

Evert Vedung

A research trajectory with political science, evaluation and serendipities

By:

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The following oral history portrayal of Evert Vedung's journey into evaluation is based on a long interview with him, conducted in 2009 by Joakim Tranquist.

The concept of evaluation is still relatively young in Sweden, although it has had a major impact over the last decades. The word evaluation (*utvärdering*) appeared in Swedish dictionaries around 1970, and has since become an established part of particularly public activities. Accounts of the development to present day are often based on a vast American evaluation literature. However, there are texts describing the history of evaluation in Sweden. In one of these Vedung, Furubo, and Sandahl conclude that the map of evaluation history and scope in the Swedish system is blurred, contains many errors, and shows large white spots.

Texts on evaluation history that are available often describe how the structural and societal conditions for conducting evaluation have changed over time, often with a distinct American touch. Such descriptions do not provide much information on how, on a more personal level, it has been to work with evaluation during these phases.

An exception in this context is the Oral History Team, a group of American evaluation scholars who in 2002 began conducting interviews with people who have contributed to the perception and practice of evaluation in America. The idea was that program evaluation is still a relatively young field, which means that most of its key players are still active. By portraying the professional development of such actors from an oral history perspective, the ambition was to recreate parts of the intellectual history of the field of evaluation as reflected by its representatives.

Inspired by the Oral History Team, the purpose of this article is to contribute to an oral history depiction of the emergence and development of evaluation in Sweden. The objective is that through an interview with a key individual in Swedish evaluation provide a picture of how, from a more personal perspective, it has been to work with evaluation during different time periods. The purpose is not to describe the actual origin and development of evaluation in the country, but rather through the life story of a person who has worked in the field of evaluation during the years the phenomenon has come to grow contribute to a better understanding of how Swedish evaluation has been formed.

The article concerns Evert Vedung, born in 1938 and professor emeritus of political science (esp. housing policy) at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research, Uppsala University. Undoubtedly, Evert is Sweden's most well-known evaluation researcher. A versatile expert in public sector evaluation, he has written several notable books on evaluation. Here follows an edited conversation with Evert Vedung on his research trajectory. At the same time, I would like to thank Evert for making himself available to interviewing as well as having contributed a factual examination of the article.



In a biographical narrative at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research¹ you once wrote that "in my research career serendipities have played a big probably decisive role". I am curious to hear more about when and how evaluation entered the existence of Evert Vedung.

Ah, serendipities. I do have a story to tell about how evaluation entered my life. I defended my PhD-thesis in December 1971, a comparison of the policies and public debates in Sweden and Norway in 1905 about the dissolution of the union between the two countries in that year. Discovering the fruitfulness of a comparative perspective, I continued with the comparative method and a few other things. As a side issue, I continued with argument analysis and analysis of ideas as it is called in Swedish political science.

Early in 1975, Professor Leif Lewin, at the time chairing the Department of Government, initiated a large research program called "Politics as rational action".² In this context, I had to choose one substantive area of expertise. Lewin wanted all the docents in the Department to participate. I for one chose energy policy, because in that sector I spotted some traces of a new ideological dimension in Swedish party politics. I noticed a Green dimension popping up, a growth-ecology dimension, not just the entrenched left-right dimension. This discovery might have been prompted by my own Green sympathies at the time. I took an early interest in environmental issues, particular conservation of wild rivers and development of peaceful nuclear energy as a way of rescuing them from dams and power stations. Maybe this caused me to be one of the first, if not the first, Swedish political scientists to notice this growth-ecology dimension. The Politics as Rational Action was funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Fund, the largest government-financed research foundation in the country.

Then I was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship³ and went to America. It was in August 1975. At the same time, I received a Kennedy Scholarship from the Swedish government and through this an association with the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. That is, not a political science department, but a public policy school. Maybe I did not exactly know the difference at the time. Yet, I started to work on the issue of energy there. I participated in nuclear energy seminars, listening to Nobelist Hans A. Bethe for instance. Yet, nothing special happened.

¹ IBFs newsletter. No. 2, May 2003. *Serendipiteter i mitt forskarliv*. (Serendipities in my life as a researcher).

² The Politics as Rational action research program left its mark on the Uppsala political science department in the decade 1975-85. The story is told by Leif Lewin in an article in the *Svenska Dagbladet*: http://www.svd.se/kulturnoje/nyheter/artikel_2672269.svd.

³ A Ford Foundation program (www.fordfound.org) aiming at bringing Swedish researchers across the Atlantic to institutions of higher education and research in the United States for cross-fertilization.

I also continued with analysis of ideas, work that in 1977 was published as *The Rational Political Dialogue (Det rationella politiska samtalet)*⁴. Later, it was translated and issued by Sage as *Political Reasoning*⁵. It was only when I came home in August 1976 that things began to happen.

The Energy Research and Development Commission⁶ (DFE) in Stockholm – a so-called ad hoc policy commission established in 1975 in order to evaluate the major national energy research program launched in the same year - sent a circular letter to energy researchers asking if we had something to contribute to the energy field. The letter came as a happy surprise to me, a felicitous coincidence. Serendipity. I had barely begun with energy issues, but apparently my name had entered the DFE's registers through the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Fund, so they sent it to me. I began to read. Would I be able to do something in this context? Naturally, I came to think of policy; after all I had spent one year at a public policy school in America. Then, evaluation popped up. I did not know exactly what it was. But when I started to read about it, I began to find it interesting and feasible to pursue for a political scientist like me.

At that time, I stumbled on Carol Weiss's book, as well as Edward Suchman's, and an anthology with the word "evaluation" in its title, edited by a Peter Rossi.⁷ In addition, I also discovered a few works by Swedes. Rolf Lind of the Stockholm School of Economics wrote papers and reports with 'utvärdering', the Swedish word for evaluation, in their titles. I found a report by Lars Söderström at The Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) with blue covers. I started to understand what evaluation is about. It seemed exciting, and I realized that would be able to do it. Subsequently, I sent a short note to the DFE that I might do something in the field of evaluation.

I took the train those 65 kilometers to Stockholm for a number of meetings in the fall 1976. At the time, the DFE was located in the quite recently constructed second skyscraper in the Hötorget City. It was very exciting to get there. Comprised of representatives of all the parties in parliament, the Delegation handed out money on energy research and evaluation of energy research. I was greeted by the executive member Sigfrid Wennerberg. He asked me to write a memorandum. Said and done.

When I came down again Wennerberg advised me: "*You must prepare the ground for this in order for it to be accepted by the Delegation. You had better talk to Olof Hörmander. He is the chairman of the Delegation.*" So I visited Hörmander, who had a brother who was a famous mathematician, in Uppsala if I remember correctly.⁸ Hörmander had his office in the Johnson

⁴ Vedung, Evert (1977) *Det rationella politiska samtalet: Hur politiska budskap tolkas, ordnas och prövas* (The rational political dialogue: how political messages ought to be interpreted, organized and validity-tested). Stockholm: Bonnier.

⁵ Vedung, Evert (1982) *Political Reasoning*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

⁶ Est. in 1975, its full name in Swedish was *Delegationen för energiforskning* (DFE). It was dissolved in 1982, when its tasks were transferred to the then established Energy Research Commission (*Energiforskningsnämnden, EFN*), which in turn was dismantled in 1990.

⁷ Vedung refers to: Weiss, Carol H. (1972) *Evaluation Research: Methods for Assessing Program Effectiveness*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Suchman, Edward A. (1967) *Evaluative Research: Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs*. New York: Sage. Rossi, Peter H. & Williams, Walter (1972) *Evaluating Social Programs: Theory, Practice, and Politics*. New York: Seminar Press; three works by Rolf Lind: Lind 1977a, *Evaluation Research: En kort bibliografi* (a short bibliography); Lind 1977b, *Utvärderingsmetoder: En översikt* (Evaluation methods: An overview); and Lind 1979, *Utvärderingsforskning: En litteraturoversikt* (Evaluation research: a literature review), all mimeographed and produced at the Stockholm School of Economics; and, finally, Lars Söderström's *Utvärdering av rationaliseringsinsatser* (Evaluation of rationalization efforts), 1975.

⁸ Vedung remembers incorrectly, Lars Hörmander was in fact at Lund University.

Group's large building at Stureplan. He received me friendly. It was a good meeting. I tried to convince him that what I wanted to do was important. Yet, I got a feeling he was puzzled. Then Sigfrid Wennerberg said: *"Contact Lars-Göran Redbrandt, he is a liberal politician. Try him too, so you get support for your project by the Delegation"*. So I worked him too. At a later meeting, I got a grant to find out how the Swedish energy policy is implemented and evaluated. That was the starting point of my career in evaluation.

In retrospect, I realize that had not the DFE existed and been actively soliciting proposals – i.e. a government-funded sectorial research body external to the universities and on top of that focused on evaluation – albeit on research evaluation - I would not have entered the evaluation track. At least not at this early time. This is what I believe now, in hindsight. And had I not just recently chosen to focus on the energy issue as my major subject matter, I would not have been of interest at all for this commission on energy research and development. I was not in search of evaluation, but stumbled upon it because of an act of somebody else. I regard this as a case of serendipity.

Many years later, I read Bengt Jacobson's narrative about how the so-called new institutionalism entered the discipline of business administration in Sweden. In a book written by somebody else⁹, he has told us that it happened in connection with an application for research funds that he felt obliged to write, in his case to the National Research Council for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (HSFR). In that fashion new institutionalism was introduced; he collected all his thoughts into a program proposal, approximately in the same way as I happened to do with evaluation. In my case it was an application to a government funds-disbursing sectorial research body, in his case to a government funded basic research council. In my case, it was the lure of getting research funds from a body external to the university itself that pushed me to introduce something hitherto new and foreign, but quite feasible and interesting. In his case, perhaps the application for funds meant he had to get hold of something already existing that nobody before him had summarized, ordered, and presented in wholesome form. In both cases, however, it was research foundations external to universities that put us on our track.

The idea of evaluation, was the persons you mention - Hörmander and Wennerberg – aware of this when you met them or was that idea your own?

Yes and no. The notion was there already, albeit completely fresh, focused on energy research and development. But I do not think it existed regarding evaluation of energy public policy at large. It was therefore Sigfrid Wennerberg meant that I had to anchor my idea with the members of the DFE. It was somewhat difficult for them to understand. It was much easier for them to understand my ideas concerning policy instruments, for that was an alternative point that I presented to them. But I really wanted to push the notion of evaluation, and to some extent implementation. Therefore, I had to try to anchor it with them. I had to work pretty hard. The reception was cool, if not skeptical.

⁹ An interview cited on page 72 in Johansson, Roine (2002) *Nyinstitutionalismen inom organisationsanalysen: En skolbildnings uppkomst, spridning och utveckling* (The new institutionalism in organizational analysis: the formation, diffusion, and development of a school of thought). Lund: Studentlitteratur.

And this was after you had spent a year in America?

Yes, this was after I had come back from America. I came back in the fall of 1976, and it was probably at that time the circular letter came. It was also then that I had these meetings with the Delegation for Energy Research.

Then I kind of jogged on with this. I did not realize then that it would be a large trend. I had other interests that I pursued - I was working with Tingsten's analysis of ideas. And that was a good thing to pursue. My generational colleagues Sverker Gustavsson, Reidar Larsson and Leif Lewin were of the same opinion. But influential people in political science considered analysis of ideas a peculiar, unfashionable heritage from the insular past of Swedish political science. We were all supposed to be positivists around 1970 – you should not research human motives, intentions, ideas, interpretations and cognitive beliefs at all. Political scientists should be objective, stick to observable facts; you were not supposed to pass any value judgments, not even if you chose to do it from in terms of goals and targets set by others. One should only deal with measurable behaviors. I remember Terry Carlbohm, who was my fellow PhD-student and good friend. Later he became a liberal politician and lord mayor of Uppsala City. When he was collecting and analyzing information for his doctoral dissertation, I recall, he argued that researchers should only take an interest in publicly pronounced claims and reasons, and not attempt to track underlying motives and intentions. Only publicly expressed opinions counted.

I was quite shocked by such statements. I did not subscribe to that kind of views. Claims and reasons, as well as motives, intentions and cognitive beliefs were in my mind all relevant and legitimate subject matters in political science. Because of this, I had some mental preparedness, a mindset as it were, for value issues and evaluation. It was quite easy for me to understand that one might evaluate against public policy goals, or against intentions, and that this must be something important in public policy. So I believe that I had some sort of preparedness for the notion of evaluation thanks to my preoccupation with analysis of political ideas and ideologies. It is not only serendipities that make you perceive, take notice of, and accept novelties. There must also be some sort of receptiveness for the novelty in the mind of the perceiver if the whole thing shall work. Yet my meeting with the DFE, that was serendipitous. Before that I had no idea whatever about the evaluation track, and that it would come from the DFE.

How did your stay in America influence you, what did you primarily bring home from that time?

It was a kind of personal confidence and courage that America imputed in me. Yet I did not discover evaluation in America. Possibly, I settled in the wrong place, at the Harvard JFK Public Policy School. Many interesting things were going on at the Kennedy School, but I did not come across any evaluators there. Instead, I was fascinated by a program, mockingly called Recycling of Bureaucrats, at the Masters level. Administrative staff from Washington and state governments was enrolled in that program to be revamped after five or six years of practice. This close connection between university and real life practice fascinated me. Regarding evaluation, however, I did not learn anything in particular about that in 1975-76. That would come later. But then came something really important. And again, there was serendipity involved.

I was busy writing on that study – how Swedish energy policy was evaluated – where I tried to follow up on the 1978 energy program. In connection with that, I came to take an interest in the Energy Savings Commission (*Energisparkommittén, ESK*) – an ad hoc policy commission in the national Government's Office - which, like the DFE also acted as some sort of a public agency. The ESK pursued energy information measures like energy-savings campaigns. Its staff also performed

evaluation of diverse energy conservation measures. The ESK staff included a young man named Jan-Eric Furubo, who was active in the agency's evaluation efforts. I came in contact with him, I remember, and my encounter with Furubo and the Energy Savings Commission turned out to be important. I came to receive funds from the ESK, funds that should be used for developing methods for evaluation of informative policy instruments. It was Ulf Karlsson, the head of the Commission's implementation office, who approved of my application.

From now on, Jan-Eric and I started to meet. He lived at Sankt Larsgatan, close to the Cathedral and at the very center of the Quartier Latin in Uppsala. On my way home from the nearby Department of Government in the Skytteanum building, I cycled past. We sat there discussing problems of evaluation while enjoying a few cups of tea or coffee. Neither he nor I had written something substantially yet on the subject, but the two of us formed an informal discussion circle on evaluation.

It was in the late 1970s, perhaps in the fall of 1978. I believe that I met with Jan-Erik Furubo in the spring of 1978 for the first time. Much later, I have asked him and he seems to even know where it was. *"On Drottninggatan (Queen's Street) in Stockholm,"* he says, *"outside Centralbadet (the Central Bath). But I must have known who you were. Because I stopped there on the street and we began to talk."*

I kept working on my study on how Swedish energy policy was evaluated. I did not find many people taking an interest in this subject or in evaluation. I cannot remember that my fellow political scientists considered it particularly interesting. I got the idea to spend some in America again. I went to Nashville and Vanderbilt University for a few months in the spring of 1980 [not the political science department, but the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, where I met Erwin Hargrove, Donald Hancock, and Jum C Nunnally among others], and then a longer stay in 1981-82 in Texas. After that, I was almost finished with the study of how Swedish energy policy is evaluated.¹⁰

This time, I went to an interdisciplinary public policy institution. I went to the Lyndon Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Austin. I thought I would like to see a different part of America. I also wanted to stay at a public policy school, but not the same ones as before. As I sat there in my office, a very important thing happened. Suddenly there was a note on my desk announcing a conference. That conference was called evaluation something. It was sponsored by an organization for evaluation and it was to be held in Baltimore in October 1982. I was startled and thought, Oh my God, is there such an organization? I must participate in this. I had money from the DFE, and I was really curious.¹¹

I noticed that the conference would have pre-sessions, and I picked the one on stakeholder evaluation. It lasted for a full day. Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln were responsible and acted as teachers. Previously, I had not really understood the nature and force of the stakeholder model is, but after this session I began to get a grasp and I brought it into my Swedish notes. At the same time, I got to know Guba and Lincoln, and there were some others there too. There was a time when I knew all the presidents of the American Evaluation Association, for I continued to participate in the AES's meetings.¹² I went every time for many years, and I particularly liked the pre-sessions because they made it possible to sneak away and learn something new in just one

¹⁰ Vedung, Evert (1982) *Energipolitiska utvärderingar 1973-1981*(Energy policy evaluations 1973-1981). DFE Report No 52. Stockholm: Liber.

¹¹ The conference was called Evaluation 82: Joint Meeting of Evaluation Network and Evaluation Research Society.

¹² Evaluation Network and Evaluation Research Society were later merged into the American Evaluation Association (AEA).

day. Eventually, I persuaded Jan-Eric Furubo and Rolf Sandahl, another Uppsala political scientist turned evaluator, to join me on these journeys. Even Sture Blomgren and Ola Nyquist at the National Council for Building Research (*Statens Råd för Byggnadsforskning*) came along with me to some American evaluation conferences.

The episodes that occurred in the fall of 1982 would have a significant impact on me and my interest in evaluation. While probably crucial for my future, they also contained elements of coincidence – again something serendipitous. Beforehand, I did not know that the Americans had such an organization for evaluators and evaluations. After the Baltimore session I latched on to this trend and started to learn a lot from the Americans. It began to dawn on me that evaluation had the potential to become something big and essential. It seemed like something important, and it was now that I realized the international greatness and potential power of evaluation.

I remember that already in 1978, I tried to sensitize my Nordic political science colleagues to the emerging field of evaluation. I have always tried to participate in the conferences arranged by NOPSA, the Nordic Political Science Association. I recall that I was present at the NOPSA 1978 conference in Bergen. I was even co-directing a working group with Björn Wittrock. I presented a paper on evaluation, but no one was really interested. Yet, Benny Hjern was there. He made some sour comments on what he called my top-down approach, and argued in favor of a bottom-up approach. I did not really understand what he meant. He was very negative, I remember clearly. It was just at the end of the workshop, when he rose and said something. I felt very discouraged. My own ideas were somewhat dim at the time; I was not able at the time to argue clearly that hierarchy is a tool for research (an ideal type), not an empirical description. On the whole, none of the Nordic colleagues at the conference were hooked on evaluation at the time.

Three years later, at the NOPSA meeting in Turku, none of my Nordic colleagues showed any interest in evaluation and my paper. I remember that a couple of Danes were present, Torben Beck Jørgensen for example [of Copenhagen University, who later became a very good friend]. But no one at those NOPSA meetings seemed to be committed to evaluation, whether as a subject for teaching, empirical research, methodological development, or an area of performance.

You have been working in Turku, for example, and now you are active in Denmark. What can you say about developments in neighboring countries during the same period, was evaluation a vivid concept there at this time?

No, I have no feeling of that. Finland was very late, much later than Sweden, and later than Denmark too. Sweden was far ahead of Denmark, definitely. I believe evaluation came to Denmark with New Public Management. It began in around 1982-83 and it was somewhat later that we started to hear about Hanne Foss Hansen for the first time. In Finland, it has come even later. From Norway, I have not received many invitations. They are skilled social scientists, the Norwegians, and evaluation exists there. But personally, I have not noticed any great interest. In my case, the interest has come from Finland and Denmark. Actually, I think I know how this interest in evaluation and in my own research and teaching emerged in Denmark.

There is a Nordic body called Nordic research courses (Nordiska forskarkurser). They give courses in almost everything upon proposals from scholars and scientists. Long ago, I gave a course together with Gunnar Sjöblom on the analysis of ideas. Göran Hermerén, Tore Nilstun, and myself initiated a Nordic summer school in evaluation. We chose Båstad as an appropriate venue for it. This was in 1986. Michael Patton agreed to come over to give some lectures, as did Joseph Wholey. I had met both of them at the AEA conference. I remember that a few Danes

participated. The Finns who attended, I never saw them again, but the Danes - for example Olaf Rieper - participated eagerly at the time. He later told me that the conference was very important to him. He even wanted us to arrange a repeat, a twentieth anniversary in 2006, which did not happen. Furubo also participated. So there has been little dissemination of evaluation to Denmark through Nordic cooperation.

A little later, in 1990, there was a NOPSA conference, the third I organized and chaired, in Reykjavik. A cohort of Danes participated: Hanne Foss Hansen, Søren Winter, and Gunnar Gjelstrup for instance. Henrik Larsen was definitely among those participating, he has since founded a successful company in the evaluation business, Henrik Larsen A/S. I also believe that Henning Jørgensen was present, a colleague from Aalborg. I have not been able to find him on any lists of participants. Maybe I have only heard this from others. Anyhow, he was interested in evaluation research and I have heard that he got some inspiration from this event as he started to build a research community around evaluation at Aalborg University.

You once participated in writing an article on different narratives¹³ on evaluation history in Sweden. These are based largely on a structural perspective, i.e. the emergence and growth of evaluation in this country is explained by particular structures. Your story so far is about how different actors meet and how certain ideas are disseminated between actors. How have these two tracks - actors and structures – been linked together?

This type of questions are important to ask, because I believe that evaluation has also been driven by the various types of public policies that governments have adopted and been working on. Evaluation has been driven by the current dominant way of thinking in public sector in some sense. In the sixties, the dominant idea was that central public planning would eradicate all miseries and inequalities. We would have a "Gosplan"¹⁴, basically, and into the various overall and sectorial plans of this Gosplan, experimental findings of the most efficient means to achieve policy objectives would be inserted. This scientification would replace talks, and debates, and irrationalities and would in the long run create a better world. There was a strong wind from the left on the political scale behind this way of thinking, indicating that evaluation should be experimental, with experimental groups, control groups, etc. Even if this perspective was prominent, it has not been important to me. I came to evaluation from political science, where experimentation plays no role at all, basically.

Another driver is New Public Management. Evaluation, no doubt, has been fuelled by the NPM-movement, which in turn is part of the neoliberal stream of thought. This wave comes from the right on the left-right political scale. The right in this case includes Social Democrats like Göran Persson in Sweden and Tony Blair in the United Kingdom, who became the major providers of

¹³ In an article from the year 2000 Vedung, Furubo & Sandahl stated that we lack broad knowledge of the history of evaluation in Sweden. Three stories or narratives are what we have. Narrative 1 says that Sweden imported evaluation from the United States in the mid-1960s, when Lyndon B Johnson instituted his welfare reforms ("War on Poverty" and "the Great Society"). Wrong, says Narrative 2. It started much earlier, in the early 1950s, with efforts by university-based educators in the field education policy, when the comprehensive school system (*enhetskolan*) was inaugurated. Also wrong, at least to some extent, says Narrative 3, insisting that at least awareness of some basic methodological problems in evaluating existed long before. The article is Vedung, Evert & Furubo, Jan-Eric & Sandahl, Rolf (2000) "Utvärdering i det svenska politiska systemet: Åtta iakttagelser" (Evaluation in the Swedish Political System: Eight Observations), *Nordisk Administrativ Tidsskrift*, 81 (2) 113-130.

¹⁴ Gosplan, short for the Russian Gosudarstvennij planovij Komitet soveta ministrov (*Soviet Ministers' State Plan Committee*). Gosplan was the Soviet government's and thus Communist Party's central economic planning body the years 1921-1991 (Source: Wikipedia).

this ideology in Europe. Its goal has been to diminish red tape and create more lean and efficient public sectors. It has been embraced by the Social Democratic right, which strives for efficiency but in a different manner. Earlier left-wing social reformers wanted to rationalize capitalism in a political way by public sector planning. Even if this worked to some extent, they later noticed that it also produced some unwanted side-effects. Stronger top-level leadership in combination with decentralization and more maneuverability at local level became the new recipe. This would create more efficiency and value for money. Let the municipalities take care of primary and secondary schools, said Persson, and let us do away with some of the rules and regulations from the central government; the central level should be satisfied with evaluation of the results. So evaluation has been associated with these waves of public policy.

What has been the driving force in universities concerning development of models and thinking about evaluation? If New Public Management has been a major driver in the world of public agencies, what are the major pushers for evaluation in academia?

Well, I believe the drivers have been changes in public sector operations, that is policies and programs, but it has entered universities through interdepartmental courses in public administration and public policy. Within frameworks of interdepartmental programs and courses. I am thinking of our studies director Sven-Erik Svärd at Uppsala University around 1980. As the government's administrative policy began to develop along NPM lines – which in Scandinavia was called administrative renewal (*förvaltningsförnyelse*) - he asked me if I would like to start classes on that within the newly instituted interdepartmental management program (*förvaltningslinjen*, later *pol-mag-programmet*). He and I would share the responsibility, he said. "We cannot just continue with the old type of public administration in political science and look at the agencies and how they have developed historically; we must try to bring in new ways of thinking like evaluation".

So momentum has come through interdisciplinary programs and courses in public administration and public management. That, in turn, has created a need for research on evaluation, governance instruments, organization theory, and so on. A few of us who have been doing this, and I believe it has entered political science through this path. So indirectly, the public sector has been the driving force. It has been driven by reform efforts in the administrative and political communities, you might say, and from this evaluation has been conveyed to the universities through interdisciplinary and interfaculty management programs. Development has been interactive, though. The university programs have produced knowledgeable people, who have later been recruited to government agencies and once there further consolidated evaluation.

If we move backwards a little bit, you started by disclosing that you "have been somewhat Green in your political opinions". Then you became a political scientist specializing on energy issues and you have written about evaluation. How do you regard yourself in the first place?

Well, what kind of a character am I really? I am a political scientist, who is engaged with public policy and especially evaluation and governance issues, this is what I am. Political scientists adopt perspectives on public policy that others do not. We link evaluation to democracy, to the democratic system, and to democratic ideas. We link evaluation to governance. We embrace a systematic approach, a holistic approach. Educators and pedagogues, for example, like Jennifer Greene or Robert Stake, focus much more on local issues in their evaluative work; they seem to have difficulties to see that the federal government in Washington and the state government in Springfield can be a stakeholder in schools on the prairie around Urbana, Illinois. The larger democratic system, political scientists like me tend to think about that immediately - there are

national and regional governance interests in local schools and we believe that such chains of governance exists. We recognize that there are client interests, and that other stakeholder interests exist as well. But we carry the state perspective with us. We think like that, we have it inscribed in our spinal cords. Sometimes people think this is sensational to hear. Officials feel at home with it, but may not get to hear it often enough. So, in this respect I am a political scientist.

Then I think that there is a lot of political science of lesser interest if you are concerned with public policy. Research about political parties, voters, mass media, the structure of government in foreign countries, and such. As an evaluator, one is also interested in dynamic perspectives – changes, effects, etc. Political scientists, studying public administration, tend to focus on organizational structure at certain points in time, how officials are recruited, what their opinions are and so on. But they do not have the time perspective and dynamic momentum that we have in evaluation theory. A public policy is shaped and adopted and then we want to see how it is implemented and what the results are in society and nature. So in the evaluation community we have the dynamic perspective with an interest in change in addition to the democratic point of view.

So what kind of a hybrid am I? I am a political scientist, focusing on evaluation, implementation and governance, I would probably say. I am not an economist, and I am not an educator. There is a multitude of disciplines in the evaluation community, and I think that someone should stand up for the political science view of the world. We are too few. We are not many political scientists in these fields. That is rather striking to me - that evaluation is so scarcely populated by political scientists.

In your generation, for example, how many are there?

There are a few. There are some bright stars in fact, coming from political science. Anders Hanberger, for example, Lena Lindgren, and Rolf Sandahl. There are a few, but not many, and it is the same thing in Denmark. What we have are some splendid exceptions.

What is it that makes it difficult to recruit new researchers?

Well, this has to do with the situation in political science. In the old days... No, I will cut straight to the point. Political philosophy has become important again in political science, theories on justice, equality, and so on. But political scientists have not really understood that evaluation is *normative political science*. For some peculiar reason, they have not understood that. Evaluating public policies and programs - normative political science, actually. They have not understood evaluation in this fashion. It is quite rare to hear political scientists express themselves in this way, quite rare. In my view, they have missed this large field. It has surprised me, but if you think about the political philosophers we have in Sweden, they have not really understood that evaluation is normative, that it might be of interest to them. It has not dawned upon them.

Secondly, neither have political scientists taken the program theory approach to their hearts. They study public policies, but they do not use intervention theory as a framework, they do not understand what excellent source this is to tap, what large body of knowledge there is in this field.

When did the program theory approach become an important of your research?

Very early, in fact. Interestingly enough, however, I was actually discouraged by political scientists. I've always considered program theory to be a tool and not a correct depiction of reality. It is an ideal-type reconstruction of a mindset, not a faithful representation of it. The idea is that it is a tool the evaluator can use to find out what the world looks like, and enable her to draw a new and another shape of that.

Jan-Erik Lane, for example, said to me a few times: *"Your program theory is too rationalistic. The world does not look like that"*. And Benny Hjern, more predictably, said: *"That is top down and therefore all wrong, it should be bottom-up"*. They did not understand the meaning and function of ideal types at that time. Neither did I, for that matter, in the sense that I could communicate it properly to them. At present, I am sure, ideal type thinking has become more common, but in the 1980s people did not understand very well that ideal types might be instruments for evaluation and research.

So I was rather put off by my fellow political scientists in this regard. For my part, I came to work with program theory or intervention theory idea quite early. Already towards the end of the 1970s, in my study of energy policy evaluations in Sweden, even though I did not use these particular designations at that time.

I noticed how powerful the program theory idea was. I should really have written an article very early. At least in Swedish, preferably in English. This is another thing that is somewhat funny to think about, now when one is old. Missed opportunities. One does not understand the value of what one is doing when you are in the midst of it, due to lack of overview. Looking back, I was probably one of the first amongst those who are living and active now to discover and use, albeit not fully understand, the notion of program theory.

I remember one ECPR conference in Aarhus.¹⁵ This was in the late eighties as well, around 1987-88. I remember that Olaf Rieper was discussant on my paper on implementation. Paul Sabatier was present, as well as Benny Hjern. And then there was a guy who is very well known ... He has a German name, but he is American.¹⁶ In my presentation I probably used the term program theory method, and I remember he said to me that it was crap and that it made him very disappointed. I could not offer any good defense myself, I just had an intuitive feeling I was misunderstood. So I was kind of discouraged and dismissed by my fellow political scientists at the time. They simply did not see the value of ideal types and program theory.

What have been your ambitions as a scholar?

Well, I have been rather vague about that. Looking back on my career, I believe I should have written more in English. On the other hand, I have come to realize that what you eventually discover or come across, that you should also bring forward to the general and professional audience. Publish and be damned, that has become my motto. Research should be of use – in the research community, in other disciplines, but also out there in society. My ambition is to be cited, referenced and used.

¹⁵ The European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).

¹⁶ Professor Richard Hofferbert (note by Evert Vedung 20130314).

Have you contributed mostly to political science, energy policy, or the field of evaluation?

That is a very good question. With time, my major contribution has not been to political science but to other research disciplines. There is actually a pretty big market for political science evaluation and public policy literature in disciplines other than political science. I have discovered this through to my contributions in evaluation. Political scientists are cited and discussed in other disciplines. The political science perspective becomes a sort of supplementary perspective in other disciplines.

I also find my contribution in public policy, of course. Not only energy policy, but also environmental policy, urban policy, urban land use policy, and housing policy. Eventually, my interest has shifted in that direction. A long time ago, as a graduate student, I learned something from Arne Næss book *Empirical semantics*¹⁷. He maintained that scientific progress often consists of transferring some methods, approaches, schemes of analysis etc from other disciplines to your own and applying them there. I thought there was some truth to this observation, and at the time I thought that in my phd-thesis I transferred a methodology for the study of policy ideas from philosophy to political science. At the time, empirical semantics and argument analysis was not very well known in political science. So I saw myself as a kind of an eclectic, a border-crosser of kind. I still look at myself this way. I still believe that you can make some mark, not only in your own discipline, but in neighboring disciplines as well.

I have come to realize that my contribution primarily lies in the political science perspective on evaluation. This implies that evaluations should be focused on public sector interventions and that evaluation has close connections with democracy and democratic governance. Yet I have been aware that the large audience for this is to be found not only among political scientists. There are large audiences for this in disciplines such as pedagogy, sociology, business administration, public health, social medicine, human geography, and social work. And of course, the sector of public administration. I have only viewed the [international] evaluation community as a second or third option. Making a contribution there is difficult. It is not easy for Swedes, neither for Europeans for that matter, to be taken seriously in America, because Americans are very much into their own discourses. I have written as a political scientist, realizing that the larger audience is to be found outside political science, in public agencies [and in other disciplines].

When did you really grasp the importance of evaluation for the first time, when did you begin to regard evaluation as a trans-discipline?

It was not very early, and it dawned upon me gradually. One crucial occasion was my discovery in 1982 of the forebears of the American Evaluation Society. A second event was my appointment in 1986 to a position in evaluation research funded by a national Swedish research council. Perhaps it was as late as at the beginning of 1990's that I seriously took notice of it and was kind of surprised. At the beginning, I thought more like a political scientist. I was pleased with publishing my reports without bothering much about whether somebody took notice of them or not.

¹⁷ Naess, Arne (1981) *Empirisk semantik* (in Swedish, in Norwegian *Noen elementere logiske emner*), Uppsala: Esselte stage.

If I understand you correctly, different types of networks have meant a lot to you?

That is true. It started when I earned a special research position in evaluation research. I occupied this from 1986 through 1991, appointed and funded by the National Research Council for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, HSFR.¹⁸ That period turned out to be extremely important for me. It was during that time that the book was written, I mean *Public Policy and Program Evaluation*.¹⁹ It should have been published much earlier. I hesitated, procrastinated, and dragged my feet too long with it. But that research position was very good for me. However, the initiative to establish it did not come from Uppsala University, neither did it stem from political science. It was Göran Hermerén from Lund University, a professor of philosophy, philosophy of science to be more precise, who was a member of the National Research Council. He probably had his own disciple Tore Nilstun in mind when he tabled his proposal. Perhaps he also thought of me a little bit. About the same time as I received the position, we were planning that joint graduate course in Båstad, which I mentioned earlier. So he knew who I was. Incidentally, I had sought him up earlier, I liked him. I had also attended one of his courses in the philosophy of the social sciences at Uppsala.

These processes had to do with networking – it has been incredibly central. I have understood it even more afterwards, and that it is important that you use the networks well. Another research network of importance to me is the Nopsa, the Nordic Political Science Association (*Nordiska statsvetarförbundet*). I have chaired many working groups in Nopsa on evaluation. I do not remember how many, but it is quite a few. Sometimes, combined with a pre-session with Professor Søren Winter for example, or with Professor Hanne Foss Hansen. There are also many others who have been involved. In this way, I have become known and come to know my Nordic colleagues in the field. This channel of communication has been enormously important.

In which ways have the networks affected your own thinking on evaluation?

Happily, I have been influenced by them, in various ways. To some extent during the meetings, but also afterwards by reading what the participants have written. Sometimes by later invitations to teach, from Professor Hanne Foss Hansen, for example. She was an emerging expert on research evaluation; listening to her taught me that this was quite different from policy evaluation in such areas as energy or environmental policies. So during these sessions, a lot of ideas have come up, but then you meet them personally or read their written works. So it has worked in two ways, I believe.

The *European network* has not been equally important, it has not had the same impact on me as the Nordic Political Science Association. Then we have the *Ray Rist Group*²⁰, which has existed for twenty-five years now. I am no longer an active member of it, because I got tired of it, but I attended its annual meetings for quite some time. It has played a crucial role for the dissemination of my American book.²¹ That book has also been translated into several languages.

¹⁸ After a national competition. Possibly, this the first academic position in Sweden with the expression evaluation (utvärdering) in it.

¹⁹ Vedung, Evert, *Utvärdering i politik och förvaltning*, Lund: Studentlitteratur, first published in 1991, 2nd rev. ed in 1998, 3rd rev. ed in 2009.

²⁰ The Brussels-based International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) is an international academic organization specializing in the management of the public sector. The work is done largely through working groups, of which one - Policy and Program Evaluation - has been led by Ray C. Rist. Later the Rist Group has worked independently of the IIAS.

²¹ Vedung, Evert (1997) *Public Policy and Program Evaluation*. Comparative Policy Analysis Series. Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction, in 2000 issued in paperpack, reprinted several times.

Do you know what I believe the reason for that is? Of course it is not the quality of the book, but that people believe that I am an American. I think that's the reason. Entertaining, isn't it?

Your involvement in the Ray Rist Group, what has that meant for you?

Well, courtesy of Rist, my book *Public Policy and Program Evaluation* was published in English and by a reputable publishing house. And courtesy to Rist, I continued to work on policy instruments in English, now with Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc and a few other members of his group like Frans Leeuw; an endeavor that resulted in *Carrots, Sticks and Sermons* (1998).²² It was actually my idea to focus on policy instruments in the group. And Ray Rist supported it, albeit with doubts about the carrots-sticks-and-sermons metaphors. We argued with each other at some length about the title of the book and the metaphors. Yet, it turned out to be a success, that title. It is somewhat humorous, easy to remember, and there are many who talk about it. Both books came out as items in Ray Rist's series at Transaction Publishers, 1997 and 1998, respectively. In this sense, the Rist Group has been very important for the production of *Carrot, Sticks and Sermons* and for the publication of both books and their dissemination. Because I've noticed that the group members have an inclination for citing each others' works...

You've been abroad a lot. Your several international endeavors, what have they meant to you?

They have been significant in different ways and not just on the margin. Starting in 1985, I have been teaching at the Vienna University International Summer School. It has created personal contacts, not many but a few. The students have ended up in various positions. So it has had some impact. Most important was that I was forced to teach classes in English and thus compose many scripts in English. Partly thanks to this, the book *Public Policy and Program Evaluation* was written in English. The Summer School Director, the political scientist Professor Peter Gerlich, also showed great interest in evaluation, which supported me. So Peter Gerlich has been important to me, by inviting me as a teacher and because of his moral support. It is also thanks to him that I decided to have the book translated into German.

Public Policy and Program Evaluation has been translated into Korean as well, but the initiative to this was my own. The whole thing started with invitations to Kyung Hee University by Chancellor Choue Young-seek, Professor Kim Kwan-bon and Professor Yang Sung-chul. [I taught there four times between 1985 and 1998, in English of course.] Professor Yang Sung-chul helped me find the publisher Hanul Publishing Company in Seoul. The translator was of immense help in this endeavor.²³

During the European Evaluation Society conference in Seville, I noticed a Korean participant in our crowd. During an evening tour in the famous Seville Alcazar. He was accompanied by his wife. I walked up to them and asked if they were Korean, introduced myself by saying my name and presenting my business card to them. He listened to me, glanced at my card and said with a very broad, cordial smile: "Professor Vedung, I use your book in my courses!"

²² Bemelmans-Videc, Marie-Louise, Ray C Rist & Evert Vedung (eds) (1998) *Carrots, Sticks, and Sermons: Policy Instruments and Their Evaluation*. Comparative Policy Analysis Series. Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

²³ Her name was Lee Kyong-ok (I Kyong-ok).

Yet, most important to me has been the Rist Group and the Nopsa and, later, the European Evaluation Society. Nopsa has been important for the Nordic situation, and the Nordic community should not be underestimated.

Allegedly, *Public Policy and Program Evaluation*, is your major evaluation work. How did you think when you wrote it?

Admittedly, it has reached a certain position as a basic reference in evaluation theory and evaluation method. The original idea was to write a book for political scientists. After all, evaluation is a relatively obscure thing in political science. Furthermore, it was good for me to think through various aspects of evaluation myself, as a kind of self-education. Yet, I thought in terms of a foundational book for political scientists, actually. Afterwards, it has been taken up by other disciplines and maybe most of all among public agencies. The ambition is to provide a holistic view of the field. And at the time I held the position on evaluation research and was responsible for courses and teachings on evaluation in the cross-disciplinary program on public management at Uppsala University, both of them mentioned above.

When I look back, I would say it took me too long to produce it. It should have been finished around 1984-85, because I was practically done with it then. It was published in 1991, the second revised edition in 1998 and the third revised edition in 2009. The third edition also took far too long, it should have come out in 2004. But of course the book has met growing competition, also in Swedish. At present, there are several other good books around, not only in Swedish, but in Danish and to some extent in Norwegian as well. There is a whole bunch of eminent Swedish and Nordic authors in this field. Yet still, there is no book by one author aiming at covering the field, not only some specific aspect of it.

You are one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Swedish Evaluation Society (SVUF). It was in 2003 and at the foundational meeting, you wrote the minutes yourself. There one can read the following: "Preliminary discussion about the establishment of an independent Swedish evaluation association. Signed Evert Vedung stated four reasons to form a Swedish evaluation association as a unifying forum for the exchange of ideas." Can you describe the lines of thinking among those who initiated the association - what you wanted to achieve and what the different reasons were which are mentioned in the minutes?

Let me move back in time a few decades. After the Nordic course in Båstad, when we brought Patton and Wholey over here, then the idea came up on the agenda - should we form a Nordic evaluation association? I was assigned to do a preparatory investigation. This was already in the mid-1980s. I found that Uppsala University would not provide any secretarial services for an enterprise like this, so I tried to find some other sponsors, like the National Audit Office. To no avail. But we had a meeting, I remember, in Copenhagen on the subject. In addition to Olaf Rieper of the AKF, people from the Institute for Social Research in Copenhagen were active; this institute was located in the Kongens Nytorv area. They wanted us to do something together, but the whole thing floundered. We found no strong sponsors.

In 1992 the European Evaluation Society was formed. A decade later a national evaluation society was founded in Denmark and a national evaluation society was formed in Finland. And so it happened during the European Evaluation Society conference in Seville in 2002. A few of us lingered in the lobby, having a drink. Then somebody said: *"We should form an evaluation society in Sweden as well. We have been very active in the evaluation movement since the beginning. Now, all European nations seem to have national associations, but not us Swedes. It is a shame."*

We were the pioneers. Now we should form an association." I believe Anders Hanberger was present, and Ove Karlsson. Rolf Sandahl wandered about in the lobby. Furubo sat there on the side: *"Yes, let us take an initiative,"* he said. *"We need to get started. Can we not to form some sort of group, so we start with that."* Since he was employed at the National Audit Office in Stockholm, we understood that he had some backing behind.

So fundamentally, it was because of international pressure that some of us felt that we had to organize ourselves, because everyone else was organized. Numerous Swedes participated in European conferences, sometimes up to one hundred of us, occasionally in some alluring place like Rome, more than one hundred. Sometimes there were around thirty of us at the meetings of the American Evaluation Association. There was a lot of interest. So then we thought that we should do something about this. It was Jan-Eric Furubo who took the lead. He asked Rolf Sandahl and me to join him in a group to author a call for a general meeting to form a Swedish evaluation society.

Actually there existed an earlier association in Sweden, a network around Statskontoret called Evaluators' Network (*Nätverket Utvärderarna*), run by Ingrid Munk. For several years, this network served as a substitute for an independent evaluation society. In that sense, it supported evaluation as well as functioned as an obstacle to a state-independent association. I remember Furubo argued strongly for an association free from government interference. It should be a policy-neutral, civil-society association. On that account, he was adamant. We have to start something completely new, he maintained.

And so we came to the conclusion that there should be open association. We imagined three types of members. Members might come from academia, consulting firms, and public agencies. The association should be open to all sorts of opinions and comments. A major conference should be organized, maybe every 18th months or so, possibly with pre-sessions. Not only an institution for dissemination of ideas to the outside world, but also to receive and adjust signals from Europe and North America and so on.

These were the ideas that guided the three of us old sourdoughs in the group. We did some preparatory groundwork, called for a public meeting where those present unanimously decided to found an evaluation association. Furubo was asked before the fact if he would stand for the position as our first chairperson, to which he declared himself willing. Rolf Sandahl decided to stand for the post as treasurer, and I myself as secretary.

How did you call to this meeting and who did you call?

We composed a general call for a meeting to form a Swedish evaluation society. The first step was as simple as that. Then, courtesy of Statskontoret we were permitted to use the member roll of the Evaluators Network. Then we arranged a few brainstorming sessions where we collected names and addresses of persons not represented on the member list. We wanted to reach persons in all corners of the country. Otherwise we collected contact information for those persons that we know personally.²⁴

²⁴ The first draft of the call for formation of a Swedish society was circulated in early November 2002. The inaugural meeting was held on January 16, 2003. The first interim board consisted of: Peje Bengtson, Jan-Eric Furubo (chair), Anders Hanberger, Ove Karlsson, Per-Åke Karlsson, Sanna Paloma, Rolf Sandahl (treasurer) and Evert Vedung (secretary).

Again, the importance of networking.

Sure. And it turned out that there was a great interest in forming an association. I for one have attended all the conferences so far. They have served very well as meeting places and for exchange of ideas.

How do you view the importance of the Swedish Evaluation Society and its conferences?

I believe the pre-sessions have meant something for the dissemination of the practical art of doing evaluation, but then also the writing [and presentation] of papers and having plenary lecturers. The society contributes to the exchange of information across both disciplinary and administrative boundaries, for the participants come from different government agencies. They are relatively well attended these meetings. Yes, it has some kind of significance because knowing people personally is really important. Yet, personal acquaintances are not sufficient; there should also be people who are doing something on the basis of personal acquaintances. For example, when people call to tell me that they need someone who can do this or that, then I try to respond as well as I can and come up with something worthwhile. But I know colleagues who refuse to respond to such wishes. So knowing people is not enough, there must also be some entrepreneurs who do something and act upon these personal acquaintances. Entrepreneurs are important in all contexts, not just in the marketplace, which Schumpeter realized. Also in the world of public agencies and research networks.

How do you see the future of evaluation in Sweden? What will happen in fifteen years?

I think along the following lines. Evaluation will come in waves [that surge and subside and leave sediments behind]. I find it hard to believe that the idea of evaluation – looking at the results and performances to ensure that public sector interventions are doing better and better – will just disappear. I do not believe so. On the other hand, evaluation will change over time. There are trends of fashion in this, so development will come and go in waves. But I think evaluation will remain, in one form or another. Sometimes, one aspect will be emphasized, sometimes another. It is difficult to see in which direction evaluation is heading right now.

I know when I was installed in Copenhagen as a visiting professor, the position I am holding there right now, I had not discovered the evidence-based wave yet. My inaugural lecture was about the development over time of evaluation research. I saw it as three waves, I had not really understood that the movement toward evidence would be a fourth wave.²⁵ Yet, undoubtedly, there is an evidence wave running high just now.

More current tendencies? Yes, concerning quality, quality assurance. For the rest, ongoing evaluation is probably the latest fad. Ongoing evaluation seems to be almost the same as good, old process evaluation. An old fad surfaces in a new fashionable guise, yet, it is certainly true, that the contents is a little bit different from how it was before.

²⁵ Vedung's memory fails him on this point. He actually treated the evidence movement as a fourth wave of evaluation in his inaugural lecture in Copenhagen.

Considering the people in the networks we have talked about and their ways of thinking, how do you believe one will develop evaluation theory in the future?

Well, one thing that will happen, for example, is that the idea of ongoing evaluation, that notion certainly some academic will grab and make something out of. Maybe compare with process evaluation or quality assurance and in one way or another make something out of. University-based research is needed to take hold of such ideas, so here is a niche. Anyone publishing a book on ongoing evaluation will probably catch a certain attention of some audience, that is for sure.

At present, you can look back on four decades of involvement in evaluation. Which differences and similarities do you see when you compare how it was to work with evaluation during this period of time?

You mean how it was earlier and what is happening now? Evaluation has taken different shapes over the years. Waves have come and gone, but all of them have left sediments that still feature in our public sectors. No wave has disappeared entirely without leaving any traces at all.

Firstly, I think the evaluation community has become much more sophisticated in its view of the utilization issue. Utilization has always been at the center of the evaluation. Not in political science; my colleagues in my own home discipline have not thought and theorized much about use of their findings. The evaluation guild on the other hand, has become incredibly more sophisticated when it comes to knowledge use, and yet use should be important in all research policies. The present Swedish general research policy puts strong emphasis on knowledge dissemination and utilization. On this point evaluation has contributed to some sophistication among those who have participated in that discourse, even political scientists.

Secondly, I think it is the topic of the value criteria against which to assess public interventions like public policies. Here, a remarkable development has occurred over the years, presently there is quite a large variation among the value criteria that may be used in evaluation. It is no longer program goals only or stakeholder goals only or client goals only or productivity and efficiency, but you may use sustainability, participation, and democracy as well. One may cite a whole directory. This would surely be something normative political science would recognize, in my opinion. For this respect, the evaluation community or discourse is quite comprehensive, if not sophisticated, I believe.

Thirdly, I would argue that public administration and management research in political science might learn from evaluation in another area and that area is forms of public governance, where evaluation has attained some sophistication. Not only is evaluation concerned with basic sectorial policies and within-sector programs, but, for example, integrated policy as well. I am thinking of that gender equality should not be another sector, it must be integrated into already existing sectors. Sustainable development should not be another sector, but be integrated into all sectors that we already have. Integration of immigrants should not be a sector, but integrated into all those already in existence. It is a type of governance that has entered public policy in the last decades, but not yet reached the textbooks in political science, although very much alive among evaluators. Another thing is collaborative governance, co-production, network governance, horizontal cross-sector collaboration.

What would you say that it means primarily to be an evaluator - what is the essence of being an evaluator?

Assessment is one part of it, but not the only part. Understanding public policy is essential as well. Being able to discern and typologise public sector interventions. Is it integrated policy or is it management by objectives? What is the underlying problem? Being able to discriminate and typologise different elements of public interventions also belong to professionalism in evaluation.

Michael Scriven, he would say that the distinguishing feature of evaluation, that is the value assessment part. Evaluation is about the merits, worths, and values of various evaluands, personnel and policies included. I do not entirely agree. Evaluation is also about democracy and public policy. Being able to see that coupling is important for professional evaluators.

Is this where your background as political scientist comes in?

Yes, I think, yes, I think so. Scriven is an extraordinary writer in evaluation. He is a philosopher, but he thinks like a customer in a market place even when he writes about evaluation. Often you will find no political system in his writings. It is almost as if you do not have to worry about what lies behind customer choices. But here the political science mindset enters the picture. I insist that client choice, client influence, client democracy etc must be coupled to steering chains and things like that, that public sector intervention has to do with democracy, citizens, political representatives and public administration.

Should we try to wrap it up a little? If you look back on your research career, what is your greatest contribution to the evaluation discourse?

My strengths reside in overviews of complicated matters, in selecting a few major themes from a wildly grown mass of narratives, descriptions and points of view and exposing them systematically. Both *Democracy and client-oriented evaluation*²⁶, an overview of six reasons for client orientation, and *Public policy and program evaluation*, an exposition of definitions, models, subject-matters and utilization of evaluation. Exhibitions of whole problem areas. I would say holistic systematic structure of the field. It is on that account I can discern my own contribution. I have not constructed any evaluation model of my own, at least not so far. The overview is my contribution.

If you would point to any person and any event during your career that has had particularly influence upon you, what would it be?

It was Guba and Lincoln, perhaps, on that 1983 pre-session. That was an important event. The fact that Göran Hermerén succeeded in instituting a special (temporary) research position in evaluation research in the National Research Council. That Sigfrid Wennerberg communicated the circular letter to energy-oriented political scientists asking what they might contribute to energy research, which I responded to and then received funding for the already mentioned study on the evaluation function in Swedish national energy policy. That I had started research on energy policy immediately before that thanks to Professor Leif Lewin who wanted all his docents

²⁶ Dahlberg, Magnus & Vedung, Evert (2008) *Demokrati och brukarutvärdering*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

to participate in a department-wide project called Politics as rational action. At least those four should be mentioned.

However, looking back, one realizes that there are several serendipities in this, unexpected things that are unplanned, albeit you need to have some sort of personal preparedness in order that something will happen at those moments when you meet them. At that Nopsa conference in Reykjavik, which I have mentioned, where a few special Danish political scientists participated, have been of importance for my role in Denmark. Just the thing that for example Henrik Larsen from Odense was there and Henning Jørgensen from Aalborg. There you have occurrence, which makes it five.

Then we have my friendship with Furubo of course and Rolf Sandahl and the decision to form the Swedish Evaluation Society. There are a number of persons. Ove Karlsson Vestman for example, more recently. He recruited me to Mälardalen University in connection with my retirement from Uppsala. Yes, it grows into quite a large gallery. In Denmark, I can mention Hanne Foss Hansen, Peter Dahler-Larsen, Morten Balle Hansen, Hanne Kathrine Krogstrup, Martin Steen Jensen, and Poul Skov Dahl. In Finland, there are Stefan Sjöblom, Per Mickwitz, and Tuija Lindqvist (now Kotiranta). And I should mention all the students, students ought not to be forgotten. Students have been a first priority for me. First in the interdepartmental program for public administration (*förvaltningslinjen*), the fifth and seventh semester. Then in the so-called politics magister program. In the beginning, there were not that many. However, they were interested and strongly motivated. We who were responsible teachers used to say, that they started out with the conception that public administration is the dumbest and dullest possible subject to study at a university, but that our teaching made them realize that the subject was the most exciting they would meet as university students.

Allow me to conclude with one more question; please, give some tips and advice to future evaluators based on your experiences and lessons learnt!

An important thing, it seems to me, is the program theory method, you should learn that properly early on in your career. And one brief addendum to that: be careful to cultivate personal contacts -- networking. Furthermore, one should not think that conferences is something you just go to, without preparation; on the contrary, you should carefully prepare a good oral presentation with figures and pictures, because it is the presentation that is important, not the comments you get, because there will be almost none. You should make a proper oral presentation and take dissemination seriously. Overall, listen to everyone, you never know what will become of them ... Be interested.

Carl Linnaeus had a motto *Omniam mirari etiam tritissima*, wonder about everything, even the most commonplace. It was his motto when he was knighted, and if you have magnifying glasses you may read it on our Swedish one-hundred-crown bills. Sometimes when I act as formally appointed opponent on academic PhD-dissertations, I choose to magnify that bill so the audience can read the otherwise invisible motto of Linnaeus, the most famous among all Uppsala scholars: *Omniam mirari etiam tritissima*.