Rotten trees, bad apples? Understanding the intergenerational transmission of extremism

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CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

Published as:
Van Wieringen, L., Weggemans, D.J., Krüsselmann, K. & Liem, M.C.A. (2021). *Van Ouder op Kind*. Den Haag: Wetenschappelijk Onderzoeks-en Documentatiecentrum.

INTRODUCTION

In the previous Chapter, we looked into the theories and concepts that have informed (thinking about) processes of intergenerational transmission, and the various disciplines and schools of thought that lie at its roots. As such, we were able formulate various answers to the question 'How can we explain intergenerational transmission?'. In the current Chapter, I will build upon these insights, while specifically looking at the intergenerational transmission of *extremism* within a family context. Because while academics and practitioners alike agree that processes of radicalization are inherently social in nature (Crone, 2016; Knott & Lee, 2020; Schuurman et al., 2019; Scremin, 2020), the empirical focus of radicalization research tends to be on the role of radical leaders, peer groups and online or offline networks (for an overview, see Winter et al., 2020). When it comes to the link between family dynamics and extremism, usually only emphasize the indirect effects parents may have on radicalization processes (e.g., through the transmission of risk factors, see Zych & Nasaescu, 2022) or their perceived deradicalizing potential (El-Amraoui & Ducol, 2019; Schewe & Koehler, 2021). Thus, while different studies have suggested that various ideologies and behaviors can be transmitted from parent to child (e.g., Carlson & Knoester, 2011; Murray & Mulvaney, 2012), the family as a source of extremist ideas remains largely understudied.

The main question at the heart of the current Chapter is therefore: 'What do we know about the intergenerational transmission of extremism?'. I will approach this question by conducting a systematic literature review, that allows me to synthesize existing empirical insights on this topic. Contrary to the previous (theoretical) Chapter, only empirical studies will be considered here, as to better understand (1) the prevalence of intergenerational transmission within extremist families; (2) the mechanisms of transmission, and (3) the factors related to these processes. As such, it offers a systematic overview of what is (empirically) known about this topic, inspiring the preliminary framework on which the upcoming chapters are based.

Search strategy

This literature review is based on the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews (Shamseer et al., 2015). All relevant empirical peer-reviewed articles, books, book chapters, and (unpublished) dissertations were included in the review. Fifteen electronic databases were consulted in the identification of relevant studies: PubMed (including MEDLINE); PsycINFO; PsycARTICLES; ScienceDirect; Social Science Research Network; Sociological Abstracts; Scopus; Web of Science (including SSCI, AHCI); Child Welfare Information Getaway; ERIC; Social Care Online; Social Services Abstracts; Criminal Justice Abstracts; NCJRS Abstracts; Worldwide Political Science Abstracts. ProQuest and EThOS were consulted to identify any relevant (unpublished) dissertations. Google, Google Scholar and the OpenGrey database were used to identify potentially additional "gray" literature on this topic. In each of these databases, the following search query was used to identify eligible studies.

(intergeneration* OR crossgeneration* OR multigeneration* OR generation* OR transmi* OR continuity*) AND (father* OR paternal* OR mother* OR maternal* OR son* OR daughter* OR parent* OR child* OR offspring* OR famil*) AND (jihad* OR islam* OR salafi* OR terroris* OR radicali* OR extremi* OR "religious fundament*" OR sectar* OR ideolog*) AND (risk* OR mechanism* OR factor* OR intervention)

To make sure that all relevant literature was identified, manual searches were performed for studies within published meta-analyses or systematic reviews on similar topics (e.g., regarding the role of family factors in radicalization), and within the journals and the reference lists of included studies. This yielded 49 potentially relevant studies, which were included in the screening process. In order to prevent publication bias and as a way to include the results of ongoing research projects, I contacted 36 scholars in through my own (international) network and those of my supervisors, to identify (unpublished) sources and upcoming publications, which yielded 8 additional studies.

Screening and data extraction

In conducting the review, I made use of a three-step screening process where I consecutively screened eligible studies on their titles (step 1), abstracts (step 2) and full texts (step 3). Studies were included if they were empirical in nature and concerned the intergenerational transmission of extremism from caregiver (including step-, grand-, adoptive and foster parents) to child. Only studies dating between 2000 and 2022 were included, to ensure relevance today. All study populations were eligible – regardless of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, or country of origin. Studies were excluded if it concerned an ineligible document type (e.g., media sources, non-scientific op-eds, book reviews, etc.); a duplicate; an irrelevant topic; or a non-empirical study. Studies dealing with other types of extremist transmission (e.g., child-to-parent or sibling-to-sibling) were excluded. Data extraction was conducted by one of our team members – whose work was cross-checked by the co-authors through sampling. Any discrepancies were resolved through team discussions.

Synthesis

In examining prevalence of the intergenerational transmission of extremism, only two studies include intergenerational correlates of extremist values (see Table 1), which was insufficient for a meta-analysis. Moreover, while five studies contain effect size data on potential risk factors and protective factors (see Table 2), I was unable to conduct a meta-analysis, due to their vast differences in choice of (independent and dependent) variables, unit of analysis, methodology and reporting. Therefore, I opted for a descriptive synthesis of quantitative findings of both factors

and mechanisms (following Mugadza et al., 2019). Qualitative findings were coded inductively using software program Atlas.ti (Friese, Soratto, & Pires, 2018). I conducted a thematic analysis of empirical work, based on my elements of interest (prevalence, mechanisms, risk factors and protective factors). This allowed us to synthesize the findings while adhering to the nature of these studies. Common patterns and themes across studies will be presented as qualitative summaries.

RESULTS

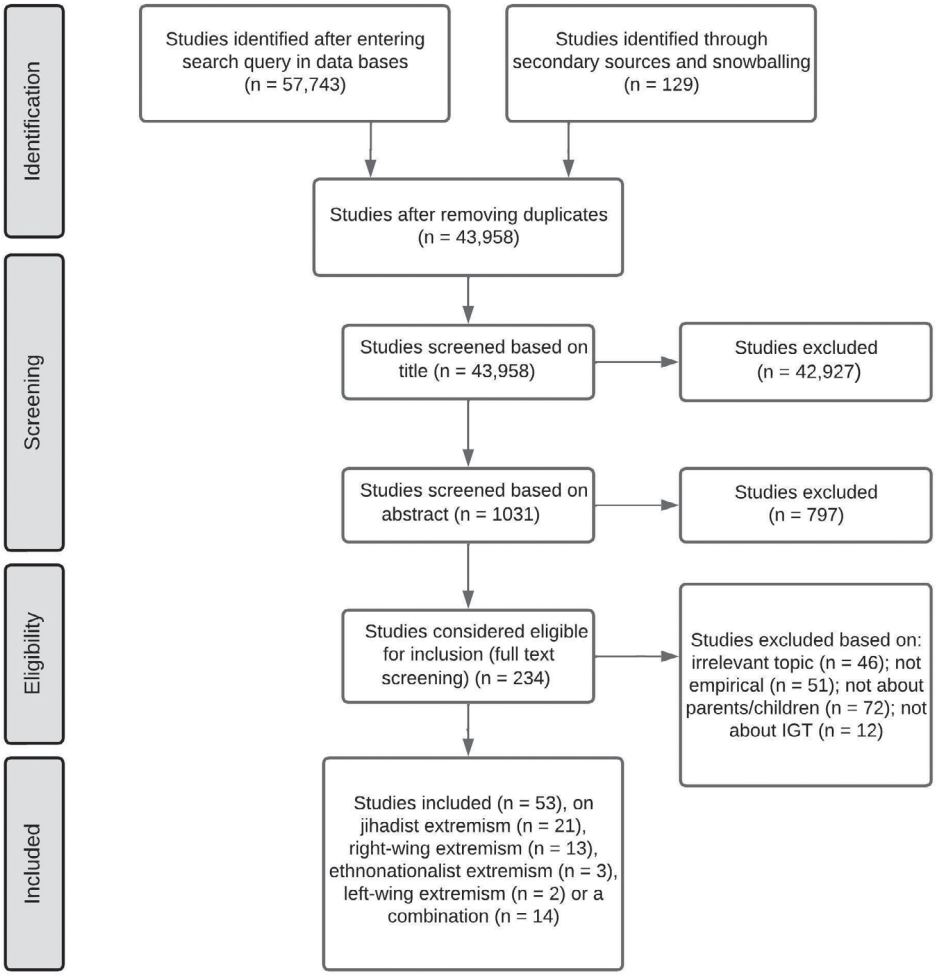
The literature search yielded 53 empirical studies, of which the majority were qualitative in nature (N=39). Other studies used either a quantitative (N=8) or a mixed method (N=6) approach. As their main type of data, the included studies used interviews (N=21), open sources (N=13), surveys (N=5), judicial case files (N=4), (auto)biographies (N=4), ethnographic observations (N=3), focus group discussions (N=1), historical archives (N=1), and written testimonies (N=1). Most of the included studies dealt with Islamic-inspired or jihadist extremism (N=21) (see Figure 1). Others concerned right-wing extremist (N=13), ethno-nationalist (N=3), and left-wing extremist ideologies (N=2) – or a combination of various extremist ideologies (N=14). The studies originate from the US (N=19), the UK (N=10), Germany (N=5), The Netherlands (N=4), Australia (N=3), Sweden (N=2), Indonesia (N=2), Canada (N=2), Italy (N=2), South-Africa (N=1), Spain (N=1), Belgium (N=1), and Switzerland (N=1). All included studies included in Appendix 1.

Prevalence of transmission

Quantitative findings on the prevalence of the intergenerational transmission of extremism are summarized in Table 3. Both Boehnke (2017) and Oepke (2005) observe positive and significant intergenerational correlations of right-wing extremist attitudes (based on parent-child and child-parent correlates, respectively). Moreover, five studies on jihadism or Islamic inspired extremism include data on the percentage of the sample that became involved in these ideologies through first-degree family members – ranging from 3% (Botha, 2014) to 20% (Sageman, 2004). While these authors indicate that these percentages include transmission by parents and caregivers, the precise contribution of this subgroup remains unclear. Three studies focus on parental permission for their sons' decision to participate in jihadist extremism, whereas four others examine extremists' family backgrounds, including parents' involvement in extremist movements.

Figure 1.

PRISMA Flowchart of the literature search and screening process.



Transmission mechanisms

The included empirical literature suggests that the intergenerational transmission of extremist ideologies takes place through various transmission mechanisms – in which parents can take on both active and passive roles. To identify these mechanisms, I conducted multiple rounds of inductive coding. I then combined and grouped codes based on the respective objectives they serve within the general transmission process, which yielded five distinct mechanisms, on the discursive, socio-spatial, temporal, moral-educational and symbolic level. I will discuss each of these mechanisms and their workings.

Table 3. Main findings regarding the intergenerational transmission of extremism.

Authors	Sample	Data	Main findings
Asal, V., Shellman, S., Fair, C.C. (2010)	Family members of Pakistani suicide terrorists (N=141, μ = 46.19 y/o)	Survey data	• 70% of households gave permissions for a sons' participation in jihad, of which 63.4% reported no one in the family refusing
Boehnke, K. (2017)	German students and their parents (N=147, 80% male, μ=20.5 y/o)	Survey data	• Father-child scores on right-wing extremist attitudes are significantly positively related (β=0.24, p<.05). Mother-child scores are not significantly related.
Botha, A. (2014)	Kenian Al-Shabaab members and their families (N=141, 96% male)	In-depth interviews	• 3% of sample became involved in extremist network through family members. • Parents were supportive of decision to join extremist group in 21% of cases.
King, M., Noor, H. & Taylor, D. (2011)	Family members of Indonesian Jema'ah Islamiyah members (N=20, 55% male)	Survey data	• On average, using a scale from completely agree (5) to completely disagree (-5), family support their son's decision to join the JI terrorist organization (M = 2.13, SD = 2.10). • On average, families scored slightly above neutral on support for violent jihad'(M = 0.60, SD = 2.12)
Kule, A. (2007)	Convicted terrorists from Turkey and the Kurdistan Region (N=200, 94.5% male)	Criminal case file data	• 8.8% of sample became involved in extremist network through family members, and 9.8% through extended family.
Malik, N. (2019)	Children in British family court cases (N=20, 24% female, 44% male 32% unknown)	Casefile data	• 52% of cases had a family history of extremist activity. • 48% of cases contained a family member that had joined IS.
Oepke, M. (2005)	German youth and their parents (N=149, 55,1% male, μ =14.8 y/o at first interval)	Longitudinal survey data	• Right-wing extremism among children is significantly positively related to right-wing extremism among parents (r=.19 to .40). • Right-wing extremist attitudes of parents (r=.96 to r=.98, p<.05) and their children (r=.70 to r=.79, p<.05) are stable over time. • Right-wing extremist attitudes of parents are significantly positively related to the attitudes of their children years later (r = .17 to r=.19, p<.05). • 'Acceptance of violence' among parents is not a significant predictor of 'acceptance of violence' among children one year later.
Post, J., Sprinzak, E. & Denny, L. (2003)	Convicted secular and Islamic terrorists from the Middle East (N= 35, 100% male)	In-depth interviews	• In total, 30% of secular terrorists and 20% of Islamic terrorists of sample became involved in extremist network through family members. • Over 30% of the Islamic terrorists reported extensive radical involvement by family. For secular terrorists, this was 15%.
Pritchett, S. & Moeller, K. (2022).	US individuals convicted for radicalism (N=2148) based on the PIRUS database	Secondary data (PIRUS)	• The variable *radical family* scores M=0.85 on a 0-3 score (N=734, 65,9% missing data)
Sageman, M. (2004)	Convicted terrorists from various countries (N=172, 100% male)	Open-source data	• 14% of sample became involved in extremist network through family members
Windisch, S. (2019)	Former white supremacists from the US (N=91, 78% male)	Life course interviews	• 13% of sample mentioned having white supremacists in the family • 73% of sample mentioned growing up with white supremacist discourse as a child

Discursive mechanisms

Of the included qualitative studies, 31 mention the use of discursive transmission mechanisms by parents. Discursive mechanisms concern verbal interactions between parent and child, through which parents learn their children how to interpret the world around them. As such, this mechanism relates back to theories of socialization (and possibly, internalization) as discussed in Chapter 2. Within extremist families, discursive techniques are first and foremost reflected in the black-and-white nature of parental discourse. Extremist parents generally make a sharp distinction between the in-group and the "evil" outside world by using dehumanizing terminology – also known as "othering" (see Said, 1979). In the jihadist context for example, Huggins (2013) described how parents refer to "infidels" as "Christian and Jewish pigs" (p. 64). In right-wing extremist families, children are taught early on that non-white people are "mudpeople" (Blee, 2002) — and that LGBTQIA+ community members are "fags" (Windisch, 2019, p. 117).

In total, ten studies indicate a certain "herofication" or "glorification" within parental discourses. Here, children are entrusted with the protection of the community and the family name, and where participation in the armed struggle is presented as a major responsibility (Copeland, 2020; Pape, 2005; Riany et al., 2018). Parents often refer to an extremist family line and the "hero blood" (Riany et al., 2018, p. 21) that runs through their children's veins, and how this "hero status" is within their arm's reach (Huggins, 2013; Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003; Post, 2005; Weggemans, Van der Zwan & Liem, 2018). Parents' stories about the struggle and resistance of previous generations ("tales of glory", Windisch, 2019, p. 138) play an important role in this respect (see e.g., Bosi & Della Porta, 2012; Futrell & Simi, 2004; Köttig, 2004). These findings reflect theoretical approaches that stress the importance of narratives and storytelling in transmission processes (see Chapter 2).

In contrast to this heroic discourse, 13 studies emphasize the role of extremist families' perceived victimization. This links back to the literature on the intergenerational transmission of trauma, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. As the empirical studies included in the systematic literature review indicate, this victimization is experienced in relation to police arrests and executions (Chernov-Hwang & Schulze, 2018; Copeland, 2020; Pape, 2005; Post Sprinzak & Denny, 2003). More general experiences of exclusion and marginalization may similarly feature in these (collective) victimization discourses – which extremist parents use to legitimize their violent ideologies both to their children and to themselves (Bickerton, 2019; Malik, 2019; Pape, 2005; Riany et al., 2018).

Socio-spatial mechanisms

In total, 24 of the included studies indicate the relevance of socio-spatial mechanisms of extremist transmission. This dimension concerns children's participation in social gatherings, where they are introduced to like-minded individuals, often in the context of their parents' extremist network

(Blee, 2002; Futrell & Simi, 2004; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Manning & La Bau, 2015). Socio-spatial transmission takes place, for example, by allowing children to participate in extremist "living room meetings" or study circles (Futrell & Simi, 2004; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Malik, 2019); having them participate in ideological youth movements (Blee, 2002; Kermani, 2010; Reinisch, 2020); or by taking them to important ideological gatherings such as demonstrations and rallies (McComiskey, 2001; Schils & Verhage, 2017; Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2015). The included studies suggest that there is a sphere of playfulness or informality to these gatherings – where personal connections are placed over (ideological) content. Nine studies indicate that extremist parents have their children partake in small chores within their ideological movements, such as assisting in organizing gatherings (Gilbert & Lambert, 2010), folding and distributing pamphlets or newspapers (Blee, 2002; Raposo-Quintana, 2009), mopping the floor in the organization's headquarters (Nolas, Varvantakisa, & Aruldossa, 2016), and bringing tea and cigarettes to members of the movement (Crawford, 2013). In all instances, extremist ideologies are indirectly transmitted by introducing children to a larger social network of extremists – which is potentially illustrative of the 'channeling hypothesis' discussed in Chapter 2.

Temporal mechanisms

Temporal mechanisms of intergenerational transmission are discussed in 22 of the included qualitative studies. These mechanisms relate to the ways in which parents establish a continuity to their extremist socialization efforts, by fully integrating their ideology into the lives of their children – with the difference between the two ultimately completely dissolving (see Futrell & Simi, 2004; Nolas, Varvantakisa & Aruldossa, 2016; Windisch, 2019). In the jihadist context, for example, marriage agreements with other extremist families are a reoccurring theme (Chernov-Hwang & Schulze, 2018; Harris-Hogan, 2014). It is suggested that as such, parents can ensure social (and ideological) control over their children through their spouse and parents-in-law (Sageman, 2004). Other studies mention how extremist parents actively engage in children's friendships, for example by putting them up with pen pals from like-minded families (Blee, 2002) and by explicitly forbidding contact with children from other backgrounds (Windisch, 2019). Here, too, elements of the 'channeling hypothesis' discussed in Chapter 2 can be observed.

School selection is also a relevant temporal mechanism, as described by 14 of the included studies. Blee (2002) describes how right-wing extremist parents in the US send their children to "Aryan-only schools", to avoid exposure to alternative ideologies that can make them "double minded" (p.127). Others emphasize the importance of homeschooling in extremist families (Ahdash, 2019; Blee, 2002; Futrell & Simi, 2004; Huggins, 2013; Malik, 2019; Windisch, 2019). Andre and Harris-Hogan (2013) describe how French children of jihadists are subjected to a homeschooling curriculum "that praises the heroism of Salafists and normalizes violence" (p. 311).

Lastly, 12 studies indicate that extremist parents make deliberate choices in their media consumption. Radio stations appear to play an important role in the political education of children from leftwing extremist and ethnonationalist families (Hamilton, 2000; Orsini, 2012). Similarly, extremist parents make choices about the (comic) books to which they expose their children, as well as the music, poetry and literature that is consumed (Futrell & Simi, 2004, Nolas, Varvantakisa & Aruldossa, 2016). This aspect seems somewhat less prominent in the studies on jihadist transmission, although some mentions are made of children being raised with radical Islamic literature (Andre & Harris-Hogan, 2013) and jihadist parents prohibiting music and television altogether (Manning & La Bau, 2015).

Moral-educational mechanisms

Of the included studies, 18 reveal a moral-educational dimension. Parents implicitly or explicitly teach their children about the (moral) ways they should live their lives, and the repercussions of not adhering to the parental ideology. In the literature it is mentioned that parents themselves – and fathers in particular – function as an important role model in this regard. The expression "following in their father's footsteps" comes up in various studies, thus underlining the importance of paternal modelling within these families (Chernov-Hwang & Schulze, 2018; Copeland, 2020; Cook & Vale, 2018). In nine studies, the moral-educational transmission is more explicit in nature. To illustrate, literature describes how jihadist parents tend to verbalize their expectations that their sons will become martyrs (Chernov-Hwang & Schulze, 2018; Pape, 2005; Riany et al, 2018), or even stress their duty to kill "disbelievers" (Huggins, 2013).

In the included literature, the use of punishments and rewards is discussed as a moral-educational transmission mechanism. These observations fit with the behavioralist theories of learning discussed in Chapter 2. Six studies mention that extremist parents use threats and fearful imagery to make their children adhere to their ideology. For example, Blee (2002) describes how an extremist father in the US threatens to kill himself if his daughter ever comes home with a black boy. Parents similarly use rewards as moral-educational mechanism, as shown by nine studies. Pape (2005) describes how jihadist parents promise their children access to heaven when becoming a martyr. Parents giving emotional or practical support for children's decisions is equally featured in the literature (Khoo, 2018; Pape, 2005; Riany et al., 2018; Sikkens et al., 2018; Weggemans, Van der Zwan & Liem. 2018). Weggemans, Van der Zwan, and Liem (2018) refer to parental expressions of pride as a type of reward. Similarly, Sikkens et al. (2018) mention extremist parents "applauding" (p. 2281) their children's actions, which may also serve as a stimulating mechanism. Other studies use the terms "approval", "consent" and "encouragement" in this context (see Felices-Luna, 2005; Hamilton, 2000; Orsini, 2012).

Symbolic mechanisms

A final dimension emerging from the literature concerns the use of symbols and rituals within the family – as discussed by twelve of the included studies. Parental use of costumes, flags and toys related to their beliefs in the upbringing of their children – and as such, further intertwine the familial sphere with the ideological sphere. Here, elements of the performative rituals (Yelle, 2006) discussed in Chapter 2 can be observed. To illustrate, Futrell and Simi (2004) note in their observational study of white supremacist movements in the US that "movement memorabilia around the home, such as pictures, posters, cards, newsletters, racist comic and coloring books, and movement uniforms (e.g., adult and children's Klan robes, T-shirts, fatigues), [which] also reinforce political identity in unambiguous ways" (p. 25). These authors also note that family members wear T-shirts emblazoned with Hitler and other right-wing extremist figures and symbols. Windisch (2019) similarly describes how right-wing extremists use symbolic clothing and uniforms, flags and other decorations to solidify the ideology within the home sphere. Only one study emphasizes the importance of traditional dressing in relation to jihadist socialization (Copeland, 2020).

Six of the included studies indicate that the use of toys is a symbolic mechanism of transmission in extremist families. Extremist parents let their children play with fake guns, for example (see Blee, 2002; Futrell & Simi, 2004; Windisch, 2019; Horgan et al., 2016). Moreover, five studies point at the importance of naming, suggesting that right-wing extremist families give their children symbolic names at birth – such as "Ariana', "Thor" or "Valkyries" in reference to the Norse-Aryan history (Futrell & Simi, 2004). In the case of jihadist converts, parents might choose to give their children Islamic nicknames later in life (Ayres, 2018).

Finally, seven studies suggest that the role of symbolism is most evident in exposure to, or even involvement in, (online) violent propaganda material. For example, Bickerton (2019) describes how British jihadist parents showed their sixteen-year-old daughter videos of beheadings and photos of "smiling corpses" (p. 10), which catalyzed her radicalization process. Here, again the value of symbolism as a means of extremist transmission is illustrated. The effects of the discussed mechanisms are both enhanced and diminished by factors inside and outside the family sphere. To better understand these dynamics, I included a quantitative overview of risk factors and protective factors that emerged from the included studies (see Table 4).

Table 4. Main findings on the intergenerational transmission of extremism.

Authors	Sample	Data	Main findings
Asal, V., Shellman, S., Fair, C.C. (2010)	Family members of Pakistani suicide terrorists (N=141, μ = 46.19 y/o)	Survey data	• Significant predictors of family consent for jihad: age of the participant (β =03821, SD=.0200, p<.05); family economic status (β = −2.1286, SD=1.161, p<.10); nr. of men in the family attending madrassah (β =6.6109, SD=2.628, p<.001); family being Deobandi (β =−1.7858, SD=.9989, p<.10). • Significant predictors of family refusing consent for jihad: family economic status (β =1.7000, SD=.7842, p<.05); female family members in religious study groups (β =−1.0961, SD=.5331, p<.05); son being unemployed (β=−.76468, SD=.4569, p<.10); son attending madrassah (β =−.95122, SD=.5827, p<.10).
Boehnke, K. (2017)	German students and their parents (N=147, 80% male, μ=20.5 y/o)	Survey data	• The variable 'hierarchic self-interests' moderated mother-daughter relationships (β=0.31, p<.05), father-daughter relationships (β=0.30, p<.05) and father-son relationships (β= 0.64, p<.05) regarding right-wing extremist attitudes.
Estévez, D. C. (2021).	Spanish participants of three different generations (N=2.936)	Survey data	• No significant difference in political extremism in the three cohorts. For all three cohorts, religiosity is significantly negatively associated with political extremism. Other significant factors are mass media consumption (β = 0.114) in the second cohort, and personal relevance of the Spanish Civil War (β = 0.113) and family relevance of the Spanish Civil War (β = 0.067) in the third cohort. • In all three cohorts, religion (an individual's perceived importance of religion) is a significant moderating factor on the transmission of political extremism (*t*= −2,277, p.<0.05; −r =-−5,035, p<0.01; r=-−8,142, p<0.01). • Both fathers and mothers can be significant factors in the transmission of extremism to their children. The effect of mothers appears to be somewhat stronger (effect size unknown)
Kule, A. (2007)	Convicted terrorists from Turkey and the Kurdistan Region (N=200, 94.5% male)	Judicial case file data	• Having convicted family members increases probability of PKK membership (β= 1.104; SD = .488; p<.05).
King, M., Noor, H. & Taylor, D. (2011)	Family members of Indonesian Jema'ah Islamiyah members (N=20, 55% male)	Survey data	• The number of JI members in the family did not significantly predict family support for sons' involvement in JI. Similarly, participants support for violent jihad did not significantly predict family support for sons' involvement in JI. • Sons' martyrdom was significantly related to less family support for their involvement in JI (effect sizes unknown). Perceived community opinions were significantly related to family's support for sons' involvement in JI (effect sizes unknown).

Risk factors and protective factors

One of the most frequently mentioned risk factors (33 studies) of intergenerational transmission, is parental membership of an extremist organization. Studies indicate that such membership can manifest itself in indirect support for terrorist groups, such as through arms and drug trafficking (Harris-Hogan, 2014), and terrorist financing (see Ahdash, 2019). The perceived victimization of family members (specifically parents) by authorities was identified as a potential risk factor in 20 studies – which is related to the discursive transmission of victimization narratives as discussed in the previous section. Experiences of familial imprisonment or assassination, for example, appear to aid intergenerational transmission processes in ethnonationalist (e.g., Bosi & Della Porta, 2012; Crawford, 2013; Noll, 2012) and jihadist families (e.g., Chernov-Hwang & Schulze, 2018; Noor, 2021; Riany et al., 2018). Findings suggest that first-hand experiences of violence and oppression serve to confirm the parental discourse, which emphasizes the victim status of the in-group and the hostility of the outside world. As Copeland (2020) notes, the feeling of wanting to protect the community or family against further suffering can further stimulate intergenerational transmission processes. Other studies note the importance of intergenerational trauma (e.g., Huggins, 2013; Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003) – as it is suggested that this, too, facilitates the transmission of perceived grievances from parent to child, which may in turn solidify the transmission of extremism. These observations seemingly underscore the importance of theories on (the transmission of) trauma and victimhood as discussed in Chapter 2.

Multigenerational extremism, or being born into a family of extremist "hardliners" (see Pepich, 2018, p. 111) was identified as a risk factor in nine studies. The fact that the extremist ideology has been part of the family history for many generations, may cause children to take their own involvement in extremist groups for granted (Copeland, 2020; Noor, 2021; Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003). To illustrate, Post (2005) observes that for Islamic terrorists, "hatred was bred in to the bone" (p. 616). Chernov-Hwang and Schulze (2018) even speak of "being born into jihad" (p. 19) in an Indonesian context, while Sageman (2004) refers to the "green diaper mujahidin" of the Middle East.

Six studies refer to financial concerns within families as a possible driver of the parental transmission of extremism. For example, it is suggested that financial motivations could drive parents to encourage their children to join IS (Horgan et al., 2016; Khoo, 2018; Motaparthy, 2014). Post (2005) discusses how relatives of martyrs may receive material and financial support from their extremist communities – which could also facilitate the intergenerational transmission of violent ideologies within marginalized families.

Additionally, twelve studies point at the role of extremist siblings within the family. While this potential risk factor is expressed in studies on ethnonationalist (Reinisch, 2020) and left-wing extremist (Lanzona, 2000) families, it is especially in relation to jihadist families that the role of siblings is highlighted (Andre & Harris-Hogan, 2013; Copeland, 2020; Githens-Mazer & Lambert,

2010; Malik, 2019; Sageman, 2004). Here, literature suggests that when children have an older brother or sister to whom a child looks up, this can aid the intergenerational transmission of extremist ideas (Copeland, 2020; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). In contrast, one study mentions having a non-extremist sibling as a potential protective factor – since these siblings could challenge the extremist ideology of the family system (Malik, 2019).

In seven studies, children's participation in non-ideological extracurricular activities or hobbies was identified as a protective factor against the radicalizing influence of parents. Here, it is argued that pro-social hobbies may not only stimulate contact with dissenters and counter the familial discourse, but they may also enable children to get their sense of identity and belonging from groups other than the parental network (Ahdash, 2019; Bosi & Della Porta, 2012; Malik, 2019). Nevertheless, the literature also shows that in extremist communities, children's hobbies are rarely completely separate from the family ideology. Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010), for example, observe that in jihadist communities in the UK, even rather innocent games of soccer are combined with religious education – which suggests that here, the protective effects of such hobbies is limited.

Eight studies mention the importance of age as a factor. These studies indicate that in extremist families, exposure to extremism already starts young (e.g., Copeland, 2020; Khoo, 2018; Sieckelink & Winter, 2015). Nonetheless, Malik (2019) stresses that for children, a higher age may be associated with a greater risk of actual radicalization – due to increased agency and because older children are able to seek out (online) extremist content themselves. They are less dependent on their parents for ideological development, and may act as recruiters themselves towards younger siblings (Malik, 2019). Others additionally point out that young children are often merely "parroting" their parents, and that only older children are cognitively able to understand (and act on) the family ideology (Cook & Vale, 2018; Horgan et al., 2016; Khoo, 2018). Nonetheless, Malik (2019) perceives exposure at a young age as a risk factor for radicalization, since "the fact that [a child] is not old enough to articulate radical or extremist views, does not mean that they are not held latently" (p. 43).

Seven studies mention factors related to intelligence, digital literacy and critical thinking as having protective properties. For example, Manning and La Bau (2015) illustrate how intergenerational transmission can be countered through exposure to alternative worldviews in higher education. Nonetheless, other studies suggest that higher intelligence stimulates the transmission of extremism (Andre & Harris-Hogan, 2013; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010) – since this facilitates children's understanding of the main principles underlying the family ideology.

Nine studies mention gender dynamics as a potential risk factor. Familial gender roles and patterns may influence transmission processes, since in extremist families, violence can be perceived as a symbol of power and masculinity by both daughters and sons (e.g., Felices-Luna, 2009; Hamilton, 2000; Manning & La Bau, 2015). Gender dynamics are also reflected in the everyday

parenting practices of extremist families, as regardless of ideology, this tends to be predominantly a woman's responsibility (Copeland, 2020; Kisyova, Veilleux-Lepage, & Newby, 2022; Malik, 2019; Windisch, 2019). This suggests that while fathers are often most involved in extremist movements, the duty of ideological transmission commonly rests on the shoulders of mothers.

Finally, eight of the included studies suggest that experiences of physical and/or emotional abuse might aid the intergenerational transmission of extremism – which ties into the moral-educational mechanisms discussed earlier. To illustrate, Huggins (2013) describes in the case "Kamal" how a jihadist father and mother burn their son's left hand whenever he improperly uses it (since, according to them, infidels were "the people of the left") (p. 64). This seems to support the hypothesis that insecure attachment might stimulate transmission processes, as discussed in Chapter 2. Interestingly, however, eleven studies note that children who come from a relatively warm nest, can also adopt their parents' violent ideas and behaviors. For example, Noor (2022) observes the interactions between an imprisoned Indonesian jihadist father and his children, which she thought "seemed close and warm" (p. 79). Bickerton (2019) similarly describes how Islamic extremist parents can hold violent worldviews while offering their children a loving and warm upbringing at the same time – and concludes that these qualities are therefore in no way contradictory. Most notably, children's loyalty to their extremist parents, and their need for parental validation, appeared to be an important element here (Copeland, 2020; Huggins, 2019; Noor, 2021). Copeland (2020) describes that while in their memoirs, jihadists tend to claim that they would also have participated in the violent jihad without parental consent – "their narratives nevertheless unconsciously reveal a personal desire to receive this validation" (p. 130). These findings fit with the literature discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, which points at emotionally supportive parenting (in the form of authoritative parenting) having a stimulating effect on intergenerational transmission.

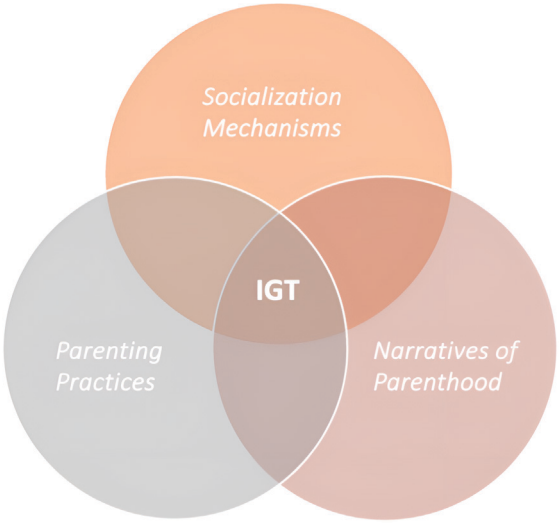
TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK

This systematic review supports the observation that extremist ideologies can be transmitted across generations, yet it is unable to make hard claims about the prevalence of this phenomenon. Moreover, the findings indicate that processes of intergenerational transmission can hardly be studied in isolation. The transmission mechanisms observed in this review take place within a complex and layered context of specific family dynamics, interactions, and risk and protective factors. Most notably, the ideological socialization mechanisms, everyday parenting practices of extremist parents, and the (extremist) narratives of parenthood that they adhere to, seem pivotal in understanding the exact workings of these mechanisms, and as we have seen, may ultimately determine the long-term outcomes of these processes. Based on these observations, this review proposes an integrated framework that may aid to the study of (the continuation of) extremist

ideologies within family contexts (Figure 2).While this framework is largely built around the (empirical) studies discussed in this literature review, it equally reflects the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 2 – as it combines classic transmission mechanisms (i.e., social learning and socialization theory) with broader developmental approaches such as attachment and parenting style theory, as well as symbolic interactionist theories that emphasize the importance of storytelling and narratives in transmission processes.

Figure 2.

Three integrated dimensions of intergenerational transmission (IGT)



Regarding the first dimension, ideological socialization mechanisms, the current review shows that parents directly and indirectly try to instill their beliefs in their children. They may for example explicitly teach their children about the extremist family ideology, put ideological rules and regulations in place, and punish or reward children for their respective (dis)obeyance. These practices mirror the social learning mechanisms discussed in the previous Chapter. On an indirect socialization level, parents might also choose to surround children with like-minded individuals, as to ensure social control and secondary socialization through peers (see Chapter 2). These findings fit with the channeling hypothesis of religious socialization (see Erickson, 1992) as discussed in the previous Chapter, which argues that in order to prompt children's religious development, parents "channel" their children into certain institutions, such as schools and youth organizations, which in turn shape their social interactions – and thus their religious identity. The findings of the current study suggest that extremist parents indeed map out the ideological paths of their children, by controlling their social lives – which allows for their further socialization.

This empirical review further points at parental narratives as a relevant dimension for studying the intergenerational transmission of extremism. The reviewed literature indicates that extremist parents consciously or subconsciously adhere to certain stories regarding (their role in) the upbringing of their children, which in turn shape and form their transmission efforts. For example, the traditional gender role patterns that dictate extremists' family lives, indirectly inform their mode of ideological transmission. It was observed that according to existing research, women appear to be the primary caretakers within extremist households – and are therefore burdened with the ideological task of raising a new generation of ideological hardliners. Similarly, the expectations of daughters in fulfilling their extremist duties, appear to be different than those of sons – where the latter is more commonly expected to get involved in violent action – which again points at the importance of (gendered) narratives as factor in transmission. Additionally, extremist parents may adhere to family narratives of collective victimhood in solidifying the extremist ideology. Rooted in experiences of adversities, marginalization or social exclusion, these narratives can give rise to the black-and-white perceptions that characterize extremist ideologies (see Schmid, 2013), playing into the indirect transmission processes that were described. At the same time, heroistic 'bloodline'-narratives may reveal the determinist worldviews of extremist parents, where children are perceived to be the natural successors of previous generations of 'fighters'. Here, too, in implicitly negating children's free will to choose a different walk of life, parents may consciously or subconsciously aid to processes of intergenerational transmission.

Finally, as both this review and Chapter 2 have shown, processes of intergenerational transmission need to be considered against a more general backdrop of everyday interactions between family members. Arguably, not all parenting practices exhibited in these families are aimed at the pursuit of ideological transmission, yet they may still play a role in children's susceptibility to their parents' ideas. For example, contrary to popular belief, this review indicates that the prevalence of emotional and physical abuse in extremist households appears to be limited. Although some studies do point extremist parents using threats and psychological manipulation in raising their children, this appears to be far from the norm. Instead, it was observed that more often, studies described loving family relations, loyalty and trust between parent and child, and seemingly positive parenting practices within extremist households. These dynamics may affect the degree to which parental ideologies may take hold in children, as previous research has shown that emotional warmth and trust are important factors in socialization processes: Children are more likely to adopt the ideas and attitudes of loving parents, and will likely rebel against those of cold or distant parents (Jaspers, Lubbers & De Vries, 2008). Reversely, other studies indicate that unhealthy family dynamics may cause children to develop insecure attachment styles, which could in turn cause children to excessively seek parental confirmation (e.g., Abela e.a., 2005; Magai et. al, 2000). Ultimately, such reassurance-seeking behavior may equally put children at risk of adopting the extremist family ideology, as to gain their parents' acknowledgement.

Although the systematic review of empirical studies presented in this Chapter is predominantly occupied with the unidirectional (parent-to-child) transmission of extremist beliefs, the results illustrate that transmission mechanisms are much more complex and reciprocal in nature. In studying this phenomenon, it is therefore crucial to overcome the distinction between parents as "active radicalizers" and children as "passively radicalized", as it ignores the role that children themselves may have in their radicalization process, and the family dynamics that may stimulate or inhibit these processes (see also Qureshi, 2018; Weggemans, Van der Zwan & Liem, 2018). This model is thus a first attempt at moving to a different, more integrated framework, in which socialization mechanisms, parental narratives and the everyday parenting practices of extremist families are equally taken into account. Ultimately, this model will provide the basis for the rest of this dissertation. It functions as the backbone for the empirical methodology and the findings presented in the chapters to come.