Why Get Involved in Program Evaluations?:
Toward a Model of Stakeholder Involvement Motives

by

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Abstract

It is generally recognized that for any evaluation to be successful there needs to be a significant amount of involvement from program staff and other stakeholders who are invested in the program. Ideally, these individuals would be highly engaged in the evaluation process; however, in practice this ideal is rarely met. Two research studies were undertaken to explore different stakeholder motives for involvement in program evaluations and their relative importance in involvement decisions. In Study 1, stakeholder views of their own involvement (or lack thereof) in recent program evaluations were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis approach. The findings revealed diverse stakeholder motives for evaluation involvement that include personal/human factors (e.g., opportunity for personal advancement), evaluation factors (e.g., clarity of evaluation goals) and organizational factors (e.g., funding implications). A second study looked more closely at these motives to determine their relative importance to evaluation involvement decision-making. Using the Q-sort method, three involvement profiles were identified which revealed different pathways to involvement based on individual concerns for program funding, learning opportunities, and evaluation quality. A preliminary model of stakeholder involvement motives is proposed in which the value and relevance of the evaluation are determined by expected outcomes of the evaluation.

Dedication

It has been said many times that all a child needs to succeed is one teacher who really cares about them and their future. In my life I have been blessed with such a gift three times over. And it is to them that this thesis is dedicated.

To my sixth grade teacher, the late Mr. Don Kusyk… Thank you for teaching me how to love learning. I carried the lessons you taught and the confidence you had in me through three post-secondary degrees. I am sorry I did not get to tell you in person how much you meant to me, and how much of this paper I owe to you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Evaluations of programs and policies can significantly increase their efficiency, and in some cases, effectiveness (Mark, Henry & Julnes, 2004; Posavac & Carey, 2013). Stakeholders (e.g. program staff and administrators), particularly those who are intimately familiar with programs and the organizations within which they operate, are essential for the successful development and implementation of any evaluation (Brandon, Smith, Trenholm, & Devaney, 2010). In fact, important aspects of any evaluation, such as identifying the goals of the evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), ascribing value to collected data (Stake, 1991), ensuring the feasibility of recommendations (Fetterman, 2001) and, of course, making use of evaluation findings (Patton, 1997), can only be accomplished when stakeholders are involved and engaged in the process. Yet little is known about the *psychology of stakeholder involvement*, that is, what stakeholders themselves actually think or feel about being involved in evaluation activities. How do stakeholders themselves explain their decisions to actively engage in evaluation tasks, or to opt out of the process? This question guided the present research, which aimed to extend the existing literature on the motives that drive stakeholder involvement in program evaluations.

The evaluation literature abounds with accounts of the potential benefits of stakeholder involvement in evaluations (e.g., Morris, 2002; Suarez-Balcazar & Harper, 2003). High levels of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process are believed to lead to positive outcomes such as increased evaluation relevance (Plottu & Plottu, 2009), greater client satisfaction (Cousins & Earl, 1992), more trust in the evaluation methods (Alkin, Hoefstetter & Ai, 1998) and greater use of evaluation findings (Cornachione, Trombetta,

& Casa Nova, 2010; Cousins, Goh, Clark, & Lee, 2004; Higa & Brandon, 2005; Johnson, et al., 2009; Nadin, 2013). Indeed, a central feature of participatory evaluation approaches is the involvement of stakeholders in many, if not all, aspects of a program evaluation (e.g., Cousins & Earl, 1992; Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Fetterman, 2001; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1997; Stake, 1991). Despite the numerous purported benefits of stakeholder involvement, surprisingly little is known about the kinds of factors that entice stakeholders themselves to focus their time and energy on evaluation work.

A cursory review of the evaluation literature on this topic could leave one with the impression that stakeholders need only be given the opportunity to participate in the evaluation for meaningful engagement to occur. The problem with this *if-you-build-it-they-will-come* way of thinking is that it ignores the freedom all stakeholders have to decline their participation outright, or at the very least, withhold their meaningful, effortful involvement in evaluations. Similar to organizational citizenship behaviours (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000 for a review), involvement in program evaluations is somewhat discretionary and therefore can be viewed as a type of prosocial organizational behaviour. Predictors of organizational citizenship behaviour include characteristics of the organization itself, (e.g., organizational flexibility; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996), individual difference factors (e.g. conscientiousness and satisfaction; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff, 1996), and task characteristics (e.g., intrinsic satisfaction, Podsakoff, 1996). Viewing stakeholder involvement from a similar vantage point may help us to see it in terms of personal motives that are situated within a particular context (the program and/or organization being evaluated) and directed toward a

particular task (the evaluation itself).

There is much to be gained from elaborating our understanding of the psychology of stakeholder involvement. Specifically useful to practitioners looking to engage stakeholders more meaningfully is an understanding of what gets stakeholders involved in the first place. Confronted with an evaluation that requires their time, energy, and other potential resources, how do individuals weigh all of these factors to ultimately make decisions about their own personal involvement? What draws them into the process, and what keeps them away? The present research aims to further our understanding of evaluation involvement by exploring the accounts and points of view of program stakeholders with previous evaluation experience. Situating the stakeholder in context, I explored elements of the personal, organizational, and evaluation environment that *pull* stakeholders into evaluations, making involvement easier, and more enjoyable, and therefore potentially more likely to occur, as well as those that *push* them away from evaluation, making involvement more arduous and therefore less likely to occur. Drawing on the literature on stakeholder involvement, in particular evaluation capacity building (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012; Taylor-Ritzler, Suarez-Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte, Henry, & Balcazar, 2013), this research will illuminate how stakeholders experience evaluation involvement from multiple perspectives.

I began by casting a fairly wide net, exploring stakeholders' accounts of evaluation participation to uncover the broader reasons for becoming involved. A second study was aimed at narrowing the focus by examining the relative importance of various stakeholder involvement reasons. In taking a wide-range view of this issue, close attention was

paid to the organizational, evaluation, and personal origins of the reasons discovered. In the next section the current literature on stakeholder involvement in program evaluations is reviewed to illustrate how questions about stakeholder evaluation involvement motives have been answered thus far.

Stakeholder Involvement in Program Evaluations

The term evaluation stakeholder, or simply, "stakeholder", will be used throughout this document to refer broadly to the people or groups who have some vested interest or stake in the outcome of an evaluation (Gold, 1983). As such, stakeholders may include policy makers, program managers, program practitioners, program clients, citizen organizations, and even the general public (Weiss, 1983). Drawing on Azzam's (2010) categorization of stakeholder roles within an evaluation, the present research views stakeholders as i) *decision makers* who set the terms of the evaluation, provide or control the evaluation budget as well as the evaluation deadlines (e.g., funders, program directors); ii) i*mplementers* who control evaluator access to information, including access to participants and knowledge of the program itself (e.g., program staff, practitioners); and/or *recipients* who provide the outcome data for the evaluation (e.g., program service users).

Given the importance of stakeholder input and effort to the success of any evaluation, understanding the motives behind their involvement has been of interest to evaluation professionals and academics for some time (Alkin, et al., 1998; Van Der Knaap, 2006). However, empirically-based research on most evaluation topics is difficult to find (Alkin, 2013; Mark, 2008) and stakeholder involvement is no exception (Brandon & Funkanga, 2014). Brandon and Fukunaga (2014) recently sorted through the murky wa-

ters of published research on stakeholder involvement in program evaluations and found only a handful of empirical reports; from an initial 322 articles containing some discussion of evaluation involvement, less than 15% used actual data and contained a methods section. Additionally, half of the articles reviewed described case studies of single evaluations, limiting our ability to trust that the findings are common across organizations and evaluations. Less than one-third of the articles reviewed were reports of original research (i.e, not tied to a particular evaluation). So, while there seems to be an ongoing discussion around stakeholder involvement in the evaluation literature, empirical research on this topic is severely limited. In response to this limitation, an original, empirical, and systematic approach was used in this research to explore a broad range of stakeholder points of view on how evaluation involvement can be achieved. The organizational psychology literature on organizational commitment and citizenship behaviour provides a compelling framework from which to structure an initial discussion of stakeholder involvement motives (Borman, 2004; Morris, 2005; Podsakoff, et al., 2000). In particular, it is useful think about the evaluation stakeholder as an individual situated within a particular context, whose behaviour may be influenced by factors at a number of levels, including the organizational domain, the evaluation domain, and the personal domain. Moreover, regardless of their source, each of these factors may exert a positive or a negative effect on stakeholders, either *pulling* or *pushing* them toward evaluation involvement.

Organizational Factors and Evaluation Involvement

At the heart of every evaluation is the program, initiative, or practice under study. These activities, typically termed evaluands, are funded, housed, and delivered by, and through organizations that come with their own unique structures, norms and expectations regarding evaluations. Undoubtedly, this affects the behaviour and cognitions of their members toward evaluation activities. The way in which organizations approach evaluation is believed to play a vital role in how this work is actually carried out by individual members and constituents. For instance, positive views of organizational processes are positively associated with organizational citizenship (Suresh & Venkatammal, 2010). In the evaluation domain specifically, there is a growing interest in how organizations can build their capacity for understanding, conducting and using evaluations (see Labin, Duffy, Meyers, Wandersman, & Lesesne, 2012 for a review). An important contribution of this emerging literature lies in the identification of key organizational factors that seem to promote 'evaluation-friendly' environments.

Organizational capacity for evaluation. Organizations can impact stakeholder involvement in evaluation through their influence on: a) the resources allocated to evaluation, b) organizational norms or culture that support evaluation work, and c) the integration of evaluation tasks with regular program functions. Taken together, these aspects speak to an organization's overall evaluation capacity.

One of the most objective indicators of an organization's capacity for evaluation is the degree to which resources are invested in evaluation activities (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012). Indeed, an investment of resources signals a commitment to evaluation, re-

flecting organizational norms. Increasing monetary resources available for the evaluation can directly affect stakeholder involvement by allowing for multiple stakeholder groups to be included (King & Ehlert, 2008). Conversely, a lack of funds for evaluations can limit the depth and breadth of the work being done, and hence limit opportunities for meaningful stakeholder participation (Fawcett, 2009; Parkinson, 2009; Smits, Champagne, & Brodeur, 2011). More resources allocated to evaluation also signifies that these activities are important and valued within the organization, which can contribute to positive social norms around evaluation involvement.

Organizations with high levels of evaluation capacity tend to exhibit a leadership, culture, and resources that are dedicated to evaluation – an organizational norm in favour of evaluation (Suarez-Balcazar & Harper, 2003). Social norms exert a powerful influence over our everyday behaviour (Azjen, 1985,1991). Organizations have their own culture and social norms that influence the behaviour of individuals that work within them (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006). A general feeling that the organization supports evaluation can help to build mutual agreement that evaluations are worthwhile (Sylvestre, Cousins, Purnima, Aubry & Hinsperger, 2008) which can make involvement "a non-issue" among stakeholders (Higa & Brandon, 2008). Social norms have long been associated with organizational citizenship behaviours (Appelbaum, et al., 2004), even among temporary workers for whom other known contributors of organizational citizenship, such as organizational identification, are likely to be absent (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004).

In a rare empirical study of stakeholder involvement in evaluations, Turnbull (1999) observed that teachers in highly evaluation-supportive environments were more

likely to exceed their desired level of participation in an evaluation than teachers in environments where support for evaluations was low. Organizational norms can also have a *push* effect on stakeholder involvement. Scriven (1991) has noted that resistance to involvement in evaluations will grow exponentially when negative views of evaluation are held at the group level. Similarly, reluctance toward organizational citizenship behaviours is often observed in organizations where norms around rewards are highly politicized (i.e., where group membership, nepotism, and power are valued over actual performance) (Chang, Rosen, Siemieniec & Johnson, 2012; Hsiung, Lin & Lin, 2012; Vigoda, 2000). The findings presented above are consistent with social psychological research that has found people will often behave in ways others expect them to, and/or in ways that are consistent with the behaviours of admired others (Cialdini, 2001).

A key indicator of the presence of evaluation-supportive norms in an organization is the extent of integration between evaluation activities and regular program functions (Forss, Kruse, Taut & Tenden, 2006; Garcia et al., 2011; King & Ehlert, 2008). Organizations in which evaluation is considered to be part of the responsibilities and duties of program staff have shown greater participation in such activities (Forss et al., 2006; King & Ehlert, 2008), while those in which evaluation is viewed as an extra task that falls outside of regular program activities exhibit greater resistance to evaluation (Forss et al., 2006; Owen, Cook & Jones, 2005). This suggests that organizations can increase stakeholder involvement in evaluation by increasing the levels of integration – making participation an essential and valued part of people's roles within the organization. While the organization can set the scene for evaluation involvement, components specific to the evalua-

tion itself may also affect stakeholder involvement.

Evaluation Factors and Evaluation Involvement

As members of organizations, evaluation stakeholders are influenced by the organizational context. Broader organizational norms, and the extent to which evaluation is integral (or peripheral) to one's work within the organization can impact involvement motives positively or negatively. However, creating space and opportunity for the participation of program stakeholders in evaluations may be seen as a necessary, but insufficient condition for stakeholder involvement in evaluations. Aspects of the evaluation itself are also likely to play a key role in stakeholders' involvement decisions. Similar to what organizational psychologists might term *task characteristics*, we must consider elements of the evaluation that may exert push or pull effects on involvement motives, including trust in the evaluators (Stevahn & King, 2014), the degree of clarity of the evaluation's goals, and stakeholder roles, stakeholder empowerment within the evaluation, and the time and effort required by the evaluation (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014).

Trust in evaluators. The importance of interpersonal relationships in the practice of evaluation can hardly be understated (Patton, 1997; Stevahn & King, 2013). Stakeholder trust in the evaluators' skills, and motives is essential for buy-in (Poth & Shula, 2008; Roseland, et al., 2011; Smits et al., 2011; Stevahn & King, 2013; Torres & Preskill, 1999). Evaluators can build stakeholder trust (leading to greater involvement) by fostering collaboration, and promoting the perception that the evaluation addresses a common interest (e.g., Plottu & Plottu, 2009; Stevahn & King, 2013). Listening to and validating stakeholder concerns can make formerly resistant stakeholders more open to the evalua-

tion (Donaldson, et al. 2002). Building trust (Preskill & Torres, 1999) and positive interdependence (Stevahn & King, 2013) at the outset of an evaluation can lead to greater persuasion of program management stakeholders to take on the extra work evaluations typically require. Likewise, Roseland et al. (2011) found that stakeholders attributed their involvement to the perception that the evaluation team was responsive, there to help them, and had sufficient expertise to carry out the evaluation in an effective way. Trust in the evaluator, and in the evaluation more broadly, may be more easily realized when the goals and purpose of the evaluation are known among the stakeholders involved. As will be discussed below, simply knowing why the evaluation is being conducted can encourage stakeholders to become involved in evaluations.

Clarity of evaluation purpose. When the goals and purposes of the evaluation are ambiguous, stakeholders tend to be less inclined toward involvement (King & Ehlert, 2008). When the goals of the evaluation, its purpose within the program, and the risks and benefits of participating are made explicit, stakeholder anxiety around evaluations is reduced (Donaldson et al., 2002; Higa & Brandon, 2005; Plottu & Plottu, 2009). Going even further, stakeholders may be more likely to contribute their time and energy when they understand the purpose of and see value in the evaluation. A number of case studies illustrate the importance of clarity of purpose for stakeholder buy-in and engagement. For example, program practitioners have warmed to the evaluation process once it was seen as a purposeful exercise that would have real benefits to the program, rather than simply as a bureaucratic exercise (Owen, et al., 2005). In another case, interest in an evaluation grew once it became clear that documenting program processes (a standard evaluation

activity) would enhance program understanding – a direct benefit to stakeholders (Poth & Shula, 2008). A lack of clarity can push stakeholders away, as in Parkinson's (2009) case study of an agriculture development program in Uganda. Misconceptions of the purpose of the evaluation led to a low response rate among surveyed client-stakeholders. The purpose and meaning ascribed to an evaluation may also affect involvement levels by changing how the time and effort required to participate is viewed.

Role clarity. Stakeholders may be more likely to engage in the evaluation process when they are clear about the purpose of the evaluation itself, and when they trust the person in charge. Another key factor seems to be role clarity. Knowing precisely what is expected and what their contribution would *look like* seems to figure prominently in stakeholder involvement decisions (Donaldson, et al., 2002; Gardner, 2003; Higa & Brandon, 2008; King & Ehlert, 2008; Plottu & Plottu, 2009; Poth & Shulha, 2008). Donaldson et al. (2002) suggest that reducing the ambiguity of stakeholder roles in evaluation by specifying expectations on an on-going basis can reduce excessive evaluation anxiety, perhaps promoting stakeholder involvement. Case studies focused on stakeholders as diverse as university faculty, to aid workers responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis, seem to converge on the same conclusion. Despite being committed to the general goals of an evaluation, and interested in helping directly with evaluation activities, stakeholders often do not know what specifically is expected of them (Forss et al., 2006; Walsh & Metcalf, 2003). This lack of role clarity can result in what appears to be a lack of engagement or even outright resistance. It may be, however, that stakeholders want to help, but need to know what exactly they are agreeing to before making a commitment. Taken together,

these findings suggest that making expectations clear from the outset is essential in helping stakeholders to make informed choices about their own involvement in an evaluation.

Stakeholder empowerment. A number of popular evaluation approaches (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Fetterman, 2001), are premised on the very idea of maximizing stakeholder involvement in the actual work of carrying out the evaluation. In their early work on stakeholder involvement, Mark and Shotland (1985) advocated for the inclusion of program stakeholders in the planning and interpretation phases, leaving the evaluator responsible for the more technical aspects of the evaluation. Other approaches, such as Practical Participatory Evaluation (Ayers, 1987; Cousins & Earl, 1992, 1995) and Transformative Participatory Evaluation (Gaventa, 1993) advocate for even greater inclusion where stakeholders become equal partners with evaluators in all aspects of the evaluation. Consistent with these, and many other evaluation approaches, is the idea that stakeholder involvement is maximized not only when stakeholders know and accept their roles, but when those roles carry with them actual power and control to direct aspects of the evaluation in meaningful ways, thus avoiding "pseudo empowerment" (Mark & Shotland, 1985).

When stakeholders have more power in the evaluation process, they are in a position to prioritize their own goals (Parkinson, 2009), which can create a sense of ownership over the evaluation process (Gardner, 2003). Ownership and involvement tend to go hand in hand.

When evaluators and stakeholders need each other to get the job done – when there is

positive interdependence between stakeholders' and evaluators' goals – stakeholder involvement tends to be high (Ayers, 1987; Cousins & Earl, 1992, 1995; Fetterman, 2001; Gardner, 2003; Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Poth & Shula, 2008; Stevahn & King, 2012; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Similarly, low levels of stakeholder involvement have been attributed to an absence of stakeholder power and control in the evaluation. Stakeholders in one study, for example, when asked why they were not involved in the evaluation to a greater extent, indicated their limited responsibilities in the evaluation as the primary reason (Smits, et al., 2011).

Time and effort. Even the most committed evaluation stakeholders must face the realities of limited time and energy. Evaluation activities are often secondary to stakeholders' other work responsibilities, giving these very practical issues a central role in involvement motives and decisions (Forss, Kruse, Taut & Tenden 2006; Owen et al., 2005). Time and effort are limited resources in any program, and evaluations that take time away from the core functions of a program may be met with disdain and resistance (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006; Taut & Brauns, 2003). Not surprisingly, stakeholder willingness to participate in evaluation activities goes down as the overall time commitment required goes up (King & Ehlert, 2008). As such, one of the first steps in engaging stakeholders in the evaluation process may be to show them that their time will not be wasted. Evaluators wishing to increase stakeholder involvement may need to focus some of their efforts on highlighting the positive cost-benefit ratio for stakeholders. If successful, stakeholders may come to view their involvement less as a chore, and more as an activity worthy of their limited time and effort (Higa & Brandon, 2005).

Personal Factors and Evaluation Involvement

If we are to really understand stakeholder involvement, we need to view stakeholders as unique individuals with their own sets of skills, abilities, personal motives, and limitations situated in a particular organizational context with particular rules and norms related to evaluation. The current literature on stakeholder involvement in evaluations suggests that stakeholders need more than just the opportunity to participate; they also need to understand and value the purpose of the evaluation and their role within it. Still, one may wonder "What's in it for the stakeholder?" Setting aside characteristics of the organization and of the evaluation, the final involvement decision can be a very personal one. Looking inward, stakeholders likely ask themselves, "Do I care about this program and this evaluation?", "Do I have the requisite skills and abilities to help?", "Are there any particular benefits to me, personally, of getting involved?" Once the benefits are weighed against the costs, what predicted outcomes or experiences are enough to tip the scale in favour of participating? A better understanding of the personal considerations that surround involvement decisions will greatly improve our ability to predict stakeholder involvement under different circumstances. I now turn to a discussion of three considerations in the personal domain that may impact stakeholder involvement motives; *existing knowledge and skills, evaluation outcome expectancies, and perceived benefits of participation.*

Individual knowledge and skills. It has been argued that the more experience stakeholders have with evaluation, the more they will understand and value this work, leading to an overall greater acceptance and use of evaluative thinking and methodology

within programming (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012). But this resembles a kind of chicken versus egg dilemma: for stakeholders to care about evaluations they must have experience with them, but to have experience with evaluation, they must care about an evaluation enough to get involved. As mentioned earlier, high capacity for evaluation exists where evaluation is supported by the organization; however, evaluation capacity can also be seen at the individual level in the people who work within organizations to develop, support, implement and use programs (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012; Taylor-Ritzler, et al., 2013). The degree to which one feels confident in his or her abilities to contribute to an evaluation may be determined by previous experience with evaluations (Donaldson, et al., 2002) or the possession of knowledge and skills related to evaluation (Kilburg, 1980; Owen, et al., 2005; Parkinson, 2009; Poth & Shulha, 2008; Smits et al., 2011). In line with these views, efforts to increase evaluation involvement at the individual level have been focused on building individual confidence and interest in evaluations by teaching stakeholders evaluation concepts and methods (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012; Lau, Netherland & Haywood, 2003; Plottu & Plottu, 2009; Roseland et al., 2011). Presumably, with greater knowledge and experience, stakeholders will have greater confidence in their ability to contribute positively to evaluations, and thus be more willing to participate in them (Labin et al, 2012).

Perceived personal benefits of participation. Taking the time to educate stakeholders about evaluation work may not only boost their confidence, it may also make clear to them that the benefits of this type of work extend beyond the program itself. Involvement in evaluation offers an attractive form of personal development (Forss et al.,

2006; Lau et al., 2003; Owen et al., 2005; Roseland et al. 2011). For example, participating in evaluation provides opportunities for professional networking (Geva-May & Thorngate 2003; Higa & Brandon, 2008; Lau et al., 2003) and to try on new roles within the organization (Higa & Brandon, 2008; Owen, et al., 2005), both of which may be attractive to program stakeholders. Personal benefits of evaluation involvement may be secondary to goals of evaluation capacity building, however, they may be primary among the reasons individuals come to care about the evaluation – creating the all-important *personal factor* (Patton, 1997) which is critical for evaluation uptake among program stakeholders. In the next section, the role of other perceived evaluation outcomes is explored further.

Evaluation outcome expectancies. It has been argued that evaluations are inherently oriented toward program change (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006). How stakeholders view evaluations and their roles within them may be shaped in many ways by expectancies about evaluation outcomes, which may vary from positive and desirable to negative and unwanted. Stakeholder *resistance* to evaluation is widely believed to stem from expectations that the evaluation will reveal unflattering results about a program (Donaldson et al, 2002; Fawcett, 2003; Owen et al., 2005), or program staff (Kilburg, 1980). Similarly, low levels of participation are believed to occur when stakeholders expect that the evaluation will lead to unwanted changes to the culture and traditions of the program (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006). In all of these instances stakeholders view the outcomes of the evaluation as unpleasant and deny their involvement in an effort to protect and maintain the status quo.

However, when the outcomes of the evaluation are viewed more positively, involvement may be increased. Concern for the program's future may motivate stakeholder involvement, as stakeholders who are keenly interested in the results and findings of the evaluation can be the most likely and enthusiastic participants. Such a desire for program knowledge through evaluation has been documented in Smits and colleagues' (2011) survey of factors related to what they have termed *propensity for participatory program evaluation,* defined as an orientation for evaluative thinking that consists of four components: learning, working in groups, using judgment, and using systematic methods. Ryan and Johnson (2000) found that stakeholders who returned an evaluative questionnaire attributed their participation to an interest in the information it would reveal. From these accounts it would appear that when stakeholders expect the evaluation to reveal information they can use to improve the program, they are more likely to participate in evaluation activities. In line with this view, Brandon and Fukunaga (2014) found use of evaluation findings to be an important outcome for program stakeholders in a majority of the articles they reviewed. This suggests that stakeholders are motivated to become involved as a way of gaining first-hand access to the results of the evaluation.

The Present Research

Stakeholder involvement decisions can be influenced by factors operating at the level of the organization, the evaluation, and the individual. The literature reviewed here provides a good starting point for understanding the motivations behind stakeholder involvement, yet many questions remain. How do stakeholders make decisions about evaluation involvement? What factors do they consider when weighing the benefits and

drawbacks of evaluation involvement? Are all factors considered equally, or are there some that are more important than others? Few studies have asked stakeholders themselves to specify the factors that influence their involvement decisions. Through an exploration of stakeholder accounts and assessments of their evaluation involvement, the present research presents a novel approach to answering these questions.

The research that has explored stakeholder motives directly has either suffered from sampling limitations (i.e., focusing only on stakeholders from the same program), or from measurement limitations (i.e., using only researcher-defined checklists or surveys; Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014). By investigating stakeholder perspectives across organizations and allowing stakeholder reasons to come to the forefront, the present research provides a more comprehensive account of stakeholder involvement motives than previously available. The aim of the present research was to better understand the motives that influence program stakeholders' involvement in evaluation-related activities.

In addition to uncovering the motives themselves, this research sought to reveal more precisely how multiple stakeholder motives are weighed or configured in involvement decisions. In other words, "are there particular kinds of motives that are consistently more or less influential in involvement decisions?" Two studies were conducted to address the following research questions, (a) To what do stakeholders themselves attribute their decisions to participate in program evaluations? and (b) What factors do stakeholders themselves believe to be the most important to their involvement decisions? In the first study, ten program stakeholders from a range of fields were interviewed about their reasons for becoming involved in a recent evaluation. Eleven themes emerged to describe

a range of stakeholder involvement motives. In a second study, 19 stakeholders used a Q-method task to sort or prioritize their own involvement motives. The result was three unique sorting patterns reflecting different stakeholder involvement motive profiles. The results of these studies will be discussed separately, and together, toward a preliminary model of stakeholder involvement motives.

Study 1: Exploring Stakeholder Perspectives on Evaluation Involvement

Study Overview. Study 1 gathered stakeholders' own accounts of their involvement decisions through semi-structured interviews. Stakeholders from different organizations, who had participated in an evaluation at some point within the previous five years, were asked to describe their reasons for getting involved in the evaluation. The coding and analysis of the accounts was guided by thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). The present study was conducted within a social constructionist framework. As such, convergence of participant experiences was not the goal. Although it is hoped that this research will provide useful information to evaluators and program personnel alike, the experiences of the individuals in the study are not meant to be explicitly generalized to any other population. Rather, the intention of this study was to understand the experiences of one subset of program stakeholders.

Acknowledgement of biases and personal views. Qualitative analysis does not assume objectivity of the researcher, and as such, it requires that researcher biases and expectations be acknowledged. To that end, I will let it be known that I consider myself to be an intermediate evaluator. I have completed small-scale evaluations of a student retention program funded by and conducted at the university at which I am currently

enrolled. In my current employment position at the university I assist faculty in designing and implementing evaluations of the degree programs offered by their unit. Up to this point, I would judge my involvement in program evaluations to be moderate (e.g., completing evaluation surveys, allowing personal data to be used for evaluation purposes). As someone pursuing a career in the field, I hold a positive view of program evaluation and believe that these efforts can significantly improve social programming. I also consider myself to be a feminist. As a feminist I believe that all voices have equal value, and that all power structures should be questioned, if not dismantled. Those beliefs have informed my decision to use a qualitative approach in which stakeholder accounts of their involvement are analysed.

Chapter 2: Study 1 Method

Participants

Participant Recruitment. A convenience sample of ten participants was recruited from personal contacts through email, social media (e.g., Facebook) and word-of-mouth. To be eligible for inclusion in the final analysis, participants were required to (a) have some involvement in an evaluation within the last five years and (b) have a score higher that 1.00 on the Evaluation Involvement Scale (EIS; Toal, 2009; Appendix A). The EIS is a 13-item measure that assesses depth of participation in activities related to evaluation planning (e.g., *I was involved in developing the evaluation plan*), evaluation implementation (e.g., *I was involved in collecting data*), editing evaluation reports (*I was involved in reviewing evaluation reports for accuracy and/or completeness*) and using evaluation findings (*I was involved in developing future project plans based on evaluation results*). The measure was developed through a comprehensive review of the literature on participatory evaluation, and consultations with professional evaluators and has been found to discriminate between evaluators (who by definition are expected to have a high level of involvement in the evaluation) from stakeholders (whose involvement level is expected to be more factor). Scores on the EIS can range from 1.00 to 4.00, with scores greater than 1.00 indicating at least some previous evaluation involvement.

Participant Demographics. Of the 10 individuals interviewed, 7 were women, and 3 were men. Considering that women make up approximately 52% of the federal public service (Treasury Board Secretariat, 2011), and 76% of the non-profit workforce (HR Council for the Voluntary & Non-profit Sector, 2008), this is fairly representative of the proportion of men and women working in social programming in Canada. The sam-

ple was diverse in terms of the types of programming evaluated by the participants. Four participants had been working for a public institution, such as a public school or a research institute, four had been working for community non-profits or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and two had been working within a federal government department. Participants' years of experience within their current organization ranged from 6 months to 17 years, with an average of 5.78 years. Most participants described themselves as primarily concerned with the implementation of programs. Although the sample did include one decision maker and one program client, the results will mainly speak to the views of the implementer majority. The programs discussed during the interview had been in operation from less than one year up to 30 years, with half being operational for less than 10 years. Interviewees had been involved with from 1 to more than 10 different evaluations. The participants also varied in terms of the depth of their involvement, as measured by the EIS. Mean scale scores ranged from 1.08 to 4.00[1], with an overall mean of 2.95 (*SD* = 0.95). Taken together, these participant demographics suggest the sample of stakeholders included was diverse enough to collect a wide range of viewpoints and experiences on the topic of stakeholder involvement. Complete demographic information for all participants can be found in Table 1 below.

Interview Procedures

Interviews were conducted either in-person (n = 8) or by video-conference (Skype; n = 2), at a place of the participants' choosing (typically a public space such as a coffee shop). All participants competed an informed consent form (Appendix B) before

[1] The possible range was 1.00 to 4.00.

our discussion began. Interview length ranged from 20.5 min to 43.2 min, with a mean time of 26.57 min.

Table 1

Study 1 Interviewee Information

Pseudonym	Gender	Program domain	Program age	Stakeholder type	Evaluation views	EIS score
Olivia	F	NGO	> 10 Years	Implementer	Neutral	2.55
Tyler	M	Education	30 Years	Client	Positive	1.08
Tony	M	Health Research	< 5 Years	Implementer	Neutral	3.54
Fiona	F	Education	1 – 2 Years	Implementer	Positive	2.46
Franny	F	Non-Profit	10 Years	Implementer	Neutral	4.00
Sandy	F	Non-Profit	25 Years	Implementer	Positive	1.92
Seth	M	Non-Profit	3 Years	Decision Maker	Positive	3.62
Erin	F	Education	< 1 Year	Implementer	Positive	3.85
Nina	F	Government	> 10 Years	Implementer	Positive	3.62
Teri	F	Government	< 5 Years	Implementer	Neutral	2.92

Prior to each interview, I completed a *face sheet* (Appendix C) to record demographic information and information about participants' previous experiences with evaluation. The interview was conducted in a semi-structured format that followed an interview guide (Appendix D). However, follow-up questions or additional questions were added to allow the participants to clarify or elaborate upon their responses. The main goal of the interviews was to uncover the factors that led the participants toward or away from participation in an evaluation. To get as comprehensive a response as possible five core questions were asked at each interview to elicit information regarding these factors: i) "*What were your reasons for being involved?*;" ii) "*What motivated you to become involved?*;" iii) "*What de-motivated you?*;" iv) "*What advantages were there to being involved?*;" and iv) "*What disadvantages were there to being involved?*" Changes to the interview schedule were made after the third interview to investigate more directly themes that were emerging through the coding process. Most notably, questions were added to capture perceptions of the degree or depth of participation. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to facilitate accurate analysis of the responses. At the end of the interview the recording was stopped, participants were thanked and given a debriefing sheet that described the study goals, risks, and sources of additional information (Appendix E).

Coding and Analysis

Thematic analysis is particularly useful for providing rich descriptions of entire datasets. Coding and analysis of the data was completed following procedures outlined

by Braun and Clark (2006) for thematic analysis of psychological phenomena.

In conducting this analysis, a direct relationship was assumed between the participants' motives and experiences and the meanings ascribed to them. This meant that the participants' statements were taken at face value. All interviews were transcribed and coded in the order in which they were conducted using MS Word and MS Excel programs. The data were analysed in six steps, following guidelines established by Braun and Clarke (2006), and are described in more detail below:

Step 1: Familiarization with the data. Familiarization with the data was achieved through careful transcription of the recorded interviews by the author. Completed transcriptions were checked alongside audio recordings to ensure content and meaning was represented in the transcripts (i.e, punctuation matched inflections). In all, I listened to the interviews and read the transcripts at least twice before coding began.

Step 2: Generating initial codes. The transcripts were coded by statement. Initial coding was conducted in an open manner, with codes closely following the meaning of each statement. Individual statements were coded using the commenting feature of Microsoft Word. Participant identification numbers were used to identify the source of the statement. Coded statements were then cut and pasted into a table with similar codes placed together and combined to form new, broader codes. As this was done, memos, or short descriptions of each code, were made to define and differentiate these new codes from one another. As more interviews were conducted and transcribed, the codes became more well-defined and themes began to emerge. A more detailed accounting of the for-

mation of the thematic categories is given below.

Step 3: Searching for themes. Initial codes were combined into larger thematic categories, following the constant comparison method (Glaser, 1965). Similar codes were grouped together under thematic categories, which were described in memos. Thematic categories were expanded or refined to include new codes as they emerged. Thematic categories that appeared to be too general or too broad were separated into two or more subthemes. These subthemes were created to capture aspects of the themes that were unique, but not sufficiently differentiated from the main theme to warrant creation of a new code or theme.

Step 4: Reviewing themes. Once all interviews had been completed, transcribed, and coded, the emergent thematic categories and subthemes were reviewed for comprehensiveness and coherence by using the following two criteria: i) All of the accounts given by the participants should be described by the themes and subthemes already in place; and ii) the themes and subthemes should make sense based on my reading of the literature and the interactions I had with the participants during the interviews. These criteria were put in place to guide the interpretation of the data toward a point of *theoretical saturation* - the point at which emergent themes are well defined and the addition of further accounts is unlikely to reveal new information (Straus & Corbin, 1998). Reaching a point of theoretical saturation allows the reader to have greater faith in the credibility of the interpretation of results as well as their transferability to similar groups of people (Morrow, 2005). Looking back on the presence of the themes within the data, I observed that no

new theme emerged after this fourth interview, indicating a good degree of comprehensiveness to the data. However, the descriptions continued to evolve until the tenth interview, suggesting the coherence criteria was not met until the final interview.

Through the coding and analysis of the findings it became apparent that some factors always seemed to promote involvement, while others always seemed to prevent it. However, most common were instances where the degree to which a factor was viewed as motivating or discouraging depended on how it was perceived, or how it interacted with other factors or sub-factors. In this way, the factors may further be described in terms of how they influenced the propensity for involvement; some factors *pull* stakeholders into the evaluation process, while other factors *push* stakeholders away from the evaluation process. A similar *push-pull* framework was applied by Brandon and Fukunaga (2014) who identified various components of the evaluation involvement literature as positive or negative. Table 2 provides a complete list of categories, themes and subthemes, subdivided into pull or push factors.

To ensure that the themes, subthemes, and overarching categories were representative of the participant's views, an individualized preliminary report was sent to all study participants via email. Each report included definitions of each theme, as well as a listing of the quotes taken from his or her interview transcript that were used as evidence of that theme. Participants were asked to indicate if their views on program evaluation had been well represented, or if something had been left out. Of the ten participants who were contacted, only three responded. All indicated that their views had been well repre-

sented.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes. A final list of eleven thematic categories, representing different factors influencing evaluation involvement was made. Within each thematic category, subthemes that provided more detail and nuance to the theme emerged. For example, within the thematic category *desire for input*, were accounts that described involvement influenced by a desire to increase the quality of the evaluation, as well as accounts that described involvement influenced by a desire to showcase positive program results. To facilitate comparability with the existing literature, in the final coding, the themes were grouped into Organizational, Evaluation, and Personal factors.

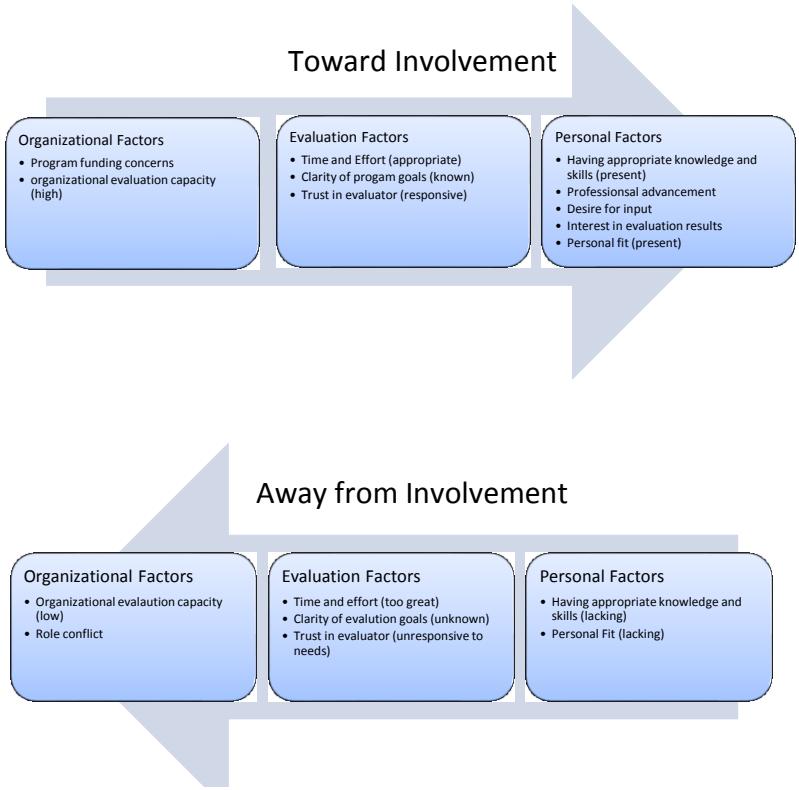
Step 6: Producing the report. A report of findings was written in which specific quotes were used as evidence of the appropriateness of the theme (see Study 1 Results below).

Chapter 3: Study 1 Results

Drawing on the evaluation and organizational citizenship literatures, the themes and subthemes derived from analysis of the interviews were collapsed under the three general categories of Organizational Factors, Evaluation Factors, and Personal Factors. Each individual theme was also categorized according to its *push* or *pull* effect on involvement motives. Figure 1 presents the results of this model.

Figure 1

Organizational, Evaluation, and Personal Motivators: A Push-Pull Model Of Stakeholder Involvement in Program Evaluations



Pull themes brought stakeholders to the evaluation, made involvement easier, or were perceived advantages to being involved. By contrast, *push* themes deterred involvement. Although there were some subthemes that only pulled stakeholders into the evaluation and some that only pushed them away, the majority of identified themes and subthemes were found to either push or pull depending on their presence, absence, specific quality or the interaction with another theme or subtheme.

Stakeholder Involvement Motives: Specific Themes

Organizational Factors. Several participants described elements of the organization responsible for the program, or even the program itself as contributing to involvement decisions. Specifically, the interviews revealed organizational themes of *funding*, *evaluation capacity*, and *conflicting roles*.

1. Program Funding Concerns. The importance of the evaluation to past or future funding considerations was an oft-cited reason for getting involved. That is, six participants reported being involved when they believed they had to be accountable for the money spent on a particular initiative. For example, Nina, who worked within the Federal Public Service, stated that evaluation was "*very, very much focused on the government's priorities around accountability*."

Others became involved because they believed that a positive evaluation would lead to additional funds for the program. Erin stated the need to "*showcase*" her pro-

grams to secure future program funding. For her, the bottom line of evaluation work was the *"need to tell people it's a worthwhile program to invest in."* Likewise, Seth reported that being involved in evaluation gave him an edge when speaking to program funders, saying:

> *"When you speak with your funders you can bring a certain element of knowledge to the table… Also explaining what resources are lacking and making suggestions to policy circles as to what might be considered in the future and why [they] should consider that."*

2. Evaluation Capacity. All 10 participants made at least one statement attributing their involvement to various forms of organizational support for evaluation. Similarly, lacking organizational support from other stakeholders was de-motivating for some of the interviewees. The interviewees mainly described two aspects of organizational capacity – capacity to take on and support evaluations, and capacity to make use of evaluation findings. In terms of capacity to actually do evaluations, several participants described an evaluation-positive culture and directives to get involved by more senior members of the organization as contributing to their involvement. Tony described a situation where "*all employees were… certainly strongly encouraged to participate. And it was presented as being beneficial for the research institute as a whole."* Erin described a similar experience, "*Well with [Program1], I think it was part of the [Program1] plan, so that was forced on me. But it was sort of a happy forced, because I like doing it.*" Similarly, Olivia said, *"Oh I had to. I had no choice. So they come to us and said that we needed to pro-*

vide information and support to the evaluator."

Going even further were statements about expectations of involvement stemming from individual roles within the organization. Olivia came to be involved in the evaluation because it was "*her job*". Others had time for program evaluation "*built-into*" their job descriptions. For example, even though Fiona's main responsibilities were with the design and implementation of new programs, she described evaluation as part of her portfolio. Similarly Seth, stated, "*I mean it's built into my job. I worked it into the job description. [Evaluation is] very active because I've built that into my job. It's engrained into my position.*"

Further evidence that involvement increases when evaluation is incorporated into organizational roles and responsibilities, either formally or informally, was seen in the accounts of individuals for whom involvement was not requested or expected. For example, when asked if he would have been involved in an evaluation that had been conducted at his organization the year before he started there, Tony stated, "*I probably wouldn't have joined the planning committee, unless I was specifically asked to*." As well, Erin stated that she did not get involved in another evaluation because it was "*just not my job. [The program] wasn't my baby, I didn't put it together. It's someone else's."* The inclusion of evaluation activities in the portfolios or job descriptions of these stakeholders, who were primarily concerned with program design, delivery, or use of the evaluation, also exemplifies how evaluation can be incorporated into an organization's daily functions (Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2013).

Further supporting the importance of organizational support to individual evaluation involvement was the finding that a lack of organizational capacity could diminish engagement in, or at least enjoyment of, evaluation work. For example, Teri described encountering resistance from other stakeholders who did not support the evaluation, stating, "*every time we'd present to the regional executive heads for each region, they'd come up with a million reasons why this is the worst thing ever".* Interestingly, while Teri regarded the lack of organizational support as a disadvantage to doing evaluation work, other participants described situations in which their involvement was actually motivated by a lack of organizational evaluation capacity. As Fiona described, *"other people didn't want [to be involved], so…ok, I get to do it two years in a row, and just extend that learning for myself."* Although a lack of interest on the part of her fellow stakeholders led, in part, to Fiona's involvement, an organization with low evaluation capacity required someone like her who was willing to *pick up the slack*. As Erin suggests, a lack of evaluation capacity among organizational personnel led to no one becoming involved, as she goes on to say, "*Sometimes program evaluation doesn't go on because somebody doesn't have the initiative to do it.*"

In addition to organizational capacity to do and support evaluation activities, some participant responses suggest that organizational capacity to *use* evaluation can affect involvement motives. As Nina notes, "*You spend all this energy and time doing evaluation and sometimes the results of those evaluations aren't used. And that's probably the biggest trouble that we have right now."* Teri recalled a situation in which the time lag be-

tween program delivery and the completed evaluation rendered the findings irrelevant. She wondered, "*Are the lessons learned from the evaluation a few years ago still relevant today?"* A lack of organizational capacity to use the results of evaluation may negatively impact stakeholder motivation, limiting future involvement.

3. Conflicting Roles. Stakeholder involvement is often sought precisely because an individual is close to the program, its clients and staff; however, when the evaluation is perceived as critiquing coworkers and monitoring, rather than assisting the program clients, stakeholders can feel at odds with the process. Moving between insider and outsider can be a marginalizing, and even hazardous, experience for practitioner-evaluators (Shaw & Faulkner, 2006). When asked about the disadvantages of being involved in program evaluation, almost half of the interviewees (n=4) described situations in which the role they played as an evaluator conflicted with their primary role in the organization. The experience of conflicting roles negatively influenced involvement motives.

For Sandy, being in a position where she would have to be critical of her fellow staff members was viewed as a disadvantage to evaluation involvement. As she explained, "*It can also be like constructive criticism toward your staff*." Erin described a similar experience, stating that a disadvantage of being involved in evaluation was that "*you can feel very bossy*" As these two quotations demonstrate, working in an evaluation requires program staff to change the way they interact with their coworkers and peers – a shift they may find unpleasant. That being involved in an evaluation will make you "*the bad guy*" may deter staff members from taking on leadership roles within evaluations.

Staff may also be reluctant to get involved when they perceive their role as program deliverers, invested in meeting user and client needs, to be in conflict with their roles as evaluators. Seth pointed to this conflict as a challenge his organization has been able to overcome:

> *"I think we do a really good job of balancing the needs of individuals and their desire to find employment with the challenges of reaching stats, reaching targets. And it's tough to reconcile those two a lot of times."*

A similar conflict was described by Fiona, who, as a teacher, had a hard time letting go of her instincts to jump in and help the students she was evaluating. However, in the end she came to see this role shift as an advantage for not only the evaluation, but for her own teaching practice as well:

> *"It's not always easy or comfortable to stay in the … researcher mode as opposed to teacher mode. It's not a disadvantage, it's an on-going tension…. The flip side of that … as teachers we are quick to give an answer, where I think far more we should thoughtfully and carefully give questions. So I think that's a big advantage forced out of the teacher… you really realize the kids are capable of taking things far further than you usually give them credit for."*

Fiona was able to transform her *role conflict* (a disadvantage to involvement) into an opportunity for *professional development*.

Evaluation Factors. A number of factors operating at the organizational level seemed to impact stakeholders' evaluation experiences, and hence, motives for involve-

ment. Factors more specifically tied to the evaluation itself were also mentioned by participants, including the time and effort required, the clarity of the evaluation purpose, and views of the evaluator.

1. Time and Effort. Given that the extra time and resources it takes to conduct evaluations is one of the most commonly identified barriers to stakeholder involvement (Enosh, 2008; King & Ehlert, 2008; Roecks & Estes, 1982), it is not surprising that all but one of the participants in this study were similarly influenced by time and effort concerns. In general, involvement motive decreased with the time commitment required. Several participants did refer, however, to certain time investments being worth the effort.

In particular, stakeholder involvement was discouraged by perceptions that evaluation work would take time away from other program activities. Sandy expressed frustration at the time and effort it would take to gather everyone's points of view on the program, "*You've got 10 other people under you, that's 10 other people's thinking.*" Fiona similarly stated that, *"it takes time and human resources to make sure that you can complete an evaluation timely and effectively."* On the other hand, when evaluation tasks were not expected to significantly impact their regular activities, stakeholders' involvement motives seemed to be high. For example, Tyler was willing to conduct a survey of his peers because it was a "*project of secondary importance*" that would not take substantial time away from his studies.

Despite the perception that the evaluation would take up time and effort, several in-

terviewees were still involved because they saw their efforts as an investment in the program. Despite working at her organization only part-time, Erin made time for evaluation activities "*…..because it is important. Because in the end it's going to save [time]".* Erin also felt the effort of evaluation was worthwhile, stating that "*the amount of time that you put into planning and figuring out what you want your outcomes to be definitely pays off in the end. It's always something that can be built upon, for future use*." Interviewees appeared to engage in a cost-benefit analysis of their involvement in evaluations. When the evaluation produced valuable results or personal benefits, it was worth the time and effort. Indeed, stakeholders tend to view the time and effort spent on evaluation work as an investment in their program (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). But when the evaluation failed to yield benefits, some interviewees appeared resentful of the time and effort required of them. Erin stated, "*I feel a little irked sometimes if I am being asked to evaluate something that I don't feel is useful or necessary*." Nina described a similar feeling toward being involved in a "*futile*" evaluation of a program that had already been canceled when she asked, rhetorically, "*Why are we spending a lot of time and energy on this?.....this program doesn't exist anymore*."

2. Clarity of Evaluation Purpose. For a clear majority of participants (n = 7), involvement was positively motivated by clarity of the evaluation's goals and purpose. Tony would have been very likely to participate in an evaluation where *"the direction was clear to everyone, not just the people running it, but the people participating."* Teri also emphasized the relationship between stakeholder buy-in and "*explaining to [stakehold-*

ers], even though it's uncomfortable, the reason [for certain methods and approaches]." Conversely, when they did not know why the evaluation was being conducted or how the results would be used, participants were disinclined to get involved. Tony expressed hesitation about getting involved in future evaluations, saying that he would first *"want to see what the plan is…to get a feel for how the data is going to be used*." As Franny plainly stated, "*Unless there is a clear purpose for it, it's a waste of time and money and resources*." In both of these cases, the cost-benefit analysis appears to involve assessments of the clarity of evaluation purpose.

3. Trust in Evaluators. Perceived evaluator competence was a motivating factor for at least six participants. Teri recalled enjoying her evaluation experience because she liked the evaluators who she described as "*really nice and open*". Conversely, participants reported being de-motivated when working with evaluators they perceived as less skilled or as coming to the evaluation with ulterior motives. For example, Olivia recalled working with evaluators who included statements known to be false in their report as a reason for her distrust of evaluation. Tony recalled the overall negative impression left by his first evaluation experience with an unskilled evaluator

> *I also think that, like everything, it depends on the skill of the person doing it. So if someone is doing [evaluation work], and they don't really have a good plan or a good idea of what outcomes they're looking for I think it can be….. not……. I don't think it would be harmful per se, but a waste of time …That was my personal experience.*

For these stakeholders, trusting that the evaluator in charge was willing and able to produce a good quality and meaningful evaluation was important to their involvement in the evaluation.

Personal Factors. In the present study, involvement motives were influenced by factors operating at the organizational level and at the level of the evaluation. The final piece of the puzzle lies within the stakeholders themselves. Personal factors that played a role in involvement decisions include having the appropriate knowledge or skills to actually carry out evaluation work, perceived personal fit with the requirements of evaluation work, a desire for professional advancement, and a desire to impact the evaluation.

1. Having Appropriate Knowledge or Skills. For all but one of our participants, involvement was more likely because they possessed at least some evaluation-related knowledge or skills. Most commonly noted was having research skills; for example, having a psychology or research background, or having previous experience with evaluation. For Seth, who was initially hired as an internal program evaluator, but had since transitioned to Director of the organization, having the education and experience was essential to getting that first position: "*I was hired on as an evaluator because I had previous experience through a master's program when I was in school.*" Fiona, a teacher working in program development, also stated that her involvement stemmed from the skills she learned as an "*undergrad in psychology and linguistics*." Still, for Fiona, it was not particularly advanced evaluation knowledge or skill that got her involved, just "*one more statistics [course*]" so that she could "*understand what a standard deviation is,*" which

was more than her colleagues understood. For individuals like Fiona, participation may have been motivated more by a feeling of obligation to contribute in ways others could not than by a desire to make use of specific knowledge or skills.

For some, being involved in the evaluation offered a rare opportunity to make use of certain skills, such as analysing data, that were not part of their daily work activities. For example, Tyler, a graduate student and self-proclaimed "*numbers person*" found the evaluation enjoyable because it gave him the opportunity to "*flex his research muscles*." He stated:

> *"I like surveys. I'm a statistics nerd, so… I like calculating averages, stuff like that. I don't actually have a lot of opportunity to exercise that in my primary research. It's almost all qualitative. I kind of like the occasional opportunity to flex those muscles a little".*

Other interviewees echoed Tyler's views by talking about research as a fun and interesting thing to do. As Teri noted, *"it was fun in the analysis stages – that was exciting. Because you're really figuring things out so you feel like Nancy Drew."*

Just as having research experience brought many of the interviewees into program evaluation, a lack of research skill was seen as hindering involvement, or at least the quality of that involvement. Although none of the interviewees reported their lack of research training as preventing their own involvement, they did point out how it limited others. For example, Franny described a conversation she had had with the Executive Director of her program in which she cited a co-worker's lack of research training. She re-

called telling her supervisor that the colleague *"wasn't a good fit for this program"* because *"she had no idea what research is, what action research is, what employment system review is."*

Not all of the knowledge and skills referenced by our participants was related to research methods and statistics. Knowledge of the program or organization also served to propel the interviewees into involvement. For example, Nina saw her involvement as stemming from having a good understanding of the program, based on her years of experience. She says:

"*My involvement was probably a result of two things: One, being involved in program delivery from the very beginning, and understanding what are, you know, what are some constraints and possibilities, and knowing the world around grants and contributions.*" In a similar way, Teri commented that, at her organization, people were chosen for evaluation work "*based on their capacity… and how much knowledge they had of the issues we needed to evaluate in this last [evaluation].*"

2. Personal Fit. Putting aside skill, knowledge, and experience, seven interviewees reported getting involved because of some aspect of personal fit. Although a number of different reasons for personal fit (or non-fit) were mentioned, the perception of personal fit with the requirements of evaluation work was an important motivating factor. For Sandy and Franny it was a natural propensity for leadership. As Franny put it, "*I think it was just my supervisor seeing a lot of those strengths in me, and leadership."* Similarly, Sandy said, "*I know my coworkers will say to me, 'When you speak, wow, people listen,*

like you're heard.'" For Nina it was being curious, quick, and bright, *"I think if you're curious and you're good with numbers and … you can kind of put pieces together quickly."* For others, it was personal integrity and a strong belief in the importance of accountability that made them suited to evaluation work. Erin had a "*need to show that [the program] is something useful and benefits somebody*." This was echoed by Franny, who said it was her "*work ethic*" and being a "*very accountable person*" that pushed her to be involved. Other personal qualities identified as evaluation-compatible were a sense of competitiveness and being open to criticism. Only Teri identified a personal characteristic that was seemingly incongruent with certain aspects of program evaluation. She joked that her nickname at work was "Moonbeam" because of her liberal leanings. This made her a poor fit to work on an evaluation that, in her view, directly led to a series of lay-offs within her department. Teri did not feel comfortable contributing (in even her small and unintentional way) to the loss of jobs that came as a result of the evaluation. She was, in this instance, pushed away from evaluation involvement.

There was little consensus about which specific personal attributes might be advantageous to program evaluation work, but many of our participants expressed a belief that there was some element of personal "fit" with the tasks required of program evaluation. Perhaps Erin summed it up best when she stated, *"I think for people who are truly interested in program evaluation it's probably a career choice. Like, you like doing it or you don't like doing it, I would think."*

3. Professional Advancement. Whether through opportunities to learn and/or prac-

tice certain skills, organizational learning, or networking, the prospect of professional advancement was viewed as a key side benefit of evaluation involvement. All but two of the participants reported that their involvement in program evaluation led to, or was motivated by, some professional gains. For some it was an opportunity to develop skills that would make them better at their jobs or more employable in the future. Seth, a program director who had transitioned from an evaluator role to a decision-maker role within the same organization, saw evaluation work as applicable to all other work he did for the organization, explaining, *"I think if you embrace the notion of evaluation you're asking questions that help you become better at what you do. And so, that benefits all the stakeholders*." A similar statement was made by Olivia, who said, "*I had never been through this kind of exercise before, so on a professional level it was nice to have that opportunity*." Program evaluation also made some interviewees happier in their jobs. For example, Erin stated that involvement in program evaluations *"[keeps] me engaged in my work, actually*."

Actually doing evaluation work gave several of the interviewees an opportunity to build important job skills. For some, like Teri who was working in an entry-level position within the federal government, exposure to evaluation work taught her "*a lot about the importance of data integrity*" especially when program decisions were being made. This sentiment was echoed by Fiona, who said that evaluation work was a "*great professional development opportunity*", especially because research skills were, "*not something that [she] gets a lot of training in*." For her, the evaluation offered an opportunity to develop

research skills that would not have been gained otherwise.

In addition to increasing opportunities for skill development and other forms of learning, evaluation involvement seemed to offer important networking opportunities to some of our participants. According to Tyler, because of his involvement in the evaluation, he was asked to attend an all-faculty meeting at his university, allowing him to get his *"face out in front of potential external readers or future collaborators, senior collaborators or potential referees for your PhD applications."* For Erin, being involved in the evaluation gave her a more prominent role within the organization: "*When you are involved in program evaluation people usually have to run things by you, which is good. So you know if there is a potential change coming down the pipeline.*" Being involved in evaluation was also seen as an opportunity for networking with colleagues and other program stakeholders. Nina explained that working with other program stakeholders allowed her to be more *"tapped in to what's actually happening at a program, at a recipient level."* Similarly, because of her involvement in an evaluation, Erin was able to present her work at conferences and receive feedback from colleagues at other universities.

4. Desire for Input. Purely instrumental motives were mentioned by a number of interviewees who simply wanted to have input into some aspect of the evaluation itself, either in the planning, implementation, or reporting stages. Stakeholders believed that their input would (a) ensure that the evaluation highlighted program strengths as well as weaknesses, and (b) make sure the evaluation was relevant and responsive. Nearly all of our participants (n=7) wanted to have a say in some aspect of the evaluation. This pro-

spect motivated their involvement in the evaluation. Nina said: "*So I think that what motivates me the most is that ability to influence something, something changing. And also being able to influence new program design.*"

Some wanted to make sure that the evaluation included indicators of success that favoured the program. For example, when asked about the advantages of being involved in program evaluation, Franny pointed to the ability to choose the methods used in the evaluation. Even though she was expected to report numerical data, such as the number of people employed through her program, by being involved in the evaluation she believed she could also include more qualitative information that would not otherwise be captured:

> *"People usually think of outcomes as numbers. But if you can get a testimonial from a hiring manager who says 'Your workshop changed my attitude towards interviewing'. You know, this makes my life, this makes my day, if I can change someone in that way."*

Others wanted to make sure a positive view of the program was communicated, and that not only program faults would be highlighted. Sandy wanted to make sure the evaluation would show that a program "*was very successful in our community, or within our organization*." Olivia also commented that it was important for her that the "*organization be talked about in a positive way.*" She wanted a say in which other program stakeholders were contacted to give evidence of the program's success, "*You want to maintain an image. So of course, I wanted to make sure they were talking to the best people they could*

in our organization."

The desire for input into the evaluation seemed to be motivated in part by wanting to put one's best foot forward. This desire was balanced by some interviewees who expressed concerns about bias and their ability to be neutral in their assessments. For example, Erin was aware of her own inevitable bias, stating that, *"I don't think you are ever totally impartial. We put a lot of work into that data, so of course you are hoping to see certain things. But you try really hard not to influence it."* Similarly, Seth was concerned about how a desire for a certain result might diminish the quality of the evaluation, warning that, "*if you have a view of what you're looking for and you structure your evaluation materials accordingly, you're going to get what you looked for.*"

Despite concerns about balancing stakeholder input with minimizing bias, a number of interviewees believed their involvement would increase the overall quality of the evaluation. They wanted to be involved so that they could influence the design and methods of the evaluation for the better. Nina believed that her knowledge of the program would allow her to "*influence what the evaluation questions are that are really meaningful for us.*" Likewise, Franny expressed a desire for the evaluation to be "*perfect*" and "*top quality*." Like Nina, she wanted to use her unique knowledge of the program to make the evaluation better: *"I have to be actively involved in it, otherwise no evaluator can see those things."* She went on to describe her experience working on an evaluation in which there was no system of data collection in place – a situation she described as "*chaotic*." She believes that her involvement from start to finish the next time would lead to better

and more efficient evaluations:

> *"It took me about 3 weeks to talk to people. [The information about the program] was all in people's heads. So after I did that, I said there's no way next year this is going to happen. Next year my report is going to take me a day because all the data are going to be in a spreadsheet."*

5. Interest in Results. Simply having access to valued information about the program and the evaluation motivated some of our stakeholders to get involved. Half of our participants mentioned this as a pull factor for them personally. Some wanted to use evaluation information for program improvement. For example, Erin stated it was her "*who wanted to email the tutors to ask what could we change… Just so that we know what's going on with our tutoring roster*". Fiona also took a special interest in the evaluation because she was "*interested in finding out whether I'm effective or not".* For some of the interviewees, seeing positive evaluation results gave them personal satisfaction. Erin stated that she liked doing evaluation work because "*it makes me feel like my efforts are worthwhile if I can see results*." Sandy also expressed that evaluation work made her feel "*amazed with myself."* Previous reports have noted that stakeholders are more likely to get involved when the program under review is new and is not yet expected to demonstrate its effectiveness (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003). In this way, evaluations of newer programs may be viewed as tools for program design and improvement, rather than as assessments of results or compliance. This view was supported by Nina, whose role in the organization was primarily focused on program design, "*To me, program evaluation and*

program design are the same thing, right?" This suggests that *interest in results* motivates involvement when there is an opportunity and desire to use those results to improve the program.

Chapter 4: Study 1 Discussion

Interviews conducted with program stakeholders revealed diverse involvement motives spanning organizational, evaluation, and personal factors. Eleven themes emerged that are useful for describing what pulls stakeholders in to the evaluation process and what pushes them away from it. Many of this study's findings are consistent with claims made in the existing literature on stakeholder involvement (Donaldson, et al., 2002; Smits et al., 2011). Some important differences were also revealed, especially with respect to the influence of personal factors on involvement decisions. In the discussion that follows, I begin with a summary of how the interview data provide support for existing knowledge on stakeholder involvement. I then turn to a discussion of some new perspectives that were revealed and ways they may add to our understanding of stakeholder involvement in program evaluations.

Support for Existing Claims in the Evaluation Literature

The use of stakeholder accounts and systematic thematic analysis in Study 1 represents a departure from the existing literature on stakeholder involvement, which is based largely on the narrative reflections of seasoned evaluators. However, despite taking a much different approach to the study of stakeholder motivations for involvement, what has been revealed is very much in line with these previous reports.

Organizational Factors. Resource issues are components of stakeholder involvement that are commonly discussed in the literature (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014). Evaluation theorists have often commented that stakeholders may not participate in evaluations

because they fear doing so will result in reduced or lost funding, cuts to program staff and resources, or even program termination (Posavac, 1994; Posavac & Carey, 1997). Although none of the stakeholders in the present research attributed their evaluation involvement to fear of program losses, it was often tied to *program funding concerns*, specifically the need to be accountable for the money spent on the program. In today's climate of mandatory evaluations (Treasury Board Secretariat, 2012), where evaluations of programs that compete for public funding can easily be compared, it may be more common for stakeholders to view *non*-involvement as the more risky venture. This was seen in the interviewees who believed a positive evaluation may lead to increased program funding.

Nearly all of the interviewees mentioned some aspect of *organization evaluation capacity* as important to their evaluation involvement. The importance of organizational-level support for evaluation has been well documented in the literature (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012, Labin et al., 2012; Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2013). In particular, it is commonly believed that there needs to be a culture of involvement, in which many people are capable and interested in participating in evaluation activities, for individuals to be successfully engaged in evaluations. Consistent with this previous research, several of the interviewees attributed their evaluation involvement to the evaluation-supportive culture of their organization, in which evaluations are mandated or otherwise supported by organizational leaders, or integrated into program roles and responsibilities. Conversely, low levels of *organizational evaluation capacity* exemplified through other stakeholders cast-

ing dispersions on the evaluation process, and a lack of use of evaluation findings were viewed as discouraging to individual evaluation involvement. These findings support previous research which has suggested insufficient evaluation capacity can be a key contributor to low levels of stakeholder involvement and cultures of evaluation resistance (Donaldson et al., 2002; Enosh, 2008).

The only truly *push* factor identified in the interviews was that of *Role Conflict*. This theme described stakeholder beliefs that their participation in the evaluation would lead them to be viewed more negatively by others. A similar observation was made by Higa and Brandon (2008), who found that stakeholders who took on evaluation roles were perceived as "nags" by other program personnel. The influence of role conflict on limiting stakeholder involvement in program evaluation has been noted by Donaldson and colleagues (2002) and in Parkinson's (2009) case study where stakeholders found it difficult to shift perspectives from program implementer or user to evaluator, leading to limited participation of some individuals critical to the program. As well, Schwandt and Dahler-Larsen (2009) discussed evaluation and programming as involving two distinct communities that have competing functions. If this is indeed the case, stakeholders who are engaged in evaluation would not only occupy two roles, but two communities, which may make involvement too effortful and uncomfortable to bother with.

Evaluation Factors. The time and resources an evaluation requires is one of the most commonly identified barriers to stakeholder evaluation involvement (Enosh, 2008; Higa & Brandon 2008; King & Ehlert, 2008; Parkinson 2009; Plottu & Plottu 2009;

Roecks & Estes, 1982; Smits, et al., 2011). This was supported by the interviewees, as all but one made some mention to the time and effort requirements of participation.

The *clarity of evaluation goals* was also frequently mentioned as important to involvement decisions. Interviewees held favorable views of the evaluation when its goals and purpose were known, but were resentful and suspicious when the purpose was hidden. This observation is in line with previous theories of evaluation involvement that have emphasized the need for evaluations to be realistic, relevant, and fair to stakeholders (Rog & Fournier, 1997; Whitmore, 1998). However, when stakeholders do not know why and for whom the evaluation is being conducted, none of these three tenets is being upheld, resulting in less interest and participation in evaluations.

Another aspect of the evaluation that both the interviewees and the literature converge on is the importance of stakeholder *trust in evaluators.* Often, this trust was built through the perception of evaluator's likeability and skillfulness. Stakeholder buy-in is more easily achieved when there is a good working relationship with evaluators (e.g., Geva-May & Thorngate 2003; Patton, 1997; Roecks & Estes, 1982; Stevahn & King, 2012).

Personal Factors. Although organizational and evaluation factors were mentioned by every interviewee as playing some role in their evaluation involvement, by and large the focus of the interviews was on personal factors. This category encompassed either aspects of the individuals themselves that contributed to their involvement (*having appropriate knowledge and skills*; *personal fit*), or aspects of evaluation work that they

found to be personally meaningful or advantageous (*professional advancement*; *desire for input*; *interest in results*).

Having appropriate knowledge and skills. In the present research several interviewees described *having appropriate knowledge and skills* as a reason for their involvement. This finding is supported by previous research (Smits et al., 2009) as well as common suggestions that evaluators provide training to stakeholders about evaluation principles and practices to increase stakeholder engagement in the process (Plottu & Plottu, 2009; Roseland, 2011). Also consistent with previous research (Donaldson et al., 2002; Fawcett et al., 2003; Owen et al., 2005; Parkinson, 2009; Smits et al., 2011) was the finding that not *having appropriate knowledge and skills* was associated with resisting involvement.

Personal fit. Previous research on the personal characteristics of stakeholders has typically been focused on explaining stakeholder resistance or rejection of evaluations – in other words the personal *push* factors that keep stakeholders from becoming involved in evaluations. Stakeholders who stall or thwart the evaluation process have been described as fearful of the effect negative results will have on their self-esteem (Scriven, 1991; Smits, et al., 2011; Whitmore, 1998) or sense of well-being (Donaldson et al., 2002). In contrast to previous research, stakeholders in this study described *personal fit* only as a *pull* motive that facilitated their involvement in the evaluation.

Professional advancement. The interviewees often attributed their involvement, or at least their satisfaction with their involvement to their *desire* for *personal advance-*

ment. Stakeholder evaluation involvement can be encouraged when it is viewed as a professional development activity (Forss et al., 2006; Owen et al., 2005; Roseland et al., 2011) that allows stakeholders to learn more about the program (Donaldson et al., 2002; Fawcett et al., 2003; Owen et al., 2005; Smits et al., 2012), network with other stakeholder groups (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Higa & Brandon, 2008; Lau et al., 2003), experience a change of role within the organization (Higa & Brandon, 2008; Owen et al., 2005), and develop new skills (Gardner, 2003; Lau et al., 2003).

Desire for input. Several of the interviewees expressed a *desire for input* into the evaluation. Previous research has mentioned garnering stakeholder participation in evaluation by providing stakeholders with an opportunity to voice their concerns (Donaldson et al., 2002; Forss et al., 2003; Gardner, 2003; Plottu & Plottu, 2009; Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006). Although a desire for their concerns to be heard was mentioned in the interviewee accounts, they also listed specific areas where they hope to have an impact on the evaluation. Some of the interviewees wanted to use their expertise to create a higher quality evaluation that would be more relevant and therefore, more useful to them.

Interest in results. Two desires drove interviewees' *interest in results* – a desire for program improvement, and a desire for positive personal feedback. These findings are supported by previous research where a desire to find ways to improve the program was a main driver of stakeholder evaluation involvement (Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Lau et al., 2003; Owen et al., 2005; Ryan & Johnson, 2000; Smits et al., 2011; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Just as the interviewees resented being involved in evaluations that would

not be used to the advantage of the program, previous research found stakeholders hold back their involvement from evaluations they fear will reflect negatively on the program (Donaldson et al., 2002; Fawcett et al., 2003, Owen et al., 2005), or will lead to unwanted program changes (Schwandt & Dahler-Larsen, 2006). The interviewees' *interest in results* was also attributed to a desire to receive positive feedback on a job well done. This finding is in line with previous research that has suggested stakeholders seek out evaluation involvement opportunities precisely because of an expectation that it will provide positive feedback, a sense of accomplishment, or self-empowerment.

Although the themes identified in Study 1 have been observed in the evaluation literature, the present study does more than repeat previous observations. By going directly to the source of evaluation involvement – the stakeholders themselves – this work has added stakeholder accounts to a literature that to date has been comprised of either quantitative methodologies, such as surveys (e.g. Smits et al., 2011 Welsh & Metcalf, 2003), or narrative reflections (e.g. Fawcett et al. 2003; King & Ehlert, 2008), both of which rely heavily on the views of the author for their findings. The reliance of Study 1 on stakeholders' own accounts, and the emergent aspect of the data analysis may be thought of as providing a middle ground, or even a triangulation, between the quantitative approach that imposes a potentially limiting rigidity on the subject matter, and the reflective, anecdotal approach that lacks methodological rigour. The value of the qualitative, yet empirical approach taken here is perhaps best seen in the findings discovered that have not been previously mentioned in the literature. These are discussed in the next section.

New Discoveries Made about Stakeholder Involvement Motives

The learning motive, while receiving relatively little attention in the literature on stakeholder involvement (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014), loomed large in the present study. The interviewees were motivated by the potential for the evaluation to provide them with learning opportunities, including research training (a component of the *professional advancement* theme) and program knowledge (a component of both the *professional advancement* and *interest in results* themes). Departures from the empirical literature were also evident in what the interviewees did not say. Although instrumental use of evaluation findings is commonly cited in the literature (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014), statements describing this type of use were so infrequent that they were grouped within the larger category of evaluation capacity. The broad view of evaluation involvement taken in Study 1 also allowed for the observation of many factors at once, which allowed for many, seemingly disparate, views of stakeholder involvement in program evaluations to be integrated into one framework. In the next sections the implications of this approach are discussed.

Fear of negative results is an oft-cited reason for stakeholder resistance to program evaluation (Donaldson et al., 2002; Fawcett et al. 2003; Owen et al., 2005; Posavac & Carey, 1997). Although none of the interviewees mentioned a fear of negative results, some did suggest that their evaluation involvement was motivated by a desire to showcase its strengths in the evaluation report (a component of the *desire for input* theme). These findings suggest that the belief that an evaluation could do the program harm can

actually motivate stakeholders to take a more active role in the evaluation, if they believe this action will allow them to advocate for the program.

In the past, stakeholders who had a *desire for input* in evaluations of their programs have been conceptualized – perhaps even demonized – as a negative force in an otherwise objective and unsullied exercise. For example Roecks and Estes (1982) labeled stakeholders as "resistant" for challenging the methods of evaluations or the credibility of the evaluator. However, the view that stakeholder involvement necessitates the sacrifice of methodological rigour (e.g., Davidson, 1993) usually assumes that the stakeholders in question have a low level of research skill. Still, most of the individuals in the present study described themselves as *having appropriate knowledge and skills* for evaluation work. In fact, all but one of the interviewees who said they wanted to have some input in the evaluation also said that having research knowledge or skills contributed to their involvement. Empowering stakeholders to take more responsibility for an evaluation is an effective way to reduce stakeholder resistance (Davidson, 1993). In this view, evaluators become more like coaches who acknowledge the stakeholders' expertise and guide them through the evaluation process, rather than impose it on them. This supports the notion that a *desire for input in* the evaluation may be an important precursor to evaluation involvement that can be promoted to encourage involvement among stakeholders who have research knowledge and skill.

The scope of the themes and subthemes identified here should make it readily apparent that involvement is motivated by a variety of interconnected, complementary and

sometimes conflicting contextual and personal factors. Although identifying a large number of factors may allow for a more comprehensive view of evaluation involvement, this presents its own set of challenges: With so many catalysts for action, how can a single evaluation incorporate them all? What motivates one individual to become involved in evaluation may have little or no bearing on another, with the importance, or weight, attributed to a single factor depending on individual differences and preferences. A better understanding of the relative importance of the motives identified here would allow evaluators and organizations to concentrate their efforts in areas most likely to have the greatest impact on involvement. This challenge was taken up in Study 2, described next.

Overview of Study 2

Having identified in Study 1, 11 broad stakeholder involvement motives, Study 2 was designed to provide more information on the relative importance of the factors that influence stakeholder decisions to become involved in evaluations. I sought to examine the question, *What do stakeholders themselves believe to be the most important factors motivating their involvement in program evaluations?* To get at the question of priorities, Q-method was used. Briefly, participants ranked 40 potential reasons or factors contributing to their own evaluation involvement decisions (Q-items) in order of importance (Brown, 1993). Q-items were derived from the results of Study 1 together with a comprehensive review of the relevant evaluation literature. Combining the ranking pattern across a sample of participants, Q-method reveals a small number of sorting *profiles*. These profiles, their defining characteristics, and what they reveal about stakeholder involvement

motives are the focus of the second study.

Chapter 5: Study 2 Method

Shemmings and Ellingsen (2012) have presented Q-Method and the Q-Sorting Task as a six-step procedure. Details on how these steps were carried out in the present research and the results that emerged as a result of their application are outlined next.

Identifying the Concourse

Because Q-method attempts to capture the subjective views of the individuals under study, the items available for sorting need to be as free of bias as possible. This is accomplished by first identifying all relevant communication around the topic of interest, (the *concourse*), from which a subset of items can be selected (the *Q-set)* (Shemmings & Ellingsen, 2012). For this study, the concourse consisted of communication about factors that influence stakeholder involvement. Even a passing glance at Figure 1 makes it clear that the stakeholder experiences and views captured in it represent mainly *pull* factors. That is, the stakeholders mainly described ways in which they were brought into the evaluation, rather than what pushed them out. Material for the concourse was derived from the Study 1 interview transcripts, and a comprehensive review of the peer-reviewed evaluation literature on stakeholder involvement. From Study 1, 237 unique statements pertaining to reasons for stakeholder involvement in evaluation were initially identified.

To ensure that the concourse was as complete as possible, a systematic search of the evaluation literature on stakeholder involvement published in 1999 or later, was conducted. The PsycINFO and ERIC electronic databases were searched in three steps, (1) using subject terms related to involvement: *involv**, *participat**, *engag**, and non-

involvement: *resist**, (2) limiting the initial results to sources that included the term *evaluation*, and *(3)* further limiting the results to only those publications that had *evaluation* listed as a subject term. The titles and abstracts of 283 peer-reviewed articles were scanned for evidence of content related to conditions affecting stakeholder involvement. From this search, 167 additional statements related to reasons for stakeholder involvement were recorded.

Developing the Q-Set

The Q-set was created by reducing the large concourse (237 statements from Study 1, 167 statements from the literature) into the final list of 40 statements used in the sorting task. Good Q-statements capture the main themes on the topic being examined, and are easy to understand (Shemmings & Ellingsen, 2012). The concourse was reviewed for statements capturing the themes from Study 1, and any unique themes that emerged. Twenty-eight Q-statements were derived from Study 1 and an additional 12 statements were derived from the literature review. Table 2 presents the 40 statements that comprised the final Q-set, together with the corresponding source (literature, interviews, or both) and domain area (Organizational, Evaluation, Personal) captured by the statement.

Table 2

Final Q-set of 40 statements

Q-Statements	Source
Organizational Domain	
11. Participation in the evaluation is mandatory*	Both
12. No one else at my organization is willing to be involved*	Both
17. Past evaluations have been used by the program/organization	Lit.
19. Evaluation work is part of my job*	Both
22. The organization has adequate resources available for the evaluation*	Both
26. The program being evaluated is new	Lit.
27. The evaluation is a requirement of the program funders*	Both
32. There will be opportunities to use the results of the evaluation	Int.
34. The evaluation is needed to pursue new funding opportunities	Int.
Evaluation Domain	
02. Variety and flexibility in the methods used to evaluate the program	Lit.
03. The evaluation will be led by someone who is highly skilled*	Both

Q-Statements	Source
07. Good return on the investment of time, effort and/or program resources*	Both
08. Having an opportunity to have my voice heard	Lit.
13. The evaluation will have little impact on my work life and coworker relationships*	Both
16. The person leading the evaluation is trustworthy*	Both
20. The evaluation will be led by someone who listens to my concerns	Int.
21. The ability to determine what methods are used	Int.
30. Being able to set the goals for the evaluation	Lit.
31. My role in the evaluation is clear	Lit.
33. The purpose of the evaluation is clear*	Both
35. The evaluation will not take a lot of time or effort*	Both
36. The evaluation will be focused on learning about the program, not judging its merit or worth	Lit.
38. Sharing responsibility for the planning and implementation of the evaluation	Lit.

Q-Statements	Source
Personal Domain	
01. Having a good understanding of the program	Int.
04. The evaluation will yield positive results for the program	Lit.
05. The opportunity for networking*	Both
06. The opportunity to have a more prominent role in my organization*	Both
09. The desire for knowledge of my organization*	Both
10. Personal characteristics such as leadership, curiosity, intelligence, and the ability to take criticism	Int.
14. The desire to develop research skills*	Both
15. Having a good understanding of research methods*	Both
18. Positive past experiences with evaluation	Lit.
23. The opportunity to advocate for my program	Int.
24. To understand how to make the program better*	Both
25. Receiving feedback on a job well done*	Both
28. The desire to make the evaluation the best it can be*	Both

Q-Statements	Source
29. Being personally invested in the success or failure of the program	Lit.
37. The opportunity to use my research skills	Int.
39. The evaluation will have little impact on my personal/family life	Lit.
40. The desire to be more engaged in my work with the program	Int.

The P-set

In Q method, the P-set refers to study participants. Unlike survey studies, in which the aim is to have as many respondents as possible included in the study sample, Q-methodology generally makes use of far fewer participants. What is most important is that the individuals comprising the sample are in a position to view the topic from a point of self-reference (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The Q-researcher wants to find and articulate the different points of view on an issue that exist in a particular population. As such, Q methodology requires only enough people for the emergence of two or more points of view that can be compared to one another (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2012). A general rule in Q-methodology is for the number of statements included in the Q-set to exceed the number of participants included in the P-set by a ratio of 2:1 (Watts & Stenner, 2012). With 40 Q-statements in the present study, the P-set could not exceed 20 participants.

Participants. Personal and professional contacts known to have evaluation experience were approached to participate in the Q-study. Two interviewees from Study 1 agreed to participate. Snowball sampling was also used to reach people outside of the author's immediate network. Twenty-six people were initially approached to participate in the Q-study. Of these, seven did not meet the pre-determined criteria for evaluation involvement (Evaluation Involvement Scale [EIS] score < 2.00) and so were not considered further. Of the 21 stakeholders recruited to complete the Q-sort, two were eliminated from the final sample; one participant completed the task too quickly to give the issues adequate consideration (less than 10 minutes) and one person later said that her responses did not reflect her actual feelings about the subject matter. Both Study 1 participants were retained.

The final P-set was comprised of 19 participants. Just over two-thirds of the sample was female (n = 13, 68.4%). Participants ranged in age from 24 to 70 years (M = 46.8 years SD = 14.2 years). Most reported currently residing within the province of Ontario, with 2 (10.5%) residing in Quebec. All had attained at least an undergraduate degree, and just over two-thirds (n=13; 68.4%) had attained a graduate degree. EIS (Appendix A) scores for the sample ranged from 2.00 to 4.00 on a 4-point scale (M=3.13, SD= 0.81) reflecting a moderate to high level of evaluation involvement.

Administering the Q-Sort

All participants indicated their informed consent prior to starting the study (Appendix E). Participant time and effort was acknowledged with a $5 coffee shop gift card

that was mailed to participants after completion of the study. This small compensation was intended as a thank-you for the Study 2 participants who could not be thanked in-person as the Study 1 participants had been. It also served to incentivize participation in the study, which, for practical reasons, had tighter time-constraints than Study 1. A de-briefing sheet was provided at the end of the study that described the study goals, risks, and sources of additional information (Appendix F)

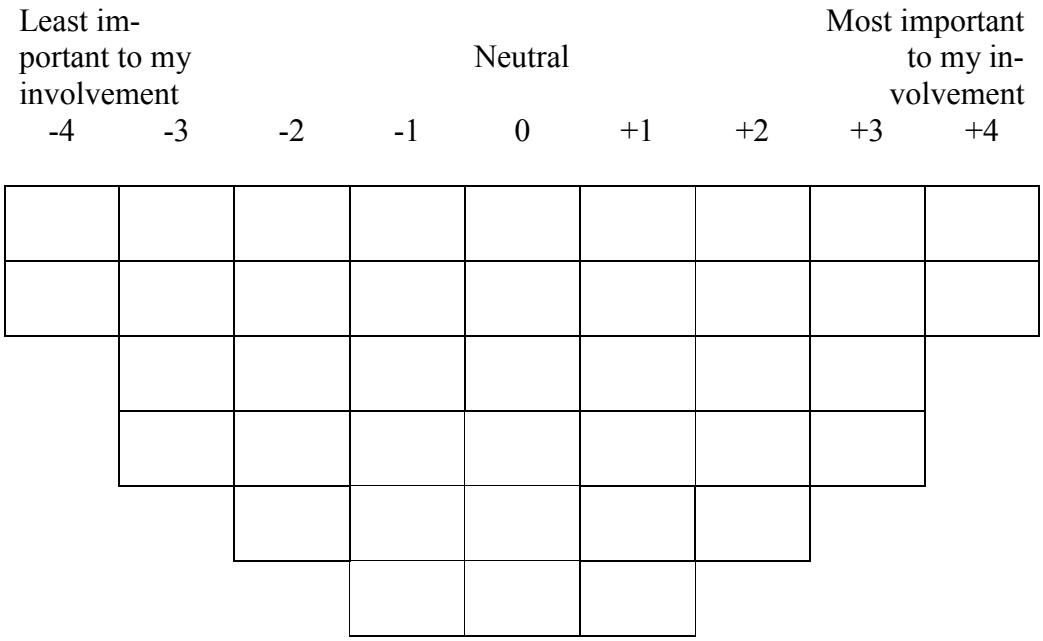
The sorting procedure was conducted using the online Q-sort software, Qsortware (http://www.qsortware.com/). After reading the statement of instruction ("*Drag and drop each statement to the appropriate bin, based on how important each one would be to* ***your decision to become involved*** *in an evaluation of the program identified at the start of this study*") participants were asked to conduct an initial pre-sort. Here, they sorted the statements into three broad categories: i) *Most important to my involvement*, ii) *Least important to my involvement*, and iii) *Neutral (i.e., doesn't play a major role one way or another in my involvement).*

In a second round, participants were forced to sort the statements into a fixed distribution, with only a few statements ranked as highly important to involvement and highly unimportant to involvement, and more statements falling in between these two extremes (see Figure 2 for a diagram of the sorting constraints). To make the decision-making process easier for participants, a relatively flat distribution was used, allowing more statements to be sorted into the middle categories. This kind of distribution is generally preferred when participants are less familiar with the study topic, or when they are not ex-

pected to have extremely strong points of view on the matter, as was the case in this study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). After completing the final sort, participants were asked to provide comments to help explain their rating patterns. This information was used to inform the researcher's interpretation of the sorts.

Figure 2

Q-sort grid



Note: One unique statement is placed in each box during the Q sorting process.

Chapter 6: **Study 2 Results**

The first step in analysing the data from a Q-sort involves reducing the individual sorts to a smaller number of overarching thematic factors. Using a by-person factor-analytic procedure, correlations between individual sorts are used to determine which individual perspectives 'hang together'. The analysis was conducted with the PQMethod v.2.20 software (Schmolck, 2012).

Factors were extracted using the centroid method with varimax rotation (Brown, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Following standard guidelines for retaining factors in Q-methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012), factors were retained if they had an eigenvalue greater than 1, and there were at least two individual sorts loading uniquely and significantly on that factor. The significance of each factor loading was assessed using the formula $2.58 \sqrt{1/n}$, where n = the number of statements sorted, to determine the minimum loading that would be significant at $\alpha = .05$ (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Based on this calculation, loadings exceeding .41 were deemed to be significant. In other words, individual sorts that correlated .41 or higher with a factor, were considered to 'belong' to, and hence, help to define, that factor. Using these criteria, three unique, but correlated factors were retained, accounting for 14, 15, and 9 percent of the variance in importance ratings, respectively.[2] A factor correlation matrix is provided in Table 3.

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[2] Although these numbers are low, in Q methodology a low amount of variance explained does not mean the findings are of little value; in fact, quite the contrary. Large amounts of variance accounted is typical when the subject matter lends itself to homogenous points of view to which a q-study is unlikely to add new insights (e.g., views on abortion

Table 3

Correlations between Factor Scores

	1	2	3
1	-	0.18	0.23
2		-	0.41*
3			-

* $p < .01$

The correlation matrix presented in Table 3, shows the degree of relationship between the three factors. Factors 1 and 2 were not significantly correlated, r (38) = .18, p = .27. Neither were Factors 1 and 3, r (38) = .23, p = .15. However, Factors 2 and 3 were found to have a moderate correlation, r (38) = .41, p <.01. This suggests some degree of overlap between the points of view represented by these two factors.

Factor Arrays

The factor arrays facilitate interpretation by providing a typical Q-statement rating for each factor. Sorts with significant loadings on the same factor share a similar sorting

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would be expected to fall into two very commonly understood categories: *pro-life* or *pro-choice*). Conversely, a low amount of variance is expected when the subject matter is complex or lends itself well to idiosyncratic views (Brown, 2014). As it was expected that the participants in this study would have differing points of view about what motivates their involvement in evaluations, and that they likely would not have expressed these views before in such a direct manner, a factor structure in which just 38% of the variance is explained may be more than adequate to provide interesting insights into this behaviour.

pattern, and, by inference, similar motives behind their involvement in program evaluation. Sorts with high loadings on only one factor are "exemplar" sorts, which are merged to form a single idealized sort for each factor, referred to as the factor array. Drawing on the ratings listed in the array, the Q-researcher can easily see how the statements would have been rated in a sort with a 100% loading on that factor.

Two sorts (QS07 and QS19) did not load significantly on any of the factors,[3] indicating that they had little influence on these idealized ratings. Another two sorts (QS 11 and QS2) were found to have significant loadings on two factors. These two sorts were retained and interpreted as points of view that are best represented by both factors. The rotated factor loadings for each sort can be found in Appendix H. Table 4 displays the factor arrays for each of the three factors that emerged here.

Table 4

Q-statement by Domain and Factor Array

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Organizational Domain			
11. Participation in the evaluation is mandatory	-1	-3	-3
12. No one else at my organization is willing to be involved*-	-2	-2	-2
17. Past evaluations have been used by the pro-	1	-1	1

[3] Sorts that fail to load on any factor may represent idiosyncratic views on the topic of interest, or they may share a viewpoint that failed to be extracted in the factor analysis

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
gram/organization			
19. Evaluation work is part of my job**	-1	-2	0
22. The organization has adequate resources available for the evaluation**	1	0	1
26. The program being evaluated is new**	2	1	0
27. The evaluation is a requirement of the program funders	4	-3	-3
32. There will be opportunities to use the results of the evaluation	0	3	4
34. The evaluation is needed to pursue new funding opportunities.	3	-4	-2
Evaluation Domain			
02. Variety and flexibility in the methods used to evaluate the program	0	2	0
03. The evaluation will be led by someone who is highly skilled	1	0	2
07. Good return on the investment of time, effort and/or program resources*+	3	2	2
13. The evaluation will have little impact on my work life and coworker relationships*-	-3	-3	-2

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
16. The person leading the evaluation is trustworthy	1	1	3
20. The evaluation will be led by someone who listens to my concerns*+	3	1	1
31. My role in the evaluation is clear	-2	-1	3
33. The purpose of the evaluation is clear	1	1	3
35. The evaluation will not take a lot of time or effort*-	-1	-2	-3
36. The evaluation will be focused on learning about the program, not judging its merit or worth	-2	3	3
39. The evaluation will have little impact on my personal/family life	-4	-4	2
Personal Domain			
01. Having a good understanding of the program	2	4	1
04. The evaluation will yield positive results for the program	-1	2	0
05. The opportunity for networking	-4	0	-4
06. The opportunity to have a more prominent role in my organization*	-3	-3	-1
08. Having an opportunity to have my voice hear*-	-3	-2	-1
09. The desire for knowledge of my organization	-3	2	-1
10. Personal characteristics such as leadership, curiosity,	2	3	-3

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
intelligence, and the ability to take criticism			
14. The desire to develop research skills	0	-2	1
15. Having a good understanding of research methods	2	-1	0
18. Positive past experiences with evaluation**	0	0	-1
21. The ability to determine what methods are used**	0	1	0
23. The opportunity to advocate for my program	3	0	1
24. To understand how to make the program better*+	4	4	3
25. Receiving feedback on a job well done*-	-1	-1	-2
28. The desire to make the evaluation the best it can be	0	3	2
29. Being personally invested in the success or failure of the program	2	-1	-2
30. Being able to set the goals for the evaluation*+	1	1	2
37. The opportunity to use my research skills*-	-2	-1	-2
38. Sharing responsibility for the planning and implementation of the evaluation	-1	2	-1
40. The desire to be more engaged in my work with the program	-2	0	-4

*+ consensus statement with positive ratings in all factors; *- consensus statement with negative ratings in all factors; **consensus statement with a neutral rating (0) in at least one factor

Consensus Statements

Before turning to an analysis of factor differences, a brief discussion of factor

similarities is needed. Q-method allows the researcher to identify consensus statements. These are items that are sorted in approximately the same fashion by all participants, and therefore are not differentiated by any of the extracted factors. Consensus statements are identified in Table 4 according to their overall positive (*+), negative (*-) or neutral (**) ratings. We can think of the four *positive consensus* statements as reflecting reliable *pull* factors for the present sample. In general, evaluation involvement decisions were positively influenced by a feeling that stakeholder effort would be a worthwhile investment, likely to result in a relevant evaluation, and program improvement.

We can think of the seven *negative consensus* statements as reflecting those issues that are not particularly impactful with respect to involvement decisions. Stakeholders did not see their involvement decisions as being influenced by various practical considerations including, time and effort required, other work demands, and research skills. One participant indicated, "*I value the fact that good evaluation takes time and effort. So [statements concerning time and effort] were moot points*." Similarly, the possibility for recognition, praise, and increased prominence within the organization did not motivate stakeholder involvement.

Final Factor Interpretation

Having examined several of the similarities across factors, I turn now to an analysis of the unique and distinguishing characteristics of each stakeholder involvement factor. The interpretation phase of Q-method involves finding the common point of view represented by each factor using both 'art' and 'science.' Similar to the process used in

exploratory factor analysis, factor arrays and participants' supporting statements are carefully examined with the goal of making sense of the pattern of statement ratings. For the present research this was achieved by examining the differences between the factors through an analysis of *distinguishing statements* as well as the unifying themes suggested by ratings of statements within factors.

From the factor array, difference scores are calculated to determine the "magnitude of difference between a statements' score on any two factors that is required for it to be statistically significant"(Van Exel, 2005, pg. 9). When a statement's score exceeds this difference it is referred to as a *distinguishing statement*. Examination of the distinguishing statements provides important clues about what sets one factor apart from the others. This information is used to interpret the meaning of each factor.

Based on careful examination of the factor arrays, as well as the distinguishing statements for each, I labelled the three factors according to my impression of the primary motives underlying involvement for each group; Factor 1: the *Bottom-Liners*, Factor 2: the *Eager Learners* and Factor 3: the *Cautious Pragmatists*. I now turn to a more detailed description of each factor, including information about the participants who loaded significantly on the factor, and the evidence used to support my factor interpretation. Distinguishing statements are provided and discussed along with participant statements about their sorts.

Factor 1: The "Bottom Liners" (M_{age} = 49.9 years; EIS M = 3.0; 4/7 female). The point of view represented by Factor 1 is primarily concerned with program continua-

tion, which is viewed as dependent on program finances, or the program's bottom line. Four sorts were positively and uniquely associated with this factor. An additional three sorts shared significant loadings with this and one other factor. Participants from every program type and program role were represented in this factor.

Distinguishing statements for Factor 1 suggest that for these stakeholders, involvement in evaluations is strongly driven by funding requirements (27: +4) and a desire to expand program funding (34: +3). Indeed, of all three factors, only the Bottom Liners assigned high, positive values to the statements regarding program funding. The key role played by funding considerations for this group is also supported by participant comments. One participant indicated that her high rankings were based on the "*importance of keeping/securing funding*." Another remarked on the need for government departments to be more accountable for money spent. Another plainly stated that "*Funders drive our evaluations.*" Bottom-liners' funding concerns appear to be related to program maintenance and survival. They see evaluation as an opportunity to advocate for the program (23: +3), and perhaps as a way to help them improve its functioning (24: +4).

Although the involvement of Bottom-liners appears to be motivated by a desire for increased program funding, this motive is balanced with a desire for objective information leading to genuine program improvement. Bottom-Liners are not motivated simply by the prospect of positive results for their programs (4: -1; 32: 0). As reflected in the following participant comment, they seem to be seeking accurate, useful information for decisions: "*I don't think evaluation is simply about finding the greatest results or ma-*

nipulating data in order to reflect solely a positive light. It is about objective and informed decision-making."

Bottom-liners are not looking to be in charge of the evaluation themselves. They are not motivated by deep levels of participation in key decisions surrounding the evaluation (38: -1; 37: -2; 21: 0). Rather, their involvement is enhanced by particular characteristics of the evaluator including his or her skill level (3: +1), trustworthiness (16: +1) and willingness to listen to stakeholder concerns (20: +3). Bottom-liners may not want to lead the evaluation, but they want whoever does to do a good job so that the evaluation will be the best it can be (28: 0). This may be due to the perception that a high quality evaluation is needed to be taken seriously by program funders.

Finally, relative to the other stakeholder groups, Bottom-liners are not highly motivated by the personal benefits associated with evaluation involvement such as increased program knowledge (36: -2; 9: -3), and the possibility of professional advancement (5: -4; 6: -3; 37: -2; 32: 0). Stakeholders in this group commented that "*My skills don't require a lot more development*" and "*opportunities for personal development are not important at this stage in my life*."

Factor 2: "The Eager Learners" (M_{age} = 52. 1 years; EIS M= 3.61, 4/7 female). The sorts associated with Factor 2 showed an interest in evaluation involvement as a potential learning opportunity. These individuals were therefore nicknamed the *Eager Learners.* A total of seven sorts comprise this factor, with six uniquely loaded and one compound sort sharing a significant loading with Factor 1. The Eager Learners all

worked in community development and post-secondary education program areas.

In contrast to the Bottom-Liners, for the Eager Learners program funding considerations were ranked as least important to their involvement in evaluation (27: -3, 34: -4). This lack of concern for program funding was also captured in the comment "*I'm not all that concerned about pleasing future funders*." However, these individuals place a high value on the potential to learn about their programs right now (36: +3, 9: +2). They are less concerned about whether past evaluation findings have been used within their organizations (17: -1). Eager Learners get involved in evaluation because they are eager to learn more about the ins and outs of important programs (1: +4), and because they want to know how they can make the program better (24: +4). Supporting this interpretation, one participant's comments revealed "*building up the [program]*" was important to her evaluation involvement. Similarly, another participant commented that he wanted to be involved in evaluations "*where [he] feels the programme will be served to the best advantage."*

Whereas the Bottom-Liners put a special emphasis on the qualities of the evaluator, the involvement of Eager Learners seems to be motivated by a desire for personal control in the evaluation (38: +1; 2: +2; 21: +1). Personal motives also loomed large with Eager Learners relative to all other stakeholder profiles. Eager Learners were more likely to report being pulled into evaluation by (a) a perceived fit with their own personal qualities such as leadership skills and intellectual curiosity (10: +3), (b) a desire for professional networking (5: 0) and (c) increased engagement in program-related work (40: -1).

Eager learners get involved in evaluation because they want to, not because they have to (19: -2; 11: -3). This analysis is supported by the fact that all of the participants included in Factor 2 made their rankings in reference to community and higher education programs, where evaluations are not necessarily mandated, as they are in federal government programming (Treasury Board Secretariat, 2012).

Factor 3: "The Cautious Pragmatists" (M_{age} = 34.7 years; EIS M= 2.92, 2/4 female). Factor 3 was characterized by a concern for the overall quality of the evaluation. The sorts and comments associated with this factor give the impression that these stakeholders wanted to ensure the evaluation would be well thought out, so that the results received would be of tangible benefit. They were thus nicknamed, the *Cautious Pragmatists*. A total of four participants fell in the *Cautious Pragmatist* group. Two participants' sorts loaded significantly, positively, and uniquely on this factor with two additional participants sharing loadings with another factor. This was also seemingly the youngest group, with a mean age that was over a decade younger than the other two groups. The programs they described spanned government funding initiatives, community development projects, and higher education programs.

Unlike *Bottom Liners* whose involvement seems motivated by a desire to keep the program funded and running, and *Eager Learners* who are motivated by a desire to learn about the program, *Cautious Pragmatists* are motivated by high quality, focused evaluations that have a good chance of being put to use. Although involvement motives were not strongly influenced by a need for power-sharing in the evaluation (38: -1; 15: 0), the

importance of a skilled (3: +2) and trustworthy (16: +3) evaluator was highlighted in this perspective.

For *Cautious Pragmatists*, it is important that the evaluation process is clearly defined with a set purpose (31: +3; 33: +3) and set goals (32; +4). Also important to the involvement motives of *Cautious Pragmatists* is the opportunity to help define relevant evaluation goals (30: +2). The pragmatic motives of this group are reflected in a strong desire to see evaluation results used (32: +4). The following comments are illustrative; "*The point of the evaluation is moot if there is no intention to use the results. The purpose needs to be clear for the same reason" "[Evaluation] is about objective and informed decision-making*".

Unlike the Bottom-Liners, the Cautious Pragmatists are not primarily motivated to secure funding resources for their programs (27: -3; 34: -2). This may have something to do with the types of programs they were thinking about evaluating. Half of the participants included in this factor made ratings in reference to small community-based projects that typically do not require large funds to operate. The other half made their ratings in reference to long-standing government funded organizations or a well-established higher education training program. In both cases program continuation was likely not an immediate concern. As such, these programs may have been perceived as either not needing significant amounts of funding to continue, or secure enough in their current funding situation to allow them to be less interested in the potential of the evaluation to address the program bottom-line.

Primary personal motives for the Cautious Pragmatist include a desire to have a more prominent role in the organization (6: -1) and to develop research skills (14: +1). Taken together, the rankings for Factor 3 suggest for these individuals evaluation involvement is motivated by a sense that if an evaluation must be done, it should at least be leading somewhere, and have some greater purpose. One explanation for this could be that these are individuals who have experienced poorly executed and utilized evaluations in the past.

Chapter 7: Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 built on the findings of Study 1 to further examine motivations behind stakeholder involvement in program evaluations. The themes that emerged from interviews with stakeholders were combined with additional motivators described in the literature. Another group of stakeholders was asked to prioritize their involvement motives with a Q-sort task. Three distinct stakeholder motive profiles emerged that were concerned with program funding (Factor 1: the *Bottom Liners*), program learning (Factor 2: the *Eager Learners*), or evaluation quality (Factor 3: the *Cautious Pragmatists*). Within each of these involvement profiles is a unique prioritization of the kinds of factors that motivate stakeholder involvement in evaluation. In the sections that follow, I will show how these findings both support and depart from previous research. I will then draw on these findings to discuss in greater detail a proposed preliminary model of stakeholder involvement motives.

Funding Concerns

Becoming involved because of funding concerns was mentioned by 70% of interviewees in Study 1, and was central to the Factor 1 point of view discovered in Study 2. Additional support for the role of funding concerns is found in the work of others who propose that resistance to involvement occurs when stakeholders believe that evaluations will lead to reduced program funding (Posavac, 1994; Posovac & Carey, 1997). However, the influence of funding on evaluation involvement is rarely addressed in the empirical evaluation literature (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014). This disparity may stem from the

research methods used in some stakeholder involvement studies. Surveys, for example, naturally restrict stakeholders to endorsing researcher-defined motives and behaviours (e.g., Smits et al., 2012, Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). In the present research, the identification of funding concerns as a driver of evaluation involvement was revealed through the open-ended interviews conducted in Study 1. The open-ended format of the interview may have allowed this different point of view to come to the forefront.

Program Learning

The notion that stakeholders become involved to learn more about their programs, or develop new skills, has been emphasized repeatedly in the literature (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014). This was a commonly cited advantage of involvement in program evaluations in Study 1, and was central to the point of view represented in Factor 2 of Study 2. Organizations and evaluators wishing to increase individual participation in program evaluation activities may be more successful in their efforts if they emphasize these types of gains. The additional emphasis on statements related to control of the evaluation in Factor 2 also suggests that some stakeholders want to be more involved than they typically are. Integrating evaluation activities into the daily functions of the program is one way to increase stakeholder power and control in program evaluations, but this would require increasing both organizational and individual evaluation capacity (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012). Training opportunities to boost the research skills of program stakeholders and creating a more evaluation-supportive culture are two ways in which evaluation capacity could be strengthened (Labin et al., 2012).

Evaluation Quality

The views represented in Factor 3 were primarily concerned with evaluation quality. This was also seen in the Study 1 interview responses that emphasized the need for the evaluation to be led by someone trustworthy and skilled, and for the evaluation to have a meaningful purpose that was known to everyone involved. This finding is echoed in the many reports that have emphasized the need for evaluations to be meaningful and purposeful (Donaldson et al., 2002; Higa & Brandon, 2005; Owen, Cook & Jones, 2005: Plottu & Plottu, 2009; Poth & Shula, 2008) and led by individuals with not only evaluation skill, but also with a high degree of communicative and interpersonal skill (Poth & Shula, 2008; Roseland et al., 2011; Smits et al., 2011; Stevahn & King, 2013; Torres & Preskill, 1999).

Evaluation Control

Regardless of factor loadings, all of the participants in both studies indicated a shared desire for control in the evaluation. This has been observed previously in reports by Gardner (2003), Poth and Shula (2008), and Geva-May and Thorngate (2003), as well as in various evaluation theories and approaches, such as Fetterman's (2001) Empowerment Evaluation and Cousins and Earl's (1992) Participatory Evaluation. Simply giving stakeholders an opportunity to participate in evaluations, listening to their ideas and concerns and giving them a meaningful amount of power and control over the direction of the evaluation can increase stakeholder participation. It seems simple enough to implement, but why then is stakeholder involvement and resistance still considered an obstacle

to overcome? This question is being examined by Paul Brandon and his colleagues at the university of Hawai'i at Manoa, who are looking at how and when evaluation leaders involve program stakeholders in evaluation work.

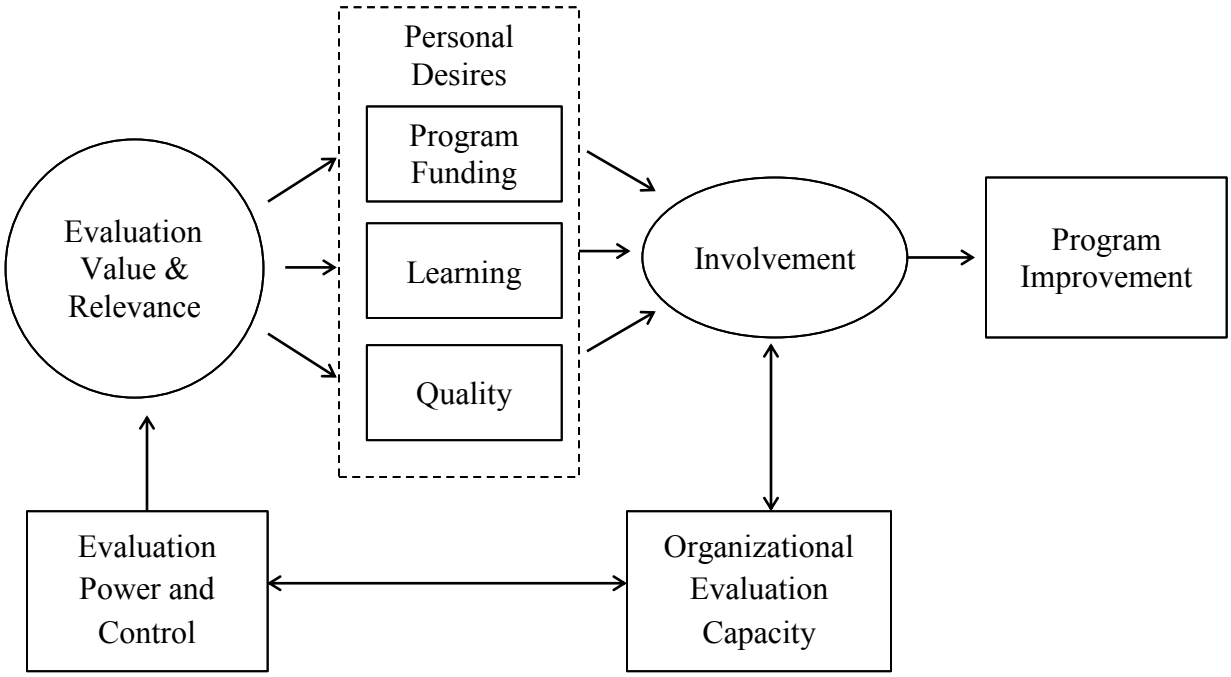
A Preliminary Model of Stakeholder Involvement Motives

Figure 3 presents a preliminary model of stakeholder involvement based on the findings of the present research as well as previous research. Under this framework, decisions around evaluation involvement are based on assessments of the evaluation's value and relevance to program improvement. Furthermore, how value and relevance of the evaluation is assessed will differ based on personal desires. For the *Bottom-Liners,* evaluations are valuable and relevant when they can be used to secure or leverage funding that ensures program continuation. For the *Eager Learners*, evaluations are valuable and relevant when they offer new (hopefully positive) insights about the program. Lastly, the *Cautious Pragmatists* see value and relevance in clearly articulated evaluation goals that stakeholders have some say in defining. Finally, with this framework, it is presumed that involvement in evaluation occurs when stakeholders see the evaluation as a way to achieve program improvement in a way that is personally meaningful to them.

Outside of personal desires are aspects of the evaluation and organizational context. If evaluations are to address the personal desires of the stakeholders involved in them, those stakeholders need to have a voice at the table early on in the evaluation process. This was exemplified in the present study through the positively rated consensus

Figure 3

A preliminary model of evaluation involvement motives



statements that specifically addressed power and control. The proposed model of stakeholder evaluation involvement includes a direct relationship between the degree of power and control stakeholders have in the evaluation and the value and personal relevance ascribed to the evaluation.

The present research also revealed several ways in which the organizational context influences stakeholder involvement. This was seen in the moderate importance of organizational resources available for the evaluation, past positive experiences with evaluation, and the perception that evaluation work was part of their job, to the participants' evaluation involvement decisions. Taken together these statements speak to the evaluation capacity of the organization (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012, Labin et al., 2012, Taylor-

Ritzler et al., 2013). As noted earlier, organizational evaluation capacity is theorized to increase as stakeholder evaluation involvement increases, but stakeholders may only become involved in evaluations when there is a high degree of organizational evaluation capacity (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012). This mutual dependency between organizational evaluation capacity and stakeholder evaluation involvement is depicted in the preliminary model through the double arrows that connect these two constructs.

At the same time as organizational capacity influences involvement directly, it also affects involvement indirectly though the power and control stakeholders have in evaluations. Greater use of participatory techniques within evaluation has been identified as a marker of developing evaluation capacity (Bourgeois & Cousins, 2012). In the preliminary model presented, organizational evaluation capacity determines the power and control given to the stakeholders in the evaluation. In turn, greater stakeholder power and control in the evaluation increases the organization's evaluation capacity.

The proposed model of stakeholder involvement motives is admittedly preliminary and, therefore, incomplete. It functions mainly as a framework for thinking about involvement motives and how different expectancies about evaluation outcomes can influence stakeholder motives to become involved. Future research may focus on adding to, and elaborating, aspects of this framework to facilitate its testability. Future qualitative research could be conducted to determine if similar themes emerge with other samples of evaluation stakeholders. Future research that takes a quantitative approach to measurement of the individual constructs could also allow researchers to test the specific relation-

ships hypothesized in the model. This could help to answer questions about what types of factors (organization, evaluation or personal factors) make the greatest difference. For example, looking at stakeholders within the same organization, one might be able to get a better handle on the relative importance of organizational, evaluation and personal factors in the involvement decision-making process.

Previous research on social motivation has identified individualism, competition, and cooperation as important factors in organizational and group dynamics (McClintock, 1978; van Lange, 2004) that may map well to the current findings. For example, the Bottom-Liners may be highly motivated to be involved in evaluation by the competitive nature of securing program funding, while the Eager-Learners are motivated by individual learning goals. Lastly, the Eager-Learners may be motivated by the cooperative aspects of evaluations, so that they can ensure the relevance and value of the evaluation. Applying these concepts in the context of evaluation involvement decision-making may help to guide future research hypotheses in this area by providing a higher-order understanding of how stakeholders ascribe relevance and value to evaluations.

Lastly, it should be noted that in Study 2, four sorts, accounting for 21% of the sample were idiosyncratic[4]. Although these participants were not excluded from the analysis, their failure to load significantly and positively on any retained factor means they

[4] Sorts are deemed to be idiosyncratic if they fail to load significantly on any of the retained factors, or if they are the lone significant, but negatively loading sort on a retained factor.

contributed very little to the interpretation of the results presented here. These sorts may be truly unique, with unique motives for being involved in program evaluations. It is possible that a different sample would have pushed these idiosyncratic perspectives to form a single factor of their own. As such, the model here is best thought of as a starting point. Future research is encouraged that would expand or refine the concerns listed here to include a wider breath of stakeholder experiences.

Chapter 8: General Discussion

Two studies explored a range of stakeholder motives for participating in evaluation activities. Going beyond a narrative reflection or case study approach that is typical of evaluation research, I sought to identify both *push* and *pull* factors influencing stakeholder involvement, as well as their relative importance in involvement decisions. Evaluators need stakeholders as key allies. Getting them on board requires a better understanding of the factors that motivate them.

In Study 1, interviews were conducted with stakeholders who had been engaged in evaluations within the last 5 years. Responses were analysed qualitatively for recurrent themes that were further grouped into the categories of personal, evaluation, and organizational characteristics. In Study 2, the insights gleaned from Study 1 were combined with views present in the academic literature. This created a comprehensive list of 40 evaluation involvement *pull* statements that program stakeholders sorted in order of importance to their involvement in a hypothetical evaluation. Factor analysis procedures performed on the individual sorts allowed for the emergence of three distinct points of view on involvement: i) The Bottom-Liners, who were concerned with program funding, ii) the Eager-Learners, who were concerned with learning opportunities, and iii), the Cautious-Pragmatists who were concerned with evaluation quality. Analysis of areas of consensus revealed these points of view to be situated within an overall concern for the evaluation to have relevance and value for the programs in question.

Many practitioners and theorists alike have noted that the key to stakeholder in-

volvement is the perception that the evaluation, and the role stakeholders play in it, has meaning. Involvement is even more likely if the value and meaning ascribed to the evaluation has personal significance (Patton, 1997). What the present research adds to our understanding of stakeholder involvement in evaluations is not just a blanket statement about valuing the time and effort invested, but more nuanced views of what stakeholders value about the evaluation experience that led to their past or potential participation.

Discrepancies Between Studies One and Two

As has been noted above, the accounts analysed in Study 1 put the greatest emphasis on personal factors, however this was generally not the case in Study 2, where the defining statements of the profiles, and positively rated consensus statements tended to be derived from the evaluation and organizational/program domains. One explanation for this difference could be that, for stakeholders, personal desires and attributes are important, just not as important as other more program- or evaluation-related characteristics and outcomes. This difference may also be explained, in part, by the methods used. By explicitly asking the interviewees why they were involved, what advantages and disadvantages there were to being involved, and what motivated and de-motivated them, the interview study emphasized stakeholders' unique experiences and perspectives. The method of questioning may have communicated an expectation for interviewees to think about their involvement in relation to their own personal desires and attributes. Although the Q-study also instructed people to consider the statements and how they should be sorted from their own point of view, this was only stated once, and rather passively at

that. The sterility of the online sorting environment may have influenced participants to focus on more objective aspects of their points of view, while de-emphasizing the very personal aspects.

One area of particular disparity was noted in the areas of personal gains (e.g., *The opportunity to use my research skills*; *Receiving feedback on a job well done*; *The opportunity to have a more prominent role in my organization*) that received consistently low ratings in Study 2, despite being mentioned by eight of the ten interviewees in Study 1. It could be that personal gains are viewed more as a perk of evaluation involvement, rather than a driving force. This would explain why it was mentioned by the majority of the interviewees as a reason, motivator or advantage of their involvement, but was not ranked highly when compared to other motivating factors in Study 2. However, it is hard to believe that anyone would decline to be involved in an activity that would directly lead to promotion or greater prominence within the organization. As such, there may be other explanations for this finding that are less related to actual beliefs, and more related to the measurement techniques employed. For example, the observed low ranking of personal gains in Study 2 might reflect social desirability in participant responses. Participants may have been reticent to rank these self-focused motivations so highly because doing so would be in conflict with the perception that they are program-focused. This may have led the participants to downplay the importance of personal gains while placing disproportionate importance on program-related gains. Personal gains of evaluation are also less prominently mentioned in the literature, which may indicate a belief that these kinds of

outcomes are unlikely to occur. In a similar way, the Study 2 participants may desire the personal gains, but believe them to be less a realistic outcome, and therefore less important to their involvement in the evaluation than other, more attainable outcomes. Future research into personal motivators may want to address the possibility of social desirability influencing responses explicitly with participants, as research has shown that awareness of these types of biases can reduce their impact (Stalder, 2012).

Project Limitations

Despite finding empirical support for the literature on evaluation involvements, as well as discovering new insights into this phenomenon, there are limitations to the present research that should be considered.

Assessments of behaviour versus actual behaviour. The present research relied on either participant reflections on past behaviour (Study 1) or hypothetical forecasts of future behaviour, rather than actual behavioural observations. As such, both studies assess stakeholder *perceptions* of their involvement motives, which may be very different from what actually leads to involvement in evaluations. Given the noted disparity between values, intention, and action, (see Feather, 1990 for a review) it is unclear if the motives uncovered in Studies 1 and 2 would be relevant to the same degree if actual behaviour had been measured. Studies that attempt a more realistic accounting of involvement motives would do well to also look at the role of office politics to evaluation-related decisions. Organizational politics have already been found to negatively affect organizational citizenship behaviours (Chernyak-Hai, & Tziner, 2012; Gao & Zhao, 2014; Hsiung

et al., 2012; Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris & Zivnuska, 2011). Given the highly politicized nature of evaluation work (Cullen, Corvn & Rugh, 2011; Datta, 2011), a closer look at the role of office politics may be useful in understanding barriers to involvement in program evaluations.

Although the present research would have been strengthened by a shorter gap between measures of actual evaluation involvement and its motives, this does not mean the results presented here are without value. At the very least, these studies provide insights into what stakeholders value about evaluations. Although this may be different than what would actually get them involved, it may be no less important. As Patton (1997) alludes to in his discussion of the *personal factor*, for stakeholders to be involved in a meaningful way, they need to care about the evaluation. The present research has provided insights into what stakeholders care about, which may be used to better engage them in the evaluation process. Future research may want to investigate the importance of the motives found here in more realistic settings. For example stakeholders could be asked at various points in time during an evaluation what is motivating their participation at that moment.

The present research operated under the assumption that the factors affecting evaluation involvement are interrelated. Future research may also help to elucidate if this assumption is accurate, or if motives for evaluation involvement are better represented by a hierarchy of needs. Are there higher-order aspects of the evaluation environment that must be in place (e.g., a high level of organizational evaluation capacity) before the personal benefits (e.g., professional development opportunities) of evaluation involvement

can be realized? Different methodologies, such as the two-alternative forced-choice task (see Koriat, 2013 for an example) in which a choice is made between two simultaneously presented components could allow for better identification of these *deal-breakers*, or those components that must be in place before the other gains of involvement can be realized.

Limited generalizability. Small sample sizes are common in empirical evaluation research, which typically includes 25 participants or less (Brandon & Fukunaga, 2014), and the present research was no exception. The small samples used in both Studies 1 and 2 naturally limit the generalizability of the findings to the entire population of stakeholders. The generalizability and transferability of study results is a common concern in quantitative research, despite seldom being the goal of qualitative methods. As Morrow (2005) has highlighted, the quality of qualitative research is perhaps better judged through *credibility* rather than *internal validity* and by *transferability* rather than *generalizability*. The present research aimed to be credible through a detailed description of the methods used and the use of the project supervisor as second reader for the thematic structure derived from the coding and analysis procedures employed. The transferability of the findings presented may be judged by the descriptions of the participants given, the breadth of organizational contexts to which they belong, and their varied experience with program evaluation, as well as my own accounting of my personal and methodological standpoints. Considering that no new themes emerged after the fourth interview was completed, it is reasonable to assume that these results would transfer to stakeholders

with similar backgrounds to those included here.

Finding universal truths was never the goal of this research. Rather, I sought to gather, in an empirical manner, insights into motives for involvement in program evaluations. One of the great strengths of the qualitative approach is the potential for resonance. Through the presentation of direct quotes and Q-sort findings it is hard to argue the points of view do not exist. They may not exist for all people, everywhere, but they exist, nonetheless.

In taking a small-scale and qualitative approach, the present research represents only a slight departure from the majority of reports present in the evaluation literature. As discussed previously, this literature is currently overly dependent on narrative reflections and case studies that aim to provide much in the way of resonance, and little in generalizability. But what the present research does offer is data to support, and even challenge, these previous assertions. It is hoped that future research will continue to answer the calls by Brandon and Fukanaga (2014) and Suarez-Balcazar and colleagues (2014) for more empirical research into evaluation involvement that will give evaluation researchers and practitioners greater power in understanding the stakeholder psyche.

Scope of included stakeholder types. The term *stakeholder* is used quite liberally throughout this document to refer to any individual with a stake in the program. As Azzam (2010) has discussed, this is far from a homogenous population; program stakeholders occupy diverse roles that include funding programs and initiatives, carrying out their design and implementation, and making use of their services. Although efforts were

made to include a broad range of stakeholder types in the present research, the majority of the participants in both studies could be classified as *program implementers,* or the program personnel who deliver the programs being evaluated. This is not an unimportant group to study, as nearly half of all empirical studies on evaluation involvement include this stakeholder group (Brandon and Fukunaga, 2014). It could be argued, however, that their over-representation here was based more on recruitment bias (the people who run programs are somewhat easier to find than the people who fund, manage, or use them) than on the needs of the research questions. As such, the results should be interpreted with caution. A different recruitment strategy may have led to a more diverse cross-section of stakeholder types. For example, a case study approach could provide a much more in-depth examination of the disparate stakeholder motives within a single organization or evaluation. Case studies have been used extensively to investigate stakeholder involvement (e.g. Geva-May & Thorngate, 2003; Parkinson, 2009; Poth & Shulha, 2008); however, few have looked specifically at the impact of stakeholder type on the involvement experience.

Directions for Future Research

Aside from work to address the shortcomings and limitations of the present research, other avenues of inquiry are suggested by the findings from the present research.

Research into individual differences in motives. The preliminary model of evaluation involvement motives presented here is meant to be a starting point for future research. The strength of the proposed relationships between perceptions of value and

relevance and actual involvement in evaluations is still unknown, and requires more targeted empirical research to determine.

The model would also be strengthened through greater exploration of the differences between the factors identified. This would help to decipher if stakeholders with shared points of view about evaluation involvement share other commonalities as well. For example, it would be interesting to know if the *Bottom-Liners* value the funding implications of evaluations because their own program resources are insufficient or insecure. Similarly, the *Eager-Learners* may share a common educational background. A closer look at what underpins stakeholder motives would also help to make clear which motives are static, remaining stable between evaluations and evaluation tasks, and which are more dynamic, changing as situations, environments and indeed the stakeholders themselves, change. Elucidating the differences that account for disparate points of view would not only broaden our understanding of evaluation involvement, it would allow for those points of view to be predicted. Such information would be incredibly useful to evaluators interested in targeting strategies to secure stakeholder involvement toward stakeholder desires and values.

Q-Studies on other evaluation topics. A variation of the Q-sorting task called Priority Sort has already been used within professional evaluation practice to build consensus among program stakeholders in the early planning stages of an evaluation (Zorzi et al. 2010), however its application is rarely seen in program evaluation research (see Nadin, 2013 for an exception). Future evaluation research may benefit from using Q-

methodology for two reasons. Firstly, Q is a relatively user-friendly method that can be applied to any evaluation-related problem. Secondly, Q-studies can be administered and analysed using open-source software programs, such as PQmethod (Schmolck, 2012) that do not require advanced statistical training, making it an attractive technique for use in a multi-disciplinary field, such as evaluation.

Growth of empirical research on evaluation. By examining stakeholder involvement with systematic, empirical methods, the present research follows in the footsteps of only a handful of previous data-driven research on stakeholder involvement motives (e.g., Smits et al., 2011; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Future research should continue to take a more data driven, and systematic approach to the questions that plague the discipline. This would not only allow for more in-depth and detailed investigations of evaluation phenomena, it would allow for the discoveries made to be evaluated, compared and expanded upon.

In particular, empirical research is needed to investigate the actual benefits of stakeholder involvement in evaluation. An implicit assumption of the present research is that involvement of stakeholders in program evaluation will increase the overall quality of the evaluation, and subsequently the program as well. Although the involvement of stakeholders makes theoretical sense, this has yet to be consistently demonstrated. Does stakeholder involvement actually improve evaluations?, and under what conditions? Is the participation of all stakeholders (even those who would derail or sabotage the evaluation) worthy of being courted? Future research that looks more closely at the benefits of

stakeholder involvement is needed not only to further our understanding of stakeholder involvement, but to assess whether this is something that should even be pursued.

Conclusion

Explanations abound for high and low levels of stakeholder involvement in program evaluation. Also plentiful are strategies for coaxing more involvement out of stakeholders. However, these claims are largely based on narrative accounts that stem from general observations from the field, years of professional experience and/or previous research in related fields. The present research offers the first systematic and data-driven study that directly asked stakeholders about their motives for involvement across different evaluations and program domains. Another drawback of the narrative approach is that it omits stakeholder voices from the conversation. The present research deliberately chose qualitative and Q-methodological approaches so that stakeholders' own views could be explored with minimal interference from the researcher.

Through these methods, the present research has attempted to find common themes and threads of connection about that which drives stakeholder involvement. It has long been acknowledged that evaluations present a challenge to stakeholders. As interest in conducting evaluations in partnership with stakeholders continues to grow, it must be recognized that stakeholders have their own reasons and rationales for engaging in evaluation. By compelling programs towards constant change and improvement, evaluations have the potential to upset program functions, traditions, and resource distributions, which can be a wholly unsatisfying endeavour for program stakeholders (Schwandt &

Dahler-Larsen, 2006). Through better understanding of what stakeholders hope to get out of their involvement there is the potential for participation in evaluations to be more meaningful and more enjoyable for stakeholders. The present research has provided a structure for better organizing and understanding evaluation involvement motives. Through the identification of three domains (evaluation, organizational, and personal) where these factors originate and the application of a push/pull framework this work offers a better way of understanding the effect of motivating factors as either hindering (pushing away) or promoting (pulling toward) evaluation involvement. Together, these overarching categorizations add a structure to previous findings and those gleaned from the present research, which elevates both beyond the more rudimentary lists of factors typically presented in the literature.

The identification of different motivational profiles also suggests that we cannot apply singular characteristics and constructs when attempting to involve stakeholders in the evaluation process. If nothing else, the present research has shown that different motives are important to different stakeholders. Enticing stakeholders to become involved in program evaluations will require a multifaceted approach. Evaluators are often called upon to be flexible in their methodologies; bringing this same flexibility to working with stakeholders may allow for more targeted and effective strategies for gaining stakeholder buy-in and trust. In this research, stakeholders themselves have highlighted evaluation qualities that they consider to be valuable and enticing, perhaps offering some guidance about effective strategies for attracting the engagement of otherwise unwilling stakehold-

ers.

Research on evaluation practice is still an emerging field. The present research aimed to go beyond the prevailing approach to scholarship around stakeholder involvement in program evaluations by investigating this phenomenon in a data-driven and systematic way. The results of the two studies presented here are not meant to provide a definitive account of what drives stakeholder involvement in all instances and environments. Rather these studies are meant to add to the on-going conversation about stakeholder involvement.

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Appendix A

Involvement in Evaluation Scale

(IES, Toal, 2006)

The following questions are related to your involvement in past program evaluations. Please circle the number that best corresponds to the degree to which you have been involved in each of the evaluation activities listed. If you have never had the opportunity to participate in an activity, circle "n/a."	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Extensively	No opportunity
1. I have been involved in the discussions that focused evaluations.	1	2	3	4	n/a
2. I have been involved in identifying evaluation planning team members.	1	2	3	4	n/a
3. I have been involved in developing evaluation plans.	1	2	3	4	n/a
4. I have been involved in developing data collection instruments.	1	2	3	4	n/a
5. I have been involved in developing data collection processes.	1	2	3	4	n/a
6. I have been involved in collecting data.	1	2	3	4	n/a
7. I have been involved in reviewing collected data for accuracy and/or completeness.	1	2	3	4	n/a
8. I have been involved in analyzing data.	1	2	3	4	n/a
9. I have been involved in interpreting collected data.	1	2	3	4	n/a
10. I have been involved in writing evaluation reports.	1	2	3	4	n/a
11. I have been involved in reviewing evaluation reports for accuracy and/or completeness.	1	2	3	4	n/a
12. I have been involved in presenting evaluation findings (e.g., to staff, to stakeholders, to an external audience).	1	2	3	4	n/a

13. I have been involved in developing future project plans based on evaluation results.	1	2	3	4	n/a

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form (Study 1)

The purpose of an informed consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of a study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent must provide sufficient information for you to determine whether or not you wish to participate in the study.

Title of Investigation: Understanding Stakeholder Involvement in Program Evaluations

Principal Investigator: Andrea Thompson, email: arocznik@connect.carleton.ca, ph: 613-520-2600 ext. 1587

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Bernadette Campbell, email: Bernadette_Campbell@Carleton.ca, ph: 520-2600 ext. 4080

Should you have any *ethical concerns* about this study, please contact Monique Sénéchal, (Chair, Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, 613-520-2600 ext.1155) or Dr. Anne Bowker, (Chair, Dept. of Psychology, psychchair@carleton.ca, (613-520-2600 ext. 8218).

Purpose and Task Requirement:

The purpose of this study is to understand why program professionals and clients become involved in program evaluations. In this study, you will be asked to participate in a 30 - 45 minute interview in which you will be asked about a) your thoughts about being involved in program evaluations; b) what lead you to become involved in a program evaluation; and/or c) why you did not become involved in a program evaluation. The interview will be digitally audio recorded to obtain a good record of everything that is said. The audio files will be kept on a secure, password protected computer. They will be kept for up to five years, after which they will be destroyed.

As the questions pertain to a personal experience, some of the questions may evoke reactions that are emotional in nature. It is therefore important that you realize your participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions and you may stop participating in the study at any time, and for any reason.

You should also know that everything you say will be entirely confidential and that the information you provide will be used for research purposes only. Only the researchers associated with the study will have access to the data you provide. In order to preserve your anonymity, a pseudonym will be used during the audio-recorded interview and in any reports of the results.

I have read the above description of the study concerning program evaluation involvement. The data collected will be used in research publications and/or teaching purposes. My endorsement indicates that I agree to participate in the study, and to have my participation audio recorded. This endorsement in no way constitutes a waiver of my rights. I

am at least 16 years of age.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS AGREEMENT, and that I have executed this agreement voluntarily.

Signed this _____day of_____, 20__, at Ottawa Ontario.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____

Signature of Participant

_____

Signature of Researcher

Appendix C

Face Sheet

Participant Characteristics

I would like to know more about you. This information will be used for descriptive and exploratory purposes.

D1. What is your gender M F

D2. What type of organization do you work for?
___Government
___ NGO
___ Community non-profit
___ Other _____

D3. How many years have you been with this organization? _____

D4. What is your role in the organization? Check the one that is most appropriate

___ Decision Maker
I am responsible for decisions regarding program funding, timelines, staffing and other logistical factors; I am a program director or manager.

___ Implementer
I am responsible for program implementation. I recruit program participants, and have an intimate knowledge of how the program is run and the population it serves.

___ Client
I make use of program and its services.

__ Program evaluator
My primary role in the organization is to evaluate programs.

D5. How many program evaluations have you been involved with? (In your present position, as well as any others) _____

D6. What have your experiences with program evaluation been like?
___ Mainly positive
___ Mainly negative
___ Neither positive nor negative

Program Characteristics

Now I would like to know more about a program you work within that has recently undergone

some form of program evaluation.

P1. What is the program domain (i.e., health, education, public policy, etc.)? _____

P2. How old is the program (in years)? _____

Evaluation Characteristics

Lastly, I would like to know some details about the types of evaluations that are typically conducted in your organization…

E1. How many evaluations have been conducted in your organization….

….in the last year _____

….in the last five years_____

E2. What is the typical duration of the evaluations (in years or months) _____

E3. Are the evaluations mainly:

___ Summative *(These are evaluations that measure program outcomes, impacts or effectiveness)*

or

___ Formative *(These are evaluations that are more concerned with describing/documenting the activities of the program, or that look for service gaps or resource constraints)*

E4. How many program sites are there usually?

___ Single site
___ Multisite

E5. Are the program evaluation typically optional or mandatory?

___ Optional
___ Mandatory
___ Unsure

E5. *Can you describe the types of evaluation usually conducted in a little more detail for me? What were its main objectives, projects and/or activities?*

- Internal vs. external
- Main goals
- Data sources

E6. Participant role: *What role (if any) did you play in…*

Planning the evaluation
Implementing the evaluation
Reporting the evaluation

Appendix D

Interview Schedule

I am going to be asking you some questions about your involvement in program evaluations.

1. What do you think about program evaluations, in general?

2a. Was there ever a time when you were very involved in a program evaluation being conducted within your organization?
2b. What kinds of things were you involved in?
Probe for:

- Evaluation decision-making activities
  (e.g., participating in evaluation-focusing discussions, selecting evaluation team members, or developing the evaluation plan, collection instruments, or collection procedures)
- Evaluation implementation activities
  (e.g., collecting, reviewing, analyzing or interpreting evaluation data, or writing evaluation reports)
- Reporting or dissemination activities
  (e.g., reviewing reports for accuracy/completeness, presenting results to others, or using results to develop future evaluation plans*)*

2c. How did you become involved?
2d. What motivated you to become involved in the evaluation?
- *Was there anything else?*
- *What about another time?*

3a. Has there ever been a time when there was an evaluation being conducted in your organization that were not very involved with?
3b. Why were you not very involved?
- *Was there anything else?*
- *What about another time*

3c. What prevented you from becoming more involved?
3d. What could have happened for you to have been more involved than you were?

4. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your experiences with program evaluations?

Appendix E

Debriefing Sheet (Study 1)

It is generally recognized that for any program evaluation to be successful there needs to be a significant amount of involvement from stakeholders who are invested in the program. Ideally, these individuals would be highly engaged in the evaluation process; however, in practice the evaluation of social programs is often met with resistance. Currently, little is known about what motivates and hinders stakeholder involvement in program evaluations. The study you just participated in is concerned with understanding what your views of program evaluation and your reasons for being involved and uninvolved in them.

Your participation in this study and all of the materials you filled out are completely confidential and will only be viewed by the research personnel. Your name will never be associated with this study. You are free to deny us the use of your data, which you may do by indicating this to the researcher. Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact Andy Thompson at (613) 520-2600 ext. 1587 or by email at arocznik@connect.carleton.ca. If you have any ethical concerns regarding this study, you can contact Dr. Monique Sénéchal, (Chair, Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, 613-520-2600 ext.1155). If you have any questions or comments about any other aspect of the study, you are welcome to contact Dr. Anne Bowker, (Chair, Dept. of Psychology, psychchair@carleton.ca, (613-520-2600 ext. 8218).

Because the study addresses a personal experience, some of the questions may evoke reactions that are emotional in nature. If you feel the need to talk to someone regarding any issues that may have been stirred up by participating in this study, please do not hesitate to contact your local 24-hour Distress Centre. This service provides confidential assistance and support by staff trained to deal with sensitive issues. The Distress Centre in Ottawa can be contacted at (613) 238-3311.

Thank you for your assistance with this research.

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form (Study 2)

The purpose of an informed consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of a study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent must provide sufficient information for you to determine whether or not you wish to participate in the study.

Title of Investigation: Identifying profiles of stakeholder involvement in program evaluation

Principal Investigator: Andrea Thompson, PhD Candidate, email: andrea.thompson@carleton.ca, ph: 613-520-2600 ext. 8016

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Bernadette Campbell, email: bernadette.campbell@Carleton.ca, ph: 613-520-2600 ext. 4080

Ethical concerns: Dr. Shelley Brown, Chair, Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, shelley.brown@carleton.ca, 613-520-2600 ext.1505

Other concerns: Dr. Anne Bowker, Chair, Dept. of Psychology, psychchair@carleton.ca, (613-520-2600 ext. 8218).

Purpose and Task Requirement: The goal of this research is to explore the importance of different personal and contextual factors on decisions about stakeholder engagement (or disengagement) in program evaluations. You will be shown a series of statements that describe reasons stakeholders may or may not become involved in program evaluation activities (e.g., planning the evaluation, providing data or information, collecting and analyzing data, writing up reports, etc.). During your first reading of the statements you will be asked to sort them into three broad categories (Most Important; Least Important; and Neutral), according to your own opinion. Once this is complete you will be asked to sort the statements again into more specific rating categories. However, this time there will be limits placed on how many statements will be permitted into each category. This will require you to prioritize certain statements over others. Once the two sorting tasks have been completed you will be asked to provide some additional information about your personality, attitudes, and preferences, as well as demographic about yourself.

Duration and locale: The study can be completed online at a place and time suitable to you. The entire study should take 20-30 minutes to complete. We ask that you complete the sorting task and all subsequent questionnaires in one sitting in a quiet place where you will be free from excessive distractions.

Remuneration: All participants will receive their choice of a $5 gift card to either Tim Horton's or Starbucks. A request for mailing information will be sent after your data has been received.

Potential risks/discomfort: There are no potential risks or discomforts associated with this study.

Anonymity/confidentiality: Because this study is recruiting participants through personal contact, and snowball sampling (asking personal contacts to forward study information to their personal contacts) it is impossible to ensure your complete anonymity. Only the

Principal Investigator and the website manager will have access to your data. Your identity will never be made public and only aggregate data will be reported.
All information will be stored online until recruitment to the study has ended. It will then be downloaded to a secure computer. All online data will then be destroyed. Once the data is downloaded personal information will be kept separate from your responses. All downloaded files will be destroyed five years after publication of the data.
Right to withdraw: You may withdraw at any time from this study. You may also choose to leave any questions unanswered without penalty.
By selecting "CONTINUE" I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS AGREEMENT, and that I have executed this agreement voluntarily.
I also agree to be contacted by Principal Investigator within one month of completing the study (via email) so that she may request my mailing address information. I understand that this information is only to be used to send me a $5 gift card as remuneration for my time and effort.

This study has been approved by the Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research (REB# 14-063)

Appendix G

Debriefing Sheet (Study 2)

What are we trying to learn with this research?
The study you just participated in is concerned with understanding why stakeholders become involved in program evaluations. Specifically, we want to know the different aspects of themselves, the organization and the evaluation that they consider when deciding to becoming engaged in the evaluation process. We are also interested in exploring different patterns of motivators of stakeholder involvement. Through the sorting task you completed, we hope to be able to reveal different stakeholder "types" who sort the statements in similar ways.

Why is this important to scientists or the general public?
It is generally recognized that for any program evaluation to be successful there needs to be a significant amount of involvement from stakeholders who are invested in the program. Currently, little is known about what motivates and hinders stakeholder involvement in program evaluations. We hope that the information gained from this research will help us to better understand how to best encourage and achieve high levels of stakeholder involvement in program evaluations.

What is the q-sort method and why was it used in this research?
The q-sort method is a way to measure subjective views about any topic. By sorting the statements into a predetermined normal distribution (i.e., a few statements at each end and more in the middle) we forced you prioritize some statements over others. This will allow us to see what is really important (and unimportant) to you when confronted with the potential to become involved in a program evaluation. Using statistical procedures we will be able to group you with other participants who sorted the statements in a similar way. The hope is that this will reveal several groups of people with similar points of view about what motivates stakeholder involvement (i.e., different stakeholder involvement profiles). We will us the questionnaires you completed to find out more about the different profiles. For example, perhaps all of the individuals in one profile have a similar level of evaluation experience, or similar patterns of personality characteristics.

What are our hypothesis and predictions?
This research is exploratory in nature, so there are no specific hypotheses to predict. However, by employing q-sorting task we are operating under the assumption that there are limited points of view one can have about what is important to involvement in program evaluations.

Where can I learn more?

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Who can I contact later?
Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact Andy Thompson (Principal Investigator) at andrea.thompson@carleton.ca (613-520-2600 x. 8016) or Bernadette Campbell (Faculty Sponsor) at bernadette.campbell@carleton.ca (613-520-2600, ext. 4080). If you have any ethical concerns regarding this study, you can contact Dr. Shelley Brown, Chair, Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research, (613-520-2600 ext.1505). If you have any questions or comments about any other aspect of the study, you are welcome to contact Dr. Anne Bowker, Chair, Dept. of Psychology, psychchair@carleton.ca, (613-520-2600 ext. 8218).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS RESEARCH!

Appendix H

Factor Loadings for Included Sorts.

Sort ID	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
QS01	**0.78***	0.09	0.05
QS15	**0.65***	-0.18	0.23
QS23	**0.54***	0.03	0.00
QS11	**0.48**	**0.52**	0.23
QS17	**0.43***	0.11	0.28
QS02	**0.42**	0.21	**0.46**
QS04	**0.41**	0.25	**0.52**
QS07	0.39	0.37	0.06
QS18	0.37	**0.44***	0.00
QS19	0.31	0.12	-0.11
QS25	0.19	**0.65***	0.13
QS26	0.13	0.37	-0.57
QS12	0.08	0.32	**0.51***
QS05	0.07	0.23	**0.50***
QS08	0.07	**0.47***	0.18
QS14	0.05	**0.64***	0.10
QS03	0.03	**0.46***	0.02
QS20	0.00	**0.65***	0.11
QS21	-0.46	-0.16	-0.26

* denotes a defining sort