2000 and 40% published since 2010. Curiously, only one *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* (CJPE) article reference appears. Does this mean that stakeholder participation approaches have been under-addressed in articles published in this journal? Certainly, Canadian theory and practice are well represented in the body of work by Canadian evaluators such as Chouinard, Cousins, Love, and Shula. Recent evidence of the importance of stakeholder involvement approaches to Canadian evaluators was reflected in the "co-creation" theme of the 2018 Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) conference; 40 presentation titles in the conference program (Canadian Evaluation Society, 2018) reference stakeholder participation, collaboration, and/or empowerment.

The book is thoughtfully divided into 12 chapters, with an overarching first chapter introducing the three evaluation approaches. Three of the next nine chapters focus on a single approach and six present case studies. The two final chapters highlight approach similarities and differences and situate them in developing contexts.

In their introduction, the authors express hope that

> this book become[s] required reading in any evaluation course that is concerned with stakeholder involvement, building evaluation capacity, use, and evaluation sustainability. It can be used in any advanced evaluation course focusing on collaborative, participatory, and empowerment evaluation approaches. The book is an excellent sup-

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plement to an introductory course, in which students will be engaged in evaluations that require stakeholder involvement in evaluation. (pp. vi–vii)

I concur that this book is suitable for graduate-level courses but not for an introductory course. One reason is that it is not designed as a traditional textbook. Specific learning objectives, pre- or post-reading questions, checks for understanding, and practice exercises are not included, although comprehensive subject and author indexes and numerous useful tables and figures are featured. A second reason is that a strong prior knowledge of evaluation constructs and stakeholder involvement is advisable.

Multiple author contributions lead to minor ambiguities despite shared purposes. Advantages of author diversity appear in the richness of insights and experiences. Disadvantages include variation in terminology. For example, "approach" and "method" are sometimes interchanged (p. 48). "Model" is also introduced in place of approach (pp. 13, 53). This ambiguity raises the question of whether the book is about evaluation types, models, approaches, methods, stances, or philosophies. The chapter on essentials of the empowerment evaluation *approach* includes a three-step *approach* defined within the overall *approach*, followed by a 10-step *approach* (p. 81). Perfectly valid, but slightly paradoxical statements appear in assertions such as the following: "Transformative participatory evaluation, unlike practical participatory evaluation, is designed to empower and give voice to members of the community with limited access to power or oppressed by dominating groups" (p. 49); "In this empowerment evaluation, information was handled and analyzed in a collective and collaborative manner" (p. 97); "Empowerment is cited as a guiding principle of collaborative evaluation" (p. 119) and "democratic participation is a guiding principle of empowerment evaluation" (p. 121).

Additionally, the book contains multiple sets of principles: micro-, mid-, and macro-level principles; guiding principles; synthesizing principles; CPE evaluation principles (pp. 119–121); principles in common (p. 120); CPE-TIG generated lists of principles (p. 121); CPE-TIG survey results on guiding principles (pp. 124–125); guiding principles for professionals on stakeholder engagement (pp. 124–125); principles of engagement (pp. 125–126); principles to nurture wise democratic process and collective intelligence in public participation (p. 126); and others. These sets of principles offer valuable additional resources to the experienced evaluator but could be daunting for new or emerging evaluators.

Cutting through the ambiguity is a delightful cartoon by Chris Lysy (p. 3) that captures the essence of the three approaches with remarkable simplicity, using three frames, few words, and image size adjustment. Collaborative evaluation is represented by a large, commanding figure enlisting the support of stakeholders. Participatory evaluation is represented by an evaluator seated at a table with stakeholders of equal size. Empowerment evaluation is represented by a lead stakeholder addressing other stakeholders with an unobtrusive supporting evaluator.

The authors conclude that "[o]ne of the next key steps is to explore and experiment with various combinations of stakeholder involvement approaches to

evaluation by adhering to their principles and standards but pushing the edges of the envelope" (p. 143). I propose two additions for further study. The first acknowledges Indigenous ways of knowing in the context of stakeholder involvement approaches. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada specifically referenced "appropriate evaluation mechanisms" involving Indigenous people, victim services, and the criminal justice system (2012, p. 4). How best to approach this call to action? Patton, McKegg, and Wehipeihana have advocated

> the use of contextually appropriate cultural principles within an evaluation and innovation process, and on the changes and learning that emerge in embedding these authentically . . . .
>
> in particular, the need for collaborative, participative values-based engagement in regard both the expectations and to key evaluative practices/processes. (2016, p. 125)

My second suggestion addresses stakeholder involvement in evaluations of programs with marginalized populations. The phrase "nothing about us, without us" (Charlton, 1998) is not new, but it remains relevant. In this book, Chouinard's case study of a participatory evaluation of a community justice program for sex offenders provides relevant leadership (Chapter 7, pp. 66–73).

My readings of this book have led me to the conclusion that these approaches are not islands but rather part of a continuous landscape—distinguishable but highly interconnected. When I stopped focusing on differences and embraced the continuum, I found the book far more satisfying. In future readings, I would like to gain a deeper insight into the micro-, mid-, and macro-levels of analysis of guiding principles of stakeholder involvement. Each reading of this book yields more understanding.

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