

**Título da Tese:** Exploring evaluation using social practice theory in development education: a longitudinal in-depth case study

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### Abstract

This thesis explores how evaluation has been practised in a non-profit domain that of an English development education (DE) organisation. The study adds to explanations of how social practice theory contributes to the refinement of the understanding of evaluation practice. Generally, studies on evaluation practice remain unclear on how small, a-political non-profit organisations practice evaluation (Henry and Mark, 2003); especially, how their evaluation practice changes over time and with what effects (Saunders et al., 2005). Within the specific non-profit sector of development education studies have described the insufficient knowledge of how these organisations practise evaluation (Bourn, 2014).

This is a single case study using an in-depth qualitative case study approach (Simons, 2009) to longitudinally explore evaluation practice and its change over time. Data from coordinators, practitioners and funders was ethnographically collected, during 1 year, through analysis of documentary evidence, 16 semi-structured interviews and 134 hours of observation where participants articulated their experiences of evaluation whilst identifying the influences shaping their evaluation practice. These articulations were coded and thematically analysed with findings displayed in a timeline of evaluation practice (Shove et al., 2012). The empirical data obtained suggests that the participation of practitioners in evaluation appears to be taken-for-granted, but their full participation may be restricted. It also sheds light on the flow of power relationships that have traditionally been operated top-down, yet an internal layer of power within the non-profit leadership seems influential. The data analysed indicates that the co-occurrence of evaluation practice with other working activities shapes and alters how evaluation is practised in a development education setting.

Two ways this thesis extends the theory of evaluation practice are: first, it proposes that a social practice view of evaluation can enhance practitioners' experiences of evaluation by tracking how their practice has changed over time. This study makes an original theoretical contribution to the broader literature of evaluation practice informed by social practice theory (Saunders 2000; Saunders et al., 2011), through the use of an advanced framework of the dynamics of social practice (Shove, 2009; Shove et al., 2012), to explore the everyday life of evaluation and how it changes. Second, the thesis extends the theory of evaluation practice (Saunders et al., 2011) by applying the dynamics of social practice into a novel research domain of development education evaluation. This thesis also offers an empirical contribution to the under-researched domain of development education (Bourn, 2014), by extending current knowledge on how evaluation is practised. Finally, the thesis contributes to advance the method of analysis of change over time, by having used a timeline as a tool to display findings, rather than only to collect and organise the dataset, as in other methods (Giele and Elder, 1998).

**Keywords:** *Evaluation Practice; Social Practice Theory; Development Education; Dynamics of Social Practice; Power relationships; Non-profit organizations.*

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