that juries systematically either misunderstand the law or the evidence or discriminate against corporate or other types of parties.

Vidmar and Hans do note several areas, however, in which the jury system poses problems. A great strength of jury deliberation, they argue, is the ability of the jury to draw on broadly diverse perspectives from the community. Although juries have become much more representative of the general populace over the past two centuries, low participation rates in some jurisdictions, unfair methods of selecting the jury pool, and the use of peremptory challenges can all undermine the breadth of jury representation. Moreover, in certain areas, such as capital cases, cases involving claims of mental illness, and acquaintance rape prosecutions, juries often reflect community biases and stereotypes that may undermine the fact-finding process. The authors also note that in complex litigation, legal "instructions can sometimes be mangled by the jurors" (p. 342).

On the whole, however, Vidmar and Hans find that these are correctible deficiencies and that the sharper criticisms of the jury system are simply unsupportable. Even more important, the positive role the jury plays in the American legal and constitutional system more than offsets any deficiencies of the jury system. In this highly readable and lively work, which should be readily accessible to students and non-lawyers as well as to those more directly involved in the legal system, the authors conclude that "our verdict is strongly in favor of the American jury" (p. 346).

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Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond *by Abdulkader H. Sinno. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2008. 336 pp. $39.95.*

This is a hard book to tackle. It is not as clearly organized as it might have been, and (especially in the opening theoretical chapters) its thread often gets lost in difficult, repetitive, jargon-laden prose. Yet for anyone interested in insurgency and counterinsurgency, Afghanistan and Pakistan, or late-period Soviet military history, the book is worth the effort. Abdulkader H. Sinno sheds new light on the organizational politics and sociology of Afghanistan's morphing militia groups, and on the 30 years of warfare engulfing the country from the Soviet invasion of 1979 to today's NATO-led peace enforcement operations.

Sinno also proposes (and defends well) a very straightforward and generalizable set of arguments, although they take a bit of parsing to find. Namely: Decentralized militias formed on the basis of competitive patron-client relationships are good at harassing their enemies and hard to eradicate, as long as they have reliable outside sources of funding; if one group is weakened or defeated, another competing militia is always ready to take its place. This makes them better at insurgency warfare than many centralized organizations, which can be easier to decapitate or co-opt. Yet only those militias that can use

geographical "safe areas" to turn themselves into independent, centralized institutions, with steadfast leaders who are secure from assassination, will eventually win the war for territorial control. Otherwise, the pressure on patrons to out-bid their rivals in order to keep their followers, and to attract new ones, will lead them to extol violence even when it would seem to harm their ultimate political cause. No matter how strong the enemy or how good the peace deal that is offered, they will keep on fighting; if they manage to defeat that enemy in a war of attrition, the militia leaders will then turn against each other.

In the empirical chapters of the book, Sinno demonstrates in great detail how these arguments fit the case of Afghanistan. Through painstaking research, he has identified the organizational structure of each major militia group in several different time periods. He convincingly explains, using only these simple structural variables and their evolution across time, why the anti-Soviet militias convinced Moscow to withdraw, why they then turned on each other instead of establishing a stable new Afghan state, why the Taliban succeeded in routing them, why the assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud was crucial for Taliban efforts to control the country, why the Taliban were so easily thrown back by the U.S.-led invasion force after September 11, and why the Taliban have managed to reconstitute themselves now into a strong fighting force using the safe-area of the Pakistani tribal frontier. In the closing chapter, Sinno uses multivariate statistics to demonstrate that his model fits not only Afghanistan, but a total of 41 wars involving 133 organizations.

The book therefore accomplishes a crucial social science goal: it develops a parsimonious and generalizable theory that explains a wide range of behavior, without the need to resort to other variables (such as religion, ethnicity, ideology, or unique factors of anthropology or history). Sinno concludes with a set of predictions about other cases, using his findings to provide useful advice for policymakers. While he only mentions in passing the relevance of his findings for the Middle East, it is striking how well his arguments seem to explain ongoing conflicts everywhere from the Palestinian territories to Iraq. For all of these reasons, this book has great value, despite being a difficult and sometimes frustrating read.

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The Second World: Empires and Influence in the New Global Order
by Parag Khanna. New York, Random House, 2008. 496 pp. $29.00.

In his ambitious attempt to make sense of the world order of the early twenty-first century, Parag Khanna, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation, has produced a book that is arguably as chaotic and confusing as the world it seeks to explain.