

*Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy.* By Archon Fung. (Princeton University Press, 2004.)

In December 1988, both houses of the Illinois state legislature passed a unique school reform bill by overwhelming margins. Calling for decentralized management of Chicago schools by locally elected councils, the legislation was hammered out by an unlikely alliance led by community groups and business executives in House Speaker Michael Madigan's office over 16 weeks of negotiations. Each council would have authority over principal hiring, budgets, and long-term planning, with oversight provided by a central body responsible for both accountability and support. By 1989, over 17,000 parents, residents, and teachers ran for election to the Local School Councils (LSCs), and 5,400 were elected. Similar, if less dramatic, changes were brewing in the Chicago Police Department in the early 1990s, when community policing caught hold in the form of monthly planning meetings for residents in each of 279 beats in the city. Endorsed by both community activists and police administrators, beat meetings were enthusiastically received by locals, attracting 80,000 participants from January 1995 to May 1996.

What are we to make of these moments of popular participation in notoriously insular urban bureaucracies? Archon Fung, the author of a rigorous, measured analysis of the Chicago police and school reforms, claims that these "hybrid arrangements" (6)—lay decision making accompanied by accountability and assistance from local civic organizations and centralized administrators—are extremely promising indeed. Many others, including Sampson et al. (2005), have celebrated cooperative arrangements as marking a new era of "blended forms of social action"—a heartening evolution of collective civic engagement from sixties-era protests to twenty-first-century collaborations.

In this sense, Fung's study provides much-needed detail and texture on what such decision-making processes might actually look like on the ground, paying attention to what happens after the initial deliberations have occurred, to the connections between state-level, regional, and local actors, and to stakeholder relationships among and within neighborhoods. Deliberative theory has ignored practice to its great detriment, and Fung is chiefly preoccupied with demonstrating the real potential of reforms in the face of detractors from both the rational choice and egalitarian sides. Marshalling both quantitative and qualitative data on deliberative groups working in "decidedly

non-ideal conditions" (221), he systematically puts to rest the most common questions raised by these skeptics. The advantages of this approach are not just that Fung challenges many orthodoxies of deliberation theory, but that he provides a compelling story of how relatively simple reforms can link political coalitions, NGOs, social movement activists, state-level governments, city-wide agencies, and diverse resident groups in surprisingly effective ways.

Fung notes that the chief critics of participatory governance have overstated capacity and resource obstacles for poor and minority residents to engage in genuinely empowered and deliberative participation. Residents of poor neighborhoods participated in greater numbers and gained more through their participation than residents in comparatively wealthy areas. Although language barriers, domination, and Balkanization did occur, they were surmounted in Fung's six case studies with the assistance of some basic participant training, sensitive facilitation, and occasional intervention from neutral outsiders. Further, Fung finds that, in unpromising circumstances of deep racial and class divisions within neighborhoods, reforms were a clear improvement over prior institutions. Such concrete evidence is welcome for advocates of deliberative ideals, who often focus less on the range and diversity of deliberative applications than on refining models and defining best practices. For its testing of oft-repeated criticisms and questioning of presumed virtues, Fung's analysis of empowered participation as a workable reform is an excellent resource for students of deliberation.

But the Chicago cases raise more intriguing questions than they answer about the transformative potential and ultimate future of accountable autonomy. By using his rich case studies in service of his argument for deliberation, and in asserting the novelty of Chicago's participatory reforms, Fung leaves unanalyzed creeping evidence—neatly sketched out in Chapter Two on the historical context of the reforms—that these innovations may not be so new or so distinct from market-based solutions. The turn to accountable autonomy was ushered in by managerial and professional consensus in the 1980s and 1990s on the power of limited decentralization to improve stagnating companies and entrenched government bureaucracies. Consultants at Booz, Allen, and Hamilton repeatedly came up with the same solution for Chicago's troubled municipal agencies that community organizing groups did. For familiars of 1980s fashions in corporate management, enthusiasm about the efficiencies of the "Quality Instructional Program"

(88) and “performance-based ‘benchmarking’” (87) in Chicago city schools sounds eerily reminiscent of Total Quality Management and similar reforms emphasizing flexibility, incentives, teamwork—and employee participation.

Tracing the influence of decentralization rhetoric back to the Reagan-era backlash against liberalism demonstrates how truly conservative the motivations behind these borrowed reforms are—and there is some evidence of this in the solutions developed by the beat teams and school councils themselves in the form of a greater emphasis on commensurable results and, alarmingly, a homeowner-centric parochialism in the beats that led to coordinated harassment and intimidation campaigns on both sides. Overall, the beats and LSCs in general were more functional for poor neighborhoods than for rich ones because rich ones *already* enjoyed the cozy relationships and preferred treatment that poor residents could cultivate in their newfound access to agency administrators and local authorities. If this is “reinventing urban democracy,” then it is less about emerging ideals or evolving approaches than about the trickling down of cyclical normative and rationalizing managerial ideologies (Barley and Kunda 1992) from the corporate sector—ideologies which, not coincidentally, emphasize quiescence over contention.

With an engaging balance of realism and optimism, Fung acknowledges that the small-bore solutions likely to be produced in empowered participation are necessarily limited, but hopes that these humble starts might lead to more ambitious collective problem solving down the road as innovative approaches are shared within the system. Given the difficulty of maintaining momentum even in these modest efforts—and Fung duly notes that democratic gains were fragile and prone to erosion once training budgets for local community groups were cut or individual neighborhood leaders moved on—Fung’s greatest accomplishment is not in showing us that accountable autonomy may succeed over the short term (it certainly can), but in demonstrating that, when it fails, it may not be for the reasons so many deliberative democrats suppose. Rather than blaming community-specific “pathologies of local governance” (217) in cases of flagging reforms, it is time for those who believe in deliberative democracy to investigate why participatory solutions can gain such overwhelming support from legislatures, the private sector, and agencies themselves if they are so hard to sustain.

Caroline Lee, *Lafayette College*

*The Politics of Sexual Harassment. A Comparative Study of the United States, the European Union, and Germany.* By Kathrin S. Zippel. (Cambridge University Press, 2006.)

*The Politics of Sexual Harassment* is a timely contribution to the question whether states, and supranational bodies like the European Union, can legislate equality. The answer that the author Kathrin Zippel provides in this excellently researched study is a qualified yes: State policies and legal frameworks shape gender equality, but the way in which politics and laws operate depends on specific cultural traditions, on institutional factors, societal pressures, and transnational influences. Drawing on a vast array of sources ranging from legal documents, internal policy discussions, and parliamentary debates to movement accounts and personal interviews, Kathrin Zippel provides a process oriented narrative of how Germany, the United States, and the European Union have institutionalized feminist policies—the prism being sexual harassment.

The author rightfully debunks a number of conceptual frameworks that have been used in the gender equality debates of recent years as insufficient explanatory variables for her specific cases. Neither the existence of a strong male breadwinner orientation nor strong feminist movement cultures can in and of themselves explain the particular framing and implementation of sexual harassment policies in these three political entities. The framework that Zippel introduces instead focuses on the specific mode of regulation that informs the institutional culture of her cases: For the United States, she traces a legal-regulatory route, for Germany a statutory-corporatist and for the European Union a bureaucratic expert-driven route.

Process clearly informs outcome, with different actors in each case framing the debates. Whereas in the United States individual cases and court hearings provided platforms for social intervention, the European Union instigated change with the help of strong women’s units. Germany, by contrast, turns out to be the quintessential laggard in regard to sexual harassment. The lack of an explicit antidiscrimination law resulted in there being no clear legal basis for a sexual harassment claim, in courts considering it a private matter, and in it being individualized because class action suits were not allowed. In effect, using litigation to fight sexual harassment was not really an option for German feminists until the mid-1990s. This changed with the 1995 Federal Employee Protection Law, but Zippel argues convincingly that this law is nothing more than a minimalist response by a conservative