

The Open University

2017 ANNUAL EVALUATION CONFERENCE  
10-11 MAY 2017 HOLIDAY INN REGENT'S PARK, LONDON

# Evaluation as Public Work

An ethos for 'professional' evaluation praxis

Martin Reynolds and Thomas Schwandt

Martin Reynolds  
Applied Systems Thinking in Practice (ASTiP) Group  
School of Engineering and Innovation  
The Open University, UK

## Session paper

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

# Civic professionalism and evaluation

Four contributions



- Albert W. Dzur (3 models of professionalism)
- Harry C. Boyte ('public work' and democratic deliberation)
- Thomas Schwandt (professionalism and evaluation)
- Martin Reynolds (systems thinking in practice for evaluation)

# “What Is Missing in Efforts to Professionalize Evaluation Practice?”

by Thomas Schwandt



Point of departure....do we need professionalism?

“I believe it is possible to appropriate and justify *democratic professionalism as the ethos for professional practice* by drawing on the work of Ulrich and Reynolds on *critical systems heuristics*...

... but that is a matter for another paper”

Schwandt (2016 p. 21)

**Modelling** evaluation practice as civic (democratic) professionalism?

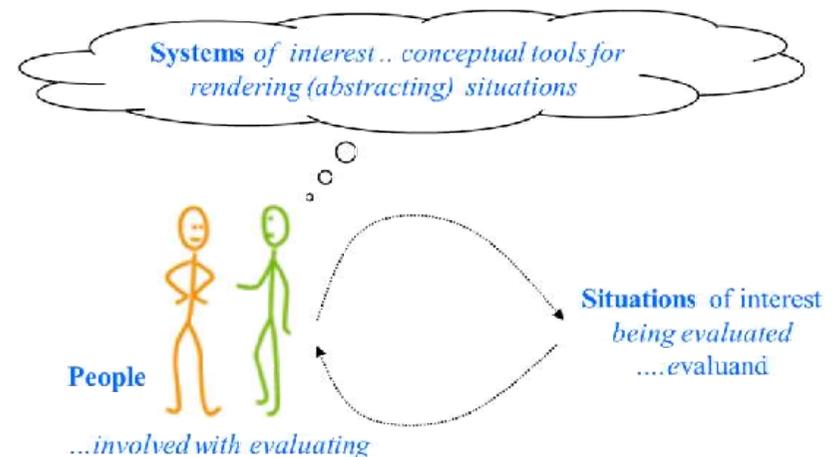
# Outline



- Modelling 1: What is the model of 'democratic (civic) professionalism' and why is it important for evaluation?
- Modelling 2: What is the model of critical systems heuristics (CSH) and why is it important for modelling professional evaluation practice?
- How might CSH modelling contribute towards civic professionalism in evaluation practice?

## Modelling = systems thinking....

- = a way of rendering real world situations of interest
- ...into conceptual constructs or 'systems' of interest...
- ...for understanding and creating improved situations.



(Alfred Dzur) **Two prevalent models of professionalism**

...rendered as simple systems (what/why/how) (purpose/rationale/process)



Social trusteeship (classic model of professionalism)...1950s

'what'	<i>A system to serve the public (the Other) as 'clients'</i>
'how'	...by means of specialized disinterested knowledge and skills
'why'	...in order to protect (but not involve) the public from market interest and political interests

Technocratic (expert-led model of professionalism)...1970s

'what'	<i>A system to provide value-free 'objective' knowledge</i>
'how'	...by means of (i) depoliticising issues as 'problems', (ii) disempowering publics, and (iii) aligning with bureaucratic government agencies rather than civil society
'why'	...in order to promote professional interests by embedding expertise as part of a modern organisational culture of control and standardisation

# (Alfred Dzur) **Third (simple) model of professionalism**

democratic professionalism



1. Social trusteeship (classic model of professionalism)
2. Technocratic (expert-led model of professionalism)

## **3. Democratic (civic-led model of professionalism)...1990s**

'what'	<i>A system to serve the public as (participant) 'citizens' (rather than as residual 'clients')</i>
'how'	<i>...by means of sharing tasks through meaningful 'conversation'</i>
'why'	<i>...in order to transform, renovate, reconstruct, co-create, empower, civil society</i>

# What's missing in professionalising evaluation practice?

...ethics and politics



(Henry Boyt) Civic-led model of professionalism?

'what'	
'how'	...by means of sharing tasks through meaningful ' <b>conversation</b> '
'why'	

... professionalism of evaluation practice lacks the conversation involving **ethics** and **legitimacy**

...i.e., “an ethos - the group’s distinguishing moral character and its sense of the civic purpose it serves”

(Schwandt, 2016 p.11)

(Henry Boyt) *What is missing.. public work*  
...competencies (conversing with judgements) and civic professionalism



“In a study of evaluation practitioners who rated the importance of 49 evaluator competencies, the *competency of “making judgments” was rated the second lowest on average of all competencies*, indicating that not all respondents believed that to evaluate is to judge...”

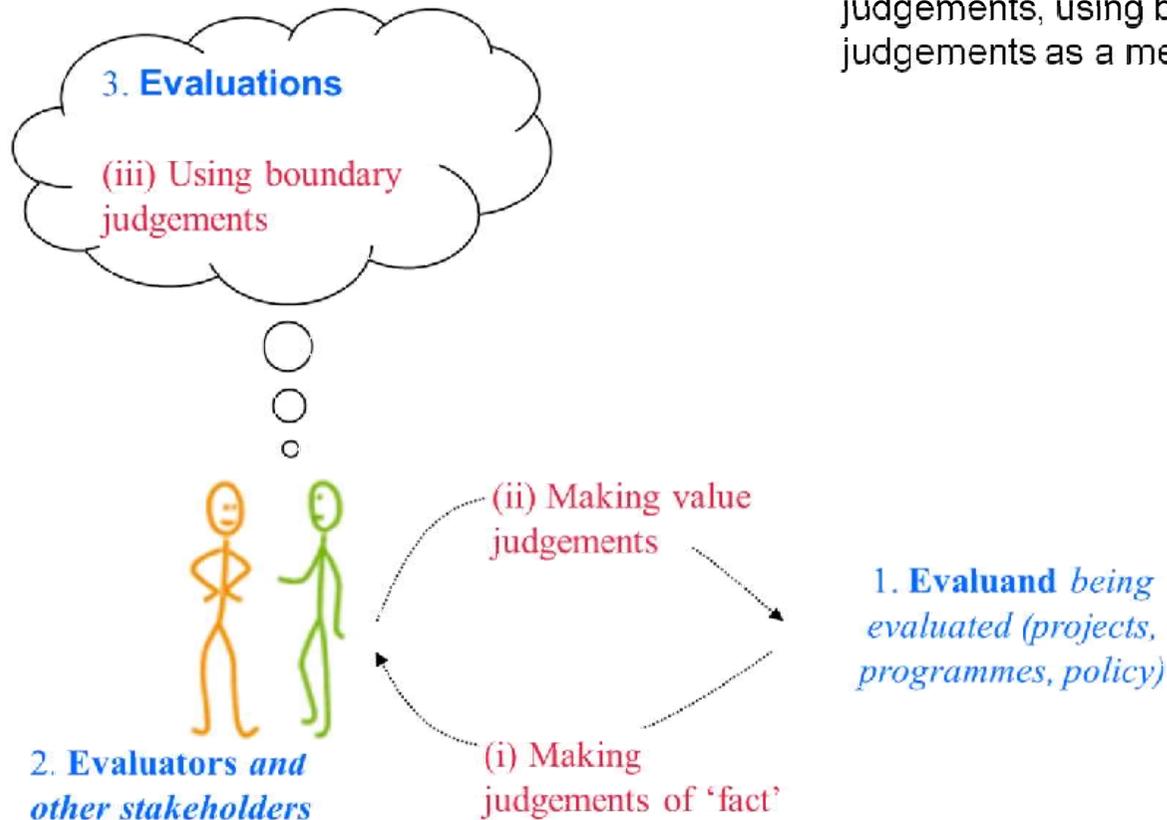
(Schwandt, 2016 p.9)

King, J.A., Stevahn, L., Ghore, G., & Minnema, J. (2001). “Toward a Taxonomy of Essential Evaluator Competencies,” *American Journal of Evaluation* 22: 229-247.

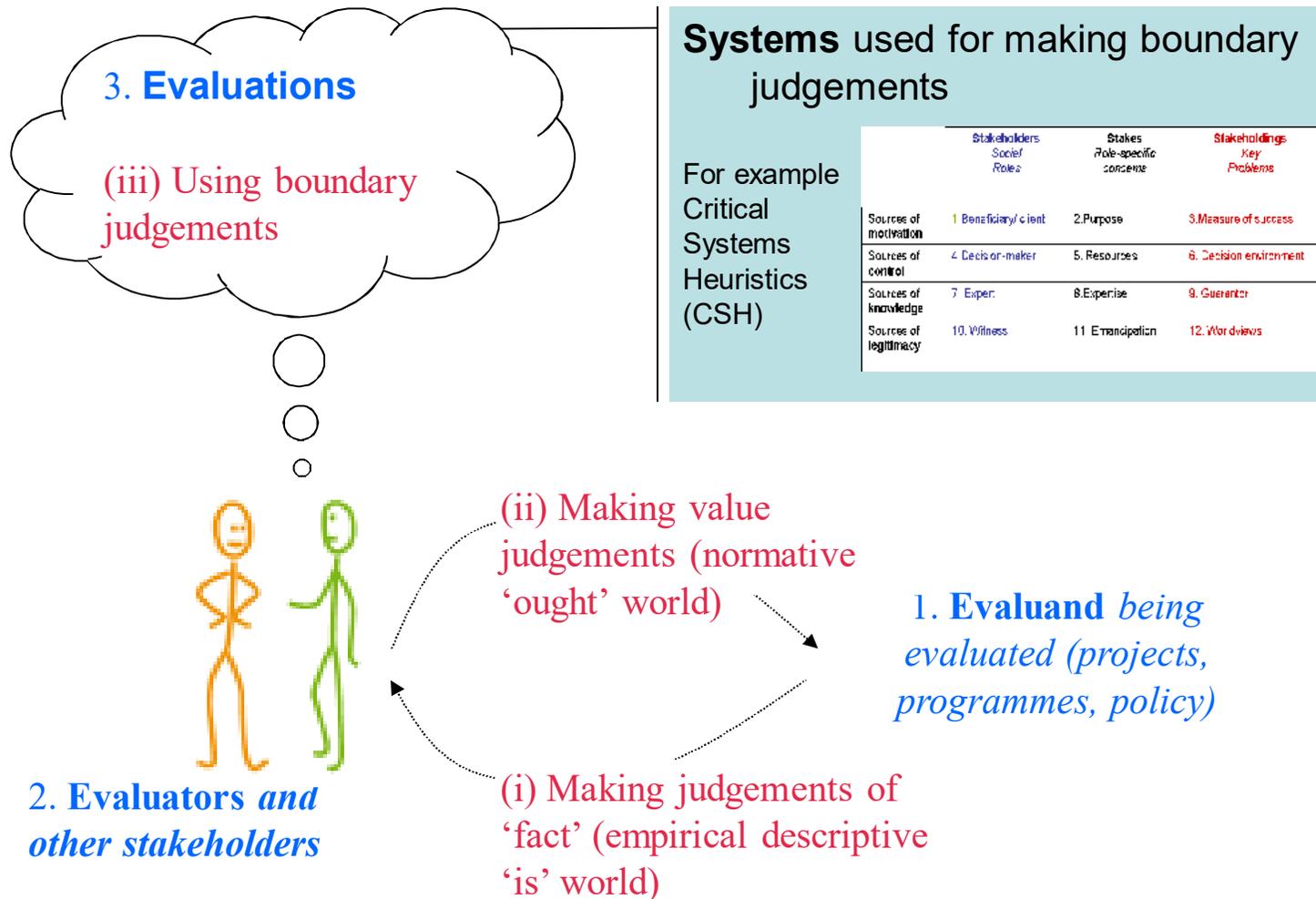
# Modelling 2: Evaluating as making judgements



Evaluation as a 'conversation' involves making and developing factual judgements and value judgements, using boundary judgements as a mediating device



# Modelling 2: CSH and evaluation conversing through critical systems heuristics (CSH)



CSH = 'reference system' (Werner Ulrich) in Ulrich and Reynolds (2010)

# Critical systems heuristics (CSH)



A reference system (tool) for *conversing* with evaluand and evaluators

## X3 Attributes of stakeholders

### X4 Sources of influence (political economy)

- Who gets what? (motivation)
- Who owns what? (control)
- Who does what? (knowledge)
- Who gets affected by what some people get (legitimacy)

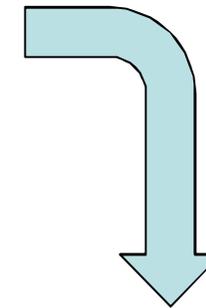
	<b>Stakeholders</b> <i>Social Roles</i>	<b>Stakes</b> <i>Role-specific concerns</i>	<b>Stakeholdings</b> <i>Key Problems</i>
Sources of motivation	1. Beneficiary/ client	2. Purpose	3. Measure of success
Sources of control	4. Decision-maker	5. Resources	6. Decision environment
Sources of knowledge	7. Expert	8. Expertise	9. Guarantor
Sources of legitimacy	10. Witness	11. Emancipation	12. Worldviews

# What's missing ... in efforts to professionalize evaluation practice ?



## 3. Democratic (civic-led model of professionalism)

'what'	<i>A system to serve the public as (participant) 'citizens' (rather than 'clients')</i>
'how'	...by means of sharing tasks through means of meaningful 'conversation'
'why'	...in order to transform, renovate, reconstruct, co-create, empower civil society



'is' mode...  
factual  
judgments

'ought'  
mode...value  
judgements

CSH-lite  
approach  
...focussing  
on last  
column  
regarding  
stakeholding  
issues

	<b>Stakeholders</b> <i>Social Roles</i>	<b>Stakes</b> <i>Role-specific concerns</i>	<b>Stakeholdings</b> <i>Key Problems</i>
Sources of motivation	1. Beneficiary/ client	2. Purpose	3. Measure of success
Sources of control	4. Decision-maker	5. Resources	6. Decision environment
Sources of knowledge	7. Expert	8. Expertise	9. Guarantor
Sources of legitimacy	10. Witness	11. Emancipation	12. Worldviews

# What's missing ... professional evaluation practice?

(Rendering) ..what 'is' being discussed



Boundary judgements informing professional evaluation practice				
Sources of influence	(prevalent) Professional Models	Stakeholding issues being discussed <i>(key problems)... 'is' mode</i>	Stakeholding issues <i>(key problems)... 'ought' mode</i>	
<b>Public work</b>				
<b>Developing value</b> Sources of motivation	<i>Democratic</i>	?	?	The 'involved'
<b>Developing power</b> Sources of control	<i>Social trusteeship</i>	Regulation of evaluation practice; standardisation; managerialism; decentralised control; definitional concerns. Conversation dominated by 'power-over' discourse.	?	
<b>Developing know-how</b> Sources of knowledge	<i>Technocratic</i>	Content of evaluation: certifying; credentialising; licencing; competence framework; cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of evaluation; logic model of evaluation (criteria > standards > measure > synthesise) etc.	?	
<b>Developing governance</b> Sources of legitimacy	<i>Democratic</i>	?	?	The 'affected'

# What's missing ... professional evaluation practice?

Contrasting what 'is' being discussed with what 'ought' to be discussed



		Boundary judgements informing professional evaluation practice		
Sources of influence	(prevalent) Professional Models	Stakeholding issues being discussed <i>(key problems)... 'is' mode</i>	Stakeholding issues <i>(key problems)... 'ought' mode</i>	
<b>Public work</b>				
<b>Developing value</b>	<i>Democratic</i>	?		The 'involved'
Sources of motivation				
<b>Developing power</b>	<i>Social trusteeship</i>	Regulation of evaluation practice; standardisation; managerialism; decentralised control; definitional concerns. Conversation dominated by 'power-over' discourse.	(power-over) + .... power-with (other stakeholders); power-to (effect change); power-within (empowerment)	
<b>Developing know-how</b>	<i>Technocratic</i>	Content of evaluation: certifying; credentialising; licencing; competence framework; cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of evaluation; logic model of evaluation (criteria > standards > measure > synthesise) etc.	(guarantors of reliability) + .... co-guarantors of 'rigour' including complementary resonance (response-abilities), and relevance (to social-ecological improvement)	
<b>Developing governance</b>	<i>Democratic</i>	?		The 'affected'
Sources of legitimacy				

# What's missing ... professional evaluation practice?

Developing an ethos of public work ...ethics and legitimacy



		Boundary judgements informing professional evaluation practice			
		(prevalent) Professional Models	Stakeholding issues being discussed <i>(key problems)...'is' mode</i>	Stakeholding issues that could be discussed <i>(key problems)...'ought' mode</i>	
<b>Sources of influence</b>	<i>Public work</i>				
<b>Developing value</b>	CSHq3 measures of success  <i>Democratic model....</i>	(ethical space of purposefulness) from single loop learning (are we doing things right?), to double loop learning regarding (are we doing the right thing?) and triple loop learning (is rightness controlled by might and mightiness controlled by righteousness) ... discussion on ethical issues – social purpose of professional evaluation practice?		The 'involved'	
<b>Developing power</b>	CSHq6 decision making environment  <i>Social trusteeship model</i>	Regulation of evaluation practice; standardisation; managerialism; decentralised control; definitional concerns. Conversation dominated by 'power-over' discourse.	(control of power-over) +.... power-with (other stakeholders); power-to (effect change); and power-within (empowerment)		
<b>Developing know-how</b>	CSHq9 guarantors/ assurances  <i>Technocratic model</i>	Content of evaluation: certifying; credentialising; licencing; competence framework; cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of evaluation; logic model of evaluation (criteria > standards > measure > synthesise) etc.	(guarantors of reliability) + .... 'rigour' including complementary co-guarantors of resonance (response-abilities), and relevance (to social-ecological improvement)		
<b>Developing governance</b>	CSHq12 Worldviews/ rationale  <i>Democratic model...</i>	(political space of deliberative democracy) opportunities available for reconciling contrasting worldviews regarding professional evaluation practice; incorporating principles of humility, empathy, fallibility, circumscribed by civic professionalism virtue of social-ecological justice		The 'affected'	
<b>Sources of motivation</b>					
<b>Sources of control</b>					
<b>Sources of knowledge</b>					
<b>Sources of legitimacy</b>					

# Conversing about... professional evaluation practice? challenges....



- Post-trust era of turbulence: usefulness of evaluators as 'experts'?
- Policy (domain of 'involved') *and Politics* (domain of 'affected'): evaluators reclaiming social legitimacy?
- Can legitimacy of evaluation practice be enhanced through professionalization?
  - ...Social trusteeship
  - ...Technocratic professionalism
  - ...Democratic professionalism....civic professionalism
- Possibly develop evaluation praxis as civic 'professionalism' based on ideas of *public work*
- Evaluation *possibly* a 'conversation': praxis involving judgements (facts, values, *using* boundaries)
- Conversation on professionalism is a judgement call....jury is out

**Martin Reynolds and Thomas Schwandt**