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

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CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Building on the theoretical background, empirical background, and the integrated model of the previous Chapter, the aim of this dissertation is to better understand the intergenerational transmission of jihadist and right-wing extremist ideas. To this end, I consulted and analyzed various data sources from the Netherlands and beyond. In order to understand the potential scope of the intergenerational transmission of jihadism in the Netherlands (Research Question 1), I examined aggregated data provided by the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, AIVD), pertaining to the family background of individuals considered jihadists by the AIVD. The use of this data, as well as the data exchange with the intelligence service itself, is quite unique for the Dutch context. This project, presented in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, allowed me to gain insight into the total number of children potentially at risk of being raised with jihadist ideas in the Netherlands.

I then wanted to gain insight into the mechanisms and factors associated with processes of intergenerational transmission (Research Question 2 and 3), as well as the long-term outcomes associated with these experiences (Research Question 4). To do so, I conducted interviews with former extremists from both domestic and international contexts (N=30), including former extremist parents and (adult) children who grew up in extremist households. Additionally, I spoke with third parties related to these families, such as journalists, practitioners, researchers and experts (N=20). The first-hand experiences of those involved in, exposed to, or working with extremist households are pivotal when seeking to understand how processes of intergenerational transmission manifest themselves. The stories and narratives of interview participants are therefore at the heart of Chapters 6 through 9. They provide insight into the processes of transmission, as well as the family dynamics that may reinforce or inhibit these processes. Moreover, they help us understand some of the long-term effects of an extremist upbringing, and the ways in which adult children may be able to break away from their family ideology. In addition to these interviews, I analyzed case files from the Public Prosecutor's Office (N=12) involving extremist parents. I also obtained access to the court rulings of 27 criminal cases involving extremist parents through the Council for the Judiciary.

As already discussed in Chapter 2, Table 5 contains an overview of how each of the data sources aids to addressing the research questions. When it comes to Research Question (RQ) 2, 3 and 4, it should be mentioned that the Public Prosecutor (PP) files and the court rulings are strictly considered in addition to the interview data – since triangulation of sources was not allowed by the parties from which the former were obtained. As a result, the interviews are regarded as the main data source, which are supplemented by (but not tested against) the data retrieved from the PP files and court rulings. For the purpose of clarity, this Chapter will discuss the quantitative methodology (aimed at answering RQ 1) separately from the qualitative methodology (aimed at answering RQ 2, 3 and 4).

Table 6. Schematic outline of research objectives

RQ	*Focus*	*Data used*	*Discussed in Chapter*
#1	Scope of IGT	Intelligence data	5
#2	Mechanisms of IGT	Interviews, PP files & Court rulings	6, 7, 8
#3	Stimulating/inhibiting factors of IGT	Interviews, PP files & Court rulings	6, 7, 8
#4	Long-term consequences after IGT	Interviews, PP files & Court rulings	9

PART I: QUANTITATIVE DATA

Data collection

The collection and subsequent analysis of intelligence data was a result of a collaborative research endeavor between Leiden University and the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, AIVD), which took off in 2021. The AIVD was able to establish an aggregated and anonymized dataset containing the familial relationships of adults who are classified as jihadists by the AIVD because of their (involvement in) the jihadist ideology, activities or networks. The AIVD tested the dataset prior to sharing for legality and traceability. In the Netherlands, such cooperation between academia and the intelligence service has never taken place before, which makes this study an innovative research project.

The AIVD determined the family relations of all individuals in the dataset through matching their data to the Personal Records Database (Basisregistratie Personsn, or BRP). The AIVD retrieved both the original dataset, as well as the matching BRP data, for the purpose of performing its organizational tasks and duties; the data was not collected for the explicit purpose of this study. The reference date for the dataset is September 12, 2022.

The BRP database contains comprehensive demographic data, including residential information, sociodemographic characteristics (gender, birth year, and migration status), and familial relationships. In the Netherlands, newborns are automatically entered into the BRP system when their births are officially registered. Legal residents possessing valid permits and intending to stay longer than four months in the Netherlands must register with the BRP. Additionally, temporary residents staying fewer than four months may voluntarily register as non-residents, thereby potentially including their data in the dataset. For this study, 'family' is operationalized as individuals sharing documented kinship relations, while 'household' is defined as individuals registered under a common residential address.

Although cohabitation as such is not officially designated in the BRP, the database does maintain detailed records of residential occupancy and familial relationships for each registered address. Household composition was determined by analyzing children's residential addresses and the presence of (officially registered) parents or grandparents at the same address, including potential step-parents or new partners. This methodological approach has several limitations:

it excludes Living Apart Together (LAT) relationships where parents maintain a relationship while residing separately; there may be discrepancies between registered and actual residential addresses; and the data cannot capture the quality or frequency of parent-child interactions or relationships with other household members. Nevertheless, using the BRP dataset offers important advantages, particularly in longitudinal consistency and reliability. The registration system maintains a 99% administrative accuracy standard, and in 2021, person-level residential accuracy reached 97.4%, indicating that most BRP registered individuals indeed resided at their documented addresses. At the household level, accuracy was 95.2%, indicating that in these cases, all persons registered in the BRP at a particular address actually lived there (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2022).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the dataset was primarily collected for security and intelligence purposes in the context of the organizational duties of the AIVD, and – in the case of the BRP – for administrative purposes, but not for scientific research. Although I was unable to independently assess the quality and reliability of the AIVD dataset, it can generally be stated that this organization aims to gain insight into all individuals in the Netherlands who can be classified as jihadists. Nonetheless, the extent to which the AIVD succeeds at this, and the reliability and comprehensiveness of these identifications, cannot be externally verified due to the classified nature of intelligence operations.

Data analysis

I did not have direct access to the raw data underlying the research project. Rather, through the established collaborative framework delineated in the section above, my authorization was limited to aggregated demographic data that (1) demonstrated relevance to the central research question, and (2) could be methodologically derived through the cross-referencing of existing intelligence databases with the BRP. This methodological approach facilitated my analysis of descriptive statistics across three levels: (1) individuals classified as jihadists according to AIVD operational criteria, (2) their offspring, and (3) their household composition and structure. The demographic variables incorporated in this aggregated dataset included, but were not limited to: chronological age (calculated from date of birth), residential geolocation, nationality status, country of origin, marital classification, mortality data (where applicable), and jihadist designation (as operationalized by AIVD parameters). Through systematic descriptive statistical analysis of these variables, I was able to construct a comprehensive demographic profile of the Dutch jihadist population. Where methodologically sound, findings were contextualized against national population parameters provided by Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, CBS) to situate the observed patterns within broader societal trends. However, the specific nature of the study population, combined with the scope of the research inquiry and my constrained access to raw data, hampered the implementation of more sophisticated statistical comparative analyses.

PART II: QUALITATIVE DATA

Background of the study population

In this study, I interviewed participants from the Netherlands as well as individuals from, among other countries, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the US. While my initial intention was to only interview Dutch respondents, I abandoned this criterion during the recruitment process for practical reasons. Particularly regarding (former) right-wing extremist families, it proved challenging to find Dutch cases that met the selection criteria. A potential explanation might be that in recent years, policy makers and academics have primarily been focusing on jihadist radicalization – in light of the respectively large number of Dutch citizens joining terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq since 2012. Additionally, some suggest that in the Netherlands, a 'normalization' of extreme right-wing ideas and discourses has occurred (Butter, 2019; Van den Broeke & Kunter, 2021; Van Puffelen, 2021). For example, Van Puffelen (2021) notes that "to right-wing extremism, something applies that does not apply to jihadist extremism: it is not difficult to say that we find jihadist extremism wrong or scary; right-wing extremism, on the other hand, is less easy to condemn" (p. 15, translated from Dutch).

Hence, I chose to expand the geographical focus of this study to include Europe more generally, Canada, and the United States. The inclusion of the latter was not a given. The US differs significantly from the Netherlands in terms of political climate, demographical composition, national history, and jurisdiction (with regards to extremism and terrorism, as well as gun legislation, parenting, and homeschooling). These contextual differences between the US and Western Europe—and their associated risks of unwarranted generalizations—have been extensively discussed in criminological literature (e.g., Barberet, 2007; Marshall, 2001; Messner, 2021). Nonetheless, having this broader focus, I was able to recruit a more diverse range of interview participants, providing me with a deeper understanding of the various shapes and forms that the intergenerational transmission of extremism may take on. This approach fit with the explorative nature of this study. Yet admittedly, the inclusion of non-European participants undoubtedly hampers the direct translation to the modern-day Western European context, which should be kept in mind in interpreting the findings of this study.

Selection and recruitment of interview participants

In the selection of interview participants, I applied various criteria. The primary condition for selection was that respondents either (1) were raised by at least one parent with right-wing extremist or jihadist worldviews, or (2) themselves held parental responsibility for at least one child at the time of their right-wing extremist or jihadist beliefs. Here, I applied a broad understanding of the concept of 'parents', including adoptive parents, foster parents, stepparents and grandparents. Furthermore, in selection of participants it was required that the extremist upbringing took

place (at least partially) after 1980, as to inhibit contextual differences in our understanding of 'extremism' as much as possible.

In recruiting interviewees, I consulted four different sources: (1) open source material (2) (international) support groups and NGOs, (3) the personal network of me and my colleagues, and (4) the Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency (Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen, DJI). Additionally, in all four sources, I employed the so-called 'snowball method', where after each interview, participants were asked for new names or contact details of potential interviewees. Recruitment efforts ceased when saturation of the research group occurred (with a total of N=50), and interviews no longer provided new insights. Recruitment took place alongside the conduction of interviews, between March 2022 and May 2023. See Figure 3 for a flowchart of recruitment efforts.

Firstly, recruitment took place through open sources such as news outlets, blogs, and autobiographies written by individuals who come from an extremist household (either as parent or as (adult) child). These cases were identified by entering relevant Dutch, French, German, Italian, and English search terms in various combinations into an online search engine (e.g., "extremist + youth + family" or "jihadism + upbringing + mother"). Based on the content of the source and aforementioned selection criteria, I then identified cases most relevant to my study (purposive sampling). Potential participants were subsequently contacted by email and via social media (including LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook), using a standardized invitation. Secondly, I reached out to various international organizations for former extremists via their websites. These organizations often provide for support groups led by experts or social workers, and generally have access to a broad network of former extremists. Several of their spokespersons were willing to (digitally) meet and provide me with names or contact details of potential participants, which allowed me to reach out to them.

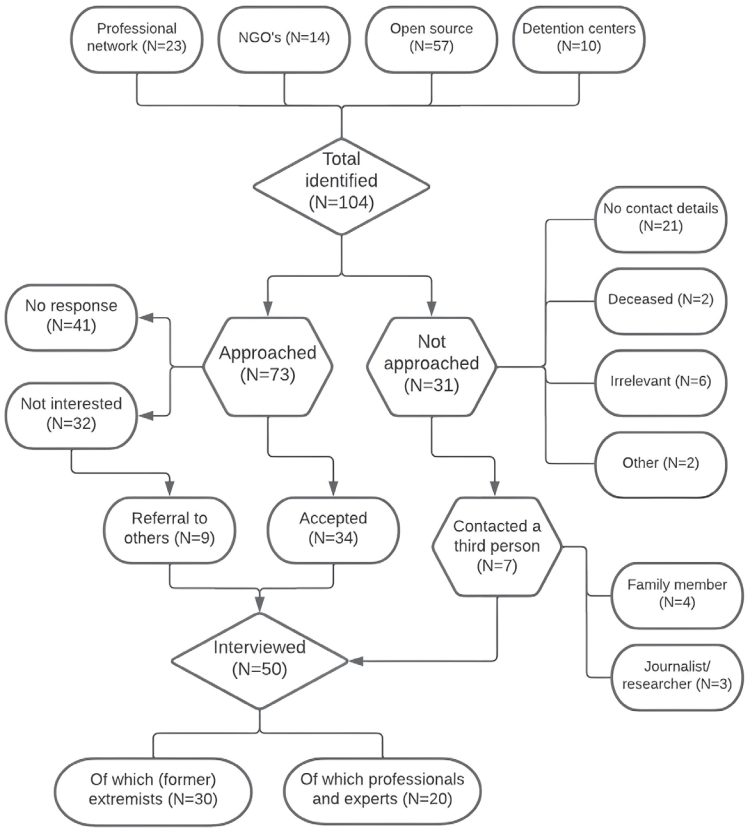
Thirdly, I tapped into the personal networks of my colleagues at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs, who over the years established good connections with researchers, practitioners, and experts in the field of terrorism and extremism research, both domestically and internationally. I invited them to share their knowledge of or experiences with extremist families. In some cases, they could connect me with potential interviewees or refer me to other experts on the topic.

Finally, I recruited respondents through the Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency (Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen, DJI). Among Dutch returnees from Syria and Iraq are many (former) extremist parents. In the Dutch context, most of them are currently detained for terrorist crimes, or awaiting trial. In order to get in touch with this group and to ask them about their upbringing and family lives, I submitted a request to DJI to conduct interviews at the terrorist units of three correctional facilities (PI De Schie, PI Zwolle, and PI Vught). The willingness and consent of the detainees was pivotal, as participation in this study was entirely voluntary (convenience sampling). In recruiting detainees and conducting the interviews, I followed the DJI standardized protocol. The employees at the correctional facilities helped me to distribute a letter among potential

participants, which explained the purpose of the study and invited detainees for an interview. Interviews were subsequently scheduled with help of the employees at the correctional facilities and the directorates of the terrorist units.

Figure 3.

Flowchart of interview participant selection.



Background of participants

The aforementioned recruitment efforts ultimately helped to identify 104 eligible participants. From this pool, I approached 73 for an interview. Reasons for not approaching individuals included, among others, the absence of contact details, or the apparent death of the individual at hand. In these instances, I attempted to contact someone from the individual's social network, such as a family member, lawyer, or journalist. Of all participants invited for an interview, I ultimately spoke with 34. In other cases, respondents indicated no interest in participating in the study (N=32). Others did not respond to the invitation at all, even after a follow-up request (N=41).

In the end, I conducted interviews with thirty former extremists, including both (former) extremist parents and (adult) children raised in an extremist household (see Table 7). Of these, sixteen had a history of right-wing extremism, and fourteen had a jihadist background. A notable portion of the participants is from the United States (N=10), the United Kingdom (N=3), and Canada (N=3). Additionally, I spoke with thirteen Dutch respondents and one German interviewee, whom I interviewed in English. In addition to these interviews, I interviewed twenty practitioners and experts who from their own professional experiences could provide insight into the intergenerational transmission of extremism.

Table 7. Background of interview participants

Alias	***Nationality***	***Date of interview***	***Ideology***
Madison	United Kingdom	18-03-2022	Right-wing extremism
Jeffrey	United States	15-04-2022	Right-wing extremism
Charlotte	United States	30-04-2022	Right-wing extremism
Brooke	United States	02-05-2022	Right-wing extremism
Liam	United States	23-05-2022	Right-wing extremism
Michael	United States	25-05-2022	Right-wing extremism
Jocelyn	United Kingdom	26-05-2022	Right-wing extremism
Abigail	United States	27-05-2022	Right-wing extremism
Damian	Canada	02-06-2022	Right-wing extremism
Ethan	United States	08-06-2022	Right-wing extremism
Lukas	Germany	21-06-2022	Right-wing extremism
William	Netherlands	30-06-2022	Jihadism
Andrew	United States	01-07-2022	Right-wing extremism
Bilal	Canada	06-07-2022	Jihadism
Brendon	Canada	06-09-2022	Right-wing extremism
Omar	United Kingdom	01-10-2022	Jihadism
Vincent	Netherlands	17-10-2022	Right-wing extremism
Irene	Netherlands	17-11-2022a	Jihadism
Rachelle	Netherlands	17-11-2022b	Jihadism
Mustafa	Netherlands	26-01-2023a	Jihadism
Ibrahim	Netherlands	26-01-2023b	Jihadism
Soufiane	Netherlands	26-01-2023c	Jihadism
Karim	Netherlands	27-01-2023	Jihadism
Abdelkader	Netherlands	15-02-2023	Jihadism
Jamaal	Netherlands	07-03-2023a	Jihadism
Rachid	Netherlands	07-03-2023b	Jihadism
Nour	Netherlands	17-03-2023a	Jihadism
Samira	Netherlands	17-03-2023b	Jihadism
Benjamin	United States	10-05-2023	Right-wing extremism
Audrey	United States	16-05-2023	Right-wing extremism

Interview setup

With the interview participants in Table 7, I conducted semi-structured interviews using two topic lists (one for parents and one for (adult) children, see Appendix 2 and 3). The advantage of this approach is that in each interview, the same topics are touched upon (structure), while allowing both the interviewer and interviewee the freedom to digress (flexibility). Semi-structured interviews promote a mutual exchange between the researcher and participant, fostering processes meaning-making and critical reflection (Galletta, 2013; Kendall, 2008). Therefore, this approach is considered particularly suitable for complex interview topics, where the participant's personal experiences take central stage (Galletta, 2013).

Based on my research questions, I developed two topic lists covering areas such as interviewee's early childhood memories, their relationship with their parent(s), and the manifestation(s) of the extremist ideology in everyday family life (see Appendix 2 and 3). Topic list 1, which was specifically aimed at interviewing (former) extremist (adult) children, was tested prior to the interviews on an international subset (N=10) of individuals who underwent a particularly harmful (e.g., radical, sectarian or cultic) ideological upbringing. This subset was established through convenience sampling, recruiting respondents based on public (online) sources such as news articles, blogs, and autobiographies. Although their experiences may not directly translate to those of children from extremist families, the (socially isolated) context in which transmission occurs, suggests similar mechanisms may be at play (see also Chapter 4 of this dissertation). With these pilot interviews, I assessed the comprehensiveness of the topic list, the applicability of the questions to the interviewee's lived experiences, and the degree to which the interview topics could cause any psychological distress to the respondents. The pilot interviews themselves are not part of this study. However, based on the pilot interviews, I did rephrase or clarify some of the interview topics and associated questions.

Following my decision to recruit international respondents, a notable portion of the interviews (N=18) took place online, via a video platform such as Zoom or Skype. I was able to interview most Dutch participants face-to-face (N=12). Here, interviews took place at a neutral public location in the interviewees' hometown (N=1) or at the correctional facility where participants resided (N=11). Interviews lasted between 42 and 179 minutes and took place between March 2022 and May 2023.

Privacy and informed consent

All interview participants were asked for their verbal informed consent prior to the interview. Considering the sensitive nature of the study, I provided as much transparency and openness as possible regarding the purpose and design of the study. Interview participants were informed about the ways the information they provided would be used, and the measures in place regarding data

security and-protection. It was emphasized that all data would only be used in an anonymous form. Although this choice to some extent hampers the replicability and verifiability of this study, ensuring the privacy of respondents was crucial. Prior to the interview, participants were informed about their right to withdraw their consent or terminate the interview at any time (either temporarily or permanently). None of the interviewees appealed to these rights. Participants were verbally asked for their permission to record the interview on a digital recorder. All interviewees agreed except for one. This particular respondent was willing to participate in the study, but expressed privacy concerns regarding the voice recording. Therefore, with the interviewees' consent, notes were taken instead, which were subsequently digitally transcribed to reconstruct the conversation.

Coding and analysis of interview data

All audio recordings were transcribed *ad verbatim* and then coded using Atlas.ti software. Coding took place using two methods of qualitative analysis—specifically thematic analysis and narrative analysis. Here, I follow Van Staa and Evers (2010) in their assertion that 'analytic triangulation' (or the application of multiple methods of analysis to the same data) can enhance the depth of a study. It increases the internal validity of qualitative research and allows the researcher to achieve 'thick analysis' (derived from Clifford Geertz's (1973) 'thick description') of data (Van Staa & Evers, 2010).

Thematic analysis as a qualitative methodology allows the researcher to identify the main patterns of conversation and core themes of an interview (Guest, MacQueen, Namey, 2011). This type of analysis helps to understand the core arguments or perspectives that interviewees bring forward. In narrative analysis, on the other hand, less emphasis is placed on the content of the data, and more on the (verbal or linguistic) ways in which ideas, feelings or opinions are expressed (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016). The goal of this analytical approach is to gain a better understanding of the ways in which interviewees interpret their experiences, the meaning they attribute to events, and the stories they tell about their past (Copeland, 2019; Maruna & Liem, 2021; Presser & Sandberg, 2019). Here, the reality of events is subordinate to the subjective interpretation of participants. In other words, narrative analysis does not aim to uncover facts but rather serves as a means to understand participants' inner reflections and meaning-making processes (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Sools, 2012). As such, I attempted to view their stories and experiences 'through their own eyes' (also known as an *emic* approach, see Becker, 1997; Harris, 1976).

In combining a thematic analysis with a narrative analysis, I followed several steps. First, I engaged in thorough data familiarization by repeatedly reading through the transcribed texts and the notes that were taken during the interviews. I then thematically coded the interviews in Atlas.ti using an inductive approach, examining the themes that arose from the data. I created thematic codes by labelling the interview data at the sentence- and paragraph-level for data relating to RQ2 (mechanisms of IGT), RQ3 (factors of IGT) and/or RQ4 (long-term consequences

of IGT). As I progressed through multiple coding cycles, I refined and consolidated themes where necessary, merging codes that overlapped and adjusting categories to ensure they accurately reflected the interview data. For example, the codes “child_sexual abuse”, “child_maltreatment” and “child_corporal punishment” were combined in the code group “insecure parenting”. These overarching code groups and categories were determined based on their frequency, relevance, and the emotional weight interviewees placed on them. In Atlas.ti, I then used specific analytical features such as the code co-occurrence table and the memos I used to document my reflections and observations throughout the analysis, to explore relationships between themes.

Second, I supplemented the thematic analysis with a narrative analysis. The decision to include both approaches was driven by a desire to not only capture the content of participants’ experiences but also to explore how they expressed and interpreted those experiences. In applying a narrative analytical approach to the interviews, I similarly coded the data in Atlas.ti, using an inductive coding style without a predefined coding scheme. I labelled textual elements that I identified as relevant in the thematic analysis at the word-, sentence- and paragraph-level. Here, however, I focussed on the linguistics of the texts and their underlying meaning. This includes the use of specific expressions, nuances, comparisons, digressions, and metaphors. For example, in the thematic analysis I identified “regret and shame” as a relevant theme, but in the narrative analysis I coupled this theme with the code “moral disengagement” and the code group “neutralization techniques”. This allowed me to come to a layered understanding of not just the ways (former) extremist participants reflect on their lives, but also on the ways they themselves try to make sense of their experiences. In both the thematic analysis and the narrative analysis, the coding process occurred in multiple cycles, as is customary in qualitative analyses (also known at the ‘iterative process’ of coding, see Flick, 2013, p. 302). The coding was periodically reviewed by a colleague, as to ensure inter-rater reliability. Upon encountering minor discrepancies in coding style, the coding strategy was adjusted to better fit the purpose of the study.

In trying to answer RQ2 and RQ3, I organized my findings along the three main axes of the model presented earlier in this dissertation (Socialization Mechanisms, Parenting Practices and Narratives of Parenthood), with a fourth dimension (Aftermath) pertaining specifically to RQ4. With regards to the analysis of the rest of my qualitative data (Public Prosecutor’s files and court rulings), I opted for a deductive coding style, as I considered these sources to be supplementary to the interview data. The details pertaining to the selection and analysis of these sources is outlined in the following sections.

Coding and analysis of Public Prosecutor's case files

In addition to the interviews, I analyzed twelve case files of the Dutch Public Prosecutor's Office involving (an) extremist parent(s). Access to these files was granted following a formal request made to the General Office. Case files were selected based on the jurisdictional overview on the website *Rechtspraak.nl*, using the search term combinations outlined below (following the search terms used in Chapter 3 of this dissertation). Prior to formulating these search terms, various cases of extremism and terrorism were examined on *Rechtspraak.nl*, to make sure the search terms adequately fit the terminology used in Dutch jurisprudence.

(Extremis* OR Terror* OR Nazi* OR Neonazi* OR Neo-nazi* OR Fascis* OR Islamis* OR Jihadis* OR Anti-semitis* OR Antisemitis* OR Nationaal-socialis* OR Nationaalsocialis* OR Terror*) AND (Kind OR Dochter* OR Zoon* OR Moeder OR Vader OR Kinderen OR Grootouder* OR Familie* OR Gezin* OR Grootmoeder OR Grootvader OR Ouder* OR Baby OR Babies OR Pleeg* OR Adoptie* OR Stief* OR Kleinkind* OR Generatie)

In the selection of case files, I applied the same criteria as when selecting interview participants. Eligible cases had to involve at least one child with at least one (biological, adoptive, foster, or step-) parent adhering to right-wing extremist or jihadist ideas. In line with the interviews, I also included the possibility of multigenerational transmission via grandparents. Additionally, the verdict had to have been rendered in the past ten years. A criminal conviction was not a requirement for inclusion of the case: cases that resulted in acquittal or dismissal of charges were also included. Moreover, it was not necessary for the extremist upbringing to be the central focus of the case. Here, an expression of concerns about right-wing extremist or jihadist transmission in the family sufficed. Ultimately twelve case files met the inclusion criteria. Case file numbers where subsequently provided to the respective Public Prosecutor's offices in charge, in order to arrange access to the files. The eventual review of the files took place between October 2022 and March 2023. As outlined in Table 8, all cases were found to be related to jihadist ideologies – the search terms did not yield cases involving right-wing extremist families.

All files were reviewed in person at the respective offices that handled the cases. Since most of the files were non-digitalized, they were examined in their entirety. Only one case file (Case File 12) was digitalized: instead of reading this file in full, search term combinations mentioned above were used to identify relevant sections. To extract the data systematically from both the physical and digitalized case files, I applied a pre-established coding scheme during the review process. This coding scheme, detailed in Appendix 4, was based on the findings from Chapters 2 and 3, as well as the analysis of the interview data described in the previous section. It allowed me to focus on key themes related to the three spheres of the Intergenerational Transmission (IGT) model (see Figure

2 on page 57) corresponding to research questions 2 and 3, as well as the 'Aftermath' dimension related to research question 4.

After manually reviewing the files, I imported the data into Atlas.ti for further analysis. Using the coding scheme, I assigned codes to text segments that aligned with the identified themes. The search and query functions in Atlas.ti allowed me to cross-reference specific codes – such as "gendered narratives" or "multigenerational transmission" – and track patterns across the different cases. This structured approach enabled a more in-depth exploration of thematic connections. Considering the deductive nature of the analysis, the initial codes required minimal recoding, redefining, or merging. However, some new code groups were added, such as "IGT in IS territory", pertaining to jihadist families raising children within the former Islamic State 'caliphate.'

Table 8. Background of Public Prosecutor's case files

#	*Office*	*Date*	*Ideology*	*Indictment*
Case file 1	East-Netherlands	27/10/2022	Jihadism	Withdrawal from parental authority
Case file 2	National Office	10/11/2022	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 3	National Office	25/11/2022	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 4	Functional Office	07/12/2022a	Jihadism	Terrorism financing
Case file 5	Functional Office	07/12/2022b	Jihadism	Terrorism financing
Case file 6	National Office	15/12/2022a	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 7	National Office	15/12/2022b	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 8	National Office	15/12/2022c	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 9	National Office	05/01/2023	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 10	National Office	19/012023a	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes
Case file 11	Office East-Brabant	19/01/2023b	Jihadism	Withdrawal from parental authority
Case file 12	National Office	16/03/2023	Jihadism	Terrorism and related crimes

Coding and analysis of court rulings

In addition to interviews and Public Prosecutor's case files, court rulings constituted the third qualitative data source of this study. Using the online (restricted) E-Archive of the Council for the Judiciary, I gained access to judicial decisions involving families with extremist worldviews. In selecting these rulings, I used the same search terms as in the selection of the Public Prosecution case files (see the preceding paragraph). Also, the same inclusion criteria were applied: court rulings had to have taken place within the last decade, and cases should be related to right-wing extremist or jihadist parents and their children. Ultimately, this approach yielded a selection of 27 court rulings (see Table 9), which were subsequently coded using the coding scheme also applied to the Public Prosecutor's case files (see Appendix 4).

Similar to the case files, all court rulings pertained to jihadist families – no cases involving right-wing extremist parents were identified. Furthermore, a notable portion of these rulings

pertained to civil and/or family law courts. This is hardly surprising, considering that in the Netherlands, these judicial domains are preoccupied with child protection measures such as care orders and out-of-home placements. In families where concerns about potential extremism among parents exist, such measures are sometimes ordered by courts, provided there is sufficient reason to believe that the family ideology puts children's wellbeing and/or development at risk.

Although in court rulings, discussions of family relations are usually less extensive than in public prosecution case files (several paragraphs of text versus multiple binders of police files), may similarly provide us with an understanding of extremists' family dynamics. These rulings often contain contributions from involved authorities (such as the Dutch Council for Child Protection or certified child protection institutions) which may carry key indicators regarding parent-child interactions and possible mechanisms of ideological transmission. Moreover, judicial rulings by criminal courts often contain a brief summary of the evidence presented in the case, which may similarly include details of family relations. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that there are some limitations in using this data. The parties and entities involved in a legal case hold different (often opposing) interests, which then inform their claims and viewpoints. Additionally, court rulings are not intended for scientific research –and incompleteness, bias, or distortion of the data cannot be ruled out. Therefore, in this study, judicial data was at all times considered in conjunction with the other data sources.

The deductive analysis of the court rulings largely followed the same structure as that of the Public Prosecutor's (PP) files. Data was systematically extracted from the selected court rulings by using a pre-established coding scheme (Appendix 4). I then imported these coding schemes to Atlas.ti to add additional layers of analysis to the data. For example, the coding category "ideological conflicts" was further expanded with the code "false accusations" – as it became evident that within court cases, parents sometimes deliberately accuse one another of being "extremist" in an attempt to gain custody over their child(ren). Again, these codes were subsequently used to identify patterns that could provide us with answers to the research question, with the help of qualitative analysis tools provided by Atlas.ti.

Table 9. Background of selected court rulings

#	*District*	*Domain*	*Ideology*	*Topic*
Court file 1	Amsterdam (District Court)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Withdrawing from compulsory education
Court file 2	Gelderland (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 3	Gelderland (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 4	Den Bosch (Court of Appeal)	Civil Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 5	Amsterdam (District Court)	Civil Law	Jihadism	Educational subsidies
Court file 6	The Hague (Court of Appeal)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 7	The Hague (Court of Appeal)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Terrorism or related crimes
Court file 8	Supreme Court	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Terrorism financing
Court file 9	Arnhem-Leeuwarden (Court of Appeal)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement
Court file 10	The Hague Court of Appeal)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 11	Oost-Brabant (District Court)	Civil Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement
Court file 12	The Hague (District Court)	Administrative Law	Jihadism	Retraction of nationality
Court file 13	Zeeland-West-Brabant (District Court)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Terrorism or related crimes
Court file 14	Amsterdam (Court of Appeal)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 15	Rotterdam (District Court)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Terrorism or related crimes
Court file 16	Gelderland (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 17	Amsterdam (Court of Appeal)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 18	Rotterdam (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 19	Rotterdam (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 20	Limburg (District Court)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Terrorism financing
Court file 21	Rotterdam (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 22	The Hague (Court of Appeal)	Criminal Law	Jihadism	Terrorism financing
Court file 23	The Hague (Court of Appeal)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 24	The Hague (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 25	The Hague (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 26	Rotterdam (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order
Court file 27	The Hague (District Court)	Family Law	Jihadism	Custodial arrangement and/or care order

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A large part of the research presented in this dissertation is based on two subsequent projects funded by the Research and Data Center (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Datacentrum, WODC) and the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security (Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, NCTV) (also see 'Background and approach' in Chapter 1 of this dissertation). Nonetheless, the presented findings are the result of an independent research process that was conducted without interference by third parties.

In the course of the WODC project and the NCTV project, extensive attention was paid to the sensitive nature of the topic (and its associated data) as well as the potential distress that the interviewees might experience. Prior to the interviews, each participant was informed of their right to withdraw their participation and/or their consent for the use of their data in this project, at any stage of the interviewing process. Interviewees were guaranteed full anonymity and confidentiality prior to participation. To detained participants, it was made extensively clear that their participation in this project would have no consequences for their court proceedings – nor would the interview recordings be shared with anyone other than the involved researchers. Additionally, interview participants, as well as third parties such as the Public Prosecutor's Offices and the involved courts, were informed of the ways data would be stored and how sensitive (personal) details would be handled. No objections were encountered in any of these aspects.

The data presented in Chapter 5 is based on a unique research project together with the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD). Here, some separate ethical considerations deserve mentioning (its methodological limitations are discussed more extensively in Chapter 10 of this dissertation). Due to the potential security risks associated with intelligence data, my co-authors and I did not have access to the raw material on which the dataset was based. We were therefore unable to check the validity and reliability of the methods used to source this data, nor were we able to account for the completeness or accurateness of the dataset itself. There was, quite naturally, also no informed consent obtained prior to including these subjects in the dataset. Additionally, although I was able to analyze the data independently from the AIVD, several internal reviews had to take place before the manuscript was authorized to be published. While no interference took place regarding the analysis and interpretation of the data itself, the framing and phrasing of the study did require some adjustments to cater to the (understandable) security concerns of the AIVD. Regardless, objectivity and academic distance were maintained at all times, and any changes made to the presentation of the data did not impair the nature or quality of the analysis.

I am not aware of any personal or professional conflicts of interest regarding this PhD project. In conducting this study, I adhere to the Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity, as established by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW et al., 2018). Prior to this project, official approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Governance

and Global Affairs at Leiden University (reference number: 2021-010-ISGA-VanWieringen). With this decision of approval, the Committee expressed its confidence in the research design of this PhD project, specifically with regards to the safeguarding of the privacy of the individuals involved. In its review, the Ethics Committee considered, among others, the acquisition of informed consent; the collection and storage of sensitive data; the independence of the researcher; and the transparency of the used methodologies. The Ethical Certificate of Approval for this study is available upon request.

OPEN SCIENCE CONSIDERATIONS

In this project, I adhered to the FAIR-principles of open science (making data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) to the extent that the sensitive nature of the data allowed. Both the WODC project (Chapter 2) and the NCTV project (Chapter 6 to 9) on which this dissertation was based, were pre-registered on the Open Science Forum (in 2021 and 2022 respectively) – with the purpose of making them accessible to the wider (academic) community and to provide transparency about the approach of the studies. The tools used to analyze the qualitative data (i.e., the topic lists and the coding scheme, see Appendix 2, 3 and 4) were shared on the Open Science Forum as well. The raw data that was used for this dissertation (interviews, case files and court rulings), as well as the metadata (regarding the correspondence with interviewees) were not shared, in light of the privacy (anonymity and confidentiality) concerns associated with this data. Similarly, the study that was conducted together with the intelligence service (Chapter 5) was not pre-registered, nor was the dataset itself shared on the Open Science Forum post hoc. Here too, the sensitive nature of the data, as well as the non-disclosure statements signed prior to undertaking this study, understandably limited my ability to adhere to the FAIR-principles.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology as outlined above is not without limitations. An extensive reflection on the nature of these limitations, and the ways they may have affected my results, can be found in the section ‘Methodological considerations’ in the Chapter Discussion and Conclusion. For now, it suffices to highlight several important aspects of the approach that was chosen. First of all, as mentioned, this study did not exclusively focus on Dutch extremist families due to difficulties in accessing this particular population. To overcome this, I decided to interview respondents from abroad as well. This decision resulted in a larger pool of interview participants, but may have introduced some bias into the data. A remarkable portion of the interviewees comes from the United States and Canada – countries with political, historical, and cultural contexts that differ

significantly from those in the Netherlands. Moreover, the majority of the interviewees represents right-wing extremist ideologies, as contacting jihadist families proved to be rather challenging. The data on jihadist families is in turn largely based on interviews conducted in Dutch prisons and public prosecutor files, which too comes with limitations and potential biases (also see 'Methodological considerations' in the Chapter Discussion and Conclusion). The participants I interviewed are likely not representative of the total population of individuals with extremist ideas. Based on the data, I cannot make generalized statements about extremist families in the Netherlands, nor can this data be used in assessment of individual cases.

Lastly, it is important to note that many of the mechanisms and patterns discussed here are not unique to extremist families. Most non-extremist parents will, to some extent, employ ideological socialization mechanisms in raising their children. This is hardly surprising, given that previous research has suggested that the intergenerational transmission of extremism shares similarities with the transmission of 'mainstream' political and religious beliefs (Aggeborn & Nyman, 2021; Jennings, Dalton & Klingemann, 2007; Van Ditmars, 2023). Nevertheless, extremist groups are unique in many respects (e.g., regarding their socially isolated nature, their legitimization of violence, their disregard of democratic and pluralist systems, etc.), which justifies a more in-depth analysis of transmission mechanisms in extremist families. It is against this backdrop that the empirical chapters to come, should be interpreted.

In the next Chapter, I will discuss the scope of the jihadist community in the Netherlands and the nature of its family relations, to better understand the manifestation of this phenomenon. Following the theoretical background laid out in Chapter 2, and the model of three overlapping dimensions as discussed in Chapter 3, I will then outline the empirical findings of my study in three corresponding chapters: Socialization mechanisms (Chapter 6), Parenting Practices (Chapter 7) and Narratives of Parenthood (Chapter 8). In the final empirical Chapter, entitled Aftermath (Chapter 9), I discuss some of the long-term effects of the extremist family dynamics, both for (formerly extremist) parents and their (adult) children. In the Discussion and Conclusion, I will then provide an answer to the research questions and discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

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