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Archon Fung: Empowered Participation

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Democracy as a Reform Strategy

IN 1996, the parents, staff, and principal of Southtown Elementary School¹ executed a coup to make the neighborhood school their own. They won permission from the Chicago Board of Education to change the name of their South Side school to Harambee Academy, after an ancient North African kingdom renown for its scholarly achievements. To the community of the newly dubbed Harambee Academy, the name was the appropriate face of a broad initiative to reorganize the school around a coherent, common, and Afrocentric vision. Of Harambee's some seven hundred students, after all, 99 percent were African-American and 92 percent were from low-income families.² How better to forge a shared vision than to reclaim academic excellence as a distinctive component of their racial and cultural tradition?³

Changing a name, of course, cannot itself raise test scores, make classes more orderly, build classrooms, or increase children's readiness for middle and high school. In the months and years ahead, the parents and personnel of Harambee would attempt to advance their historical and cultural commitment to scholastic achievement through a variety of programs that included technology labs, prekindergarten programs, physical plant upgrading, curriculum changes, and a host of instructional innovations.

Those versed in education reform will find these projects familiar and recognize that they are by no means distinctive to Afrocentrism. For many low-income urban schools, however, mustering the leadership, organization, staff motivation, and community commitment to imagine and implement such changes is itself more difficult than any particular change. Without commitment to their shared and culturally specific vision, many of these initiatives might not have been launched and perhaps none of them would have enjoyed the support and devotion needed to carry them through.

The school continued to face daunting obstacles—the poverty of its families and decaying family structure, neighborhood migration that resulted in the turnover of 42 percent of its students each year, and a building that was constructed before the turn of the century (Chicago Public Schools 1996). Despite this challenging environment, the staff and community set in place two of the basic components necessary for school improvement: students, parents, staff, and managers were broadly committed to a com-

mon educational vision and these groups developed capacities to formulate and implement a variety of promising school-reform strategies.⁴

Several miles to the north of Harambee, residents of a Chicago neighborhood called Lakeville were plagued by intimidation, narcotics trafficking, prostitution, and suspected gang activity.⁵ They met with police for several months to understand these problems and develop strategies to mitigate them. In these meetings, they determined that most of the undesirable activity originated in a large park nearby. Analyzing patterns of behavior there over several weeks, they found that most of the illicit activity occurred at night around an unfinished sunken concrete structure deep within the park. They dubbed this area, obscured from the street by trees and elevation, as the “pit.”

In the short term, residents and police worked together to mitigate disturbances. Police patrolled the area more frequently at peak times identified by residents, conducted foot patrols, and enforced loitering and curfew laws. Neighbors living next to the park organized themselves to watch for illicit activity and summon police response via a phone tree. In the longer term, residents followed Jane Jacobs’s (1993) wisdom that “eyes on the street” can prevent crime and nuisances in public places. They began with simple measures such as trimming tall trees to make the park’s interior visible from the street. More ambitiously, residents sought physical improvements to make the park more useful, attractive, and inviting to legitimate users in the hope that they might drive out illegal ones. Through social connections, they contacted an architect who redesigned the park to include a community garden, a multi-use athletic field, and plenty of lighting. Residents secured approval to make these modifications from the Parks Department. They also raised more than \$20,000 from the Chicago Cubs and local businesses to implement their new design. After construction was completed, unlawful activities and nuisances all but disappeared and residents used the park more frequently.

1.1. Empowered Participation as an Administrative Reform Strategy

Why were citizens and officials at Harambee and Lakeville able to improve their local circumstances and public institutions when those in thousands of similar urban neighborhoods in dozens of other cities seem unable to move forward? At the most proximate scale of school and neighborhood, local heroes like the principal, committed teachers, police officers, and parents deserve the credit. But the choices, powers, and motives of those inside schools and other local institutions are deeply determined by the institutional terrain around them. Both schooling at Harambee and policing in Lakeville benefitted from an institutional environment that created

a certain kind of participatory democracy. Several years earlier, both the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) were reorganized to create new channels through which residents could exercise their collective voice and influence. Extensive powers were devolved from their headquarters out to the neighborhoods. These initiatives transformed the CPD and the CPS into the most participatory-democratic public organizations of their kind in any large American city.

In 1988, the General Assembly of Illinois passed a major piece of education legislation that turned the hierarchical structure of the CPS on its head. The legislation shifted governance power to individual schools by creating some 580 Local School Councils (LSCs), one for each elementary and high school in the city. LSCs are bodies elected every two years by members of the school community. Each consists of six parents, two community members, two school staff persons, and the principal. These bodies are empowered to select principals, develop school-governance plans and visions, and spend discretionary funds. These powers and responsibilities enabled the Harambee LSC and school community to develop its Afrocentric educational vision and to pursue a variety of innovations outside the school as well as within it.

The CPD embarked on a similar strategy of reform in 1995 when it rolled out its Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS). While many other cities had experimented with forms of community- and problem-oriented policing for several years (Wilson and Kelling 1989; Sparrow, Moore, and Kennedy 1990; Kelling and Coles 1996), CAPS is quite distinctive for the extent to which it involves ordinary residents and street-level police officers in determining policing priorities and approaches (Skogan et al. 1999). Unlike the situation with respect to local school governance, residents who participate in CAPS cannot hire and fire police officers; however, the police officers in each of the city's some 280 neighborhood "beats" hold monthly open meetings with residents to discuss neighborhood safety issues. In these sessions, police and residents jointly select priority public safety issues and develop wide-ranging strategies to address them. These community-policing arrangements form the institutional structure through which residents, police, city officials, and non-profit organizations rebuilt Lakeville's dilapidated park. Beat meetings created new spaces in which police and residents could together and develop a range of solutions addressing various problems at the park. CAPS's grant of operational autonomy liberated police officers to implement some of these ideas.

These reforms set into place some central features of a kind of participatory democracy that is appropriately called Empowered Participatory Governance (Fung and Wright 2003). In the crucial areas of public education and policing, the CPS and CPD reforms advance the central tenet of

participatory democracy: that people should have substantial and equal opportunities to participate directly in decisions that affect them (Pate-man 1970, 22–44; Pitkin and Shumer 1982). Despite many complexities and limitations, these reforms have made the CPS and CPD much more *participatory* in that they invite ordinary individuals to take part in crucial governance decisions about the goals, priorities, and strategies of policing and public education. Furthermore, this participation is *empowered* because, unlike the case with regard to many advisory panels, public hearings, and discussion groups, decisions generated by these processes determine the actions of officials and their agencies. Finally, decision-making around local education and policing has become much more *deliberative* in that members of Local School Councils and beat meetings make decisions through a process of structured reasoning in which they offer proposals and arguments to one another. The chapters that follow elaborate these concepts of participation, empowerment, and deliberation; analyze the political and administrative institutions that translate these abstract concepts into actual practices; and explore the empirical experience of those institutions to assess the promise of participatory democracy in these challenging contexts.

Of the many objections to participatory democracy, perhaps the most common and compelling is that the ideal is irrelevant in the face of modern governance challenges. The problems of scale, technical complexity, the intricate division of labor of government, and the privatization of public life all decisively weigh against any straightforward implementation of the New England town meeting (Bryan 1999) or the Greek assembly to most modern political contexts (Cohen and Sabel 1997). This book responds directly to the objection of irrelevance by counterexample. The following chapters show how two large urban bureaucracies, operating under very challenging background conditions, did in fact transform themselves in substantially participatory-democratic directions.⁶

Even if some version of participatory democracy is feasible, it might not be very desirable as a path of reform. The core argument of this book is that troubled public agencies such as urban police departments and school systems can become more responsive, fair, innovative, and effective by incorporating empowered participation and deliberation into their governance structures. The experiences of Harambee and Lakeville suggest several ways in which neighborhood participation and devolution might improve the quality of public action compared to centralized agencies. Foremost, centralized programs may be effective in some places and under some circumstances but not others. Decentralization, by contrast, allows localities to formulate solutions tailored to their particular needs or preferences (Tiebout 1956). Harambee's effort to develop a school mission and vision suited to the culture and background of their student body

illustrates this advantage. Devolution can also free residents, teachers, and police officers to imagine and implement innovations that depart from conventional wisdom and routine, and are therefore unlikely to come from the central office. Police supervisors, for example, were much more likely to offer intensified patrol than environmental redesign as a solution to the problems at Lakeville Park because of their professional training and administrative capacities. Third, residents and officials may have local knowledge that can usefully inform policy strategies but that may not be systematically available to or easily usable by centralized organizations. Residents' and police discovery of the "pit" in Lakeville Park and their knowledge of the best way to reshape its grounds to enhance use and visibility illustrate the importance of such local knowledge. Fourth, citizens who depend on these public services have strong motivations to contribute to their improvement through civic engagement. Given opportunities to participate in school governance or community policing, they can contribute distinctive resources and expertise, as they did in the architectural redesign and fundraising around the park. As we will see, they can also use these opportunities to hold principals and police officers accountable when they shirk, lie, or act incompetently.

1.2. Accountable Autonomy: An Institutional Design for Empowered Participation

If these intuitions about the contributions of participation to public action sound familiar, it is because they stem from a long tradition of those who favor participatory decision-making (Pitkin and Shumer 1982; Barber 1984) in local democratic forms such as New England town meetings (Mansbridge 1980), community controlled public offices (Arnstein 1969; Kotler 1969), and workers' cooperatives (Pateman 1970; Whyte and Whyte 1988; Gastil 1993). Proponents of this view favor local autonomy from centralized authority in part because they fear that central power tends to encroach on local prerogatives, to crowd out civic initiative and engagement, and to disregard crucial local knowledge. The constructive forms of civic-official action at Harambee and Lakeville suggest that these fears are sometimes warranted. But local autonomy often encounters its own difficulties. Scholars who have examined participatory small-group decision processes have found that they are often no more fair than other kinds of governance and decision-making (Mansbridge 1980; Gastil 1993; Sanders 1997). Voices of minority, less educated, diffident, or culturally subordinate participants are often drowned out by those who are wealthy, confident, accustomed to management, or otherwise privileged. Liabilities such as parochialism, lack of expertise, and resource con-

straints may impair the problem-solving and administrative capabilities of local organizations relative to centralized forms.

Such pathologies may not be intrinsic to empowered participation and deliberation. Rather, the extent to which such criticisms apply may depend upon the details of the institutions that render the abstract notions of deliberation, participation, and empowerment into concrete practices. In particular, the devolution of authority to autonomous local bodies is frequently taken to be the natural institutional form of participatory democracy (Arnstein 1969; Kotler 1969; Mansbridge 2002). It may be, however, that a judicious allocation of power, function, and responsibility between central authorities and local bodies can mitigate these pathologies of inequality, parochialism, and group-think and so better realize the ideals empowered deliberation and participation. To their credit, the CPS and CPD reformers tried to address the defects of decentralization and localism by developing just such hybrid arrangements. They did so by moving toward an institutional design of administrative and democratic organization that is appropriately called *accountable autonomy*. Though the two parts of this term may seem to be in tension, consider how they work together in the context of municipal and neighborhood governance.

Officials and citizens working together in Harambee and Lakeville illustrate the importance of autonomy. Within the broad charge of improving education and public safety, these two groups set their own agendas regarding both ends and means. The Harambee LSC and community forged an institutional vision that centered on educational excellence in an Afrocentric setting, developed a host of school-level programs to realize that vision, implemented those through internal resources, and were afforded the latitude to act under the 1988 state education-reform legislation. Similarly, it was Lakeville's residents and police, not central authorities, who designated the park as the most urgent problem area, devised unconventional tactics to address it, and mustered the wherewithal to execute their plans.

These renditions, and the local democratic tradition generally, improperly conflate two distinct senses of autonomy. In one sense, autonomy entails independence from central power. In a second, it stresses the capacity of local actors to accomplish their own ends, such as school improvement or neighborhood safety. Accountable autonomy stresses the latter sense, which requires retreating from autarky to a conception of centralized action that counterintuitively bolsters local capability without improperly and destructively encroaching upon it. Support and accountability are two pillars of a reconstructed relationship between central power and neighborhood action that can reinforce local autonomy.

Successful local action, especially in depressed urban contexts, frequently requires external support. This support can come in multifarious

forms such as financing, other direct resources, expertise, or cooperation from larger entities. In Lakeville Park's cleanup, for example, residents and police were aided by numerous external public and private actors such as the streets and sanitation department, the parks department, a friendly architect, private foundations, and local businesses. Harambee's LSC also benefited from friendly partnerships with downtown elements of the CPS and helpful local parties. While these examples for the most part illustrate ad hoc forms of support, central authorities of both the CPS and CPD have organized themselves to provide quite systemic forms of assistance for local planning and problem-solving. These mechanisms, analyzed in detail in the chapters that follow, include extensive training for both participating residents and street-level officials, changes in the legal and regulatory environment of these efforts, the pooling of knowledge and experience, and provision of technical assistance.

A second and perhaps more perplexing problem with local independence is that groups may lack the wherewithal, goodwill, or motivation to come together as the professionals and residents at Harambee and Lakeville managed to do. While proponents of participatory forms of decision-making tend to presume that the greatest threats to democratic values lie outside the boundaries of community and locality, many of its critics point to the dangers within. Internal divisions among participants, for example between factions of residents or between residents and officials, may paralyze the group or allow some to dominate. Or, even in the absence of conflict, groups may be unmotivated to utilize local discretion to innovate and advance public ends through problem-solving. Many beat groups and LSCs in Chicago certainly seem imprisoned by habit and have continued with ineffective but comfortable routines in the years following the devolutionary reforms there. Group divisions, domination by particular factions, and lethargy all reduce local autonomy, when autonomy is understood as capacity rather than license.

Centralized authority in "accountable autonomy" can reduce these internal obstacles through mechanisms to safeguard both local processes and substantive outcomes. To check domination and faction, external reviews and audits can verify the integrity of local decision-making processes and intervene when procedures seem suspect. For example, both the CPS and CPD require local groups to document and justify their missions, agendas, strategies, and particular actions and then subject these plans to supervisory review. To assure that local groups utilize their discretionary latitude constructively, outside bodies monitor the relevant outcomes—through student test scores, truancy rates, incidents of crime, and more discerning measures—to detect trends of improvement, stasis, or decline in performance. While efforts to establish substantive accountability are fraught with the difficulties of developing sensitive performance

metrics and judiciously associating observed performance with internal effort, both the CPS and CPD have begun to develop such monitoring programs.

Accountable autonomy, then, offers a model of how reformed public agencies such as schools and police departments might interact with citizens that stands in contrast to visions of local democracy and community control on both conceptual and institutional dimensions. This model emphasizes the positive and constructive face of autonomy—the capacity, indeed responsibility, of groups to achieve public ends that they set for themselves—as much as the emancipatory aspect of shedding centrally imposed constraints and demands. Beyond this, it reduces potential pathologies that afflict social choice within small groups. These two considerations support alternative institutional relationships between center and periphery. Far from withering away, central authority serves two important general functions in this model. The first is to provide various kinds of supports needed for local groups such as beat teams and LSCs to accomplish their ends, yet would be otherwise unavailable to these groups in isolation. The second is to hold these groups accountable to the effective and democratic use of their discretionary latitude. Somewhat paradoxically, realizing autonomy requires the sensitive application of external guidance and constraint. When factions inside a group dominate or paralyze planning processes, outsiders can step in to break through jams and thus enable the group to better accomplish its ends. When the indolence of these groups results in subpar performance, external interventions and sanctions can transform license to innovation and problem-solving.

1.3. Paths More Traveled: Markets and Public Hierarchies

Reformers of many stripes agree that public policies and administrative organizations should instill the kind of coherence and problem-solving capacity exhibited by those at Harambee and Lakeville. Indeed, fostering that self-motivated, innovative drive is a prime objective of public-sector management and organizational reform. Experts disagree vehemently, however, about how best to generate these qualities. While they frequently acknowledge the importance of citizen empowerment, often understood as customer satisfaction (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), strongly participatory variants of citizen engagement, such as community control or accountable autonomy, seldom arise. Instead, this debate roughly pits two general positions against one another. In one camp are thoughtful defenders of the public bureaucracies, who seek to repair their obvious defects and failings by improving the effectiveness of the hierarchy through modern management techniques and accountability mechanisms. Those in an-

other camp argue that the failures of large public-sector organizations are so deep and incorrigible that they require radical evisceration. These reformers, impressed by the efficiencies and accomplishments of firms in the private sector, would inject healthy doses of competition and consumer choice through market mechanisms to improve the performance of the public sector.

Empowered participation is a third path of reform that takes its inspiration from the traditions of civic engagement and participatory democracy rather than public-management techniques or competitive markets. The concepts, experiences, and analysis that follow show that this course has already yielded many benefits for the substantive objectives of public safety and education while advancing important democratic values of participation and deliberation. Empowered participation, and other reform models that spring from democratic roots, therefore merit serious exploration and consideration alongside the prevalent choice between hierarchies and markets. For some problems in some places, like public safety or school improvement in central cities, democratically inspired strategies may offer decisive advantages.

A definitive analysis of these three alternative reform paths would detail their relative strengths and pitfalls across various cultural, political, and organizational contexts. Which strategy, or mix of them, yields the largest improvements in public performance? Unfortunately, no one can offer such a comprehensive analysis because the experience with each of them is too short and sporadic. Indeed, taken on its own terms the intense controversy surrounding each of these reform paths indicates that systematic comparisons must await their maturity. Juxtaposing the justifications that motivate hierarchical and market-reform strategies, however, clarifies the terms of comparison and highlights the distinctive promise of accountable autonomy.

Some of the most visible and hotly debated efforts to transplant market mechanisms appear in the reform of public education (Chubb and Moe 1990). School-choice programs allow children to attend public schools outside of their neighborhoods and then reward schools that attract more students, thus fostering competition among public schools. Charter-school programs—a second variant adopted by many jurisdictions, among them Arizona and Massachusetts—begin from the desire for entrepreneurship. They enable individuals or groups to form and manage new public schools. School vouchers constitute yet a third variant that goes further in its degree of privatization. For example, programs in Milwaukee, Cleveland, and many other cities grant vouchers that enable parents to send their children to private schools.

Though these variants differ in important design details, their supporters share three common commitments. First, they believe that hierarchical

management of schools—top-down efforts to improve them by imposing particular curricular or instructional requirements, for example—are misguided. Improvement must come from the personnel of the school itself. This requires rescinding many of the procedural requirements that commonly direct public-school operations. Second, they believe that children should not be forced to attend particular schools simply because they live near that school, but rather their parents should be able to select from among a range of schools that match their quality requirements and curricular preferences. Improved parental choice drives a third commitment to competition among schools. While some believe that emancipation is sufficient because it will unleash the entrepreneurial energy, craft, and compassion of principals and teachers (Meier 1995, 2000), most favor competition among schools as a way to motivate educators. Hence market-based reform strategies link financing to the number of students that choose a given school.

Like these strategies, the accountable autonomy approach relies upon bottom-up innovation rather than wisdom that flows down from on high. But it differs in three important respects. First, accountable autonomy emphasizes the importance of citizen participation and voice before exit.⁷ In both LSCs and beat meetings, the first recourse of unhappy parents is not to move to another school or neighborhood, but rather to contribute to governance efforts to improve the situations in which they find themselves. Some parents and users of other public services may not—for reasons of time, distance, expense, inconvenience, or allegiance—wish to abandon their neighborhood school as quickly as they might switch between telephone companies or brands of soda. When they do engage in partnership and joint governance with local officials rather than play the role of consumers selecting between different service offerings, they can contribute to innovation and institutional improvement. Most market-based reforms rely upon the efforts of professionals. As we have seen with both Harambee and Lakeville, the engagement of citizens can add distinctive resources, ideas, and talents to governance and problem-solving endeavors.

A second difference concerns the need to link local units like firms and police beats together. By eschewing central authority in favor of consumer and producer sovereignty, market-based reform strategies rely upon competition and price to diffuse innovations and to solve coordination and equity problems. If one school hits upon an innovation that works well for its students, for example a truancy-reduction strategy or effective reading program, market-based mechanisms may be quite slow to spread this good news to other schools that might benefit from it. Indeed, if education markets were quite competitive, the most successful schools might prefer to hoard their techniques as a kind of intellectual property

for competitive advantage. Similarly, market-driven systems have difficulty redistributing their resources where they are most needed. While many voucher proponents favor distributing them to poor students first, and perhaps even giving larger vouchers to the most needy, other helpful interventions outside the realm of market-style reform might instead channel resources to the most needy schools or neighborhoods. In accountable autonomy, by contrast, central authorities are redefined and revitalized to perform such functions.

A third concern revolves around the extent to which market-based reform strategies advance the public mission of the institutions they seek to reshape. John Chubb and Terry Moe have argued that public-school systems are paralyzed by a surfeit of missions generating contradictory and burdensome regulations that ultimately thwart effective school operations (1990). Their prescription is that schools be subject to market disciplines and insulated from these self-defeating political pressures. But, as public outrage over a Kansas Board of Education decision to inject creationism into its program shows, collective social concern for the curricular content and substantive vision of public schools is perhaps unavoidable and probably desirable. Market mechanisms, aspiring as they do to automatic self-regulation through consumer choice and producer response, offer no direct solution to this steering problem. By contrast, the model of accountable autonomy holds local groups, such as those in schools and police beats, to more general procedural and performance standards. So, Harambee Academy's staff justified its adoption of an Afrocentric vision and school environment on the grounds that this would create a more effective school as measured by the general criteria—themselves determined through ordinary political and administrative processes—under which schools are generally evaluated, such as test scores and graduation rates.⁸

In addition to these market-based mechanisms, another well-trodden path of reform recommends enhancing performance within the public sector through modern management techniques, among them decentralization, careful monitoring of subordinates, and accountability. Some areas, for instance police operations and the provision of public safety, may be widely regarded as too critical to be privatized or left to the vagaries of market governance. Others may harbor criticisms of market mechanisms like the foregoing, or they may see reform within the public sector as a more rapid path of transformation in light of both political resistance to the imposition of market competition and the difficulty of creating enough independent providers to replace existing public capacity. Though there are many prescriptions for improving public management, a prevalent and salient strain resembles accountable autonomy in that it combines the devolution of authority with careful performance-monitoring and accountability mechanisms. As a managerial approach, this path dif-

fers from accountable autonomy in that it makes no special provisions to engage citizens. It does not rely substantially on their voice, insight, or energy, nor does it seek to establish direct channels of accountability between public officials and the citizens they serve.

In modern policing, for example, this path of reform is well articulated under the heading of “problem-oriented policing” and exemplified by the reforms led by William Bratton and supported by then-mayor Rudolph Giuliani in New York City (Goldstein 1992). This new policing responds to perceived failures in the ability of centralized and hierarchical methods to cope with the complexity and multiple modern threats to public safety. In response, it calls for ordinary frontline police officers to become more informed about the particular problems they face, assume responsibility and “ownership” for addressing them, and attempt more innovative approaches. Following the adage that responsibility requires authority, this reform recommends enhancing the discretionary power of officers in the streets by liberating them, in the manner of market reforms, from regulatory minutiae.

In the New York City Police Department, for example, performance accountability has replaced loose procedural supervision. Through a now well-known and highly regarded procedure called COMPSTAT (“comparative statistics”), precinct commanders meet regularly to review crime incidents, reports, and response patterns as generated through a centralized information-management system.⁹ Supervisors congratulate their commanders when rates drop. In high-crime precincts, however, they castigate commanders and demand that they develop more effective abatement measures. In subsequent meetings, these commanders are called on to report steps taken and assess their success by considering COMPSTAT data. This city-wide procedure is mirrored in many of the precincts, with commanders using more localized data to motivate and assess their captains and sergeants. At multiple levels, supervisors encourage subordinates to creatively engage and solve problems and evaluate their efforts through statistical monitoring. Proponents of COMPSTAT credit it with not only contributing to the widely noted decreases in violent crime in New York City, but also with consolidating fundamental and lasting reform of the department (Buntin 1999; Silverman 1999).

In some manifestations, high-stakes standardized testing is the educational analog to COMPSTAT. In recent years, a movement for accountability based on standardized testing has emerged as the main alternative to market-based education reform. In states like Massachusetts, North Carolina (Jones et al. 1999), Texas, and many others, student performance on standardized tests of basic knowledge and skills is becoming the fulcrum of educational change.¹⁰ An array of programs seeks to evaluate students, teachers, and schools based on these tests and to punish those

who perform poorly with grade retention, loss of merit pay, and administrative sanctions. Many of these initiatives are accompanied by teacher training and support. Critics of high-stakes testing contend that this accountability restricts the creativity and professional discretion of teachers and disproportionately punishes schools that serve minority and poor student populations (National Research Council 1999; McNeil and Valenzuela 2000; Orfield and Kornhaber 2000). Supporters contend, to the contrary, that these accountability arrangements motivate teachers and principals to explore instructional methods that improve their students' test performance. Though research has not yet settled this controversy, testing proponents rest their faith on the efficacy of a managerial combination of professional discretion at the school and classroom levels and direction via performance accountability from above.

Problem-oriented policing and high-stakes testing illustrate three important respects in which these new public-management strategies differ from the participatory path of accountable autonomy. First, accountable autonomy relies much more heavily upon direct contributions of citizens and users of public services. As we saw in the cases of Harambee and Lakeville, the participation and partnership of parents and residents figured centrally in the formulation of overall agendas and visions and the development and implementation of specific strategies. While new public-management strategies claim to invite citizen participation—in the form of community-policing outreach or parental consultation and support associations, for example—they depend predominantly on the resourceful action of professionals at the street, school, and headquarters levels.

Second, accountable autonomy entrusts local groups that include both citizens and professionals to develop their own agendas and set their own ends, whereas the new management strategies leave line officials to determine the best ways to advance ends, whether higher test scores or lower crime rates, that are set for them from above. Harambee Academy developed its Afrocentric course to improve student test scores, but also to bolster staff morale, engender student commitment to education, increase parental involvement, and enhance school discipline. Its LSC and school community set these goals for the school after substantial reflection on its context and particular strengths and weaknesses, and in response to the centralized requirement that each school construct a coherent mission as part of its plan. Similarly, the residents and police of Lakeville targeted the park in part because of incidents of crime, but also because they knew that it could become a rich addition to the public life of the neighborhood. Much more than new managerial strategies, whether high-stakes testing or COMPSTAT, accountable autonomy encourages the incorporation of local values and knowledge into public decisions.

A third difference stems from considerations about the trustworthiness of public officials and the mechanisms that hold them accountable to the broader public. The new managerial strategies rely upon the integrity and efficacy of highly placed officials who establish the standards of success and stipulate the consequences of failure. In environments where agency heads and their staffs are highly effective and well respected, this delegation and confidence may be warranted. In contexts where the rifts between the government and the public are greater, however, and marked by distrust or a history of failure and disappointment, reentrusting central authority to control subordinates and transcend ignominious legacies may seem less prudent. The history of policing and many other public services in Chicago and numerous other cities certainly contains many scandals, complaints, and failures that feed such distrust.

Accountable autonomy meets this trust deficit by building direct avenues of communication and oversight between local officials and the citizens they serve. The principal of Harambee Academy answers to an elected LSC that writes, monitors, and chooses whether or not to renew his contract. The officers in Lakeville meet monthly with residents and report on actions taken to implement various public-safety strategies and their outcomes. Low-level officials are thus doubly accountable. From above, supervisors monitor their performance and techniques and call them to account when necessary, as with the new managerial strategies. From below, citizens and clients participate directly in determining, implementing, and reviewing the problem-solving strategies in partnership with local officials.

1.4. Origins: Civic Engagement, Pragmatism, and Deliberative Democracy

While market-based reforms stem primarily from insights in economics and new methods of public organization derive from the field of management practice and related scholarship, empowered participation extends three traditions centered on investigations of society and democracy: civic engagement, pragmatism, and deliberation.

Interest in society's contribution to democratic governance in America dates famously to Alexis de Tocqueville's celebration of citizens' propensity toward self-help and habit of "forever forming associations" in the nineteenth century (Tocqueville 1969, 513). Recent work examining social capital and civic organizations, perhaps most notably that of Robert Putnam (1993, 1996, 2000) and Theda Skocpol (1999), importantly has brought the associative habits of citizens back into the forefront of scholarly and public concern. Though their findings are not without contro-

versy, both of these scholars contend that in recent decades Americans have become more private and less social. In Putnam's language, stocks of "social capital"—norms, networks, and associations—are drying up. One main contribution of their work is to track the rise and decline of associations and individual participation in them. This research also argues that civic participation offers a kind of social education in which citizens learn to trust and work with one another that better enables them to act collectively for common ends. Since healthy democracy is itself composed of a multitude of such collective efforts and transactions, they argue that the ebb of civic-engagement decreases the quality of public life and state action (Putnam 1993).

With a few important exceptions, civic-engagement scholarship has not yet generated compelling accounts of how public policy and institutional design might reverse these trends of civic deterioration (Hirst 1994; Cohen and Rogers 1995). Reforms in the direction of empowered participation attempt to reciprocally connect public policy with civic engagement at points where particular social problems arise. The police and school-governance reform strategies in Chicago open up previously insular municipal agencies to public input. In doing so, they invite residents to generate and deploy social capital to make their neighborhoods safe and improve their schools. As we shall see, many people respond to this call, engaging with officials and other community members in attempts to solve public problems, because they believe that they may be able to make a difference through participation. Reforms that foster voice and empower citizens to solve problems urgent to them may thus increase the public returns from social capital by generating concrete and highly valued public goods.

While many scholars of social capital treat engagement as a highly fungible and multipurpose good, this account of empowered participation also extends pragmatism, a second tradition that emphasizes contexts, the impact of particular problems, and how efforts to address them often transform citizens, their associations, and public policies. In *The Public and Its Problems*, John Dewey laid out an ideal form of governance in which democratic institutions and cultural habits of thought enable citizens and experts to act publicly to solve their collective problems, and to recognize and comprehend the surprising consequences of their actions (1927). Since the effects of joint actions in complex environments can never be completely foretold, perhaps the most crucial capacity of a modern democracy is its ability to reformulate strategies, policy instruments, frameworks, interests, and even values and ends in light of such surprises. For him, this participatory, social, and creative feedback was the essence of democracy: a democratic public exists when individuals in society can

collectively recognize and sensibly respond to the problems that arise from their interactions with one another.

Critically, however, he lamented the stagnancy and inability of political forms to enable this feedback in the face of rapidly changing economy and society. Citizens in preindustrial America may have been able to keep abreast of public affairs and express their will through the machinery of parties and elections, but these institutions had proven woefully inadequate to the challenges of modern governance with its large scale, diversity, and technical complexity. The problem of the modern public—and the cause of its incoherence—was that citizens, alone and together, were for the most part bewildered when they contemplated affairs of state and their relationship to it. An effective and democratic public would be one in which citizens felt the actions of government, understood the relationship of politics to these effects, discussed the connections between these ends and means, and in turn were connected through democratic arrangements to a state that respected their discussions. In contrast to this ideal of civic engagement, he thought that available social and political institutions did not enable citizens to organize themselves into publics capable of understanding, responding to, and directing their state in this way, and so governance—now largely the province of experts—was cut loose from the tether of democratic guidance. The spheres of state and society had lost their reciprocal linkages.

Despite a recent renaissance of interest in Dewey's pragmatism and his public philosophy, this "problem of the public," as he put it, remains largely unanswered (Westbrook 1991; Bernstein 1992; Stever 1993; Evans 2000). Though it was the central puzzle for Dewey and his progressive cohort, contemporary scholars have for the most part shied away from answering, or even asking, how state and society might be pragmatically reconnected. That is, what public policies can improve the capacity of citizens to sense and understand the effects of state action, on one hand, and empower them to improve it by incorporating its lessons, on the other? The institutional design of accountable autonomy offers one potential answer. Public action organized through participatory planning—rather than through hierarchy, market, or expert devolution—allowed the residents and officers in Lakeville, for example, to develop highly tailored local strategies based on their reflective understandings. A feedback loop that was compact in terms of time, geography, and levels of administration allowed these residents to observe the consequences of their strategies, learn from those through collective discussion, and thereby improve the quality of their problem-solving.

If empowered participation draws from civic-society research answers to questions about who should act and from pragmatism suggestions about what reform designs might be appropriate and effective, delibera-

tive democracy suggests how strategies ought be formulated and collective decisions made. In different ways, political theorists such as Jürgen Habermas (1989, 1992, 1996), Joshua Cohen (1988, 1989, 1996), John Dryzek (1990), and James Fishkin (1991, 1995) offer an attractive formulation in which public decisions ought to be made, or at least steered, by citizens reasoning and persuading one another about the values or course of action that they should pursue together. This deliberative view contrasts with decision processes that attempt to aggregate individual opinions or preferences into a single choice, for instance through voting, majority rule, and other adversarial processes (Riker 1982; Cohen 1988). It also clearly differs from arrangements in which power is delegated to authoritative experts.

Proponents of deliberation argue that enabling those who must live with the consequences of a decision to make it together—struggling to reach mutual understanding, if not agreement, through discussion—offers several advantages over both adversarial and expert decision-making. For instance, the information and creativity that often grows out of discussion may improve the quality of decisions. Outcomes that take into account the reasons why participants support various courses of action—rather than simply tallying votes, money, or power—may thereby become more fair and just. Citizens themselves may become wiser and more understanding and accepting of different views and preferences after encountering them in discourse. Finally, even when some participants disagree with group deliberations, they may be more easily reconciled to the outcomes because others have justified the bases of their positions in good faith. The Harambee and Lakeville experiences illustrate how local participatory planning can reap some of these benefits.

As an empirical investigation of a concrete set of institutional reforms that utilize direct deliberation, empowered participation extends this line of research in two main ways. First, many of these theorists have thought that fair deliberation requires demanding and rarely realized preconditions—as economic or social equality, wealth, or shared values and a homogenous culture, for example. By examining deliberation in the context of Chicago’s poor and often conflicted neighborhoods, this investigation explores whether the often distant ideal of deliberative democracy can be applied fruitfully to urgent contemporary public dilemmas. Second, the conceptual development of deliberative political theory has come at the expense of investigating the practical institutional forms that might realize the ideal in actual organizations and agencies. The chapters that follow begin to fill this gap by examining a range of institutional mechanisms in Chicago school and police reform that sometimes help, while at other times hinder, deliberation.

1.5. Mechanisms of Effectiveness

Those sympathetic to the radical democratic tradition may find accountable autonomy attractive because of its provisions for citizen voice, influence, and deliberation. This institutional design, compared to those of markets and public hierarchies, increases the opportunities for citizens to exercise voice in decisions that are important to them. It may also yield psychological and educative benefits often attributed to participation, such as contributing to participants' political skills, sense of efficacy, and solidarity (Pateman 1970). In dealing with critical institutions like schools and police departments, however, many will gauge the desirability of particular reform proposals according to practical consequences that are less directly associated with participation and deliberation. The democratic benefits of citizen voice and political socialization may be purchased at too high a price if empowered participatory-governance methods turn out to be less effective than market reforms or new managerial strategies.

Therefore, empowered participation must offer a practical account of how its organizational prescription will generate effective public action. Insights from research in civic engagement, pragmatic participation, and deliberative democracy contribute to such an account. In public-action environments where there is a history of distrust between officials and citizens, or where conditions are diverse and unstable, four mechanisms may offer decisive advantages over markets and hierarchies: directed discretion, institutionalized innovation, cross-functional coordination, and studied trust.

As a consequence of diversity in their problem environments, tasks necessary to achieve a given broad public aim vary from one situation to another. In the field of primary education, the most urgent task for one school might be teaching English-language skills, for another computer literacy, and for yet a third dealing with truancy and discipline issues. The optimal pedagogical method for one school might be a progressive, Deweyan, "whole-language" approach, while rote methods of Direct Instruction better suit a second (Gardner 1993; Druffin 1996). Policing situations are just as diverse—residents of some communities may perceive the police as little more than an occupying army, while residents from other neighborhoods might see them as an ally against encroaching disorder. Such variation makes it difficult for a centralized body of experts or managers to accurately specify a uniform set of tasks or procedures that will effectively advance even the most general of public ends. Due in part to these complications of diversity, hierarchical attempts to direct street-level actors frequently cannot guide action because their rules are either overdeterminant and contradictory or underdetermined and dependent upon the skillful use of discretion. Michael Lipsky writes that

Rules may actually be an impediment to supervision. They may be so voluminous and contradictory that they can only be enforced or invoked selectively. In most public welfare departments, regulations are encyclopedic, yet at the same time, they are constantly being changed. With such rules adherence to anything but the most basic and fundamental precepts of eligibility cannot be expected. Police behavior is so highly specified by statutes and regulation that policemen are expected to invoke the law selectively. . . . Similarly, federal civil-rights compliance officers have so many mandated responsibilities in comparison to their resources that they have been free to determine their own priorities. (Lipsky 1980, 14)

If tasks cannot be specified, then routines cannot be formalized and relevant performance cannot be monitored. As is commonly known by students of bureaucracies and subordinates who work in them, low-level agency staff fill the gaps in these formal procedures through their own discretion (Downs 1967; Lipsky 1980; Wilson 1989). Sometimes managers have the foresight to grant discretion; at other times operatives seize it. Such discretionary gaps are inevitable in any bureaucracy, but grow larger with the increasing diversity of problem environments because formal routines lose prescriptive purchase.

The standard response to such discretion is professional indoctrination and training. If successful, indoctrination reduces the need for close supervision by instilling enthusiasm and codes of ethics in ground-level agents. This training attempts to enable agents to cope with diverse situations by providing them with a wider repertoire of routines than can be specified through bureaucratic routine and by developing senses of professional judgment.

But there are at least two reasons to think that a hybrid scheme of well-trained professionals organized in a bureaucracy of loose formal routines will be hampered in conditions of diversity. First, the professional model still presumes a body of experts who possess effective routines and can train others in these techniques. Perhaps due to radically diverse conditions, there are many areas of public action in which expert prescriptions seem irrelevant or ineffective. Thus, “many novice [teachers] look back at their training and complain it was insufficient for the challenges they face” (Catalyst Staff 1996). Standard advice to rookie cops on the first day of the job from veterans is to “forget what you learned in the police academy” (Wilson 1989, 37). Absent a set of master routines, then, professional bureaucracy has no generative mechanism for practical knowledge beyond informal training provided by experience on the street. And since the reasons for bureaucracy’s effectiveness stand on its capacity to implement articulated routines, informal experience is simply an explanation of how bureaucracies (don’t) work, and not a justification for them. Presuming that this source of incapacity could be overcome, discretion

also erodes democratic accountability. Emancipated from the strictures of the center, organizations in which street-level officials enjoy wide discretion may become more effective. But since professional socialization can never be complete, some may use their discretion to shirk or otherwise abuse the public's trust.

The design of accountable autonomy responds to these difficulties with the mechanism of *directed discretion*. It recommends increasing discretion for street-level officials with respect to formal rules and centralized oversight, but harnessing that discretion to the achievement of public ends through internal and external direction. Internally, citizens should be invited to deliberate with street-level officials, in forums like beat meetings and local school councils, on how public power and resources should be deployed. Externally, these group deliberations, subsequent actions, and the results of those actions should be fully documented and available to the wider public. These two provisions create avenues of accountability from the bottom up—through local citizen participation—and from the outside in—through public transparency—to help assure that street-level officials utilize their irreducible discretion to advance public ends.

To *generate innovations and diffuse them*, conventional bureaucracies rely upon policy specialists, markets utilize entrepreneurs driven by competition, and the new public management employs well-trained, but closely watched, line officials and their supervisors. Several institutional features of accountable autonomy create potentially superior capacities for responsive innovation. Devolution and heightened local authority liberate operational units from headquarters' constraints, thus creating the space and potential for constructive innovation. At the local level, deliberative problem-solving encourages constant reevaluation of received procedures to identify more effective strategies; in James Fearon's (1998) terms, deliberation may help decision-makers to overcome their constraints of bounded rationality. Furthermore, the feedback loops connecting decision, action, and results are quite small, and so enhance the potential for rapid trial-and-error learning compared to lengthy chains of hierarchical command or the relatively slow responses from price and demand signals.

At the level of the participants, accountable autonomy reduces the alienation that accompanies demands for change from centralized authority by fusing task conception and execution at the level of the individual operator. In hierarchical schemes, waves of innovation devised at the top wash down on a rank-and-file that often receives them as ill-considered and often impractical (Lipsky 1980). It is unsurprising, therefore, that lack of ground-level "buy-in" often hampers the implementation of innovations in bureaucracies. Agent participation in deliberative problem-solving sets the content of innovative strategies. Having emerged from

discussions between citizens and local officials, strategies and policies are more likely to enjoy grassroots support and enthusiasm. Innovation becomes part of the core job responsibility rather than being an occasional idiosyncratic requirement. In accountable autonomy, part of being a good teacher, policeman, principal, other public servant, or citizen requires being able to continuously envision how the job or the organization might do better, explain that vision, and then help implement it.

Finally, accountable autonomy potentially diffuses successful innovations quite rapidly to enable a kind of system-wide learning. While its provisions for devolution liberate indigenous creativity, its centralized apparatus can identify local successes and make their techniques known to others by pooling disparate experiences and making them accessible to others who might benefit (Dorf and Sabel 1998; Sabel, Fung, and Karkkainen 2000). This device is widely known in other contexts as the benchmarking of best practices.

A third mechanism in accountable autonomy might be called *cross-functional coordination*. Every organization and system must deal with complexity by breaking daunting tasks into more manageable parts, and then by developing divisions of labor and expertise appropriate to those subtasks. So, the public tasks of city management might be broken up into fire, police, schools, transportation, sewers, sanitation, and other agencies, each with their core competencies. Solutions to many urban problems, however, require jointly coordinated action on the part of two or more agencies, or between public agencies and private actors in civil society or the economy. The logic of rigid division and specialization, constraining both new management and market-based reform strategies, makes these kinds of problems seem complex and even insoluble. Deliberative local problem-solving, however, can facilitate the recombination of public and private parties necessary to overcome these barriers of complexity.

Problems that lie between the core competencies and responsibilities of several agencies are complex because effective remedial action requires coordination between horizontally separate agencies. Because no particular agency centrally bears official responsibility, all lack motive and opportunity to solve such problems. In this way, bureaucracies purchase economies of scale at the expense of scope; each specializes in a particular policy area and develops a stock of procedures and techniques to address the canonical problems that arise in that arena. Problems seem complex, then, when they do not fit these canonical types. In accountable autonomy, however, public action often acquires a more open approach, in which the scope of a solution is determined (on the fly, as it were) by the particular problems to be addressed. In Lakeville, for example, residents developed a solution involving the architectural redesign of a city park to what began as a policing issue.

A fourth way in which this democratic reform path enhances the effectiveness of public action is by creating a framework of discussion and action in which participants, citizens and officials alike, can earn each others' *trust through tests of collaboration*. The bureaucratic principle of professional autonomy demands insulation from public, politicized, nonprofessional "interference." In many urban areas, this insularity has fostered mistrust and conflict between citizens and public servants by hardening the identities and interests of each and pitting them against one another. From the perspective of officials, citizens seem unreasonably demanding, their suggestions uninformed, desires contradictory (e.g., civil rights and safe streets), their engagement unconstructive, whiny, and clueless. Several close observers of law enforcement, for example, identify these beliefs as constitutive of police culture: (1) "No one understands the real nature of police work. . . . No one outside police service . . . can comprehend what we have to do. The public is generally naive about police work"; (2) "We have to stick together. Everyone else . . . seems to be out to make our job difficult"; and (3) "Members of the public are basically unsupportive and unreasonably demanding. They all seem to think they know our job better than we do. They only want us when they need something done" (Sparrow, Moore, and Kennedy 1990). Though the levels of public trust in government varies widely, broad segments of the public hold large public agencies such as schools and police departments in low esteem and lack faith in them.

Accountable autonomy offers deliberative problem-solving to citizens and public servants as a method for reconstructing their trust in one another and modifying their respective behavior in ways that warrant trust (Sabel 1993). In contrast to the bureaucratic separation of state from society, it throws citizens and their agents together at the grassroots level. Joint problem-solving is an occasion for participants to probe each others' agendas, motives, and commitments and to identify and expand real regions of overlap. In the context of public safety, citizens may not trust police because they perceive a wide gap between what police should be doing and what they actually do. In the process, citizens can demand that police justify particular actions, or, more commonly, that they take action. If police cannot justify a particular course, reasonableness demands that they change future behavior. When such demands arise under bureaucracy, street-level agents can "pass the buck" by claiming that rules and red tape do not permit them to change dysfunctional routines. Accountable autonomy, however, removes this excuse by empowering grassroots agents to implement results of deliberation. On the other hand, police may be able to justify apparently unreasonable behaviors by providing additional information or deeper explanations.

Similarly, repeated interaction between citizens and officials in deliberative problem-solving allows each to ascertain the others' commitment to a shared goal—say, public safety or education—by observing levels of follow-through. Anecdotes about such studied trust-building—following the dictum to “trust but verify”—recur frequently in tales of participation in community policing and school governance. Initial meetings between police and residents begin as shouting matches, where each suspects that the other side had no real commitment to supposedly common goals, and then transform slowly and tentatively into problem-solving. Often, citizens and officers surprise one another by fulfilling their commitments, sometimes tenaciously. In this way, citizens and public officials can gradually and verifiably build the mutual confidence necessary for partnership and cooperation.

1.6. Sources of Fairness

Apart from the effectiveness of these public-sector organizations, a second crucial axis of evaluation concerns the fairness of their policies and actions. In the ideal, fairness in a public-school system would mean that every child enjoys an equal opportunity to gain a high-quality education for his later educational, professional, and personal pursuits. In public safety, the ideal might be that residents, regardless of location or personal characteristics, face similar and low risks of criminal victimization or nuisance. No urban area comes close to meeting these ideals of fairness. Because accountable autonomy prescribes substantial devolution of power to decentralized groups, however, some may suspect that this reform path will exacerbate unfair and inequitable outcomes.¹¹ The first risk is that decentralization will amplify the gap between differently situated groups, for instance those in wealthy neighborhoods versus those in poor ones. It may, for example, create opportunities for voice and creativity of which wealthy or well-educated residents make good use, but that are inaccessible to poorer citizens. Beyond intergroup inequities, decentralization may facilitate the domination of vocal or entrenched factions within particular groups.

Much of the inequality in service provision, opportunities, and outcomes across different neighborhoods stems from the background of social and economic disparity that characterizes all urban environments in the United States. Children from disadvantaged families and neighborhoods face much greater barriers to obtaining decent education and their parents suffer greater risks of criminal victimization due to social factors that stand quite apart from the details of how school systems or police departments are organized, governed, or even financed. It is worse than

wishful to think that any administrative reform could approach the ideal of fairness without broader measures to alter this background. Some social choices, such as the practice of funding education from ad valorem taxes on real estate, no doubt reproduce these differences (*San Antonio v. Rodriguez* 1972; Gutmann 1987). The appropriate question for administrative reform, however, is whether some paths might dampen the effects of background inequalities between neighborhoods and groups and so move toward the goal of fairness despite these daunting socioeconomic obstacles.

Accountable-autonomy reforms attempt to advance intergroup fairness through two distinctive routes. First, it should be recognized that effectiveness within school and police systems is itself an important component of fairness. One primary source of urban inequality is precisely the existence of effective schools and policing in some areas but not others. To the extent that these reforms improve the quality of service in disadvantaged areas, therefore, they contribute importantly to fairness. While bureaucratic, market-based, and new management methods also seek to enhance the fairness of public systems in this way, accountable autonomy distinctively creates channels for the least advantaged to act constructively against this unfairness. It attempts to reverse the adage that those who need democracy most use it least by creating space for efficacious voice at the most basic levels. Those low on the socioeconomic ladder, it is hoped, will use these channels to articulate demands for effective service, and for resources that they themselves can use to help direct and provide that service.

Through centralized mechanisms of support and monitoring, agencies that adopt the accountable autonomy-reform course can prioritize the neediest groups for various kinds of assistance. Given the limited resources of public organizations, they must make important choices about allocation and redistribution. A natural principle to guide this allocation in accountable autonomy is to redistribute centrally pooled energies to assist the least capable groups. In the Chicago school-governance reforms, one manifestation of this principle is the central-office policy of identifying the schools whose students perform least proficiently on standardized tests and then channeling additional supervision and resources to them. In a similar vein, the least capable neighborhood groups and police beats might be prioritized in the allocation of personnel and material for training, mobilization, and technical assistance. Finally, the mechanisms that diffuse innovations in accountable autonomy link the most successful to the least by making the creativity and good fortune of the former available to the latter. The extent to which particular agencies enact this distributive principle of channeling assistance to the most needy of course depends upon numerous contingencies such as political will, social mobi-

lization, and committed administration. In this regard, it resembles the conditional character of fairness in other reform strategies, for example the generosity of vouchers in market-based education proposals and the ethical disposition of high and low public officials under new public-management reforms.

A second kind of unfairness, less noted in administrative-reform discussions but equally important, concerns the character of action within groups. More difficult to evaluate than intergroup equity, the fairness of decision-making within localities is determined by the extent to which the perspectives of relevant parties are taken into account and their interests advanced. On this understanding, it would be unfair if the principal of Harambee Elementary had, for example, reorganized the school along Afrocentric grounds over the objections of staff and parents. It would have been unfair for a police commander to decide that speeding was Lakeville's priority policing concern if beat officers and residents worried most about drug activity in the park. Note that this conception of fairness differs from both market-driven and new-management perspectives. In the former, these administrative decisions pose no particular problem of fairness because consumers of public services can choose another school. The latter typically privileges the official judgments of correct agendas and strategies above the views of untrained citizens and users.

The participatory approach of accountable autonomy, however, puts professionals and citizens on an equal footing by charging them to develop problem-solving strategies and priorities together. This process is deliberative in that each must try to convince the other of the wisdom of its preferred course of action. It is often the case that principals and teachers offer greater contributions than parents in the formulation of instructional and curricular strategies, but these strategies often improve in the course of justification to and reflection with parents and others. One danger of this kind of deliberative problem-solving is that the outcomes will be no more fair, or substantially different, from choices made under market-driven or purely expert arrangements. Professionals may dazzle the untrained or uninitiated and assert their programs without any genuine discussion. Quite a different threat is that troublesome factions of citizens or professionals will obstruct the constructive, and perhaps wiser, recommendations of principals or police commanders. Both courses lead to unfair outcomes—the former because the views of some are improperly discounted and the latter because a faction prevents progress from which most would benefit.

Accountable autonomy addresses both of these kinds of domination by attempting to create open deliberative processes of agenda-setting and problem-solving. It does so first by altering basic administrative routines not only to devolve authority and open new channels of access to nonpro-

fessional citizens, but also to ensure that procedures and norms of deliberation govern the exercise of local power. This effort begins with the creation and diffusion of training for deliberation, facilitation, and problem-solving methodologies to groups like LSCs and beat teams. After equipping groups and individuals to deliberate, it then relies upon them to utilize these tools and take the norms of reasonableness and receptiveness seriously rather than pursuing narrow interests and goals. Doing so may be enough to avoid the expert domination or factional paralysis that often characterizes small-group interactions. When the self-regulation of local groups through deliberative norms and procedures fails, however, centralized methods should detect these outcomes and attempt to correct them. External review of problem-solving procedures, for example, can help detect the undue influence and control of professionals or factions, especially when those who are excluded voice procedural complaints. Performance monitoring can help to detect paralysis or inaction. In both cases, external sanctions and supportive interventions can help set deliberation back on track.

1.7. Exploring Accountable Autonomy, in Theory and Practice

The sections above contend that empowered participation offers an attractively democratic course of institutional reform that departs from the received organizational templates of hierarchical bureaucracy, marketization, and the new public managerialism. This contention is composed of three general linked claims: (1) institutional reforms that follow the design of accountable autonomy can spur (2) robust direct citizen participation and deliberation that (3) contributes to the fairness and effectiveness of governance outcomes through a variety of mechanisms. The chapters that follow explore each of these stages. A first set of questions relates the concepts of participation and deliberation to institutional designs. How do the institutional-design features of the CPD and CPS constitute deliberation, participation, and empowered voice for Chicago residents? In other words, how do organizational changes, new rights, and novel procedures translate these abstract, potentially attractive, notions into opportunities for citizens and street-level bureaucrats to join in urban governance: to exercise influence, learn about each other and their environment, and solve problems? And, as a matter of institutional history, why did the CPD and CPS develop in this participatory-democratic direction when their counterparts in other cities pursued new-managerialist or market-oriented strategies? A second set of questions concerns the quality of the democratic processes established by these institutional reforms. In particular, what is the character of participation and deliberation within these

new institutional forms? Is participation highly biased toward better-off citizens, or unsustainably low, as some critics might expect? Does decision-making approach the ideal of *reasoned* decision-making, or do participants simply rely on their numbers, status, or expertise to exercise control? Finally, is there evidence that these reforms generate fair or effective outcomes by, for example, improving the quality of schools or safety in the streets?

The next two chapters establish the historical and conceptual foundations for this investigation by answering three questions. First, how did the CPD and CPS, which appeared to be quite hide-bound hierarchical agencies in the mid-1980s, come to embrace deliberative and participatory-democratic reforms in the 1990s? For both school reform and community policing, sophisticated nongovernmental organizations that were expert in education and public safety issues leveraged popular discontent to advance a reform agenda that focused on neighborhood involvement. Those who traditionally controlled the urban educational agenda—the Board of Education and the Chicago Teachers Union—were initially quite hostile to this reform course. With community policing, by contrast, police officials and the mayor embraced community policing and championed it as their own initiative.

In what ways did the 1988 LSC legislation and the development of CAPS in 1995 constitute empowered participation and deliberation? The model, even to the level of its central concepts of deliberation and civic engagement, contains theoretical abstractions that attempt to distill the underlying design principles and features of actual reforms. These are not part of the vocabulary that officials and citizens have used to describe their own efforts. Chapter 2 thus elaborates the idea of accountable autonomy by showing how the powers, procedures, and responsibilities that were placed upon citizens and street-level bureaucrats in individual schools and police beats by the reorganizations of the CPS and CPD do indeed formally institute devolution, citizen participation, and deliberative problem-solving at the neighborhood level.

The third chapter then explores the second part of accountable-autonomy institutions by describing the roles and functions of central authorities both conceptually and as they actually operate in the CPS and CPD. Whereas central powers in conventional bureaucratic models formulate, direct, and supervise subordinate units such as school personnel and beat officers, central authorities in both the CPS and CPD have developed mechanisms to support, monitor, and selectively intervene to bolster the problem-solving efforts of local deliberative bodies. This chapter shows how, as a design solution, these arrangements can address classic pitfalls of deliberative and participatory democracy such as parochialism, factionalism, elite domination, and paralysis. In their operationalization,

however, both the CPS and CPD fall short of the ideal. One obstacle has been the difficulty of developing novel and effective management, support, and oversight mechanisms that depart from the conventional wisdoms of hierarchical supervision or market-like decentralization. A second, more fundamental block is that the reform visions and commitments within these organizations have oscillated between the distinctive Chicago path of deliberative participation and more conventional and insular managerial methods.

Given these formal provisions for grassroots engagement, who actually participates? As with any scheme for civic engagement and direct democracy, success depends upon the character of actual participation. The generation of fair and effective decisions and actions in accountable autonomy relies upon the involvement and collaboration of ordinary citizens and street-level officials. Outcomes depend not only upon the presence of citizens in the aggregate, but also upon the representativeness of those who choose to participate. The absence of citizens from poor neighborhoods or minority groups, for example, would indicate serious systemic malaise. Chapter 4 explores the quantitative shape of participation under the CPS and CPD reforms. Surprisingly, citizen engagement under Chicago school and police reform defies conventional explanations of political engagement that rely on socioeconomic status or resources as central predictors. People from poor neighborhoods, for example, participate as much or more than those from wealthy ones. Contrary to expectations of some critics of deliberation, women participate more than men. The chapter then presents city-wide participation data to develop an explanation that relies upon policy design: people from low-income neighborhoods participate when doing so yields tangible results in areas of urgent concern to them.

Though substantial levels of participation and the absence of severe bias are necessary conditions for fair and effective deliberative problem-solving, they are far from sufficient. Chapters 5 and 6 offer a more textured understanding of the strengths and pitfalls of deliberation by examining the course of participatory problem-solving as it unfolded over several years in six Chicago South Side neighborhoods. Generally, these case materials contribute much-needed empirical texture to the predominantly abstract and theoretical content of current debates about deliberative democracy. Specifically, these studies explore the micromechanisms, processes, and outcomes of actual deliberations. When, for example, is deliberation inclusive and reasonable? What conditions, on the other hand, generate factions, domination by elites, paralysis, or ignorance? Aside from the democratic quality of discursive local processes, these case studies also afford some purchase on questions about the administrative and technical contributions of accountable autonomy. Sections 1.5 and 1.6

above put forward some mechanisms through which institutions of accountable autonomy might generate fair and effective outcomes. When do actual deliberations about school and police governance employ such mechanisms to produce innovative solutions? When, on the other hand, does popular participation hamper the efforts of capable professionals or unfairly divert their energies to serve powerful constituencies at the expense of weaker ones?

Chapter 5 offers insight into these questions by examining actual problem-solving processes in three cases that differ along the dimension of economic wealth. Two cases analyze school-improvement planning and community policing in poor neighborhoods, and the third probes similar efforts in a wealthy school. Confirming the expectations and findings of previous inquiries, poor residents and their public servants do indeed find it more difficult to deliberate and solve public problems than do wealthy professionals. Even citizens and officials from poor neighborhoods act effectively under certain conditions, however. When they do, participatory opportunities and powers yield greater benefits for them than for their more well-off counterparts.

Beyond poverty, several political theorists have criticized deliberative democracy because it can allow culturally or economically advantaged participants to dominate and exploit vulnerable ones in diverse or socially conflicted contexts. Chapter 6 uses ethnographic evidence to explore the dynamics of deliberation in three internally diverse and balkanized environments. The first case study examines community policing in a neighborhood that is segregated between one group of professional and middle-class white residents and another of lower middle-class African-Americans. In a second neighborhood, all of the residents are relatively poor, but the relevant differences fall along racial and cultural lines: one group is African-American while the other is Hispanic. In the third, factions of parents and staff fought each other to a stalemate that paralyzed school governance. One central finding from these cases is that unguided *laissez-faire* discussion does indeed often result in domination of one group by another, but that facilitated and structured deliberation can generate improbable but constructive alliances between wealthy white professional residents, their lower middle-class African-American neighbors, Hispanic residents, and the local police that serve all of them.

The final chapter concludes by assessing Chicago's experiments with participatory and deliberative democracy and then turning to the question of generalization. Is the design of accountable autonomy limited to specific urban policy problems or even to the unique political conditions and history of Chicago? Or, it is applicable to a much broader range of governance challenges? Beyond the arenas of public education and policing, reforms that embrace many of the principles and elements of accountable

autonomy have begun to emerge in arenas such as environmental regulation, municipal budgeting, and economic and social development. These diverse experiments illustrate how accountable autonomy, as a strategy of participatory-democratic, administrative reform is applicable to many areas of public concern in which market-based or hierarchical models seem inappropriate or ineffective. If the scope of accountable autonomy can be extended to an array of policy arenas, its multifarious application would create diverse opportunities to improve the quality of governance through citizen engagement. This, in turn, suggests an ideal of citizenship that lies between a fantastic ancient participatory ideal, in which every citizen ought to be engaged in all public matters, and the modern reality, in which few deeply or frequently participate in the affairs of state at all. The ideal of citizenship in accountable autonomy is one that respects the contemporary constraints and complex realities that prohibit a person from engaging all of the public problems that merit attention. It asks, however, that each consider at times stepping away from purely private pursuits to participate in public problem-solving around urgent issues of common concern. It does so by striving toward institutional reform that leverages such participation to amplify the wisdom and impact of public action. Simultaneously, this engagement empowers people to make governance an endeavor that is in part their own rather than a distant set of actions from which benefits are extracted or burdens suffered.