

# The Evaluation of Polycentric Climate Governance

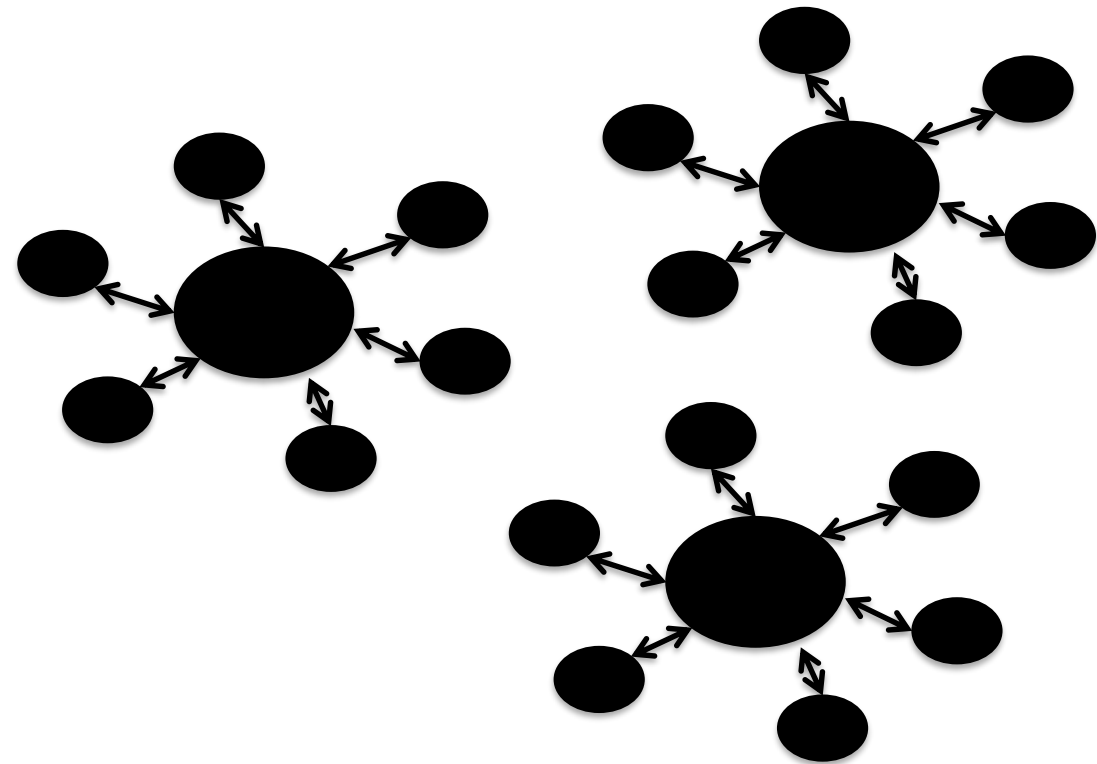
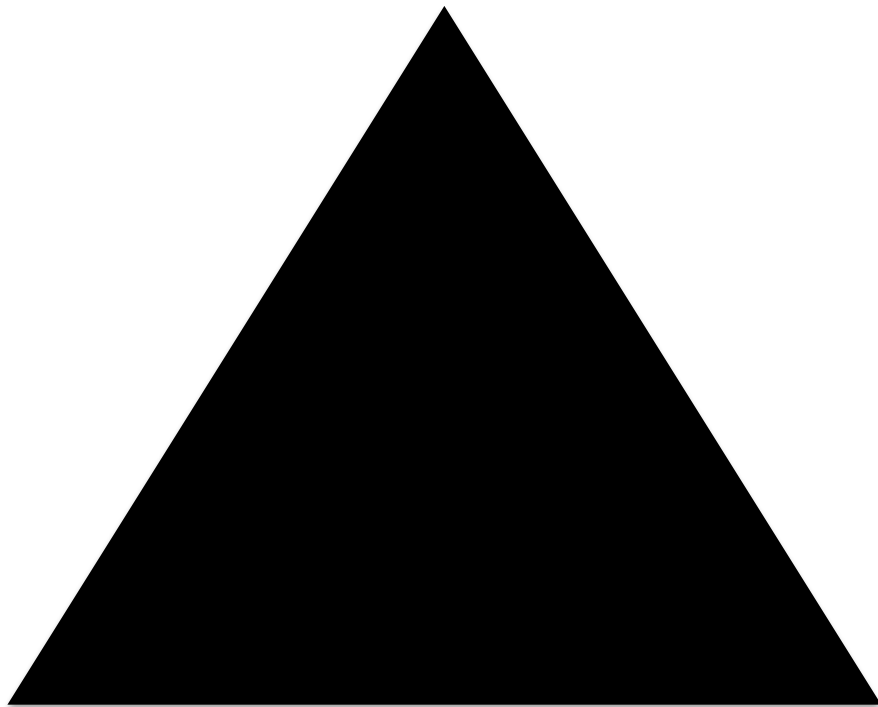
*ESSCA Workshop: Making sustainability real: EU policies, the role of technology, and new business models*

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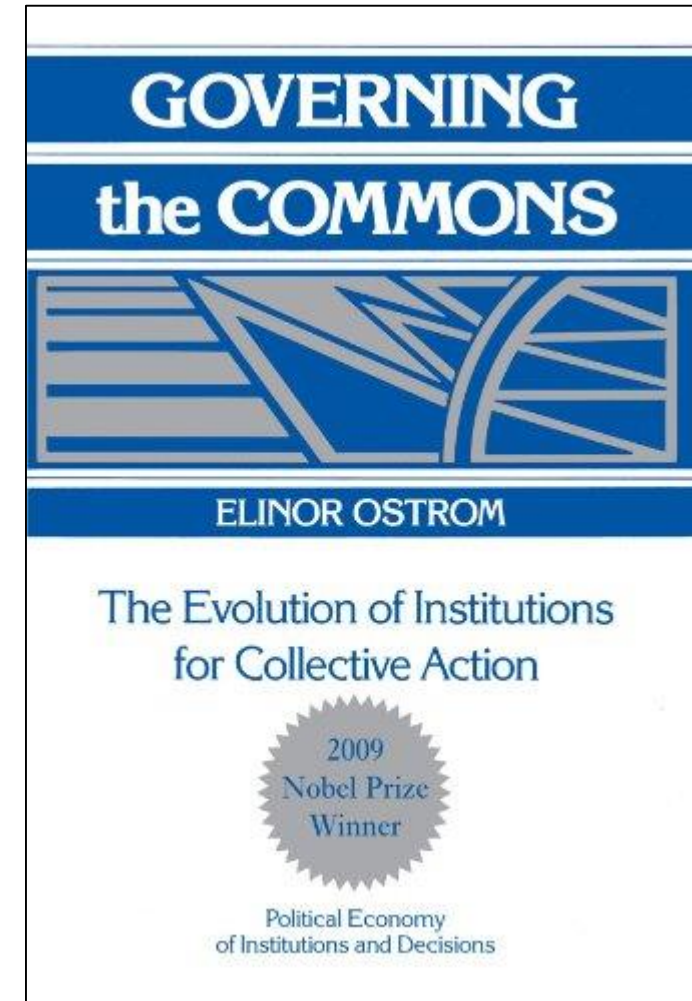
Dr. Jonas Schoenefeld, Institute for Housing and Environment (IWU) & Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia

# Governing climate change – monocentric or polycentric?



# Beginnings of polycentric thinking...

- Alexis de Tocqueville → laboratories of democracy in decentral systems
- Vincent Ostrom, Charles Tiebout, Robert Warren → The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas (1961)
- Elinor Ostrom → Application of polycentric thinking to collective action/commons
- Engaging with Gerrit Hardin's key ideas (1968, *Science*)
- Property rights, markets OR... *polycentrism*?



# Applying polycentric ideas to climate governance

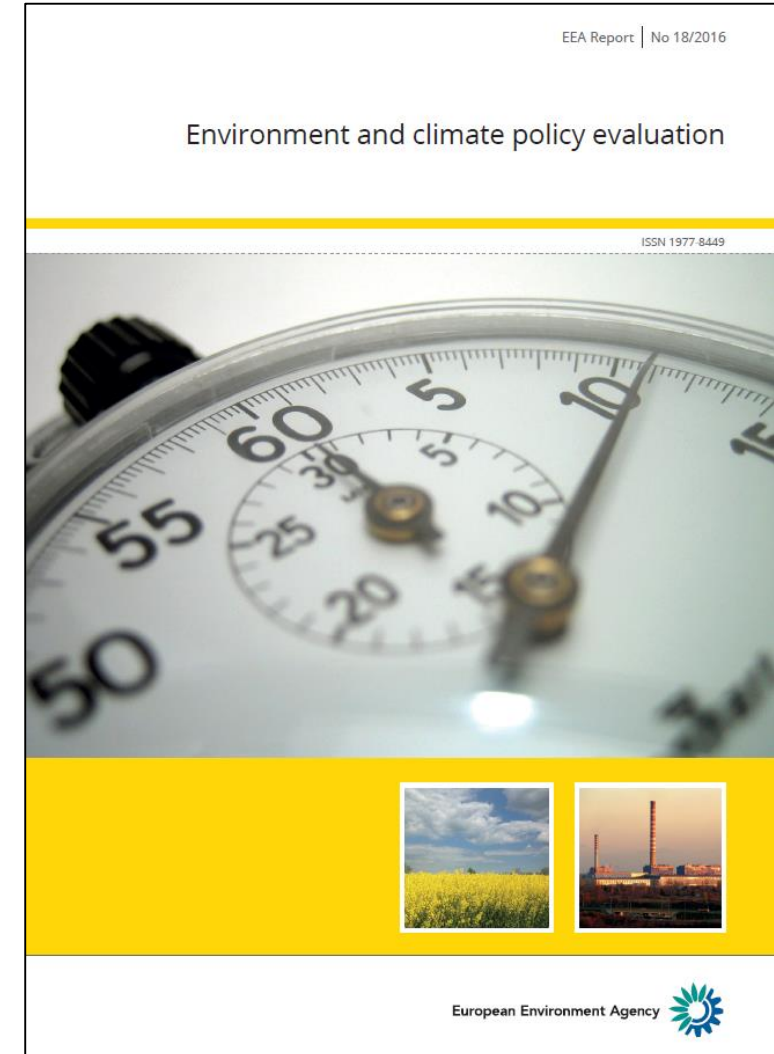
- Traditional approaches → UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, Copenhagen Accord: Weaknesses of more monocentric forms of governing
- 2010: Elinor Ostrom argues that another/complementary form of governance is already underway
- Mounting evidence of bottom-up climate action in states, regions, cities, the private sector...
- Polycentric governance as a *better* form of governing? (e.g., Cole, 2015)
- A theoretical/empirical view of polycentric governing (Jordan et al., 2015; Jordan & Rayner, 2013; Jordan et al., 2018)



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# In parallel... policy evaluation builds up as a growing practice...

- New public governance, ideas on effectiveness, efficiency, etc...
- A growing scholarly community
- Dedicated journals (e.g., Evaluation, American Journal of Evaluation)
- Book series (e.g., 'Comparative Policy Evaluation' series by Transaction Publishers)
- Professional societies & conferences (e.g., European Evaluation Society)
- 2007: European Commission spends 45 million Euros on evaluation and has 127 dedicated staff
- Other institutions (European Court of Auditors, Parliament, NGOs also active (e.g., European Court of Auditors, 2018))

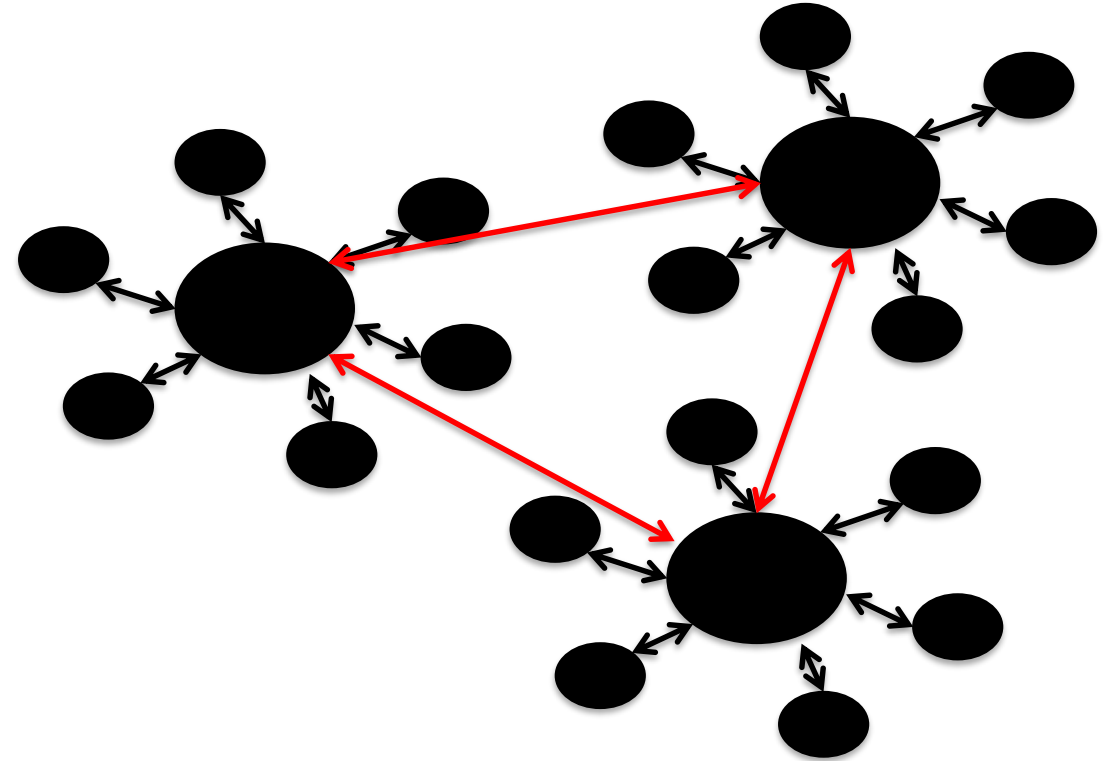


# Defining evaluation

- “Careful retrospective assessment of the merit, worth, and value of administration, output and outcome of government interventions, which is intended to play a role in future practical action situations.” (Vedung, 1997, p. 3)
- “A scientific analysis of a certain policy area, the policies of which are assessed for certain criteria, and on the basis of which recommendations are formulated.” (Crabbé & Leroy, 2008, p. 1)

# Putting it all together – what role for policy evaluation in polycentric governance?

- “Without monitoring, there can be no credible commitment; without credible commitment, there is no reason to propose new rules.” (Ostrom, 1990, p. 45)
- Monitoring is context-sensitive: „Better“ in the hands of localities?
- Ostrom’s „*multiple layers of nested enterprise*“ (Ostrom, 1990, p. 101)



# Theoretical approach

- **Polycentric governance: 3 key ideas**

- Self-organization
- Context
- Interacting governance centers

- **Application to evaluation**

- Self-organisation: State-driven vs. society-driven evaluation (impetus: who funds it?)
- Context: Political context, geography, time... (various variables)
- Interacting governance centers: Do evaluations pay attention to other governance centers, etc.?

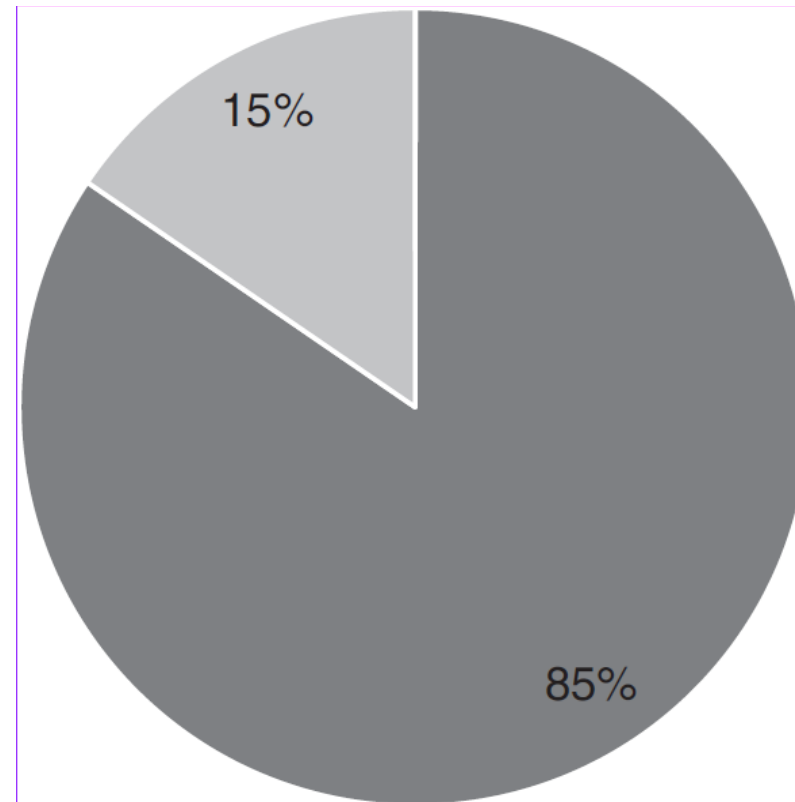


# Research questions & approach



- To what extent
  - Do actors self-organize to evaluate climate policy?
  - Are climate policy evaluations context-sensitive?
  - Do governance centres interact via-à-vis climate policy evaluation?
- New database of >600 evaluations from the EU level, Germany and the UK (both national level) from 1997-2014
- Analysis of the evaluations with a newly-developed coding scheme

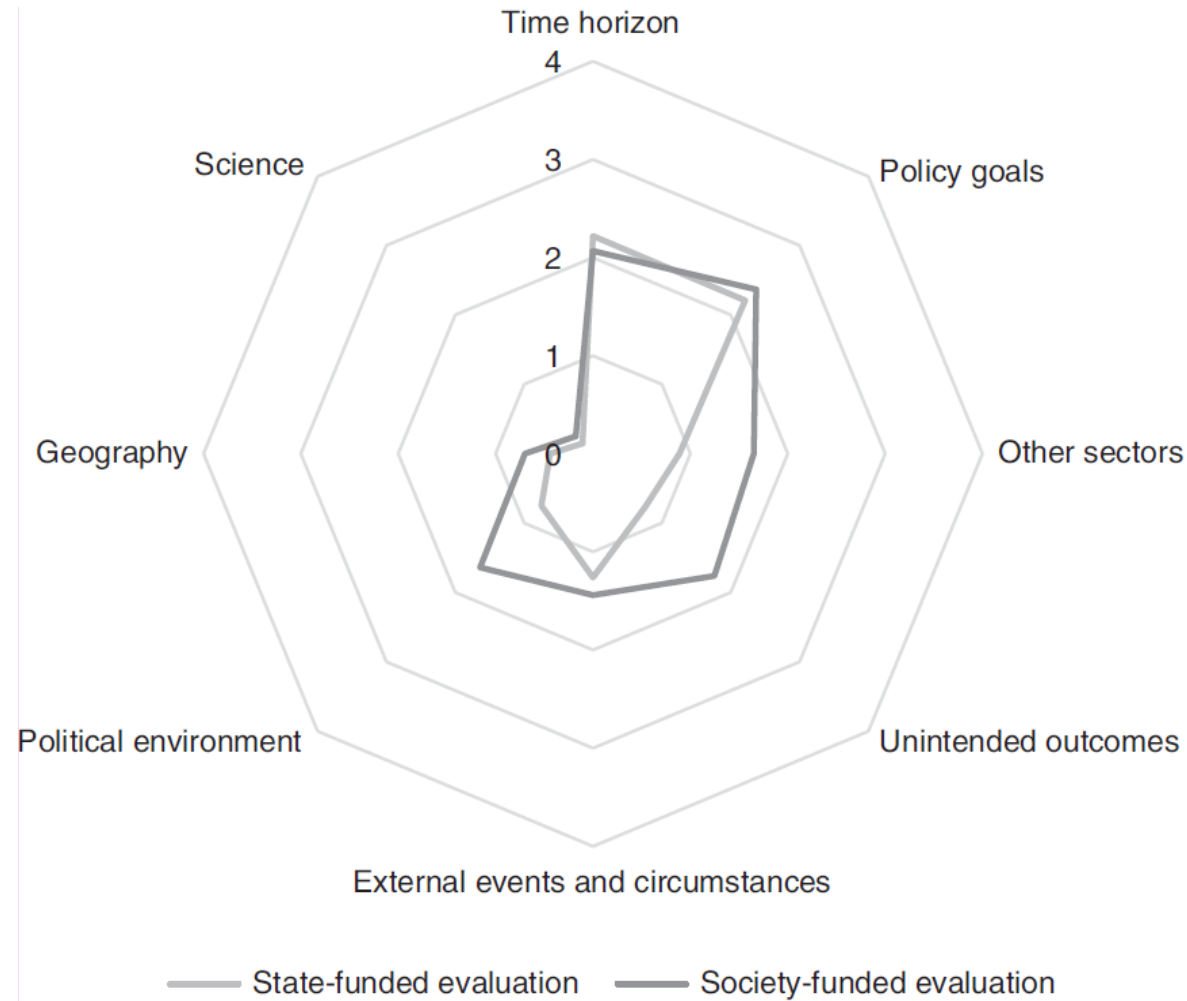
# Selected results – Self-organization



- State-funded evaluations
- Society-funded evaluations

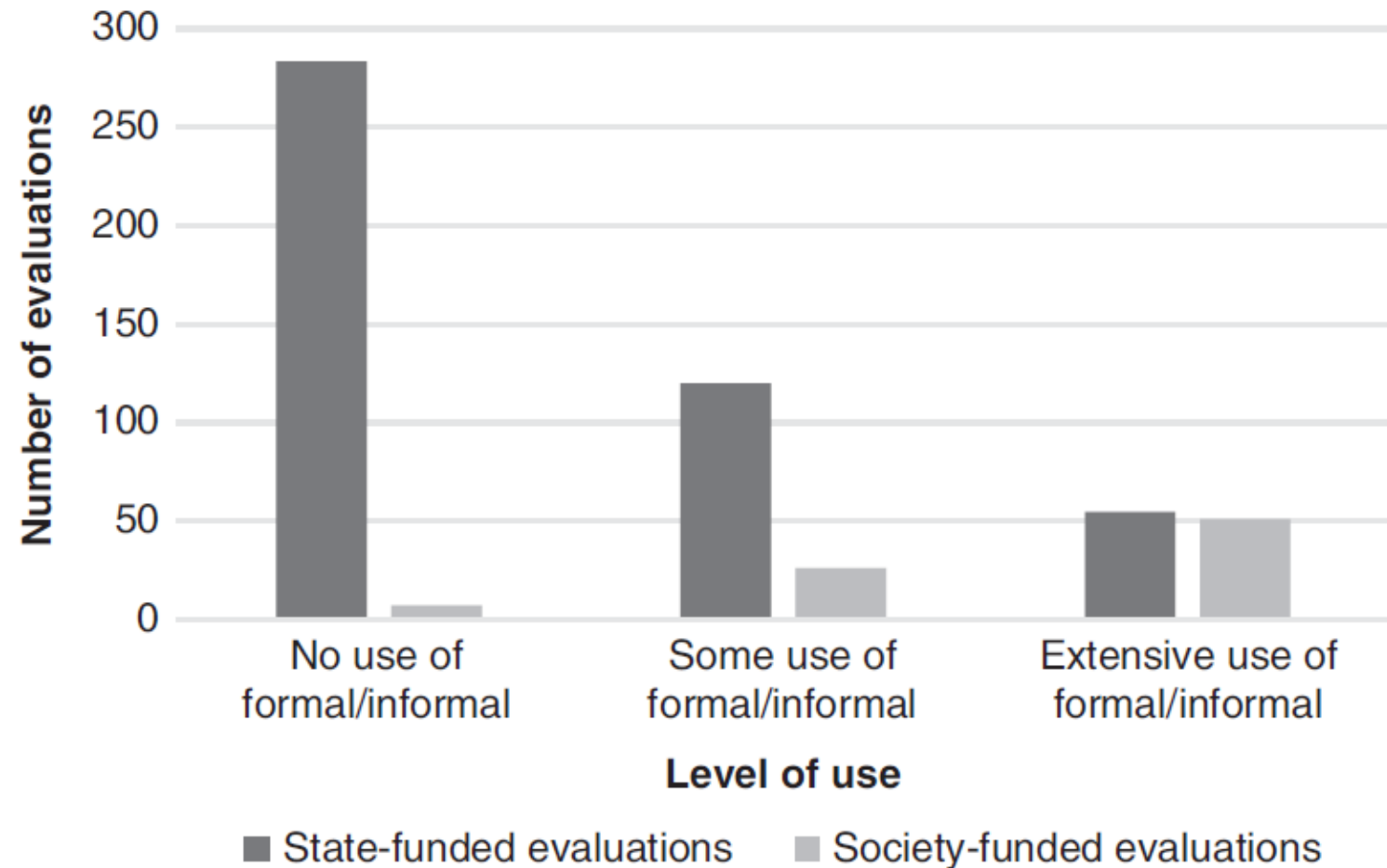
N = 542

# Selected results - context



N = 542, includes extrapolation

# Selected results – governance centre interactions



N = 542,  
includes  
extrapolation

# Discussion & Conclusion

- Evaluation in polycentric governance
  - There is self-organization in climate policy evaluation – multiple actors are evaluating, but some limitations
  - Medium attention to context – room for improvement!
  - Interaction limited to standard aspects (e.g., executive summaries)

Who can take evaluation to the next level? EEA? European evaluation agency?

# The Evaluation of Polycentric Climate Governance

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Further information:

<https://www.cambridge.org/de/academic/subjects/earth-and-environmental-science/environmental-policy-economics-and-law/evaluation-polycentric-climate-governance?format=HB&isbn=9781316511244>

# Thank you!



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