

a formidable potential competitor to democracy” (p. 108) in Taiwan seems exaggerated: Indeed, neither Taiwanese society nor, above all, its elite seriously envisage a reappraisal of the democratic consensus, all the less so in view of the challenge represented by the rising power of authoritarian mainland China.

Another case where the lessons to be learned are not quite clear is Japan, which is the only country studied for which multiple surveys from the mid-1980s to a 2003 are available. While the editors exhibit reservations about public support for democracy in Japan, Ken'ichi Ikeada and Masaru Kohno argue that “Japan’s democracy is firmly grounded in the Japanese people’s perceptions and values” (p. 185). While they find low levels of overall satisfaction with democracy and institutional trust, those findings “are not exceptional in the recent history of Japan”; with regard to political efficacy, they acknowledge that “there has been virtually no change over the past twenty-five years” (p. 176). Hence, the two authors conclude that “even though the Japanese have long been dissatisfied with incumbent authorities, they nonetheless remain relatively highly committed to democracy as an ideal or principle” (p. 179).

Finally, it is unfortunate that there was no systematic analysis of factors to account for the country-level findings and the variations or similarities arising from cross-national and cross-regional comparisons. While the editors mention some possible explanations, such as the previous authoritarian regimes, levels of socioeconomic modernization, and the political performance of actual regimes, a more in-depth analysis is absent from the volume. But all books have their limits. Overall, this one provides both new data and unique insights into the political cultures of East Asia. It is essential reading for students and scholars who are interested in the politics of democratizing Asia, the comparative study of democratic change, and political culture.

When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation. By James S. Fishkin. New York:

Oxford University Press, 2009. 256p. \$29.95.

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— Graham Smith, *University of Southampton, UK*

James Fishkin is an impressive individual. For most academics, it is enough to critique: to find fault with existing institutional arrangements, while offering token (often idealistic) suggestions for rearranging the institutional furniture. But Fishkin has done what (to my knowledge) no other democratic theorist has attempted, namely, to design his own democratic institution—the deliberative poll (DP)—and spend more than 15 years promoting its adoption and analyzing the results of its implementation (the first DP was held in the UK in 1994). Armed with the DP, he has ventured across continents, political systems, levels of governance, and issues: from the United States to Europe

(East, West and the European Union itself) to Australia and to China and Thailand, on topics including candidate selection, social and education policy, urban budgeting, and energy choices. On a theoretical and practical level, Fishkin has become synonymous with the DP and the form of deliberative democracy that he believes it embodies. And it is in relation to this trajectory that his latest book, *When the People Speak*, should be understood: as a systematic theoretical and empirical defense of deliberation as practiced in DPs.

At points, the book embodies broader ambitions: On a number of occasions, Fishkin convincingly articulates “the need for a social science research program assessing the merits and limitations of various institutional designs that might realize deliberative democracy” (p. 98), where “[t]he idea is to assess the designs that best stand up to critical scrutiny so as to capture the promise of deliberation and avoid potential objections to it” (p. 157). And the structure of the book provides evidence of how Fishkin believes such a research program should progress. In the first half of the book, he offers a theoretical explanation of what he terms the “trilemma of democratic reform”: an inability to fully realize three basic democratic principles—political equality, participation, and deliberation—in any single democratic institution. He then turns his attention to the analysis of four competing democratic theories—competitive democracy, elite deliberation, participatory democracy, and deliberative democracy—which, he argues, aim to realize different combinations of democratic principles: the three design principles, plus a fourth “outcome-related” principle of nontyranny. Having differentiated deliberative democracy, which he takes to be focused primarily on enacting political equality and deliberation, the rest of the book turns to an investigation of how deliberation can be made *practical* and *consequential* and take place under *difficult conditions*. While one may disagree with the details of the author’s strategy, he lays the basis for a theoretically informed social science research program to assess democratic innovations.

I am highly sympathetic to Fishkin’s general approach in this book, but the specifics of the analysis raise two broad sets of questions: one theoretical, the other empirical. At a theoretical level, I concur with Fishkin’s insight that any particular democratic institution involves a compromise in the manner and extent to which the principles (I prefer the term “goods”) we associate with democratic practice can be realized. But does his “trilemma” accurately capture the range of democratic principles that are at stake in designing institutions? If we are interested in questions of democratic engagement, then the principle of popular control surely needs to be considered (and there are other candidates, such as publicity). He creates problems for himself by not giving systematic attention to popular control: At some points, he refers to forms of citizen engagement such as referendum that can give citizens

decision-making power, at others to designs such as DP, which are best construed in terms of public consultation. Perhaps Fishkin would argue that popular control is captured under his principle of “participation,” but this principle seems primarily to refer to the idea of “mass” citizen engagement, rather than the specific issue of decision-making power (after all, we could imagine a small sample of citizens who are given direct control of a decision). Different democratic designs realize popular control to different degrees and at different points in the political decision-making process. Thus, popular control is arguably part of the design dilemma that he is raising—but its inclusion (along with other principles) would spoil a rather neat trilemma, a favored form of analysis for Fishkin given his earlier pre-DP work on the trilemma of justice.

A second theoretical concern relates to his conceptualization of deliberative democracy. Almost as soon as the theory is introduced, it is recast as “microcosmic deliberation”: “a modest and practical strategy for realizing deliberative democracy” (p. 81). While I and others share Fishkin’s interest in minipublics that employ some form of (more or less) random sampling, to immediately conceive of deliberative democracy in this limited manner does a disservice to the rich theoretical literature and the variety of designs that (more or less) institutionalize aspects of deliberation.

It is this limitation of deliberative democracy to forms of microcosmic deliberation that then allows Fishkin, in the second half of the book, to focus empirical attention almost completely on the experience of institutionalizing DPs. He steps away from the promise of assessing “the merits and limitations of various institutional designs that might realize deliberative democracy” (p. 98). While he occasionally alludes to the promise of his (and Bruce Ackerman’s) proposal for Deliberation Day, other “microcosmic” designs are given short shrift, typically in less than a page, and typically because they fail to realize random selection to the same degree as DPs. Citizens’ juries, twenty-first-century town meetings, consensus conferences, and the British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly are all treated in this way, although the last two designs are given limited praise for the extent to which they have been institutionalized formally in the political process (another indication of the need to consider popular control as a design criterion). Democratic designs that institutionalize forms of deliberation but which do not utilize random sampling are simply discounted: There is no mention, for example, of the extensive studies of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre (and elsewhere), aside from a footnote that suggests that it is not of interest to deliberative democrats because of its failure to institutionalize “scientific samples” (p. 218). Without random sampling, then by definition designs lack deliberative qualities worth our attention. My general concern here is that the hundred pages that make up the empirical half of the book almost exclusively focus on the *merits* of DP (and

occasionally Deliberation Day), whereas Fishkin saves the analysis of *limitations* to every other potential design.

Fishkin’s idea of a systematic social science research program on democratic innovations is timely, and the general strategy that recognizes the compromise between democratic goods or principles that any particular democratic design entails is an important insight. But this book does not fulfil this particular promise. For readers seeking a summary of developments in the implementation and analysis of DP, it will be very useful, but they should be aware that the tendency is to focus on the merits rather than limitations of the design (of which there are a number).

A final comment on the DVD, *Europe in One Room*, that accompanies the book. The film offers an indispensable insight into how a DP works and will play a useful pedagogical function: It will enliven discussions on democratic innovations in the seminar room and also enlighten those many critics of Fishkin who clearly do not understand or appreciate the design’s dynamics. It also gives an insight into the challenging logistics of organizing a DP—let alone one that brings together citizens from across the European Union. That said, Fishkin and his longtime collaborator Bob Luskin make for the most unusual pair of heroic leads.

America’s Uneven Democracy: Race, Turnout, and Representation in City Politics. By Zoltan L. Hajnal. New

York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 254p. \$23.99.
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— Melissa R. Michelson, *California State University, East Bay*

Pundits and politicians often note the importance of voter turnout. They claim that who will win, whether or not power will change hands, and whether one party or another will gain a majority of seats all depend on who decides to vote. That turnout matters. Yet, as Zoltan L. Hajnal notes in the introduction to this important and powerful volume, political scientists generally do not believe that turnout matters. The preferences of voters are generally identical to the preferences of nonvoters, and thus election outcomes—both who wins and the policies that result—would not change if turnout changed.

Hajnal claims that the focus of most scholars on national elections and partisanship masks the bias of uneven turnout in local elections. At this level, lower turnout is associated with significant bias by race and class. Nationally, minorities are a small portion of the electorate, but minorities often comprise a substantial portion of local populations, making uneven turnout by race even more likely to cause biased election results. In this book, Hajnal proves quite clearly that uneven turnout by race at the local level results in significant bias in election results, with consequences not only for descriptive representation but also, perhaps more importantly, for substantive representation. In isolation, the individual data sets that he employs are often flawed (e.g., outdated or small samples), but as a