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INTRODUCTION: RADICALIZATION AND CONFLICT IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

Imagine a gigantic snow-capped mountain with two groups of people living alongside one another in the green valley below. The two groups can live in peace in the valley if they agree on how to share water and other resources in a way that seems fair to both of them. However, in some situations members of one or both groups come to feel they are being treated unjustly. In search of alternatives, one group starts climbing the mountain in order to gain control of the sources of water high on its snow-capped peaks, and the second group does the same, each wrongly imagining that the solution to the problems they experience in their shared valley are to be found by gaining command of those water sources.

The people in each group imagine that if they reach a higher level and position themselves above the other group, they will be able to become dominant and capture a greater share of water for themselves. The higher the groups climb, the farther behind they leave the agriculture in the valley,

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Mutual Radicalization: How Groups and Nations Drive Each Other to Extremes, by F. M. Moghaddam
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and the more difficult it becomes for them to think clearly and act rationally. As they make their way higher and higher up the mountain, the thin air and increasingly harsh conditions result in the two groups becoming more and more irrational: They lose touch with the real reasons they do what they do and even become confused about what they are actually doing. They begin to confuse imagination with reality—to believe that the threatening phantoms they see are real. For each group, the other takes on an increasingly fearful shape. The imagined enemy casts a hideous shadow across the entire valley below.

Violence flares up between the groups, as each tries to capture the sources of water. The phantoms they imagined now come to life in the intensifying fighting. Engaged in the cycle of violence, the groups become even more irrational. The mountaintop is covered with snow and shrouded in impenetrable clouds. The groups have become ensnared in a spiral, taking more and more extreme positions in response to what they imagine as the increasing threat from the enemy.

We are all familiar with some aspects of these patterns, from family feuds such as those between the Hatfields and McCoys to the families in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, from the troubles between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland and between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims in Iraq, the violence associated with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, and the dynamics between jihadists and extreme right-wing nationalists in the West.

MUTUAL RADICALIZATION

This book is about the powerful dynamic and destructive process I have termed *mutual radicalization*, which occurs when two groups take increasingly extreme positions opposing one another, reacting against real or imagined threats, moving further and further apart in points of view, mobilizing their resources to launch attacks, and finally attempting to weaken and destroy each other. A key feature of mutual radicalization is that it is a process that can only emerge through interactions *between* groups and nations. The properties of mutual radicalization can only be understood by examining relationships between (and not just focusing on what goes on within) isolated groups and nations. This reminds us of the gestalt idea of the whole being more than the sum of its parts (see Moghaddam, 2005) and of Vygotsky's (1978) view that to understand cognitive processes we need to look first at the social level of relationships between people, and second at the level of processes within individuals. Although Vygotsky's main focus was on interindividual behavior, his general approach is also applicable to intergroup relations.

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A typical outcome of this mutual radicalization is *pathological hatred*, in which each side prioritizes "your pain, my gain" and interprets a loss for the other side as a gain for itself, with the destruction of the other bringing maximum self-satisfaction. The dynamic process of mutual radicalization can involve individuals competing against other individuals, as when two people become increasingly hardened in their hatred toward and acts of aggression against one another. But in this text I focus on the most destructive form of mutual radicalization, which involves large groups, and the most devastating cases, which involve violent groups mobilized on the basis of religion and ethnicity, as well as nation-states mobilized by nationalist fervor.

A Baseline

Some form of competition and even conflict is present between all groups and nations, even between allies. For example, the United States is an ally of the European Union and Canada. However, the relationship between the United States and both the European Union and Canada does involve a level of competition and sometimes, even conflict—over issues such as trade and foreign policy, for example. The presence of some level of conflict in relationships between allies is highlighted by the case of North Korea and South Korea, the North being allied with China and the South being allied with the United States. Without China's support, North Korea would probably collapse. Similarly, South Korea benefits greatly from having the United States as an ally, and without U.S. support South Korea would not have survived the Korean War and later years (see Chapter 7, this volume). Despite this, the relationship between North Korea and China is sometimes fraught with tensions and even conflicts, as is the relationship between the United States and South Korea (e.g., the regular large anti-U.S. demonstrations in South Korea).

The normal level of tensions, frictions, and even conflicts between groups (including allies) provides a baseline for the process of mutual radicalization. This normal baseline is set apart from the spiral of destructive conflict integral to mutual radicalization. For example, although the United States and Canada are in some form of conflict, over issues such as trade (e.g., the North American Free Trade Agreement), their goal is not to destroy one another. Their common interests and collaborations are far more important than the conflicts they experience. This baseline of normal low-level intergroup conflict provides a point of departure as I explore the deadly and enormously destructive process of mutual radicalization, which leads groups and nations to hate and try to destroy one another.

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New Contributions

Psychologists have theorized about and studied radicalization before, so how exactly is this exploration of mutual radicalization new? There are a number of crucial ways in which this project is new and adds to our understanding of important human behaviors. Psychologists have studied radicalization, but most of this research has been narrowly focused on terrorism (Doosje et al., 2016; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2017). The classic research of Sherif (1966) on radicalization involving two competing groups focused on small groups of 11- to 12-year-old boys attending a summer camp. Psychologists have given some attention to real-life groups mobilizing and taking collective action (Montiel & Christie, 2017), but enormously important questions about how major groups and nations become entangled in a process of mutual radicalization have not been addressed. The wider literature on the psychology of intergroup relations (Moghaddam, 2008b), including group polarization (Lyenger & Westwood, 2015), also clearly shows that radicalization by major groups and nations in spiraling relationships with one another has been a neglected topic in psychology. This work is a step toward filling this vitally important gap.

This work on mutual radicalization highlights a destructive process that can become self-perpetuating, self-contained, and independent from ideology and other characteristics of groups. Irrespective of whether the groups and nations involved are capitalist or communist, Muslim or Christian or Jewish or Buddhist or some other religion, or what their ethnic or gender mix and other characteristics are, once they become entangled in mutual radicalization they can be sucked into a spiraling and ever more destructive process. Although individually those entrapped in this process might include highly insightful individuals who can recognize that the collective is going down the wrong path, the sheer force of mutual radicalization often overrides their objections and pushes them along to conform, obey, and speed toward a destructive end. In mutual radicalization collective pressures override individual intelligence.

Another important and new contribution of this work is the *dynamic model of mutual radicalization*, discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and used to analyze the cases studies presented in Chapters 2 through 11. This model identifies three main stages in the mutual radicalization process: group mobilization, extreme ingroup cohesion, and antagonistic identity transformation. Within each of these main stages there are also four minor steps, but not all of the steps are applicable to all of the cases of mutual radicalization. Thus, in discussing the case studies of mutual radicalization in Chapters 2 through 11, all three main stages of the dynamic model are applied to all case studies, but not all four minor steps within each stage are applicable to all cases. The

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dynamic model helps us to better understand and manage new and emerging cases of mutual radicalization, so we can plan ahead and take practical steps toward solutions (see Chapter 12, which discusses solutions to mutual radicalization). The dynamic model also serves to stimulate and guide future research on mutual radicalization.

The case studies discussed in Chapters 2 through 11 were selected to be representative of three types of intergroup relationships. The first group of cases represent relations between Islamic radicalization and the West, such as the case of the United States and Iran. (The conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East predates the most recent Islamic radicalization movement.) The theme of "Islamic radicalization versus the West" has grown much stronger since the Iranian revolution that toppled the pro-U.S. Shah (in 1979), followed by the invasion of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan (in 2001) and Iraq (in 2003), and continued U.S. involvement in conflicts in Muslim societies (e.g., Syria, Yemen). The four cases discussed in Part I were selected to represent this highly influential, important, and widespread conflict. The second group of case studies, in Part II, represents nation-states that are starting on the road to mutual radicalization but have opportunities to pull back, such as in the case of China and Japan. All three selected case studies involve pairs of nations that have been in wars against one another in the past and are once again going down the road of mutual radicalization and possibly war. Finally, the case studies in Part III were selected to represent domestic (rather than international) groups in the United States that are entrapped in the mutual radicalization process (e.g., resulting in the current "gridlockracy" on Capitol Hill). The groups involved in all these case examples have experienced different intensities of mutual radicalization. Some groups, such as China and Japan, are still experiencing a relatively low (but increasing) intensity of mutual radicalization; some others, such as the European Union and Islamic jihadists, have already moved on to experience a more intense kind of mutual radicalization; and other groups, including Israel and Palestine, alternate relatively rapidly between cycles of intense and less intense mutual radicalization. (I use the term *Islamic Jihad* to refer to the extremist movement that uses Islam as a political ideology and justifies violence in the name of God. Those involved in the Islamic Jihad movement do not necessarily belong to an organization but subjectively see themselves as part of a broad movement of political Islam.) The dynamic model of mutual radicalization reviewed in Chapter 1 applies to all of these different types of cases.

The dynamic model conceptualizes elites as being particularly influential because of their greater power and resources, but the ordinary group member and the "common citizen" also play central roles. In line with the extensive research on motivated reasoning (e.g., Kahan, Peters, Dawson, & Slovic, 2017;

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Lodge & Taber, 2013), which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1, the assumption in the dynamic model of mutual radicalization is that ordinary citizens think through problems and make decisions not as neutral, rational deliberators; rather, they are very much influenced by their motivations, emotions, and preexisting preferences. The process of conscious deliberation and decision-making is highly influenced by the biased gathering of information that endorses preexisting perspectives. Thus, although elites are highly influential in the mutual radicalization process, ordinary people are also responsible for the biased perceptions and actions that emerge.

Mutual Radicalization on a Trivial Basis

Mutual radicalization is driven by a combination of psychological and material factors; but in some instances what starts out as a material conflict which on its face could be easily resolved becomes seemingly intractable because of essentially psychological factors. In such instances groups are fighting over things that have symbolic rather than material value (see Moghaddam, 2008b, and Alimi, Bosi, & Demetriou, 2015, for alternative perspectives on conflict). For example, Siachen, a territory on the border of Pakistan and India, is claimed by both countries. Pakistan and India have fought over Siachen in three major wars and many other smaller but violent conflicts since their independence from Britain in 1947. Given the enormous investments that India and Pakistan have made to fight over Siachen, it would be easy to conclude that the area is of huge material value. But the truth is very different. In 2004, President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan (quoted in Kapur, 2008, p. 76) admitted that Siachen is "barren wasteland" but added "but it belongs to us." In other words, although Siachen has no material value, the two countries will continue to fight, for symbolic rather than material reasons.

The long-standing human inclination to fight over territory and other "stuff" that has little material value is explored in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. When Hamlet cross-examines a captain (*Hamlet*, 4.4.9–25) to find out why he is leading soldiers to fight in Poland, the captain admits that the land they fight over is worthless ("We go to gain a little patch of ground/That hath in it no profit but the name . . ." *Hamlet*, 4.4.18–19). When Hamlet responds that the Poles will never defend a worthless piece of land, the captain points out that the Poles have already set up defenses and intend to fight ("Yes, it is already garrisoned"; *Hamlet*, 4.4.25). Pakistanis and Indians have fought over what the president of Pakistan called a "barren wasteland." A piece of land that is objectively worthless can become symbolically of great value, and something many, many people fight over and die for.

Psychological studies have explored this puzzling tendency. Hundreds of studies using the *minimal group paradigm* (named so because it involved

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groups with minimal differences), pioneered by Henri Tajfel (1978) and his associates, have empirically demonstrated this process, where an apparently "worthless" criterion becomes a basis for intergroup differentiation and bias (see Moghaddam, 2008b, Chapter 5). In the minimal group paradigm, an individual is placed in a group with a label, such as X or Y, on the basis of a trivial criterion, such as the number of dots he or she estimates is flashed onto a screen. After being placed in Group X or Group Y, the person allocates points to other labeled members of Groups X and Y. However, when allocating points the individual does not know the identity of other persons in Groups X and Y (meaning that no interaction with them will ever take place), will not receive any of the points they allocate, and does not know the value of the points allocated. In this situation, there seems to be no reason to give points to one group rather than another. Surely no one would show group-based bias on such a trivial basis? If participants are acting rationally, perhaps not, but numerous studies have shown that participants in the minimal group paradigm do show ingroup favoritism (Moghaddam, 2008b).

The brilliant satirist Jonathan Swift (1726/2001) wrote about a similar kind of practice when discussing relations between "Little-Endians" and "Big-Endians" in the novel *Gulliver's Travels*. During his adventures in distant lands, Gulliver is horrified to discover that violent conflicts have raged for generations between groups of Lilliputians, and tens of thousands of people have been killed over whether boiled eggs must be broken first at the "big end" or the "little end." The process of mutual radicalization, as both the Tajfel research and Swift suggest, often involves group differentiation and intergroup conflict that is based on factors that do not have specifically material importance but come to acquire value because of their incorporation as part of collective identity. The result is a willingness to kill and die, even for a barren wasteland—or because members of the "other group" break their eggs at the big end instead of the little end.

The research literature and historical examples demonstrate that the importance of an issue is determined subjectively, by how it is psychologically interpreted and particularly the role it plays in the identity of the individual. For example, the Islamic hijab and the American flag are both just "bits of cloth," but for some people their symbolic value is immense. These are pieces of cloth that are integral to the identity of some people; pieces of cloth they are willing to die for—even though they are not of high material value.

In other cases, something can have both high material and symbolic value. For example, Jerusalem has high material value, in that land in Jerusalem has a very high price on the open market. However, beyond the material value, Jerusalem is of great symbolic value, particularly for practicing Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Disentangling the material value from the symbolic value of Jerusalem becomes difficult and impractical.

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THE DYNAMIC PROCESS OF MUTUAL RADICALIZATION

The process of mutual radicalization is dynamic, or mutual, in the sense that an increase in radicalization in one group affects other groups, especially those directly targeted, increasing the probability that those groups themselves will become more extreme in their attitudes toward the first group, which in turn will increase the probability of further radicalization in the first group. This process can result in a ratcheting up of aggressive actions and an increasing intensification of conflicts. Over time, the culture of each group becomes transformed to support and continue intergroup aggression and opposition, with prejudice becoming an ingrained part of their identity. The biased socialization of the next generation may endorse in the children further radicalization, and conflict may become so entrenched, cyclical, and "automatic" that continuing the conflict seems like the natural thing to do. Although these situations seem intractable, there are some ways in which the cycle can be broken, as I discuss in the final chapter.

Throughout the discussion, I use the term *radical* in the modern sense of "extreme" rather than its original meaning of going to the root or origin of something. My particular focus is on how groups and nations can impact each other to become more and more extreme. For example, in the period after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, Shi'a and Sunni Muslims in Iraq became engulfed in a tit-for-tat deadly fight that cost tens of thousands of lives. Each deadly attack by Sunni on Shi'a Muslims, or by Shi'a on Sunni Muslims, was followed by more extreme retaliations, and the cycle has continued. Such cycles of highly destructive violence can become automatic. Groups caught in this situation often provide explanations for their violent actions, but such explanations tend to serve as justifications for continued violence and do not necessarily reflect deeper motives. For example, in Iraq, Sunni extremists claim that Shi'as are heretics and conspirators against true Islam, while extremist Shi'a groups see Sunnis as working for U.S. and Israeli interests. More than a decade later, the Shi'a–Sunni fighting spans enormous territories and involves large armies—the (Sunni) Islamic State against the mainly Shi'a government forces of Iraq. At the same time, "extremism" and "radicalization" reflect relative positions: Sunni and Shi'a groups in Iraq radicalized and became more extreme relative to their earlier positions.

The process of mutual radicalization can be initiated, restarted, or accelerated by one group or one side of a conflict. However, it "takes two to tango," and the process only becomes dynamic after the second group reacts by also moving along the path of increasing radicalization and reacting in such a way that further radicalizes the first group. To return to the example of Sunni and Shi'a groups fighting in Iraq, their mutual radicalization has involved cycles of attacks and counterattacks. Because of its dynamism, the process of mutual

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radicalization tends to accelerate and intensify collective pressures, with the result that few individuals are able to resist becoming active supporters of, and often participants in, the escalating violence. Despite the best of intentions, even peace-loving individuals and groups often find themselves carried along by the surge of collective radicalization.

The process of mutual radicalization thus tends to entrap individuals within collective changes, forcing even reluctant group members to adopt more extreme positions along with the rest of the group. An impressive body of psychological research has accumulated over the past 80 years or so showing how even individuals with normal personality characteristics can be influenced to take extreme actions under pressure from the majority and the leader (see discussions in Moghaddam, 2005, and Zimbardo, 2007).

Extremism as the New Norm

The pull of extremist factions can often be the most potent factor driving the process of mutual radicalization. Despite being a numerical minority, small factions and tiny subgroups of extremists can have a profound influence on the path taken by a much larger group. The influence of an extremist on the rest of a group was first empirically demonstrated by researchers following the experimental paradigm established by the brilliant Turkish American psychologist Muzafer Sherif, in his studies starting in the 1930s (Sherif, 1935, 1936; see also Moghaddam, 2005, 2015). Sherif established that groups can develop arbitrary norms by using what is known as the *autokinetic effect*, the common illusion that a star in the night sky or a constant spot of light in a dark background is moving from place to place. Interestingly, there tend to be individual differences in the amount of movement perceived. (In fact, any report of perceived movement is incorrect, because the light never actually moves.)

Sherif asked participants individually to sit in a dark and soundproof room and to estimate how much a spot of light moves. The results showed that individuals developed personal norms for how much movement they reported, some seeing less and some seeing more movement. When these individuals were then placed in a group, their estimates of light movement tended to converge on a group norm. Importantly, individuals continued to be influenced by the (incorrect) group norm even after the group was disbanded and they were once again asked to report their estimates individually in subsequent sessions. When an "extremist" (actually, a confederate of the experimenter) was planted in the group and gave extreme estimates of the amount of movement of the light, the entire group norm shifted toward the extremist position. Furthermore, the group continued to be influenced by the extremist estimate even after the extremist left the group and was

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replaced by a naïve participant (Jacobs & Campbell, 1961). This experimental demonstration highlights how an extremist minority can pull the majority of individuals in a group in a radical direction. Radicals do not always manage to pull the group to an extreme position, when there are countervailing forces within it. For example, there have been factions within both the Democratic and Republican parties of the past that tried to get their party to take more forthright, human rights–based stands on civil rights and some other issues but failed time after time.

My experiences in postrevolutionary Iran showed me in very concrete and tragic terms how a radical minority could pull the rest of society to extreme positions. When the pro-U.S. Pahlavi dictatorship collapsed and the last Shah fled Iran in January 1979, the fundamentalist Muslims were in a minority, just as the Bolshevik communists had been a minority when the Tsar fell from power in Russia in 1917. What brought the fundamentalist Muslims to power in Iran was exactly what brought the Bolshevik communists to power in Russia in 1917: ruthless pursuit of power and the willingness to do whatever necessary to take advantage of a power vacuum and control the country. In Iran, this path led to the hostage crisis and decades-long mutually radicalized relationship with the United States (see Chapter 3). In the wake of the Shah's overthrow, the Islamic fundamentalists were able to use their monopoly of brute force and control of the media, the mosques, and key resources to pull the rest of Iranian society in a radical direction, strictly obedient to Ayatollah Khomeini. Similarly, in the years following the 1917 anti-Tsar revolution, the Bolshevik communists were able to pull the rest of Russian society, after a protracted civil war, in a radical direction, obedient to the Communist Party under Lenin and later under Stalin.

Oppositional Pathways

The influence of extremist factions within each group paves the way for a process of increasingly radical change, with the competing groups moving in opposite directions. An example of this is the highly destructive civil war between the "Reds" (Bolshevik) and "Whites" (anti-Bolshevik), which began in 1917 and was still smoldering in parts of Russia in 1923. This civil war eventually brought the most extreme communist forces to power, having radicalized them further in the course of the conflict. Mutually radicalized nations and groups may become stuck in oppositional ruts, continually misperceiving, misinterpreting, and distrusting one another, and subsequently basing their actions on highly distorted images and communications. Such cases involve a tragic waste of resources and opportunities for peacemaking and progress—Arabs and Israelis over the last half century, the United States and Iran since 1979, North Korea and South Korea in recent decades, the

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West and Islamic fundamentalists, Republicans and Democrats stuck in gridlock in the early 21st century. Many consequential examples and tragedies follow from them.

Causal Plasticity in the Process of Conflicts

One of the important lessons from studying cases of mutual radicalization is what I have termed *causal plasticity*: what are interpreted to be the "causes" of conflict by the two sides, what each says the conflict "is about," can and often does change over the course of a conflict. This has important implications for both our understanding of the conflict and our attempts to resolve it.

The conventional models of conflict present a static and simplified view of the "causes." An assumption underlying these models is that there are certain factors that cause conflict, that these causes are present throughout the course of conflict, and that the solution to conflict is to discover and address these causes (for a more in-depth discussion of varieties of causation, see Harré & Moghaddam, 2016). The conventional models have been heavily influenced by the "rational and selfish" view of humans—the view of humans as "Econs"—that dominates economics (Kahneman, 2011). The rational choice model that has dominated mainstream economics assumes that humans are logical decision makers who choose options that maximize their benefits. However, as Kahneman (2011) and other behavioral economists have demonstrated, in practice humans are very different from Econs. Humans often make decisions on the basis of biased and limited information, are unaware of the factors that actually influence their decisions and actions, and generally behave in ways that are not consistent across time and situations.

The traditional models assume that underneath the narratives given by the two sides are the "real" causes of conflict. These real causes are hidden and stable, whereas the causes interwoven in narratives are visible and changing. The traditional models work on the assumption that there is a "real" world of causes out there somewhere, outside the constructions of the world manufactured by the groups in conflict. However, it is not clear how we can get to know these causes or establish that their (assumed) influence is continuous and constant throughout a conflict. Thus, this search for stable, real underlying causes of conflict can be misleading because such stable and continuous causes, even if they ever exist, cannot be accessed or verified.

What we do have access to are the *constructions* of conflict, as reflected in the narratives of those involved. These include claims such as "they have stolen our land and water," "they have persecuted us," "they have shamed us," "they have killed and injured our people," and the like (see Moghaddam & Harré, 2010). The most striking aspect of such narratives is that a conflict that

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begins with people complaining primarily about land and material resources can develop to become a conflict that is primarily about collective shame and humiliation, and then about something else entirely. In some situations, the main motivation apparently becomes the continuation of the conflict itself, perhaps as a means to keep its promoters in power, with the particular cause given for the conflict becoming secondary.

Symmetric and Asymmetric Mutual Radicalization

The majority of the cases examined in this book involve *symmetric mutual radicalization*, where two groups both radicalize in a tit-for-tat process, with a radical move by one group being followed by a radical response from the second group, followed by a more extreme response from the first group, and so on, until usually a plateau or stalemate is reached. For example, the United States and Iran have experienced such a symmetrical process of mutual radicalization since 1979, having reached a plateau or stalemate in their relationship in the 21st century. In such cases, the two groups could remain in a stalemate situation, or they could deradicalize, or even further radicalize and move to more extreme positions in opposition to one another.

But groups can also become engaged in *asymmetric mutual radicalization*, where the first group takes up increasingly radical positions, pulling the second group toward itself, which encourages the first group to radicalize even further, which in turn leads the second group to accommodate even more and move further toward the first group, and so on. In asymmetric mutual radicalization, the two groups still influence one another, but the outcome is both groups moving in the same direction, with the first group taking up more and more extreme positions. An example of this is the gridlockracy in U.S. politics, when powerful Republicans announced at the beginning of the presidency of Barack Obama that they would adopt a zero cooperation policy, particularly on key issues such as health care (Draper, 2012). This influenced President Obama to move closer to the Republican position, which in turn emboldened those Republicans who reject the belief that health care is a right that everyone should have.

The concepts of symmetric and asymmetric mutual radicalization highlight the relative characteristic of terms such as *radicalization* and *extremism*. For example, the health care policies proposed by President Obama seemed "extremist" from the perspective of conservative Americans, but they were moderate and very limited in the context of policies in practice in other Western democracies. Indeed, in the context of Canadian, United Kingdom, and Scandinavian politics, where universal health care coverage is an accepted norm, Obama's health care proposals have been conservative. But by taking up a position of zero cooperation and branding Obama as an extremist, and

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even a Muslim and a Socialist, the Republican opposition was able to move the president to a position closer to itself—a real-life example of asymmetric mutual radicalization.

CULTURAL CARRIERS, IDENTITY, AND MUTUAL RADICALIZATION

Central to the psychological processes underlying mutual radicalization is the construction of *cultural carriers*, the means through which the culture of a group is perpetuated and propagated (Moghaddam, 2002). Cultural carriers become integral to the collective identity of a group (e.g., in the case of a national flag), defining what kind of a group it is ("Our people have courage"), what kinds of values it upholds ("We cherish loyalty to the group"), and what kinds of actions it believes are laudable ("We award prestigious medals to group members who show courage in fighting the enemy"). Cultural carriers also influence the orientation of a group toward other groups (in this, they are like legitimizing myths, that justify the relative unequal positions of groups; Chen & Tyler, 2001). For example, a cultural carrier such as a territory, city, or clothing related to status and role can come to reflect the (perceived) subjugation and deprivation (or the superiority) of a group, continually reminding group members about how they have variously been "unjustly treated" by another group, or deservedly enjoyed superior status. For example, lynching serves as a cultural carrier in the United States, reminding African Americans of the subjugation and deprivation they have suffered and White supremacists of their past superior status. In this case, skin color also serves as a cultural carrier, displaying group identity in a negative or positive light, defining a group's inferior or superior standing in a status hierarchy.

Cultural carriers are an integral part of collective memory; they are often a long-standing part of group culture. Thus, particular symbols, such as a national flag, a traditional style of clothing, a particular territory or city, or a combination of colors representing a nation, are often already part of a collective identity when a group member is born. Such carriers are learned as part of "the sort of people we are." Of course, the sort of people we are today is intimately linked to our collective past, which cultural carriers help to construct, perpetuate, and reconstruct to meet changing identity needs.

Because cultural carriers play such a central and important role in shaping group identity, they often become the focus of power struggles between competing factions. For example, consider the fierce and often violent competition to establish the meaning of Jerusalem, which is claimed by Christians, Jews, and Muslims (discussed further in Chapter 2). By pushing to establish their own interpretation of a cultural carrier such as Jerusalem, each group

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widens the rift between itself and the other groups, adding momentum to mutual radicalization. Thus, mutual radicalization may involve a continual struggle to reconstruct the past, reinterpreting important cultural carriers so as to redirect group identity development in one direction rather than others. To transform conflict and make progress toward peace, it is essential that we first understand psychological processes such as those described above that underlie mutual radicalization.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

In this book, I discuss the psychological processes underlying some key cases of mutual radicalization, arguing that a better understanding of these cases can help illuminate a path toward mutual peace if not always their full resolution. The book develops a road map of how mutual radicalization takes place, shaped by underlying psychological processes. Each case study is presented within the same three-stage framework: (a) group mobilization, (b) extreme ingroup cohesion, and (c) antagonistic identity transformation. I describe these stages and their psychological underpinnings, as well as the four substeps of each stage, in more detail in Chapter 1. In the final chapter, I offer solutions, a path for avoiding and nullifying mutual radicalization.

The book is organized in four parts. The four chapters in Part I consist of two case studies involving a nation-state and a nonstate actor, Israel–Palestine; a case involving two nation-states, Iran and United States; and two case studies involving Islamist terrorism and nation-states (the United States and the European Union). The discussion of conflict between the nation-states provides the necessary context for the case studies involving Islamist terrorism. To understand acts of Islamist terrorism such as the marathon bombing attacks in Boston, Massachusetts (April 2013) and the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris (January 2015), for example, we need to first understand the Palestinian–Israeli conflict; the situation in the Middle East since the invasion of Iraq in 2003; and the roles of the United States, Russia, China, the European powers, and other world powers in the region.

The three chapters in Part II consist of case studies of nations in transition and in danger of moving further along the path of mutual radicalization. They represent a range of the most important 21st-century conflicts: China–Japan, North Korea–South Korea, and Pakistan–India.

Three case studies of within-state or "domestic" mutual radicalization are presented in Part III. These cases do not involve direct physical violence, but nevertheless the process of mutual radicalization leads to destructive outcomes. The first involves mutual radicalization leading to gridlock in U.S. politics during the last 6 years of the Obama presidency, the second focuses

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on mutual radicalization in U.S. politics as represented by the Trump and Sanders presidential election campaigns, and the third explores the relationship between the National Rifle Association and gun-regulation groups in America.

Part IV of the book consists of a final chapter, examining solutions to mutual radicalization, with proposals for how to break the cycles of distrust and violence.

Mutual radicalization has a destructive impact on our personal lives, our societies, and our future. It is critical that it be better understood and that steps toward a solution be found. In response to the wide relevance of mutual radicalization for individuals, groups, and societies, I have attempted to write this book in a style that will be interesting and accessible to a broad audience. This audience includes general readers and students, as well as researchers interested in psychology and politics, political behavior, conflict, intergroup relations, international relations, peacekeeping, and war.