

setting the agenda for direct democracy. Various essays in the *Designing* volume (by Dennis Thompson, Mark Warren, Fred Cutler et al., and John Frerejohn) and by Fournier and his coauthors in *When Citizens Decide* all show how the CA model offers a promising response to the basic problem with current direct-democracy efforts for large-scale societies: The proposal power is captured by special interests or policy elites. Even with the initiative as in many Western states in the United States, it is not effectively in the hands of the public but, rather, in the hands of special interests who can finance the signature gathering. The CA model allows a representative and deliberative minipublic to take ownership of the agenda-setting process in the name of the people.

Lastly, why should the proposal power, the power to set the agenda for direct democracy, be in the hands of a minipublic? Why would this be an improvement if it could somehow be institutionalized, at least for selected issues? Why are the judgments of such a group authoritative or legitimate for such an important function? Both books cite the similar role of the Athenian Council of 500, a randomly selected body that deliberated for a year and set the agenda for the Assembly in Ancient Athens.

Even with such a venerable historical precedent, however, why should a voter pay attention? Several answers are offered. Cutler and his colleagues say that the claim boils down to “there must have been someone a lot like me, thinking like me, wanting what I want” (p. 188). Such a person will have had good conditions (information, access to competing arguments), and that person was probably among those who recommended the change. But this *individual* connection to a member of the microcosm faces the problem that dissenters from the CA actually campaigned against the proposal (*Designing*, p. 187). Which members do I identify with, and what are the information costs in figuring that out? Another rationale, based on the *collective* results of a deliberative process by a representative microcosm—representative in its viewpoints and demographics (and, hence, presumably interests)—is offered by Andre Blais and colleagues in the *Designing* volume: “[I]n principle, such a decision should correspond to the decision that would be reached by the entire electorate if it were well informed. The composition of the Assembly should assure that it reflects the general values and concerns of the population and the information and deliberation processes should assure that the decision is a wise one” (pp. 143–44). The microcosm, in other words, reflects what the public *would* think under transparently good conditions for thinking about it.

Frerejohn mentions such a claim of “hypothetical deliberation” but prefers a more modest comparison of the microcosm to courts and agencies: “[I]t can claim a right to base its recommendations on substantive value judgments and on relevant information from the community

of experts” (*Designing*, p. 211). But whose value judgments? If the microcosm is not representative in its viewpoints, those values may be quite different from the values of the public at large. They may be the values of activists and partisans who have disproportionately self-selected themselves. And public mistrust of experts, often hired guns for special interests, is rife in most advanced countries. Cutler and his colleagues show that knowledge of the Citizens Assembly and its workings as representative of ordinary citizens was a major factor in support of its recommendations. And in the Ontario case, the failure is traceable in part to a communication failure. A majority of the public actually believed that the Assembly members had been “handpicked by the government” (*When Citizens*, p. 135).

Both books show that when voters understood that a representative group of ordinary citizens deliberated, it was an effective recommendation. Suspicion of experts and political maneuvers by policy elites suggest that the normatively ambitious claim—this is, what the people would think about the issue under transparently good conditions for thinking about it—is not only normatively appealing but probably good politics.

These two books will stand as the definitive source-books for the debate about the Citizens Assemblies. They should nurture a further debate about appropriate applications, institutional designs, and possible avenues of influence for deliberative democracy. They show that the public is capable of determining its will if it is engaged under good conditions. What are the avenues, the strategic moments in which that public will can be made consequential? These books are an indispensable contribution to that dialogue.

The Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda. By Fawaz A. Gerges. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 272 p. \$24.95.
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Fawaz Gerges argues with a powerful and convincing voice that al-Qaeda does not provide a meaningful threat anymore, more than a decade after the attacks of 9/11/2001. Al-Qaeda only continues to loom large in the imagination of Western policy makers and publics because of a combination of cultural, economic and political factors inherent to the West. It also only continues to replenish its thinned ranks because of the resentment produced by damaging American policies, including the use of drone attacks. Making al-Qaeda appear significant through words and actions, Gerges argues, creates a self-fulfilled prophecy.

The book includes many valuable contributions. One is its interesting synopsis of the debates among the leaders of the Arab *ansar* (a better term for the so-called Afghan Arabs that many authors, including Gerges, use) after the Soviet defeat about the direction that the jihad should

take (fighting dictators in Muslim lands, liberating Palestine, pushing further towards Moscow, or fighting the United States). Another is its illustration of the complicated relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban (Chapter 1). The book also contextualizes the very important argument made earlier by Michael Scheuer in his own books that al-Qaeda's strategy was to provoke the US to embroil itself in long conflicts in the Muslim World that would lead to draining the US economy and, subsequently, its demise as a superpower that bolsters tyrants, supports Israel's violence against the Palestinians and other Arabs, and hinders the advancement of Muslims more broadly.

The book shines in the second part of Chapter 3, where Gerges describes the critique of Osama Bin-Laden's attack on American civilians by other proponents, or previous proponents, of jihad in Egypt. While this book only occasionally relies on original research (most of its narrative is based on journalistic and official publications), Gerges's knowledge of the thinking of "reformed" Egyptian militants allows him to provide a particularly interesting summary of their writings on the topic. One wonders, however, how much of a role the Egyptian intelligence services played in the production of these writings.

In another strong chapter, the fourth, Gerges charts how the Bush Administration, Bin Laden and al-Zarqawi (leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq) all damaged themselves and their causes by the use of massive power or extreme violence against civilians. Bin Laden gained little traction with Muslim publics from 9/11 but benefitted immensely from the Bush Administration's brutal occupation of Iraq. Later, Zarqawi's use of beheadings and mass attacks on Shiite Muslims dissipated all the goodwill al-Qaeda gained from helping the resistance against the US invasion of Iraq. Gerges eloquently weaves findings from surveys and analyses of intellectual debates to make the point.

Chapter 5 drives the point home that anti-terror US activities that amount to overkill in the face of a vestigial al-Qaeda help keep al-Qaeda afloat. Al-Qaeda is an organization that is not rooted in the social structure of any country and therefore needs popular sympathy for its cause to replenish its ranks. This recruitment is therefore facilitated by the resentment produced by the inhumane and extra-judicial use of tactics such as drone attacks that have killed thousands of Muslim civilians around the world along with al-Qaeda operatives. US policies to fight al-Qaeda also included the use of torture and increased cooperation with very unpopular governments, such as in Yemen and Pakistan, leading to their demise. Gerges powerfully and convincingly makes the case that restraint, responsible policies vis-à-vis Muslims and humane behavior are much more beneficial for reducing the cost of terrorism and the potency of terrorist organizations than the policies of either the Bush or Obama administrations.

In the conclusion, Gerges builds on these points by advocating the need for the US to reconsider some of the

policies that cause enough damage to Arabs and Muslims to drive them to consider joining militant organizations that position themselves as challengers to the world's remaining super power. The policies he questions include uncritical support of Israel's military transgressions and mistreatment of Palestinians, the military occupation of Muslim lands, the posting of military forces in the Arabian Peninsula, the imposition of crippling embargoes on Iranians and other Muslim populations, and support for brutal dictators.

The book includes some surprising mistakes that do not take away from the thrust of the argument but are worth pointing out. Gerges talks of Arab *'asabiyya* (sense of solidarity and superiority over people from other tribes or over non-Arab Muslims, p. 30) within al-Qaeda but there is no sign that such *'asabiyya* exists. In fact, some key players in al-Qaeda are (were) not Arabs (e.g. the Baluch Khaled Sheikh Muhammad), the organization's ideology focuses clearly on pan-Muslim solidarity, it relies on alliances with non-Arab Islamists in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and it was forged in the crucible of the anti-Soviet jihad in defense of non-Arab Afghan Muslims along with many non-Arab *ansar*. Gerges also expands the concept of tribal *'asabiyya* to explain the coming together of the Egyptian "tribe" and peninsular "Islamist tribes" into an "unholy alliance" (p. 34)—a very unusual, and not at all rigorous, way to understand the sociology of the organization.

It is puzzling that Gerges mentions that Sayyid Qutb, a thinker and ideologue only, "spearheaded" (pp. 30–34) the Egyptian Ikhwan's secret militant branch while frequently tortured in prison—perhaps "inspired" would have been a more accurate term. It is also not correct that Bin Laden was the point of contact between Saudi and Pakistani intelligence services before 1991 (p. 47). The two intelligence services had regular, direct, high-level contact.

Another surprising assertion that is at the heart of Gerges's argument (Chapter 2) that al-Qaeda was formed out of desperation by nearly defeated "jihadis" (mujahideen is a more accurate term) is that these "jihadis" were nearly defeated in the early 1990s. While this was certainly true in Egypt where Gerges did field research, it simply was not the case in the rest of the Muslim world: Islamists were fighting tooth and nail in Algeria after being deprived of the fruit of electoral victory by a military junta, Islamists ruled in the Sudan, Hamas and Hizballah were on the rise, the Taliban were spreading in Afghanistan like wildfire, Pakistani militants were becoming more brazen, and mujahideen from around the world were supporting fellow Muslims in Bosnia against genocidal Serbian militias. Gerges's problematic generalization unfortunately detracts from the other important points of Chapter 2, particularly the lack of support among "jihadis" for the internationalization of their struggle and a direct conflict with the US, and how Bin Laden kept the Taliban in the dark

regarding his plans of attacking the US in 2001, even after his advisory council asked him to inform Mullah Omar and seek his consent.

These problematic digressions do not take much away from the value and general thrust of Gerges's book. Political elites in the US and some key European powers suffer from endemic groupthink on issues of policy in the Muslim world. This book does a wonderful job of deconstructing their assumptions and strategies (but not motivations). This is not exactly a work of original research but it is well written and generally compelling. Teachers will find it useful for undergraduate courses on US foreign policy in the Muslim world, intelligent readers will find it revealing, and non-specialized academics will find it informative.

Monitoring Democracy: When International Election Observation Works, and Why It Often Fails. By Judith G. Kelley. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. 352p. \$80.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.

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International election monitoring has become a near-universal practice in young democracies and hybrid regimes, but we still know little about the behavior of monitors and whether they matter for democratic development. Summarizing and extending her past work, Judith G. Kelley presents a wide-ranging and theoretically rich account of election monitoring. Whereas Susan Hyde's *The Pseudo-Democrat's Dilemma* (2011) concentrates on the strategic interaction of monitors, autocrats, and domestic audiences, Kelley's *Monitoring Democracy* focuses more closely on the characteristics of the monitors and how their assessments are derived. Although the author ultimately expresses optimism, the book presents a complex picture of monitors' biases and compromises.

Kelley addresses three main questions. First, why has election monitoring become so widespread? The answer is tackled from two perspectives: why international organizations have chosen to monitor elections and why governments grant them access (Chap. 2). She argues that the supply of monitors was driven by the international community's growing emphasis on elections as a component of human rights and the desire of Western actors to shepherd states transitioning to democracy at the end of the Cold War. Though rare before 1990, international monitoring is now present in roughly three in four elections in nonconsolidated democracies, effectively becoming an international norm expected of legitimate governments.

Why do countries, including many autocracies, invite election monitors? Besides the international rewards, Kelley argues that allowing monitors provides a valuable signal to domestic audiences. For weak democracies, an international stamp of approval encourages political losers to accept the result, as was critical in Mexico in 2006. For

autocracies, monitoring has become sufficiently common that "the stigma associated with not inviting monitors motivated even cheating governments to invite monitors to avoid an automatic stamp of illegitimacy" (p. 31). However, a number of regimes—such as Egypt, Singapore, and Russia—have spurned international monitors without any discernible penalties. In general, Kelley could have provided more evidence regarding the punishments that are associated with avoiding monitors or cheating in front of them.

Second, what influences monitors' assessments of elections? There are several components to this, including differences between monitoring organizations (Chap. 3) and the relationship between specific types of violations and overall quality ratings (Chap. 4). As Kelley explains, there is surprising variation in the leniency of different monitoring organizations, with some comprising a "shadow market" of observers willing to provide autocrats the illusion of international credibility. Later, she makes the important point that only the tougher monitors appear to have a positive effect on election quality.

Monitors' assessments are, unfortunately, reported in the media as a simple thumbs up or thumbs down, but their election reports delve into much greater specificity. To analyze these reports, Kelley employs a thorough original coding of the monitors' data records, a previously untapped source of information. She finds that election-day cheating and legal problems are especially likely to lead to a negative overall assessment, whereas preelection irregularities are more often overlooked. Oddly, Kelley finds that preelectional violence is *positively* related to overall quality ratings, which, she speculates, is due to monitors' fear of inspiring more violence in protest if they condemn the election.

An intriguing question for future research concerns geopolitical interests and how they factor into monitoring behavior. Kelley offers examples to suggest that American interests and alliances with target states blunted the pressure to allow monitors (as in Egypt) or softened the tone of election assessments (as in Bosnia in 1996). She also finds that foreign aid predicts more favorable reports despite being unrelated to actual election quality, suggesting that monitors are more lenient toward internationally favored states (p. 70). A more systematic analysis could add to the study of both autocratic durability and the interaction of norms and realist interests among international actors.

Third, does international monitoring improve the quality of elections? In particular, does the presence of monitors in a given election improve its conduct (Chap. 7)? Two major problems arise in this analysis. The first is the nonrandom determination of the elections that are monitored, a product of strategic selection by both observers and observed. Kelley uses matching in this analysis, but correctly acknowledges (at least in the appendix) that matching has no advantage in dealing with endogeneity