UBUNTU and the Challenges of Africa-Rooted Public Policy Evaluation Approach

DE Uwizeyimana

ABSTRACT

African evaluation experts and scholars have been trying to establish a public policy evaluation approach which is based on the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu for many years. This type of public policy evaluation has been variously referred to as ‘Africa-rooted evaluation’ or ‘Made in Africa evaluation’ (MAE) and many other similar names. The objective of this article is to critically analyse the challenges evaluation scholars, academics and practitioners must overcome in order to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach. The methodological approach used in this analysis is mainly qualitative and it is based on a robust review of existing topics of evaluation, Africa-rooted public policy evaluation (and similar concepts) to determine whether it is possible to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation in an African context. This research finds that, the establishment of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach will depend on two important transformations. First, indigenous African evaluation and non-indigenous African scholars and experts must agree on the African values, practices, and traditions on which such public policy evaluation approach should be based. Second, the indigenous African philosophy of Ubuntu has its own downsides which have serious implications for public policy evaluation in Africa. These weaknesses and their implications should be addressed before making Ubuntu the foundation of the envisaged Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach. The challenge facing African evaluation scholars, experts and practitioners is to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach which benefits the African indigenous people without excluding citizens of African countries who do not subscribe to the Ubuntu African philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article is to critically analyse the challenges of making the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu the backbone of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach. The “Ubuntu” or “Botho” African philosophy is known as umunthu in Chewa (Malawi), umundu (in Yawo), unhu (in Shona Zimbabwe), botho in Sotho or Tswana (Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa) (Segobye, 2000), umuntu in Zulu, vhutu in Venda, and Ubuntu in Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele
languages and bunhu (in Tsonga) (South Africa) (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2005:147). The same concept is called “Ubuntu” in Kinyarwanda (Rwanda) and Kirundi (Burundi’s language). Ubuntu expresses African people’s “interconnectedness, their common humanity, and the responsibility to each other that flows from African people’s deeply felt connection and communal ways of life (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2005:147).

Literature shows that evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation, and its intended and unintended results (Uwizeyimana, 2020a:2; Uwizeyimana, 2020b:3). An evaluation which is based on African indigenous traditions, African indigenous philosophies and ways of life, known as *Ubuntu*, is exactly what an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation is all about.

It is practically impossible to identify concrete ‘Eurocentrism’ or ‘Western values’ as coherent bodies of knowledge, which are different from Asian values (Cloete & Uwizeyimana 2020). In addition, the existence of a coherent set of “African values” that is uniquely African and does not exist on other continents is difficult to find (Anoba 2017:37). However, while there is no agreement on what constitutes western evaluation approaches in literature, the type of evaluation which is based on western approaches and practices is said to emphasise good governance elements when used to measure the success and failure of public policies (and other government interventions). Instead of paying too much attention on issues of communal well-being, empathy and indigenous cultural values and traditions, western public policy evaluation approaches focus more on efficiency, effectiveness and economy (i.e. the so called 3Es) in terms of acquiring and transforming inputs into outputs and outcomes (i.e. return on investments and results) (Cloete 2016:65-66). Table 1 below lists some of the potential differences between the Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach proposed in this article and the current western evaluation approaches.

**Table 1: Western individualism vs. Indigenous African communalism**

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<th>COMMUNALISM OR INDIVIDUALISM?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Western individualism</td>
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<td>Individual self-concept</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Survival of the individual</td>
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<td>Personal gratification</td>
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<td>Competition and conflict</td>
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<td>Ownership</td>
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<td>Individual rights</td>
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*Source: Adapted from Van der Walt (1999:28)*

**Why should an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach be established?**

Cloete (2016:1) states that the following key issues were identified at the 2007 the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA) Conference in Niamey, Niger as a guiding framework for the discussion on why an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach should be established for the African continent. The first key issue raised was that “evaluation practice in Africa is based on external values and contexts, is donor-driven and the accountability mechanisms tend to be directed towards recipients of aid rather than both recipients and the providers of aim”. The second key issue was that “evaluation…needs to address…country ownership; the macro-micro disconnects; attribution; ethics and values, and power-relations. The third and final key issue identified at the 2007 AfrEA conference was that there was an urgent “need to re-examine our preconceived assumptions; underpinning values, paradigms (e.g. transformative vs. pragmatic); what is acknowledged as being evidence and by whom, before we can select any particular methodology/approach” (AfrEA, 2007:internet source).

In summary, the main reason why most African evaluation scholars and experts want to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach is because they believe that a one-size-fit-all policy, programme and project evaluation approach which is based on the western evaluation model is not appropriate in non-western cultures and environments (Cloete 2016). They also argue that evaluation approaches which are based on western values and cultures do not benefit African indigenous people (Chilisa 2015). Therefore, the purpose of establishing an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation is to benefit indigenous African people. The challenges of trying to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach based on *Ubuntu* philosophy on a continent that has people who do not subscribe to the African indigenous philosophy of *Ubuntu* are discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Discourses around Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approaches**
Literature suggests that the call for the Africa-rooted public policy evaluation has been made by many individual scholars. Among the many leading scholars who have spearheaded the call for establishing an Africa-rooted evaluation are Zenda Ofir, Bagele Chilisa, Sukai Prom Jackson and Sully Gariba, Gaothlobongwe et al. (2018), Chilisa and Malunga (2012, 2013), Chilisa (2015), and Cloete (2016).

The type of public policy evaluation approach most evaluation experts and scholars have been trying to establish for many years has been variously referred to as “an Africa-rooted programme evaluation approach” (Cloete, 2016:55), “Made in Africa Evaluation or MAE” (Bellagio Conference Report, 2013:1; Ramasobana, 2018:1), “culturally responsive evaluation” (Gaothlobogwe, Major, Koloi-Keaikitse, Chilisa, 2018:159) and Gervin (2012:1), “decolonised/decoloniality ... research and evaluation” (Cloete & Auriacombe, 2019:1), “culturally responsive evaluation” (Hopson, 2009:429, Chouinard & Hopson, 2016), “decolonised evaluation practice” (Kawakami, Anton, Cram, Lai & Porima, 2007:319), “evaluation in African contexts” (Mbava & Dahler-Larsen, 2019:1), “indigenous evaluation framework” and “evaluation in our communities” (AIHEC, 2009:1). Therefore, while other concepts will be mentioned as and when the contexts require, the concept Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach is used in this article for consistency.

Cloete (2016:55-56) argues that the closest to a concept of a MAE can be traced back to the 4th AfrEA Conference, which took place between the 17th and 19th of January 2007 in Niamey, Niger. During this conference “Michael Patton and Sulley Gariba fielded the keynote that launched the “Making Evaluation Our Own Concept” (Chilisa, 2015:8). Ofir, Gariba and Oumol Tall organised “a special stream to discuss the topic: Making Evaluation our Own: Strengthening the Foundation for Africa Rooted and Africa Led Monitoring and Evaluation” (Chilisa, 2015:8). The theme for this special stream suggests that it focused on trying to establish the foundation of what is called an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation in this article. Among the requirements of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation was that it should be made in Africa, for Africa, by Africans and that its implementation should be led by Africans. Chilisa (2015:8) explains that “The introductory session of the 2007 AfrEA Conference that led to MAE set the scene for the day’s discussions by considering the African evaluation challenges, the trends shaping M&E in the developing world; and the multiple roles of and approaches to evaluation”.

Chilisa (2015:8) opines that the presentations by Robert Picciotto (UK), Michael Patton and Donna Mertens (USA) explained, among others, the theoretical underpinnings of evaluation as it
is practised in the world today (Chilisa, 2015:8). The main problem highlighted in this conference is that the application of the current western or globalised policy, programme and projects evaluation paradigm is not always optimal in the African developmental contexts (Bellagio Report 2013). Hence the need for a contextualised evaluation approach that is more suitable to African conditions, and its cultures and institutions.

What all the authors cited here, and other authors who are not cited in this article, have in common is the belief that western evaluation approaches do not always serve the interests of non-western people. It is also their desire to replace, or at least to compliment western evaluation approaches and practices with a public policy evaluation approach which is based on indigenous African values, customs, traditions and practices (which is commonly referred to as an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach in this article). They want to “Make Evaluation our Own” (AfrEA, 2007), they want to establish a “Made in Africa strategy for evaluation” (Bellagio Centre in Italy in 2012), they want to establish a public policy evaluation approach which is rooted in the African context, which is decolonised, Africanised or indigenised (Gaothlobongwe, et al., 2018; Chilisa & Malunga, 2012). According to Cloete (2016:56), these scholars “jointly believe that the MAE concept gives rise to how Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approaches contribute to Africa’s broader development”.

TWO POSSIBLE WAYS TO MAKE UBUNTU THE FOUNDATION OF AN AFRICA-ROOTED PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION APPROACH


- Adaptation and domestication of the western evaluation theory and practises which have been accumulated over many years to make them serve the needs of Africans and;
- Development of a new and different relational evaluation branch which is based on the African indigenous philosophy of *Ubuntu*. 


The following sections provide a detailed critical analysis of the two options and the challenges they pose in the process of establishing an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach which is based on African indigenous philosophy of *Ubuntu*.

**Adaptation of western evaluation theories and practices which have been accumulated over many years to make them serve the needs of Africans**

Chilisa and Malunga (2012) reported in the 2012 Bellagio Conference Report (2013) that the first step in the process of establishing the Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach would be to decolonise and indigenise the “the accumulated western theory and practice on evaluation, which has been applied in Africa for many decades and to make them serve the needs of Africans”. In domestication process, “more appropriate African ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies have to be infused in a more holistic transdisciplinary manner” into current western evaluation approaches and philosophies which are used by both western and African evaluators to systematically evaluate public policies on the continent (Bellagio Report 2013, cited in Cloete 2020:88).

If one considers the fact that there is no known African theory and practice on evaluation, Chililisa and Malunga’s (2012) argument makes perfect sense. One must make do with what is already available. In the absence of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach, the first logical thing to do would be to find ways to adapt, modify or transform the western evaluation approaches already being used by western evaluators to evaluate policies, programmes and projects in Africa. However, there are many conceptual, contextual and practical challenges evaluation scholars, academics and practitioners will have to deal with, if the adaptation, domestication and indigenisation of western evaluation theories and practices suggested by Chilisa and Malunga’s (2012), adopted by the 2013 Bellagio Conference Report’ (2013), and which continue to dominate current literature is adopted as a method for establishing an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach.

Conceptual problems include the proposal to adopt, domesticate and indigenise western evaluation theories and practices to make them serve the needs of Africans while not explaining what is meant by “Africans, African people and indigenous African people”. The concept “African people” generally refers to “all people of indigenous origin to the African continent, but it is often used exclusively to refer to black people of African descent” (CEPT, n.d.:11). This is the only group of people who have claim to the indigenous African people status and to the African
indigenous philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Many of the participants of the Bellagio Conference, including the most leading scholars and proponents of “Africa-rooted evaluation” (or MAE as they call it), are excluded from this definition of “African people”. Is it possible to establish an Africa-rooted evaluation which excludes its leading proponents?

Furthermore, the concept “indigenous” simply means “having originated…in a particular region”, “innate, inborn, occurring natively or naturally in a specific region or environment” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1993:591). Thus, an indigenous African person is one who originates on the African continent. According to Gaotlhobogwe et al. (2018:322), “some key ideas regarding indigenousness” include the feeling that “*We were here first. Newcomer, you do not have the right to impose your values on us, even if you have more destructive weapons than we do*. If one considers the meaning of the concept ‘African indigenous people’, many, if not all non-indigenous people would be excluded from this definition. How can an evaluation approach which excludes people, such as whites, Indians, Coloureds, Arabs, etc., who are otherwise rightful citizens of one or more of the 54 independent African countries be established?

The final conceptual problem is about the decolonised evaluation in the African context. For example, Chilisa (2015:5), states that “*AfrEA’s initiative to facilitate scholarship on an MAE is in line with what other leading professional associations such as the American Evaluation Association (AEA), the Aoteore New Zealand Evaluation (ANZEA), and the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) are doing.*” These associations continue to push the boundaries of evaluation to include the voices of formally colonised and marginalised groups (Chilisa, 2015:5), but fails to explain what decolonisation means to every group of communities who are involved in the debate and who are going to be conducting the evaluation. For example, it is a fact that African indigenous people were colonised by people from western countries and their governments. Cloete and Auriacombe (2016:2) argue that “decolonisation implies getting rid of the legacy of colonialism or colonisation”. However, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017:1) argues that getting rid of colonial legacy is not enough and that one must go further to undo its dirty history and to reverse its impact on the colonised. Thus, Cloete and Auriacombe (2016:2) do not explain who must get rid of that legacy and how, and what would be the implications of getting rid of the colonial legacy to the colonisers or the people who benefited from the colonial legacy. For example, some of the descendants of the western people who came to Africa to colonise Africa are now African citizens. What would decolonisation mean to them? In fact, some of the scholars leading the decolonisation conversation in the process of decolonising evaluation in Africa and the “Africa-rooted evaluation”
(or MAE) at AfrEA 2007 and the 2013 Bellagio Conference, and other continental and national conferences are not African indigenous people as explained above.

Hence, it is possible for a decolonised evaluation suggested by Cloete and Auriacombe (2016:2), Chilisa and Malunga (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017:1) to mean different things to both Africans of indigenous origin, who were most probably underrepresented at the 2013 Bellagio Conference, and other African people of western and eastern origin, who were most probably better if not overrepresented at the 2007 AfrEA Conference and the 2013 Bellagio Conference. The conference resolved to establish the MAE, without providing a definition that accommodates all the African people in their multiple and unique African circumstances and contexts.

The 2013 Bellagio Conference Report (2013) and Chilisa and Malunga (2012:551) attempted to deal with the conflicting interests of western and non-western African people by suggesting that for evaluation to be rooted in Africa, it should for example, include an analysis of the intervention’s contribution towards community wellness, and balance both western and African priorities and indicators. But this suggestion is problematic in the current African context. Furthermore, Gaotlhobogwe et al. (2018:49) encourage the African Evaluation Association - AfrEA to foster and develop evaluation methodologies and frameworks relevant to the needs of traditional African people. However, even if the interests and needs of indigenous Africans people were not served by evaluation approaches based on western values, it may not also be the case with Africans of western and eastern descent because, most people of western and eastern origin still hold their western and eastern values.

Finally, from a practical point of view, Chilisa and Malunga (2012) do not explain how the existing western evaluation approaches, that have been applied in Africa for many decades, and have failed to serve the interests of Africans during the past can suddenly be adapted to serve the needs of Africans. They also do not explain how a domesticated non-African evaluation approach, or value, or tradition can turn such western evaluation practices into African evaluation practices. Adopting and domesticating western evaluation approaches and using them to serve the needs of Africans does not decolonise them or make them decolonised in the same way, using lyrics from indigenous African languages to sing American Hip-hop does not make Hip-hop an African genre, and singing Indian Bollywood music, using indigenous African words does not make Bollywood an African genre.
Based on the above argument, it can be concluded that the adoption and adaptation of western evaluation theories and practices which have been accumulated over many years does not assist in the establishment of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach, which is based on indigenous Ubuntu traditions and practices. The first reason why an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach is needed is because western evaluation approaches did not serve the needs of indigenous Africans people. In addition, the adoption and domestication of evaluation approaches which are based on western values and traditions does not make them African indigenous traditions and values. Western values and traditions cannot be used to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach. The following sections explain why such public policy evaluation approach should be based on indigenous Ubuntu traditions and practices.

Indigenous African philosophy of Ubuntu as a reaction against western evaluation approaches

The second main African transformation of current western evaluation culture and practices, suggested by Chilisa and Malunga (2015:35) in the “African Evaluation Tree Metaphor”, and which continues to be endorsed by the 2013 Bellagio Conference, is the development of a new and different:

“...relational evaluation branch’ (that) … draws from the concept of ‘wellness’ as personified in African greetings and the Southern African concept of ‘I am because we are’. The wellness reflected in the relationship between people extends also to non-living things, emphasising that evaluation from an African perspective should include a holistic approach that links an intervention to the sustainability of the ecosystem and environment around it” (Chilisa, 2015; 2012).

According to Chilisa (2015:24) and Gaotlhobogwe, et al. (2018:47), a new and different relational evaluation branch for the African context would be based on African indigenous traditional cultures and values, and more specifically on the African philosophy commonly known as Ubuntu. The 2012 Bellagio Conference also resolved that the African philosophy known as Ubuntu must be the cornerstone of the MAE. Consequently, the Bellagio Report (2013) also prepared by Chilisa and Malunga (2013), states that Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approaches require that “the prevailing African ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies should and must be infused (in a more holistic transdisciplinary manner) into the application of systematic programme
evaluation on the continent”. One of the main similarities in different African traditional values and culture, which has been highlighted by Van der Walt (1999:40-42) and Gaotlhobogwe et al. (2018:49), is an interdependent, love and respect for elderly people and community. Ubuntu characterises the communal nature of African communities, and brings to the fore images of supportiveness, cooperation, and communalism (Murithi, 2009:222). As Chilisa (2015:20) puts it:

“Among the Bantu people, there is recognition of an I/We relationship as opposed to the I/You, which emphasises the individual at the expense of the majority. This principle is captured under the philosophy of Ubuntu. An Ubuntu philosophy expresses an ontology that addresses relations among people, relations with the living and the non-living, and a spiritual existence that promotes love and harmony among peoples and communities” (see also Chilisa, 2005, 2012).

Therefore, an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach must draw from the concept of “wellnesses” as personified in African greetings and the Southern African concept of “I am because we are” (Nzimakwe, 2014:30; Segobye, 2000). Such an evaluation approach must be shaped and guided by the existing body of knowledge of African values and worldviews (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018:47). It must also take into account that the wellness reflected in the relationship between people extends also to non-living things (Nzimakwe, 2014:30). It must include a holistic approach that links an intervention to the sustainability of the ecosystem and environment around it (Cloete, 2016). It must recognise that the indigenous African individual and his/her community or communalism is what characterises that which is essentially African (Chilisa & Malunga, 2012:551). African communalism is the “practice of communal living, common ownership and tribal loyalty within cultural or racial groups” (CEPTSA, n.d.:10).

Gaotlhobogwe et al. (2018:49) argue that establishing an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach “is not as difficult as it might otherwise sound in a continent of 54 independent countries, a diverse population and different ethnic cultures, because research has shown that these cultures have many similarities. One of these similarities is that: “The Africans share a common understanding of the nature of reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology), and values or ethics (axiology)” (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018:49).

However, the above analysis seems to forget that culture is not limited to race and ethnicity but includes language, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and social class, and more generally,
any group’s values, norms and beliefs (Gervin, 2012:5). If one considers this definition by many citizens of African countries, including leading personalities in the fight to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation, it will have very little to nothing in common with indigenous African people’s cultural values and traditions. For example, Van der Walt (1999:1) argues that most white South Africans originate from Europe, they have different economic, social, political and historic backgrounds, and as a result, they still struggle to find their “Africancentric or Eurocentric” identities within a multicultural South Africa (Gervin, 2012:5). The argument can be extended to other groups such as Indians, Coloureds, Arabs, Jews, Chinese and other western and eastern ethnic groups. Most of these groups of people tend to have very little to no social and cultural interactions with black-skinned African indigenous people.

In addition, there is an African saying that “No culture is perfect” (Van der Walt, 1999:42-42). Every culture reveals both light and shadow (Van der Walt, 1999:42-42). This also applies to the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu. Therefore; “As it is true of western culture, apart from appreciating it, we should also look critically at African culture” (Van der Walt, 1999:42-42). As indicated in the above discussion, the need for a special Africa-rooted public policy evaluation is motivated by the fact that Africa and the west are different (Van der Walt, 1999:28). The two are different in terms of the value they attach to time and the environment.

Furthermore, African and western ontology (understanding of reality), their anthropologies (views of man), views of society, theories of knowing (how knowledge of reality is obtained) and axiologies (norms and values) are often opposed (Van der Walt, 1999:28). The reason why the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu must be a sine qua non characteristic of Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approaches is that “Africa emphasises human community (or communalism), while evaluation approaches which are based on Euro-American value systems are often criticised for promoting privacy “individualism, competition, and selfishness” (Shai, 2019:4). This is again proof of how these two cultures are different. How then could participants in the Bellagio and other conferences, who have no claim on the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu, have championed the type of evaluation for which they are not qualified to perform because of their lack of knowledge of indigenous African traditions and customs?

If anything that takes away individual freedom, liberty, is bad in western culture, while it is good in terms of African communalism; how could proponents of African indigenous philosophy of
Ubuntu ignore the fact that its over-appreciation of the community and under-appreciation of the individual's freedom and liberty makes it not appealing to non-indigenous African people?

Finally, an evaluation which is based on values and traditions that have the potential for discouraging individualism and competition has the potential of stifling individuals' entrepreneurship and hard work, which are already in short supply among African indigenous communities. For example, communalist ideas that “I am because We are” (Nyasha, 2015:125) have been linked to a vexing hindrance for many young black professionals in Africa who are forced to pay what is known as Black Tax, a shorthand used to articulate the financial responsibility of providing for an extended family. While Black Tax is often portrayed as responsible citizenship and humanity, as a result of the indigenous African philosophy of Ubuntu, it also unwittingly initiates a pattern of economic hardships for the black working class (Manyike, 2019:1). This is the reason why members of the black working class have not been able to achieve the financial and economic progress that is so easily achieved by their non-African indigenous counterparts with the same salaries and education levels (Oliver, 2019:1). Non-indigenous African people might find it difficult to accept an evaluation approach based on African values, traditions and practices of Ubuntu, which they think lead to poverty and misery. The other problem is that an African’s conception of causality is quite different from that of the west. Indigenous Africans attach the importance of spiritual forces to almost everything (Goduka, 2000:63), including the perception of why public policies succeed or fail to benefit them. There is a major practical challenge in this argument. Most indigenous Africans conception of causality, beliefs in magic and supernatural powers, which are associated with indigenous African philosophy of Ubuntu and communalism, cannot be systematically and scientifically proven or evaluated.

Based on the arguments in the above sections, it can be safely argued that the desire to establish an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach, which is based on indigenous Ubuntu traditions and practices did not sufficiently consider the fact that African citizens include people from non-African cultures such as western and eastern cultures etc. who do not necessarily subscribe to the African indigenous philosophy of Ubuntu. There is also no evidence to suggest that the weaknesses of using Ubuntu as a foundation of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach have received the attention they necessarily deserve.

CONCLUSION
The analysis in this article shows that there is currently no simple answer to the question which seeks to find out whether it is possible to establish a public policy evaluation which is based on indigenous African philosophy of *Ubuntu* in a continent with 54 independent African countries, multiple ethnic groups and multiple cultural background and origins. The first challenge of making the indigenous African philosophy the foundation of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach is that the adaptation and domestication of the western evaluation theory and practices which have been accumulated over many years does not necessarily make them serve the needs of indigenous Africans people. The domestication of western evaluation philosophy, culture and values does not make them African. The second challenge is that the development of a new and different relational evaluation branch which is based on the African indigenous philosophy of *Ubuntu* ignores the fact that there are citizens of many African countries who do not subscribe to indigenous African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Many of them are leading scholars in the Africa-rooted public policy evaluation debate.

The third and final challenge is that the indigenous African philosophy of *Ubuntu* has its own downsides which have serious implications for evaluation in Africa. The weaknesses of indigenous African philosophy of *Ubuntu* should be seriously considered. So much can go wrong for both African indigenous people and non-indigenous African people if *Ubuntu* philosophy is blindly adopted as the foundation of an Africa-rooted public policy evaluation approach.

Therefore, much work still needs to be done by evaluation scholars, national, continental, and global evaluation organisations, and most importantly, the African governments and African leaders. The establishment and application of an evaluation which is based on the African indigenous philosophy of *Ubuntu* requires non-indigenous African evaluation scholars and experts, such as those who attended the 2012 Bellagio Conference, but more specifically, continental and sub-continental institutions such as the AfrEA, and CLEAR-AA. These institutions should initiate and spearhead a frank, open and honest discussion on how such an evaluation will be conducted, what it entails, and how will it benefit both indigenous African people and non-indigenous African people who are citizens of every one of the 54 independent African countries.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


