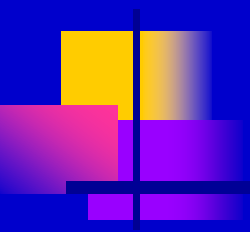


Evaluation and NPM  
– as seen from the perspective of  
evaluation

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September 6, 2013  
SEVAL conference  
Fribourg

Professor Peter Dahler-Larsen, PhD  
Dpt of Political Science and Public Management  
University of Copenhagen



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In a era of NPM, what  
will be the destiny of  
evaluation?




# NPM: Strict program?

## Or loosely coupled elements?

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- Ideas about leadership and management
- Ideas about contractual relations between principals and agents
- Ideas of role of performance indicators

# Three types of consequences in NPM

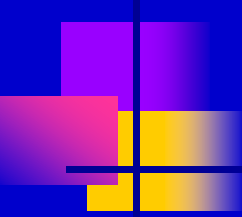


- NPM is about thinking: Redefinition of sense and purpose: We are here for the citizens. Anti-bureaucracy. A better vision leads to better service.
- NPM is about knowing: Results should be measured. Better knowledge leads to better management (weak NPM)
- NPM is about paying: Results should be rewarded. Clearer incentives lead to more efficiency (strong NPM)



# Evaluation is not only an instrument. It is also

- A theoretical field with a knowledge base
- Perspectives and models
- A sense of professional obligation
- A democratic mandate related to self-appropriation of a democratic society (Stehr, Rosanvallon)



# Relation NPM – evaluation (Rieder)

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- Substitution hypothesis
- Complementarity hypothesis



# The substitution hypothesis

- Attention is limited (H. Simon)
- Changing social imaginaries (Dahler-Larsen 2012)
  - From reflexive modernization (development)
  - To the audit society (assurance)
- Institutional competition



# Managerial critique of evaluation

- Too little use
- Too little synthesis after 100 evaluations
- Too little predictability and reliability



# The complementarity hypothesis



- There is room for both: Situation analysis: different needs, different answers
- More of one leads to more of the other: Mutual question-answer:
  - Broadness/depth
  - Results/Proces
- Evaluation policies, portfolio etc. with a division of labour between performance management and evaluation
  - Over time
  - Function

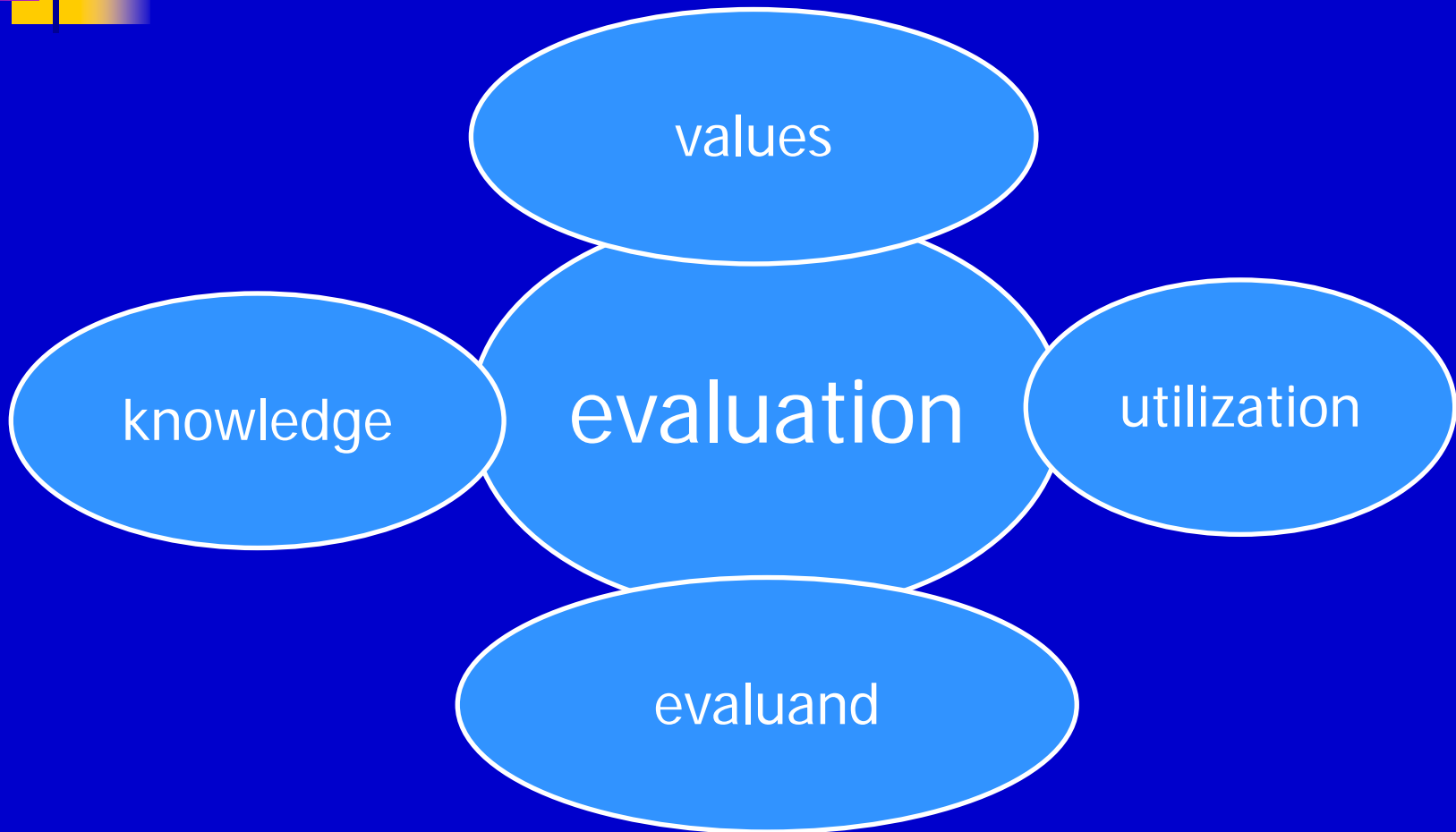
# How evaluation complements

## NPM



- Helps investigate causal links
  - Program theory, realistic evaluation (Pawson and Tilley)
  - Implementation problems
- Helps qualify criteria and indicators
  - Program theory pinpoints good criteria
  - Relevance of criteria for users, stakeholders
- Meta-evaluation of NPM reforms
- Theoretical space to think systematically

# Theoretical space of evaluation (Shadish et al 1991)

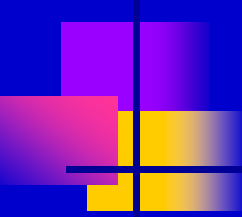




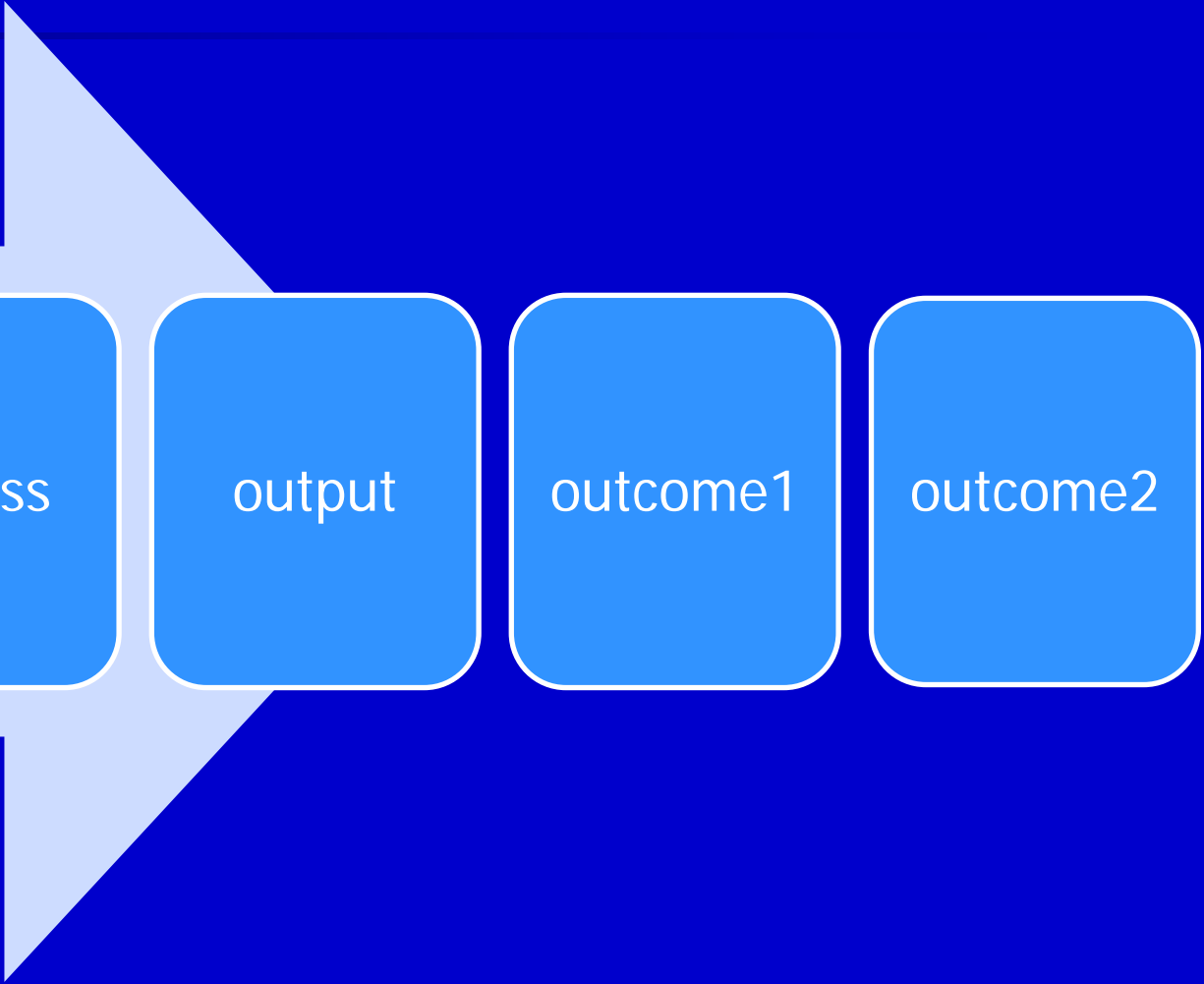
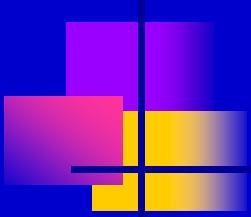
# Did we make too narrow assumptions?

- Assumption 1: NPM historically inevitable
- Assumption 2: Evaluation can be understood as a management instrument only
- Assumption 3: Implicit explanatory model: Problem -> need -> instrument

# Performance management: Unresolved issues



- Confusion about results, outcomes, effects
  - Measurement problems
  - Conceptual confusion
  - Attribution problem with legal consequences
- Holding producers accountable or creating knowledge about interventions?
- Defensive view of quality: Minimum standards
- Constitutive effects of indicators
- Less relevant for complex interventions



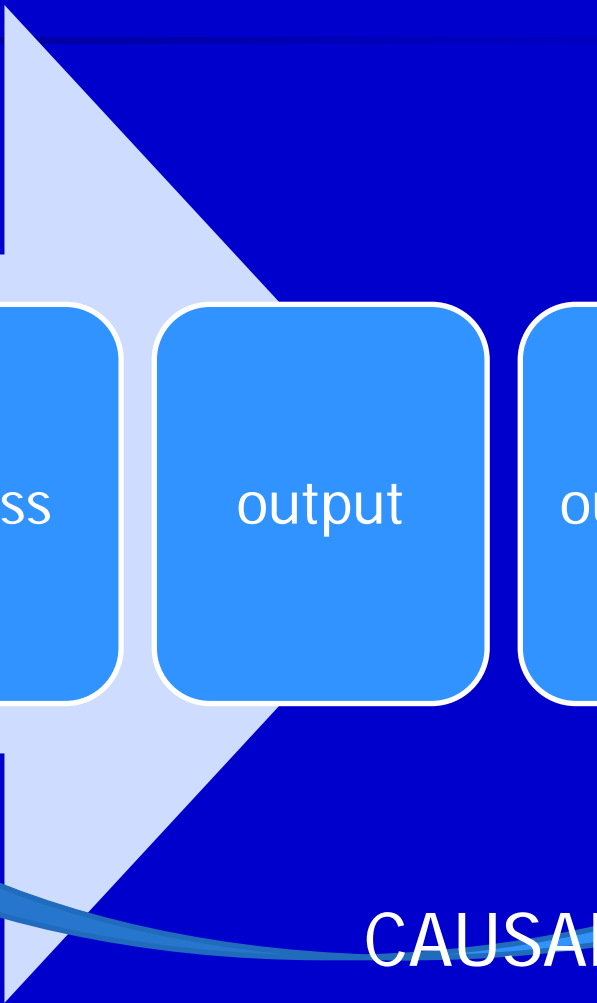
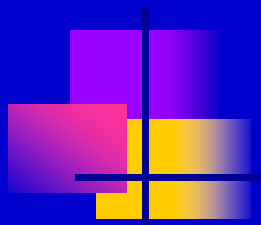
input

process

output

outcome1

outcome2



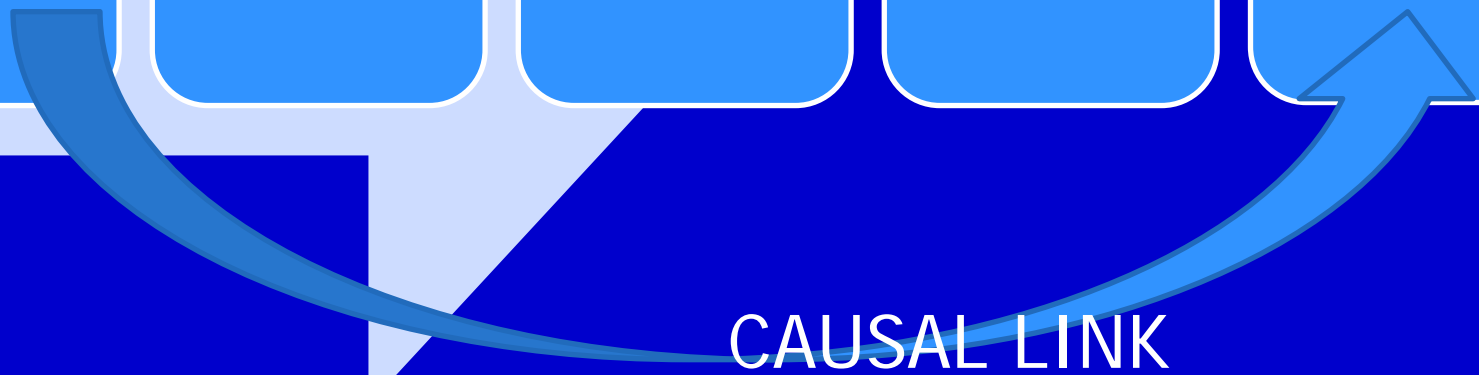
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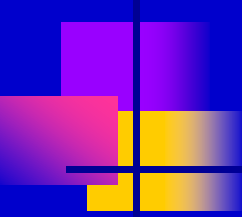
outcome1

outcome2



CAUSAL LINK

# Performance management: Unresolved issues



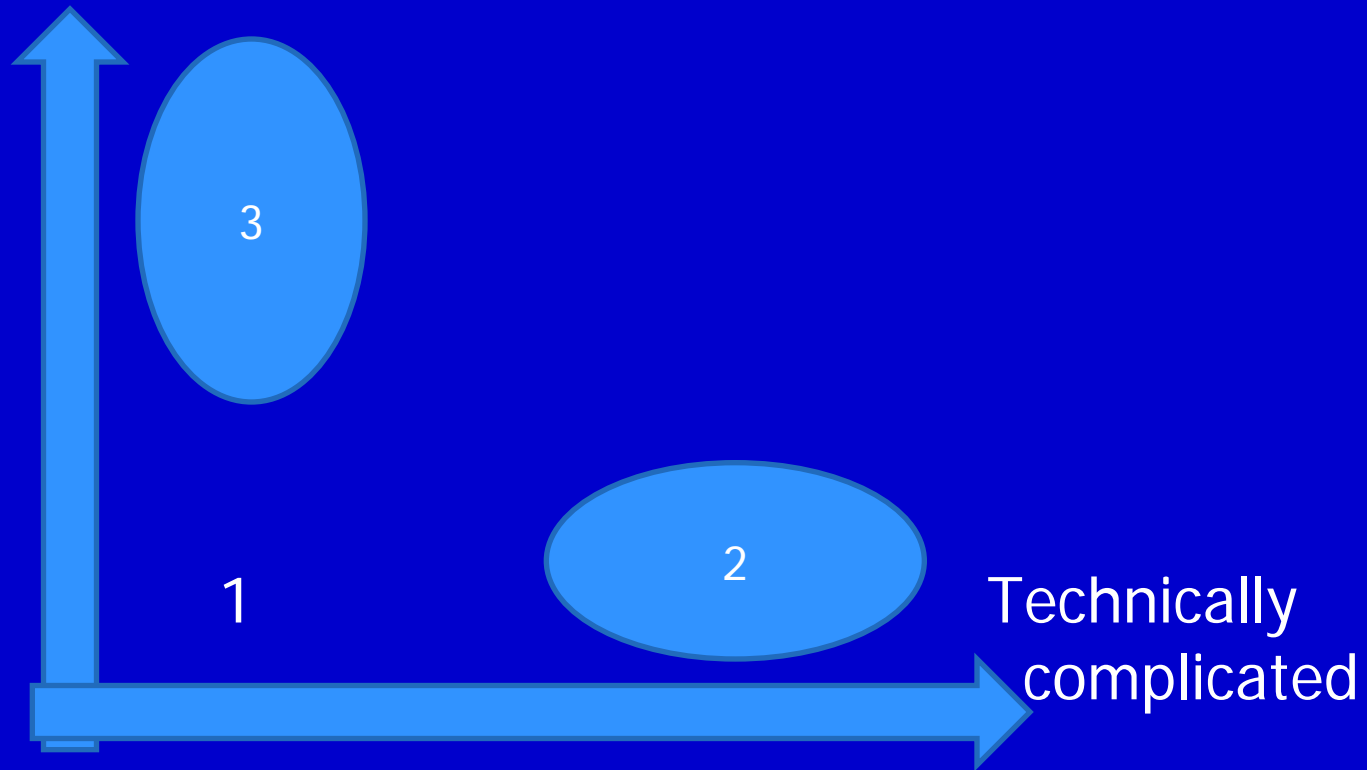
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# Complex interventions

(Stacey, Zimmerman, Patton)

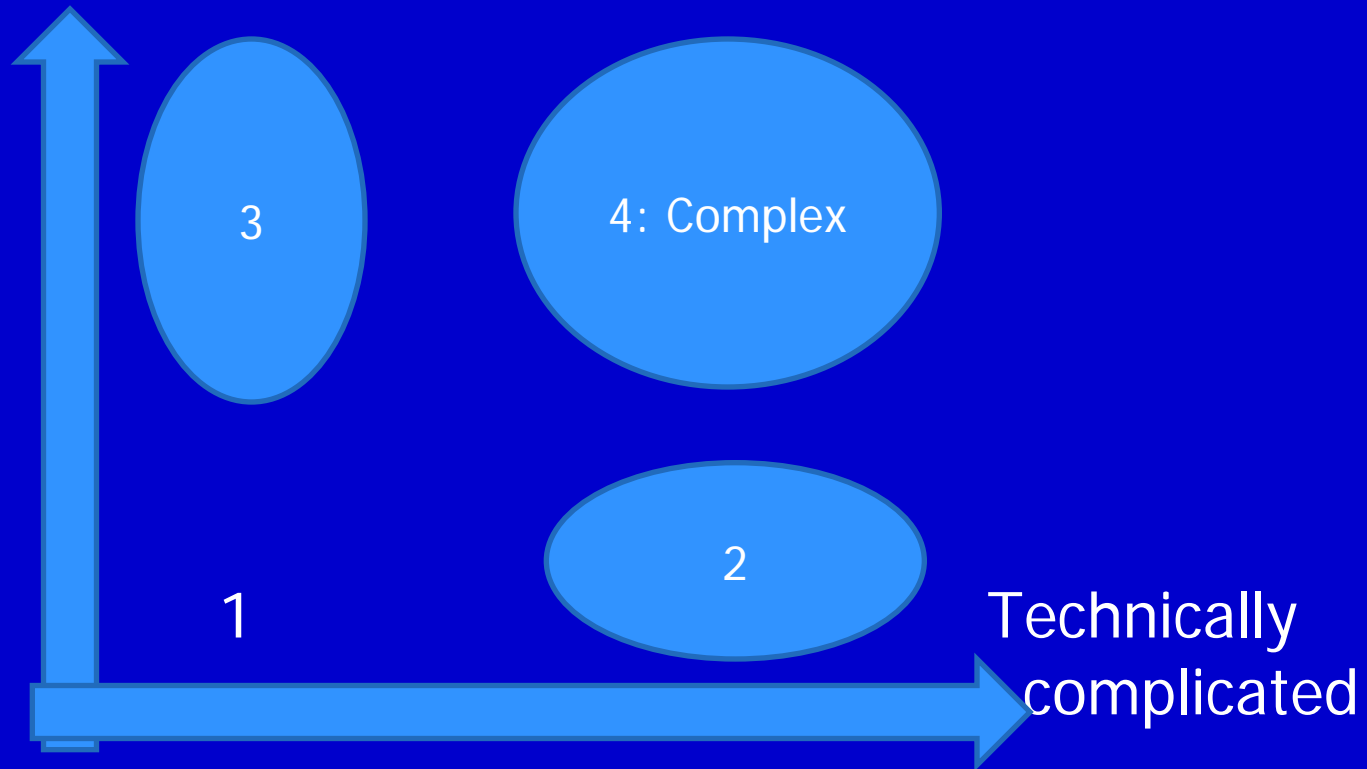
Socially complicated



# Complex interventions

(Stacey, Zimmerman, Patton)

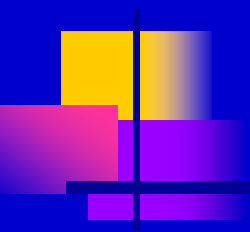
Socially complicated





# Characteristics of complex interventions

- Dynamic intervention
- Contested key terms: safety, security, quality, sustainability
- Meaningfulness of intervention matters
- Uneasy relation: Problem structure, accountability structure and intervention structure



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What if the future of  
evaluation is created,  
not predicted?



# Make yourself important: Five roles for evaluation beyond NPM

- Attention to complexity (Patton, Rogers)
- Attention to a broad set of values and to justification of values (Schwandt)
- Evaluation of policy-making and goal setting, not only goal attainment
- Link to social innovation and experimentation
- Link to public debate



# Literature

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