Benefits and Costs of Evaluation – An Essay

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Abstract

The paper summarizes several benefits of evaluations, such as increased accountability and transparency, organizational learning, experimentation, dissent and democratization. It also points at diverse costs of evaluations, such as financial costs, error costs, costs resulting from performance paradoxes, routinization and loss of ‘critical power’. It is argued that although benefits of evaluations often are stressed, it is wise to also address the topic of the costs of evaluation. It may be a cognitive bias that costs are underrated while benefits are overrated. The paper finally discusses why it is important to address this issue.

Keywords: Benefits and Costs of Evaluation, Cognitive Biases, Democratization, Evaluation Systems, Performance Paradox