

Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us. By Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)

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***Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us.* By Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-19-974743-6. Bibliography. Index. Pp. viii-240. \$35.00.**

Friction takes a refreshingly newer look at radicalization, and it should be on the list of every reader who is interested in studying and understanding radicalization. The organization of the book is simple, and the authors do an exceptional job of using specific historical examples relevant to each mechanism. *Friction* is academically researched and based on a historical analysis of the radicalization process, using case studies from the era of the People's Will (the first stated terrorist group) during Czarist Russia in the late 1880s, to more contemporary profiles of terrorist organizations. From this historical examination, the authors extract twelve mechanisms of political radicalization that influence individuals to step into radical circles. The mechanisms are grouped into individual, group, and mass radicalization categories, and include personal grievance, group grievance, slippery slope, love, risk and status, unfreezing, group polarization, group competition, group isolation, jujitsu politics, hatred, and martyrdom.

Previous literature addressing radicalization issues revolved around the identification of steps on how to *identify* or *convert* individuals who have become radicalized so they can become *normal* again. The main argument of *Friction* is that radicalized individuals are not abnormal. They are normal people who lead normal lives who have strong beliefs and passions and at a certain point in their lives (possibly in response to a trigger event) begin to act on those strong beliefs in response to any number of internal and external influences. The authors also point out that sometimes, radicalization is good and radicalized persons motivate others to take action for the good of humanity. The authors use Doctors without Borders and the 2010 Haiti earthquake response as examples of radicalized behaviors and actions employed for the good of others.

The argument about radicals being normal individuals and not evil, crazy persons is the key point introduced immediately to the reader. The authors state, "It is a psychological trajectory that, given the right circumstances, can happen to any person, group, or nation. The trajectory is not right or wrong; it is amoral in the sense that radicalization can occur for

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causes both good and bad" (p. 4). Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko want their readers to understand that a mind shift is required to properly understand radicalization and that:

"...those who enter must leave behind the orderly and comfortable world in which normal people do not do terrible things. Full admission requires examining how we are ourselves susceptible to radicalizing influences. (p. 4)"

While the majority of the book is a historical analysis of the mechanisms of radicalization, the most intriguing part is in Chapter 14, where the authors conduct an analysis of how the mechanisms of radicalization influenced Usama bin Ladin. The authors take the readers through each mechanism and explain how it did or did not influence ibn Ladin to become the terrorist icon he ultimately became.

Both authors have an academic background in social psychology and have done extensive research into terrorist and political environments. They have a clear understanding of the psychology of the individual in concert with the influences of social groups and society in general. Clark McCauley is a Rachel C. Hale Professor of Sciences and Mathematics and co-director of the Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict at Bryn Mawr College. His research and publications focus on political conflict. Sophia Moskalenko is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and a consultant with the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, TN. Her research and publications focus on group identification, political activism, radicalization, and terrorism. Each author brings unique insight into understanding the radicalization problems in the world.

Everyone who is fighting against radicalized individuals should read this book so they have a baseline understanding of what they are up against and how individuals who are radicalized can take a perceived wrongdoing from an event in their childhood or early adulthood and use that event as a foundation for radicalization later in life. On a positive note, if one wants to radicalize others for the good of humanity, reading this book will help him or her understand what is involved in motivating others to join a cause and find passion for that cause. As the authors stated, "It seems likely that the same mechanisms that move a few to terrorism also move many to lower levels of commitment and risk taking for a political cause." (p. 215)

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