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REVIEWS

The Argumentative Turn Revisited. Public Policy as Communicative Practice

EDITED BY FRANK FISCHER AND HERBERT GOTTWEIS

Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8223-5263-1; £18.00 (pbk).

In 1993, Frank Fischer and John Forester edited *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning* as a collection of articles that radicalized Majone's thesis that argumentation is the hard core of good policy analysis. In doing so, they posed a formidable postpositivist challenge to mainstream policy studies and policy analysis. Twenty years later, Frank Fischer and Herbert Gottweis edit the sequel, proudly harvesting the fruits of what stands now as a mature paradigm of argumentative or interpretive policy theory and analysis, inspiring a large body of work, both in the USA and Europe. Elaborating on themes in the 1993 book, the 2012 sequel features contributions inspired by discourse analysis, deliberative democracy, collaborative planning, frame analysis, discursive institutionalism, new media and film, rhetoric, narrativism, semiotics, post-structuralism, critical theory and transformative learning.

In their introduction, Fischer and Gottweis clarify the meaning and relations among key concepts in their paradigm. Argumentation remains at the heart of policy-making; it draws on socio-cultural macro-discourses and institutions; but also encompasses other (meso- and micro-) modes of communicative practices such as rhetoric, deliberation, narration, expression of emotions, and images and pictures. In Chapter 1, Dryzek and Hendriks focus on structure and rules, participation and roles, and authority and design in the creation of more spaces and forums for deliberative democracy. In Chapter 2, Patsy Healy describes several cases of collaborative planning, showing how it depends not on specific techniques, but on a general attitude to planning processes characterized by an ethics of commitment, attention and transparent reasoning. Chapter 3 explains Vivien Schmidt's views on discursive institutionalism as a necessary complement to historical, economic and sociological institutionalisms. In Chapter 4, Mary Hawkesworth shows the usefulness of feminism-inspired frame analysis in deconstructing the discursive politics of development policy and globalization. In an original and excellent Chapter 5, Stephen Coleman discusses the internet as potential space for, but also threat to, authentic policy deliberation between citizens, experts and authorities: 'It may not be where policy is *made* . . . , but it is increasingly the space in which it is shaped, announced, contested, and evaluated' (p. 151). In Chapter 6, Sandercock and Attili narrate the making of their documentary,

1 *Where Strangers Become Neighbors*, as an exercise in policy inquiry and as dialogue
2 catalyst in Canadian multi-culturalist immigration policy.

3 In Chapter 7, Herbert Gottweis stresses the performativity of language and
4 discourse in the understudied rhetorical practices in public policy-making in
5 general, and stem cell policy in the USA in particular. In a conceptually rich
6 and transparent Chapter 8, Schram uses a semiotic approach to elucidate the
7 relations between narrative, framing metaphors, discourses and subjectivities
8 as levels in policy discourse on welfare reform. Chapter 9 is another concep-
9 tual chapter, in which Buchstein and Jorke explore contrasts and similarities
10 between Habermas's and Foucault's contributions to thought on deliberative
11 democracy. In Chapter 10, Howarth and Griggs, inspired by neo-Gramscian
12 thinking about hegemonic discourse, explain a five-step method of post-
13 structuralist critical policy analysis. In Chapter 11, Fischer and Mandell tackle
14 the popular concept of 'social' or 'policy learning'. Inspired by Paolo Freire's
15 critical thinking, they advocate transformative learning as a kind of balancing
16 act between critical deliberation, and dealing with deep-seated, hidden
17 assumptions, emotions and conflict. Only policy analysts trained as facilitators
18 and acting as transformational leaders may be able to handle these difficult
19 change processes.

20 This all too brief summary shows the collection's strength. The 'argumen-
21 tative turn' has grown into a conceptually rich and still fertile and promising
22 approach to *policy research and theory* in numerous policy domains and issues. But
23 there are a few downsides as well. Most authors delve deeply into the intro-
24 spective methods of the humanistic sciences, philosophy of science and literary
25 theories for ideas to better analyze public policy-making and practice policy
26 analysis. What is missing is systematically reaching out to the 'hard' evidence-
27 based disciplines like cognitive psychology, the neurosciences (but see Chapter
28 11 by Fischer and Mandell) and constructivist social science (science, technol-
29 ogy and society studies, cultural studies) in order to strengthen the argumen-
30 tative turn's conceptual framework. In addition, the 'fifty (and counting . . .)
31 shades' of argumentative *turns* make for an exuberantly meandering concep-
32 tual river delta. The family resemblances between the streams are obvious and
33 justify 'the argumentative turn' as umbrella concept. But with a little bit of
34 tighter editing, using key insights from later chapters, Chapter 1, instead of
35 mere conceptual clarification and overview, might have developed into a
36 programmatic statement of the universal and the particular, and a future
37 research agenda, in argumentative policy studies and policy analysis.

38 This might have helped soften another downside: the 'so-what' question for
39 *policy analysis* is not always clear. Many contributors still consider it their
40 mission to bash mainstream policy analysis through 'critique'. But even
41 brilliant point-by-point rebuttals do not count as actionable alternatives in
42 real-life policy-making (Roe 1994). Although some authors acknowledge the
43 appropriateness of mainstream policy analysis for relatively structured prob-
44 lems (cf. Hoppe 2011), most contributors argue that every policy problem
45 should be tackled in the argumentative or interpretive way. Only in Chapters
46 1 and 11 are there intimations that perhaps argumentative policy analysis lends
47 itself better to the (arguably very important) unstructured or 'wicked' policy
48 issues. By limiting ambitions to 'critique', the challenge to mainstream policy

studies is strong for *policy research and theory*, but remains fairly weak as preparation for *policy analysis*. In a recent article, Weimer (2012), perhaps the leading author of mainstream policy analysis, sets out in a few pages what he considers universal in policy analysis: skills in filling out the goals-alternatives matrix, relying on evidence-based descriptive, explanatory and predictive methods in the social sciences, particularly economics, cost-benefit analysis and quantitative methods to take uncertainty into account. The rest (problem and goal finding, value trade-offs, professional ethics) are considered country- and culture-specific particulars. Argumentative policy analysis appears to disavow any universals in policy analysis (except, perhaps, people skills), and focuses on the particular, contingent and contextual instead. In one of the few empirical chapters, Patsy Healy characterizes collaborative planning as '(not) a technical concept that can be introduced and applied in a specific situation . . . (R)ather it is both a concept within an intellectual perspective and a bundle of discursive techniques and practices that may be called into use' (p. 63). More empirical work to 'understand and reconstruct what policy analysts do when they do it', or research into 'policy work' (Colebatch *et al.* 2010), especially policy work that uses new modes of argumentation and citizen influence enabled by the internet and the new social media, clearly is an important item in the research agenda for the argumentative turn. Another important task would be to write authoritative and *teachable* textbooks aimed at bachelor and master level students. Failing this, the argumentative turn may still lose out to mainstream policy analysis.

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Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945–2010

BY GRETE BROCHMANN AND ANNIKEN HAGELUND

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. ISBN 978-0230-302-309; £55.00 (hbk).

This is a very comprehensive publication that attempts to provide answers to two basic questions that have been around in political and probably also societal circles in Scandinavia for quite some time: Can the Nordic model survive present levels of immigration? Or does it actually need more immigrants to be sustainable?

These are not simple questions, and this is not an easy task. The issue has been discussed for many years, and the shifting answers have been mostly

dependent on the economic situation, growth, crises and vice versa, for example the shifting supply-demand balance in the labour market. The answers have also been dependent on the perspective and the dominant discourses in societies, on different ideological and pragmatic attitudes of political actors, and on the minimum winning coalitions, to mention just some of the many factors influencing this answer. Let us also keep in mind that it has been a matter of astonishment how two countries, both representative of the universal welfare state, with similar traditions and development, for example Denmark and Sweden, can be almost at either end of the spectrum when dealing with immigration and integration: Sweden as 'the flagship of multiculturalism', as the publication puts it, representing openness and tolerance, and Denmark as the most restrictive.

In order to provide answers that represent at least a minimum level of validity and reliability, one should, I believe, make clear what data are relevant and should be included in studies such as this. Immigration is not the major challenge to the universal welfare state.

If you need detailed information on the universal welfare states of Scandinavia, about their history, construction, theoretical perspectives, conceptual elaboration and background description, this is the publication you need. Also, if you need valuable historical information on immigration (with a focus on immigration from non-western countries) to Scandinavia, the extent, patterns, dilemmas, etc., this is the publication you need. You will probably get even more than you need by reading this book. The publication satisfies the need for specific knowledge on immigration and the welfare state in the three countries. It is, on the other hand, a myriad of information about these and several other issues.

It is, however, scattered information, and not necessarily the right data by which you could provide reliable, even valid, answers to the main question of the publication. We are, so to speak, dealing with a lot of pearls, some big and shiny, some small and beautiful, mixed together, and fairly speaking, it looks just fine. But if you spend time trying to find a string in order to make a necklace, you will be disappointed.

The almost 300 pages of this detailed publication are further structured to provide answers to three more specific questions:

1. How do the Scandinavian universal welfare states (Sweden, Denmark and Norway) deal with increased immigration and the cultural diversity attached to it?
2. How do the countries deal with challenges of social cohesion and extended solidarity in a multicultural context?
3. What are the impacts of immigration on the countries' general welfare policy and the attitudes of the general public in the countries towards future development of the universal characteristics of the Nordic welfare states?

These are relevant questions. But again, they are difficult to answer. Specifically, question 3 is almost impossible to answer within the methodological framework of this publication. The publication consists of five chapters, one

1 introductory outlining the different/similar contexts of the universal welfare
2 states in Scandinavia, and one final chapter that compares the three countries'
3 policies and practices. In between there are three chapters, each one dealing
4 with a specific country, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Like the country-
5 specific chapters, the comparative chapter too is mostly a retrospective
6 description of historical events, and taking in to consideration the lack of an
7 adequate analytical structure that could help to identify most influential
8 factors, it is rather difficult to produce qualified answers to the two basic
9 questions of the publication, i.e. whether the universal welfare states of
10 Scandinavia are sustainable under the pressure, or would they need more
11 immigration.

12 A wider analytical and methodological awareness, together with a focus on
13 the questions that were presented at the beginning of the publication, I
14 believe, could have systematized the large number of theoretical perspectives,
15 conceptual elaboration and empirical observations in order to investigate
16 possible relations between the numerous historical events that are described
17 in the book. The structure of the publication, i.e. dividing the content into
18 episodes/decades makes it possible to drop almost sporadically a large
19 number of concepts, which is positive. On the other hand, the same structure
20 contributes to the introduction of many hypothesis and pure speculations,
21 which remain to be tested.

22 International as well as Nordic literature and research have in decades
23 made a core distinction between immigration and integration, not only as two
24 distinct academic research areas, but actually also as areas with distinct
25 political, social and institutional implications. Immigration policy is primarily
26 about managing foreigners' access to the country, including issues like access
27 to family reunification, access as asylum seekers, as job seekers, etc. Integra-
28 tion policy, on the other hand, deals with how states and societies ensure that
29 individuals and collectives who permanently reside in the country will become
30 participating citizens. This publication reveals quite a critical lack of this
31 important distinction. That is probably one of the reasons why it has difficul-
32 ties in providing reliable perspectives on whether the universal welfare states
33 of Scandinavia would be able to deal with the challenges of immigration in the
34 global era.

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36 *Shahamak Rezaei, Roskilde University*

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38 **Welfare and Old Age in Europe and North America: the Development of**
39 **Social Insurance**

40 **EDITED BY BERNARD HARRIS**

41 London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84893-189-3; £60.00
42 (hbk).

43
44 In recent years, there has been a renewal of interest in mutualism and
45 collective self-help, as a result of increasingly neo-liberal trends in social
46 policy. Do the nineteenth century friendly societies offer us a viable model for
47 how 'personal responsibility' might be enhanced if welfare was provided

outside the state? From Frank Field to Philip Blond, there has been no shortage of political commentators offering a romanticized, 'back to the future' gaze at past examples of mutualism and voluntarism. Such rose-tinted perspectives ignore the many deficiencies of nineteenth century friendly societies – for example, their inability to meet the welfare needs of women, their precarious solvency or their high rate of lapsed policies. Nevertheless, these societies are worth studying: their sickness records provide us with one of the very few datasets of past morbidity patterns (providing that one accepts the many problems in drawing conclusions from recorded morbidity); they represented a measure of democratic control over welfare provision; they illustrated the complexities of state/private relationships; and they grappled with timeless issues such as work disability, moral hazard and long-term sickness. Lastly, the question of exactly how and why the state replaced friendly societies has long intrigued social historians.

This edited volume brings together a collection of interesting essays on aspects of nineteenth century mutualism across Europe (with one chapter on North America). John Benson offers a well-written and insightful examination of permanent relief funds among coalminers in the two areas of Northumberland/Durham and North Staffordshire. (Miners are an interesting group to study, since they had both good – if unpredictable – earnings and high accident rates.) Benson suggests that differences in approach between the two areas were attributable primarily to cultural differences. Timothy Guinnane follows with a rather limited examination of moral hazard as manifested in malingering in the case of the German miners' fund (which had a surprisingly long existence) – limited, in that it does not consider possible labour market effects on self-definitions of health status and working capacity: the alleged monetary attractiveness of sickness benefits is the only variable considered. Well-researched explorations of friendly societies in Eastern Lombardy and in Spain in the pre-Second World War period form another two contrasting chapters.

Bernard Harris, the editor of the volume, then re-visits (with fellow authors) territory he has explored before – the sickness experience of UK friendly societies in the late nineteenth century – and examines the possible explanations for rising recorded morbidity at a time when aggregate death rates were falling. These included age-compositional changes in membership, malingering, increasingly lax administration, competition for new members and increasing job insecurity experienced by older men. How 'objective' was this morbidity increase is, of course, the key issue, raising all the thorny problems of interpreting sickness trends. Harris then briefly links the friendly society 'crisis' to the coming of state welfare in 1906–11. This is a very useful essay that could be read with profit by anyone starting out in this field. In a briefer but effective chapter, Nicholas Broten then confirms a suggestion offered by this reviewer 15 years ago (but presented here with better quantitative evidence) that the 'insolvency' of late nineteenth century friendly societies was greatly over-emphasized by Bentley Gilbert in his classic account some five decades ago.

Herbert Emery devotes his chapter to the intriguing question of why the USA never developed a state health insurance system based on the European

model, despite the catastrophic effect that sickness could have on family finances. (In some ways, this is a microcosmic part of a much bigger controversy over why socialism never really took hold in the USA.) His conclusion is mainly quantitative, evaluating the relative effects of savings rates, incomes, wealth distribution, and so on. Emery suggests, interestingly, that the higher incomes of American workers led them to prefer voluntary health insurance: the state was not needed. Pilar Leon-Sanz's study of *La Conciliation* insurance fund in Pamplona is impressively researched and interestingly detailed: for example, possible moral hazard was kept at bay by the surveillance of workers' guilds, the society physicians and a special inspector. There then follow two solid chapters by R. A. A. Vonk (on the Netherlands) and D. Rigter (on Belgium), in which a more political history approach is effectively used to examine the boundaries between the state and the private sector in sickness insurance provision.

This is a very useful collection of well-researched essays on a topic that has recently assumed growing importance among social policy historians. It is a book that will appeal more to the experienced researcher than to the raw undergraduate, since its subject-matter is quite specialized; but that is its purpose, and there are valuable lessons to be learned from it. The research supporting these essays is impressive, as evidenced by detailed end-notes providing follow-up clues to further reading. Some of the contributors examine political factors; others are inspired more by behavioural economics, in which self-interest takes precedence over any collective conceptions of 'the good society'. In that sense also, this volume is relevant to today's political culture.

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Social Policy and Citizenship: The Changing Landscape

EDITED BY ADALBERT EVERS AND ANNE-MARIE GUILLEMARD

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-19-975404-5; £50.00 (hbk).

This volume offers a refreshingly nuanced account of how social policy changes are affecting the nature, practices and experience of social citizenship across Europe. The editors concede that there are financial limitations to what the welfare state can achieve now and in the future. As such, the book engages with the economic and political pragmatic concerns of social policy in a way that many welfare rights and social citizenship authors do not. Rather than relying on *ad hominem* moral repertoires to critique welfare reforms, the authors draw upon empirical evidence to explore how close or how far nations come to a Marshallian conception of social citizenship. In terms of critical comparative social policy, this is very much the foundation from which empirically driven ethical questions can (and should) be raised. The material presented offers something of a unique contribution to social policy and citizenship literature then, by exploring the intersection between theory-led research on the one hand and empirical evidence on the other hand.

According to many of the authors of this volume, social policies have necessarily adapted to demographic, economic and socio-political challenges to reshape actual and ideal conceptions of social citizenship. The editors, in particular, explain how social rights are increasingly framed, granted and justified as a form of economic and social investment. Invariably, this has shaped the legitimate function and remit of social rights to cultivate 'public support for private responsibility' (p. 86) where economic self-sufficiency is incentivized by targeted provisions to maximize labour market participation. The pitfalls of such an approach are fruitfully postulated, but the authors fail to explicitly recognize that even within this framework, social rights are often only labelled rather than implemented as part of a broader social investment strategy. Whether it is to dissuade dissent on social rights or because a sustainable welfare state is the ultimate end is neither here nor there. The social investment strategy can and (as shown in many chapters) does exist independently of a concern for social inclusion or de-commodification. Nonetheless, such a concept enables us to understand and interpret trends in social policy change and the resultant implications for social rights and citizenship across different European welfare regimes.

Whilst socio-economic shifts that have shaped the nature of social citizenship are global in their processes, much of this book demonstrates that 'the national level continues to be central for citizenship and its social dimension' (p. 29). Neo-liberalism and globalization pose significant but differing challenges to national welfare systems, and substantive responses are essentially domestic. In light of this, *Social Policy and Citizenship: The Changing Landscape* raises important questions about the epistemological limitations of comparative social policy research and what can be inferred about the effect of welfare reforms on social citizenship more generally. As a result, claims made are modest but novel. This book is not just concerned with the *quantity* but also the *quality* of social rights, and the historical locus from which they originate. Little attempt is made to offer a comparative perspective in each chapter (except Chapters 3 and 7), but the national cases are presented in such a way as to facilitate a means of critical consideration of the relationship between social policy and social citizenship within and across national boundaries.

A total of eight countries are considered in depth: some falling within Esping-Andersen's typologies of welfare, and some post-communist welfare regimes are also included. A broad range of social policy domains are examined including healthcare, social care, in-work tax credits and supplements, pensions, unemployment and disability benefits. Welfare and activation reforms are explored to understand not only the institutional embodiment of citizenship but also the experience of citizenship as a social construct and discourse (Chapters 6 and 14). Of particular significance is the book's exploration of the fragmented experience and receipt of social rights as a repercussion of activation reforms. In the case of France, access to social rights has become increasingly stratified according to gender, income and employment status (Chapter 7). For Italy, social rights are delineated along territorial and generational lines (Chapter 8). For those least able to wield political power over social policies and provision (Chapters 8 and 9) but also those most in need of them, these issues coalesce to expose the interrelationships between

civil, political and social rights and duties (Chapters 2 and 10). This book illustrates just how historically and socio-culturally embedded understandings of welfare, social security, rights and citizenship are. As an example, in many ex-satellite states of the USSR, the concept of social rights has a negative connotation. Within such a setting, social rights were seen as a system of leverage, whereby personal rights were forfeited for the sake of social rights and this continues today (Chapter 11).

Ultimately, the book shows that whilst the rise of neo-liberalism across Europe has challenged and reformulated social citizenship, it has not destroyed it. Social spending has increased, but neo-liberalism has led 'to the gradual evolution of a bifurcated welfare system with remarkable divergences in the social rights of respective welfare clienteles' (p. 287). Increasingly regressive forms of redistribution that inadequately target those most in need of assistance not only fuel inequality but also threaten the financial sustainability of welfare. Given that much of this book was written prior to the Great Recession, it is impressive that many of the chapters (with a couple of exceptions) resonate so well in the existing socio-economic climate.

The shifting balance between rights and responsibilities in social citizenship is discussed to great effect at points, but the significance of responsibilities is somewhat neglected overall. If the social investment welfare paradigm is to function as is intended, it is not enough to say that citizens are afforded more responsibility due to recent reforms. What this responsibility constitutes and how this changes the nature and experience of social citizenship, is not only important for the citizenry, but also for the future structural functioning and sustainability of welfare regimes across Europe. Further attention to this would have enhanced what is already a very thorough and insightful read.

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Street Practice: Changing the Lens on Poverty and Public Assistance

BY LORI MCNEIL

Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4094-2533-5. £55.00 (hbk).

There is a growing literature that seeks to build a theoretical foundation for applied academic research, to identify its challenges, and to point to what we might call 'best practices' for 'putting scholarship in the service of struggles for social justice', as Charles Hale phrased it in a recent collection of essays on the subject (Hale 2008). It has been elsewhere described as a search for a *phronetic* social science, harking back to Aristotle himself for guideposts on how to generate research that is produced with the aid of those who might otherwise merely be the subjects of it; research that, importantly, is designed to be useful to them (Flyvbjerg 2001; Flyvbjerg *et al.* 2012; see also Byrne 2013).

In *Street Practice*, Lori McNeil, Director of Research and Policy at New York's Urban Justice Center, is concerned not with how to bridge the gap between *academic* research and the world it would seek to explain but to 'learn how nonprofit organizations combine research and policy advocacy' (p. 16) in order to 'tell the "on the ground" story of how real change occurs in com-

1 munities when supported by empirical research' (p. 20). It is a potentially
2 valuable inquiry: to identify how applied research is undertaken outside the
3 academy and to learn lessons from it. This project is undertaken via in-depth
4 case studies of five community-based organizations working on issues related
5 to poverty and welfare in New York City, with the assertion that 'the research
6 featured in this book offers a new direction for research and policy advocacy'
7 (p. 35).

8 The cases are well-chosen, although I admit to bias in that regard: I have
9 worked on issues of poverty and homelessness in New York City for more
10 than 20 years (first as a practitioner and then as an academic), and know
11 each of the organizations featured here (some more than others), have made
12 donations to many of them, know some of the organizations' leaders and
13 members, and currently sit on an advisory board for one of them. But that
14 gives me some authority, I would argue, to say that each organization is in
15 its own way an important node in the network of agencies and activists
16 working on issues of poverty, welfare and homelessness in the city. And to
17 its great credit, the volume creates space for each of these organizations to
18 speak for itself, tell its history, define its mission, and describe its research
19 and advocacy work.

20 But the book's chief virtue points to its principal failing. It offers far too
21 much description, description that is ultimately thin and too little informed by
22 the phronetic research McNeil herself references as a touchstone, and pro-
23 vides too little analysis. Indeed, many of the chapters, which often credit
24 leaders of the organizations themselves as co-authors, read much like annual
25 reports or grant proposals, and some are even written in the third person ('We
26 use a combination of advocacy, outreach and litigation . . .').

27 Perhaps that descriptive emphasis would be less problematic if those
28 descriptions articulated lessons about how particular kinds of research under-
29 taken in particular kinds of ways led, directly or indirectly, to better pro-
30 grammes or to better policy. But the things that are most important are least
31 attended to – we get no clear sense of the genesis of these various research
32 projects, and no clear guidance on how to evaluate outcomes. Too often,
33 evidence of success is asserted, and is often indicated by having garnered
34 media attention. Moreover, and much worse to my mind, there is no attention
35 to failed efforts – perhaps a product of turning over too much of the narrative
36 to the organizations themselves.

37 McNeil refers periodically to various organizations' 'theories of change'.
38 That is never explored systematically, but suggests a framework that could
39 have better fulfilled the significant promise of the project: if we could identify
40 each organization's theory of how policy change happens, compare them,
41 demonstrate how each is carried out, and then evaluate their successes, that
42 could provide what is most lacking here:

- 43 1. theoretical or analytic insight that would make the volume of use for
44 scholar-activists; and
- 45 2. practical lessons that might be of use to those working more directly to
46 effect change: how to conceive of agency-based research projects, how
47 to ensure that they are consonant with the organization's mission, how to
48

secure funding and support, how to most effectively carry them out, and how to evaluate their success or failure.

In their absence, we are left with a schematic sense of some of the work these non-governmental organizations have been engaged in but with little way of knowing what to make of those activities.

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