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

Wieringen, L. van

CHAPTER 6

SOCIALIZATION MECHANISMS

INTRODUCTION

Studying the intergenerational transmission of extremism can be a challenging undertaking: family life generally unfolds behind closed doors, and for outsiders, gaining insight into the parent-child interactions that may facilitate ideological transmission, is rather complex. In this Chapter, I aim to shed light on the of ways parents may socialize their children into the extremist family ideology, using interview data, Public Prosecutor's case files, and court rulings. Although I will primarily focus on the direct and indirect ways in which extremist socialization occurs, I simultaneously acknowledge the assumption that intergenerational transmission is a dynamic and reciprocal process, in which parent and child mutually influence each other in their perspectives and beliefs (Bernardi, 2013; Roest, 2007). Children are thus not merely passively exposed to their parent's worldviews, but (to some extent) have agency over the ways in which they engage with these ideas. This is likely especially the case for older children, who are able to reflect on (their view of) the family ideology.

In this Chapter – building on the theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 2, and the empirical overview presented in Chapter 3 – I therefore distinguish between direct socialization mechanisms and indirect socialization mechanisms. Direct (or parent-driven) socialization involves the conscious and active choices parents make in trying to get their ideology across to their offspring. Examples include the use of social isolation, exerting media control, and the use of extremist language or symbolism within the home environment. The direct mechanisms discussed in this Chapter inductively arose out of the interviews, case files and court rulings – but as we will see, they largely overlap with the mechanisms observed in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, the current Chapter 2 adds to previous findings by uncovering potential indirect manifestations of extremist socialization mechanisms as well. Indirect (or child-dependent) socialization relates to the ways children subsequently deal with the ideas presented by their parents. In analyzing the data, it was observed that the ways children respond to their parents' extremist beliefs and behaviors depends on, among other factors, children's own personal characteristics and their relationship to their caregivers. By discussing direct and indirect socialization mechanisms separately, the findings discussed in this Chapter 5 demonstrate that intergenerational transmission is a layered phenomenon in which both parent and child can play a significant role – and that parents' socialization intentions do not always match anticipated transmission outcomes.

DIRECT SOCIALIZATION MECHANISMS

Social isolation

Following the empirical background as discussed in Chapter 3, the findings suggest that (social) isolation can play a pivotal role in the intergenerational transmission of extremist ideologies. Both right-wing extremist and jihadist parents may attempt to keep their children away from potential

dissenting voices, as became apparent by analyzing the interviews and Public Prosecutor's files. In practice, this means that children of extremist parents may grow up in an ideological bubble where contact with the outside world is discouraged if not inhibited. Jeffrey, the son of a right-wing extremist father in the United States, shares:

> "I was almost never with [my father] in public. We didn't do anything together as a family. You know, we didn't go out on picnics, we didn't go out and socialize with the neighbors. The only time I ever remember being out in public with him was when we were meeting members of his Nazi Party" (Interview Jeffrey)

For Jeffrey, this socially isolated upbringing results in him being unaware of what is happening in the world as a child. "I had no idea about the things that my classmates talked about, like music or pop culture. I didn't know anything about their world. And I didn't realize until much later how isolated my parents had kept me" (Interview Jeffrey).

Other interview participants, who also grew up in right-wing extremist families, describe their childhood as "very isolated and lonely" (Interview Brooke) and "extremely solitary" (Interview Jocelyn). Five of the right-wing extremist interviewees, describe that their parents exerted very strict control over their children's friendships (e.g., Interview Jeffrey; Interview Benjamin; Interview Michael; Interview Charlotte; Interview Brooke). Any contact with non-white children was strictly forbidden; and romantic relationships outside of the ideological group were strongly discouraged. "One time my brother was dating someone who was 25 percent black, and they got so upset with him. They were furious," the daughter of right-wing extremist parents in the US remembers (Interview Charlotte).

The importance of social isolation also appears in the context of jihadist families. Dutch interviewee William talks about his (formerly) jihadist brother and how he and his wife kept their children away from the outside world: "What always struck me was that [the children] grew up extremely protected. [The parents] thought an Islamic upbringing was important, and so [the children] went to an Islamic primary school, but otherwise, they were very focused on shielding their children from the outside world" (Interview William). In his view, his brother and his wife were looking to establish their "own pillar" of like-minded individuals.

Four of the Public Prosecutioners (PP) files on jihadist families support the significance of social isolation (PP File 1; PP File 3; PP File 11; PP File 12). In PP File 1, a radicalized suspect keeps his children away from daycare because he is convinced they will be mistreated there. The suspect also argues with the children's general practitioner, as well as the Board of the elementary school of his eldest daughter. His wife later tells the police, "[He] was very concerned about the entire world being against us" (PP File 1). According to the suspect's wife, the man believed that the world was an unsafe place for his children, and was committed to keeping them away from it as much as possible. "[He did] everything to protect the children," his wife recalls (PP File 1).

These examples illustrate that within extremist households, social isolation may occur for various reasons. Parents may try to keep 'outsiders' away from their children to strengthen their ideological influence, which corresponds with the findings of the systematic literature review in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, the empirical data shows that for extremist parents, social isolation is also an important means of *protection*. From their perspective, the outside world is not merely a 'bad' or morally compromised place – but more importantly, it is perceived as *dangerous*. This observation cannot be separated from the institutional distrust that often characterizes extremist belief systems (following Van den Bos, 2019; Stephens, Sieckelinck, & Boutellier, 2021; Williford, 2019). Nevertheless, this insight provides considerable nuance to the prevailing idea that extremist parents may keep their children socially isolated solely out of malicious intent.

Media control

In line with the social isolation described in the previous paragraph, extremist parents exert strong control over the media consumed by children, as part of their extremist socialization efforts. Former right-wing extremist respondent Michael from the United States, for example, recalls that prior to his deradicalization, he did not allow his children to watch certain television programs. Most notably, he remembers prohibiting shows in which Chinese was spoken, fearing his children would be 'brainwashed' by Communism. "I was terrified of them getting indoctrinated by anything that I saw as a detriment to white people," he remembers (Interview Michael). Other television shows were also forbidden:

> "I remember talking to my wife about how we can't have the kids watching *Jake and the Neverland Pirates* because it was promoting diversity. It was like brown kids, and white kids, and Asian kids, and black kids. There was just too much diversity. It was not, you know, the way things should really be between the races" (Interview Michael)

Another US interviewee describes what it was like watching television with his right-wing extremist father: "At home, we would be watching a show on TV or something, and if a black person came on [TV], my dad would make these really disgusting sounds and act like he had just seen something that made him want to throw up" (Interview Jeffrey). His father also believed that all mainstream media was controlled by a Jewish elite, instructing his children not to believe anything they saw on television, according to Jeffrey.

Similarly, Dutch right-wing extremist participant Vincent explains that he is critical of the media his children consume. "Everything you see on television is controlled. I just hate it, it makes me sick," he says. He claims to no longer watch so-called "state television" anymore. "And even if

there is a program about *BIJ1* or *GroenLinks*[6] – yeah, I turn it off immediately. We don't watch that," Vincent says. He prefers his children to watch channels that, in his opinion, provide 'objective' and 'independent' news coverage, which in his perspective are mainly found online.

In jihadist families, propaganda often plays a significant role in parental media control, as indicated by Public Prosecutor's (PP) files. In four of these files, parents show their children extremist propaganda, including videos of individuals being beheaded. Moreover, in PP File 2, children of jihadist parents even state that they enjoy this kind of violent material and even ask their parents to replay some of these videos. In other files, parents listen to *nasheeds* (Islamic songs) with their children (PP File 2; PP File 3; PP File 12). PP File 2 explicitly mentions a song glorifying jihadist martyrdom, and in PP File 12, gunshots can be heard in a nasheed. In this latter case, the children are so accustomed to hearing these violent songs that they can sing along. A quote:

> "[The suspect] plays a nasheed. One of the children specifically asks for "that beautiful one". She wants to hear a different nasheed. [The suspect] turns up the nasheed very loud. Later, nasheeds with gunshots in the background can be heard. The children sing along in part. [The suspect] laughs. He explains to the children how to pronounce the words sung in the nasheed" (PP File 12)

The children in this particular case are likely too young to understand the meaning of these songs. Nonetheless, legitimization of violence may indirectly occur through the gunshots in the nasheed – which leave little to the imagination about the gist of its lyrics. Additionally, the 'playful' and 'harmless' nature of this scene – with children laughing and singing along with their parents – may potentially reinforce the intergenerational transmission of extremism.

Homeschooling

In line with the findings discussed in the empirical background of this dissertation (Chapter 3), homeschooling appeared to be a prominent theme within the data. Based on eight interviews, two court cases and two Public Prosecutor's (PP) files, it was observed that for some extremist parents, ideological homeschooling is a desirable way of imparting their ideologies to their children. Damian, a former right-wing extremist father from Canada, remembers that homeschooling was rather common within his organization. Here, stories about Norsemen and Vikings would play a prominent role: "It would all have a really strange overtone of whiteness", he recalls (Interview Damian). Homeschooling materials often had a strong Christian connotation, Damian says. "They would teach their children that Jesus was not from the Middle-East, but that he was actually a

[6] *BIJ1* and *GroenLinks* are two progressive left-wing political parties in the Netherlands.

white person. All that stuff." (Interview Damian). This religious undercurrent was used both to consolidate right-wing extremist ideology within a broader Christian tradition, and as a welcome "cover-up" for its violent agenda. According to Damian, this made it difficult to distinguish where religious education ended and extremist homeschooling began (Interview Damian).

Some right-wing extremist parents choose, either for practical or financial reasons, to provide children with supplementary ideological training as opposed to a full-time homeschooling curriculum. Here it was observed that parents tend to give preference to additional 'alternative' history lessons—specifically regarding World War I and World War II (Interview Jeffrey; Interview Liam; Interview Ethan). The son of a right-wing extremist father from the United States explains:

> "My Dad denied the Holocaust. He taught us that it was all Jewish propaganda. He said it did not happen and he had several very well-rehearsed and very well-thought-out talking points that he used to debate any intellectual person and get people to actually start doubting what they thought was true" (Interview Jeffrey)

Another interviewee similarly describes how his stepfather tried to teach him about the right-wing extremist ideology, as to counter everything he had learned in public school:

> "I would be sitting with him, and he would pull me up to the side, he would have me read different white supremacist books, tell me stories about different things and explain to me the government and you know, this whole Zionist attack on the world and how the Jewish people are here to spread homosexuality" (Interview Ethan)

Based on the data, however, it can be observed that homeschooling is not a self-evident choice for jihadist parents. In three of the PP files, children from jihadist families attend public (elementary) school (PP File 2; PP File 9) or Islamic school (PP File 12). In four of the files, children also receive Quran lessons—either from a preacher (PP File 12) or from the parents themselves (PP File 1; PP File 2; PP File 11). In this aspect, jihadist families seem to differ little from 'regular' Islamic families.

Nevertheless, based on conversations with various experts and practitioners, it is likely that extremist homeschooling also occurs in the Netherlands. In practice, it is challenging to gauge the extent to which this happens since Dutch truancy officers (or compulsory education officers) are not required to report suspicions of extremist homeschooling practices. Yet, both Public Prosecutor's (PP) files and court cases contain some signs of possible jihadist homeschooling practices in the Netherlands. In Court Case 5, for example, it is mentioned that a female teacher at an Amsterdam educational foundation encouraged jihadist socialization practices among her female students.

The teacher told her students:

> "Your children must receive strict Islamic education according to Sharia doctrine; even listening to music is not allowed. You must hide your lesson material well. Otherwise, [your husband] could talk about it to the *Kuffar* [infidels], which will be detrimental to you and can lead to serious problems!" (Court Case 5)

Although it remains unclear to what extent female students indeed adhered to the pressing 'advice' of their mentor, this particular case demonstrates that such ideological communities may indeed impact the private (family) lives of the women involved. Moreover, this case illustrates how isolation and psychological manipulation are used to keep dissidents (specifically women's husbands and the *Kuffar*) at bay. It is therefore not unlikely that these women did at least to some extent follow abovementioned guidelines regarding the upbringing of children.

Only one file out of the dataset suggests extremist homeschooling of an explicitly violent nature. During a police raid of a terrorism suspect's home, various Islamic State schoolbooks are found. As described in the case file at hand: "One of these books, called (translated from Arabic) "Physical Education" contained training for handling a Kalashnikov, including general information about the weapon, maintenance, repair, and shooting exercises" (PP File 9). The book is intended, as indicated in the introduction, for high school students of "level two", which corresponds to secondary school in Syria. Another book has the following (translated) introduction:

> "The new elements of disbelief and apostasy have left their clear traces on Muslim youth. Therefore, the State of the Caliphate has taken on the task of bringing them [the youth] back to the right path, the path of the unity of God, and bringing them to the broad square of Islam under the banner of the wise Caliphate" (PP File 9)

To what extent the suspect in this case actually used these books in raising their own children cannot be discerned from this particular file. Nevertheless, it shows that in the Netherlands, the use of Islamic State teaching materials in the ideological socialization of children cannot be ruled out.

Introduction to parental network

From the analysis, children's introduction to parental network emerged as a prevalent theme (observed in seven interviews, five PP files and four court cases). This mirrors the findings of previous studies already discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, and simultaneously fits with the 'channeling hypothesis' of religious socialization that was presented in Chapter 2. It appears that

extremist parents do not only keep their children away from those with contrasting worldviews; they also ensure that their children become socially embedded within their own network. For example, right-wing extremist parents tend to take their children to ideological gatherings or activities (Interview Jeffrey; Interview Brooke; Interview Liam). A former right-wing extremist respondent from Canada reflects on the families he encountered at right-wing extremist rallies: "A lot of these folks would bring out their kids and then they would have like swastikas on their shirts or whatever," he says. "Those things had a real Third Reich-feel to it" (Interview Damian). According to this particular participant, mothers were often responsible for organizing specific children's gatherings, where games were played and craft workshops were provided – all with a strong Nazi overtone (Interview Damian). American respondent Brooke shares that her father, a KKK member, also considered it important for her to attend "Klan" gatherings:

> "He had my mom sew a little robe for me so that he could dress me up in it and bring me around to things like Klan rallies. And I saw things at some of these Klan rallies that were so frightening for such a young child (...) Just seeing those crosses being burned, with all these adult people standing around in white robes, like ghosts, I mean that was very, very scary" (Interview Brooke)

According to interviewee Benjamin, within American neo-Nazi groups, parents are even compelled to bringing their children along to extremist events. He himself experienced a lot of pressure from his fellow members. "It was not just accepted, more like *expected* that you'd start bringing your kids at some point. Especially when you dressed them up, that was really applauded. All the members would be like: 'Aw, that is adorable'" (Interview Benjamin). Another former right-wing extremist parent shares this vision. He talks about neo-Nazi festivals where hundreds of children of extremist parents would come together, saluting Hitler. "They'd be saying things, like curse words, no child at that age should say" (Interview Ethan). He admits to bringing his own children to such an event once, "but luckily they were too young to remember any of that" (Interview Ethan). A Dutch right-wing extremist father also mentions taking his children to demonstrations and protests, including pro-Black Pete rallies. "They loved that," he says, "It was really an event for them (…) They definitely inherited that interest from home, I think" (Interview Vincent).

In four of the interview cases, children are inadvertently exposed to their parents' friends and acquaintances. The son of a right-wing extremist father recalls: "I grew up hearing my dad talk to his Nazi friends in the garden every weekend. They would talk all day about their hate of gays, feminists, immigrants, trans-people. It was my experience of normalcy" (Interview Benjamin). German respondent Lukas also mentions that his parents frequently had fellow members over. "Our living room was one of their main informal meeting points. So, every now and then, all of the group members would gather in our house, just to discuss politics and movement matters, and so on. (...) I have very strong memories of that, I mean, witnessing that as a child" (Interview Lukas).

In a single (exceptional) case, parents involve their children not only in social events but also in committing extremist violence. An American respondent recounts how her right-wing extremist father took her in the car to shoot or set fire to the houses of black people (Interview Brooke). Similar stories of extremist parents involving their children in violence can be found in the media as well (see, for example, BBC, 2018; Kapoor, 2018). Nonetheless, it is crucial to highlight that such references to participation in violent extremist activities are sparse; the instances where parents have their children partake in violent events are likely a vast minority.

Psychological pressure and emotional manipulation

From the data analysis, the parental use of psychological pressure inductively emerged as a relevant theme (observed in seven interviews, five PP files and six court cases). This theme encompasses the subthemes 'expressing expectations', 'expressing encouragements', and 'using fearful imagery', which all refer to the emotional manipulation with which parents (consciously or subconsciously) try to get children to adhere to the family ideology. To illustrate, US interviewee Jeffrey recounts that his right-wing extremist father taught him that black people are "inhuman demons". "At first, I looked at them with fascination, but I quickly learned to be afraid of them. My Dad convinced me that they were responsible for all of the ills of our society, and it was because of them that all the bad things that were happening in our country" (Interview Jeffrey). Similarly, respondent Brooke also had to deal with the scare tactics of her right-wing extremist father: "When I was in school, I can remember going to the bathroom and washing my arms with soap because my dad told me: 'Black people carry diseases' and one had bumped into me" (Interview Brooke). When her father finds out that despite this scaremongering, his daughter sometimes plays with a non-white friend, he threatens: "If I ever see you playing with that little N-word again, I will burn a cross in her backyard" (Interview Brooke).

In jihadist contexts as well, parents use techniques of emotional manipulation to impart their ideologies to their children. In Court Case 4, a jihadist foster father tells his foster son that women and Dutch people in general are evil. These ideas induce so much fear in the child that his relationship with his mother becomes severely strained, ultimately leading the court to decide on an out-of-home-placement (Court Case 4). In Court Case 5, a mother tells her children that they must swear allegiance to Al-Baghdadi (the former leader of the Islamic State) and emphasizes their obligation to kill disbelievers. Three Public Prosecutor's (PP) files additionally show jihadist parents voicing explicitly violent expectations in socializing their children. In PP File 3, for example, a jihadist suspect who travelled to IS-territory writes in a letter to her family that she hopes her son becomes a "strong boy" as to "kill as many *kaffirs* [unbelievers] as he can, to enter *jannah* [paradise]". Similarly, PP File 2 describes how a suspect tells her children that if anyone ever insults the Prophet, they are allowed to kill that person, and that they will subsequently go to paradise.

The file reveals that the children at hand indeed adopt their mother's mindset and frequently use threats of violence in their everyday interactions (PP File 2).

In jihadism, the glorification of martyrdom plays a notable role too (e.g., PP File 2; PP File 3; PP File 5; Court Case 5). To illustrate, in Court Case 5, a jihadist mother glorifies the death of her husband by telling her children that they should be proud of his martyrdom. Similarly, in PP File 3, a mother expresses the desire to die as a martyr herself – and wonders: "will my children accompany me, or will they stay to grow up as *mujahideen* [jihadi fighters] or the wife of a *mujahid*?" (PP File 3). PP File 2 further exemplifies how a suspect talks about the father of her children, who died in IS territory: "[The suspect] tells her daughter, among other things, that her father was a *mujahideen* and that she should be proud of that. [The suspect] suggests to her daughter that they should do their best to see her father in paradise as soon as possible", the file writes (PP File 2). In another excerpt, the same suspect explicitly states that she expects her children to "become like *baba* [Dad]". She promises her children that they will see their father again in paradise and that they should ask Allah to go to paradise sooner rather than later. The mother even expresses her desire for her children to not live beyond 15 to 17 years old – she would prefer for them to die prematurely and go to paradise (PP File 2).

Moreover, in PP File 2, it becomes evident that extremist parents actively instill existential fears in their children by threatening them with apocalyptic visions, as to socialize them into their ideology. A quote from a recording of confidential communication:

> "[The mother] is presumably furious with [her daughter] and says: 'Sit down and listen out of respect! Don't you want to be protected? Don't you know that you scream in your sleep? Don't you know that? Did you know that the devils come to you every night? That you're screaming and crying out of nowhere? Don't you understand that? Listen to the Quran, even if you don't recite it, at least listen! Listen to the words of Allah'. While [the mother] is shouting, the children are dead silent" (PP File 2)

In PP File 12, recordings of confidential communication reveal similar interactions taking place between a radicalized suspect and his children. The file states:

> "On the recording of [date], it was heard that [suspect] was violent with his child. From the later transcription of the audio recording of that day, it can be heard that [suspect] asks [daughter] why she had said that Satan is good and God is bad. [Daughter] is then repeatedly hit by [suspect]. [Suspect] declares that if she keeps saying this, God will throw her into a big fire" (PP File 12)

An excerpt from the same file:

> "[The suspect] explains to the children what is allowed and not allowed by Allah. He says that if you obey Allah, you will go to paradise, and if you are disobedient, Allah can punish you. [On the recording, a] child's voice can be heard saying that women should wear a headscarf but dads shouldn't. [The suspect] explains that Allah has said that it should be so, and there is no room for discussion. [The suspect] continues talking about what it means to be a Muslim and what happens when you go to paradise (then you become young again according to [the suspect])" (PP File 12)

While these quotes demonstrate how parents use images of fear and promises of paradise in the ideological socialization of their children, their intent is not clear. In the section 'Social isolation' of this Chapter, I discussed how extremist parents genuinely perceive the outside world as an unsafe place and are convinced that they have the best interests of their children at heart. It is possible that this is also the case here. For instance, a former right-wing extremist father explains that the use of threats and rewards was a way for him to protect his children: "I was just so angry… I wanted [my children] to be aware of all these evil forces in the world. I thought to myself, if I could just instill this fear in them, perhaps they would build a defense mechanism. They'd be better prepared than I was as a child" (Interview Benjamin). Such self-reflections are not present in the stories of (former) jihadist parents. Nevertheless, it is not unimaginable that the genuine desire to protect children is a more substantial motivator in parents' scaremongering, than their mere goal of transmitting their extremist worldviews.

Symbolism, home decor, and attire

In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, it was already observed that the home environment is the place where parents feel most free to fully express their worldviews. In the analysis, the significance of symbolism within the home environment emerged in seven interviews, four Public Prosecutor's (PP) files and two court cases. It was observed that parents' extremist ideologies are reflected in in their stylistic choices regarding their home decoration, which tends to feature ideological ornaments, flags, banners, books, and memorabilia. Former right-wing extremist respondent Andrew, for example, describes that he used to have T-shirts with symbolic prints, ideological music, and "boxes of magazines and literature, and handbooks for the members" at home, which his children were regularly exposed to. Another interviewee talks about the "gilded Hitler bust" and swastika letter openers that his right-wing extremist parents had in their house (Interview Jeffrey). Ethan, a former right-wing extremist respondent from the United States tells me:

> "If you walked into my bedroom, you definitely knew that this was the home of a Nazi. In my bedroom, I had a map hung up on my wall that had a bunch of different places marked down where Latinos lived or where a lot of Jewish people lived. I went into the nitty-gritty with that stuff. I also had a swastika flag hung up right above my bed. I had different, you know, like parts of the World War 2, some kind of knife from World War 2 that had a swastika on the handle. I had symbols, like German symbols – at the time I was gonna make a necklace out of that – set up on the dresser. The whole room was like… You could totally tell that this all belonged to someone who was part of the Nazi movement" (Interview Ethan)

As it appears, extremist parents also tend to choose toys that align with their ideologies. American interviewee Jeffrey recalls that as a child, his right-wing extremist father gifted him a chemistry kit so that they could build bombs and explosives together. The use of toy weapons also comes up in three of the interviews (e.g., Interview Abigail; Interview Ethan; Interview Lukas).

Finally, right-wing extremist parents use tattoos and clothing choices to express their ideologies (Interview Ethan; Interview Jeffrey; Interview Benjamin). American respondent Ethan shares that he liked to dress his children in camouflage shirts. Respondent Benjamin reveals that he had a Ku Klux Klan robe made for his three-year-old son. "He loved it", he remembers. "All day he would be like: 'Dad, can I wear my robe? Can I wear my hood?' Looking back on it, it really makes my heart sink" (Interview Benjamin). Now that he has deradicalized, Benjamin cannot comprehend why he did not try to shield his children from his violent beliefs.

From the Public Prosecutor's (PP) files, it becomes apparent that jihadist parents express their extremist ideology at home in similar manners. For example, in PP File 2, the police describe finding an Islamic State flag in the house of a suspect. The suspect's children previously recognized this flag while watching an Islamic State propaganda video, the file describes: "We have that flag too!" they reportedly shouted (PP File 2). Similar to right-wing extremists, jihadist parents may have a preference for toys that reflect their ideology, PP File 2 indicates. It is discussed how the suspect in this case gives her children dolls without faces. Her explanation to the police is that her daughter had expressed finding the faces of the dolls ugly. "Do you know how much money I've spent on that crap... My kids love those things, and I find it difficult to say no to them", she elaborates (PP File 2). However, recordings of confidential communication reveal that the mother explicitly told the children that dolls with faces are "haram", suggesting she cut of the faces of the dolls herself.

For families residing in Islamic State territory in Syria and Iraq, weapons seem to have constituted a common element in home decor. In PP File 8, for instance, it is described how on the online platform "Marketplace of the Caliphate" parents would exchange baby items as well as heavy

duty artillery among each other. According to the file, a female suspect sold "a stroller and children's shoes, but also two hand grenades" on this online marketplace (PP File 8). PP File 3 depicts various photos where the suspect's children play with plastic guns. A large firearm is hanging on the wall, the file indicates – although the suspect claims it is fake. "In Syria, it is very normal for children to play with toy weapons and military figures and such", the suspect in this file tells the police (PP File 3). In PP File 8, a mother who returned from the warzone also reveals that they had weapons at their place in Syria, which the children were frequently exposed to. The police officer inquires:

> Officer: "How did you deal with the children and the weapons [at home]?"
> Suspect: "'You're not allowed to touch them'. Just like that."
> Officer: "So the children knew about [the weapons]? They could see them."
> Suspect: "My son was a baby!"
> Officer: "Yes"
> Suspect: "So, he didn't really pay attention, no. But my daughter, yes, I think she saw it. So, then we would tell her: 'You're not allowed to touch it'" (...)
> Officer: "I'll ask again: [Your husband] comes home..."
> Suspect: "Yes"
> Officer: "You say: 'He just puts his weapon in the living room'"
> Suspect: "Yes, usually in the corner"
> Officer: "In the corner"
> Suspect: "Yes"
> Officer: "Your daughter sees that"
> Suspect: "Yes"
> Officer: "What was her reaction? She comes from the Netherlands..."
> Suspect: "'Not allowed to touch it', she would say."
> Officer: "Is that how it goes?!"
> Suspect: "Yes. She might have found it interesting, but she knew she really couldn't touch it. But she was only three years old, you see? She doesn't know what [a weapon] stands for, she might just know what it does, but she doesn't even know what 'death' means! No, I don't think children at that age are aware of death (...) or that weapons can kill someone. Because sometimes she would say things like 'yeah, he fell'. So if she saw someone die, she would say, 'yeah, he fell'" (PP File 8)

While this interaction might be indicative of some investigative bias – considering the skeptical tone exhibited by the police officer – it is relevant nonetheless. It suggests that ideological socialization

may indeed take on rather covert forms through symbolism in the home environment. When children are repeatedly exposed to weapons as symbols of violence, especially at a young age, it can desensitize them to violence, which can in turn shape their understanding of power and conflict.

Regardless, the parental ideology cannot always be derived from the home environment. In PP File 9, the police explicitly mention the absence of extremist memorabilia and decorations in the home of a jihadist suspect: "During the raid, [the mother] was not wearing a hijab. Our services also found no religious symbols (Quran, verses, wall decorations, …) or other indications that would point at the radical extremist ideology of the residents" (PP File 9). It should be noted that elements like hijabs and Qurans are not inherently indicative of extremism, but their absence is notable in this case given that the suspect was indeed confirmed to be an extremist. This suggests that while extremist parents may use symbols and decorative items at home that reflect their ideologies, this is not necessarily the case, and the absence of memorabilia does not necessarily indicate the absence of ideology. This may be attributed to the security awareness that often characterizes jihadist individuals (see Aarns & Roex, 2017; Grol, Weggemans & Bakker, 2014), potentially resulting in them hiding their worldviews even in the comfort of their own home.

The use of extremist language and "Othering"

The systematic literature review discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation suggested that parental language may play a crucial role in the transmission of extremism from parent to child. The ways in which parents engage in conversations with their children can indeed reveal their extremist narratives – or the stories, narrations, and discourses with which one interprets events and experiences in their everyday life (Maruna & Liem, 2021; Presser & Sandberg, 2019). Narratives, in this context, serve as the means by which people construct and share their personal stories, making meaning of themselves and the world around them (Copeland, 2019; Maruna & Liem, 2021; Presser & Sandberg, 2019). In extremist contexts, processes of "othering" specifically play a crucial role in the construction of these narratives. Othering refers to the phenomenon where individuals or groups are constructed as "The Other"; placed outside one's own *in-group*; and considered evil, strange, or inferior (Dervin, 2012; Etaywe, 2022; Jensen, 2011). Ultimately, group identity is reinforced by creating an external enemy and constructing a dichotomy between "us" and "them" (Mountz, 2009).

The narrative analysis of the interviews, as well as the confidential recordings discussed in the Public Prosecutor files and the court cases, exhibit this dualistic, black-and-white worldview utilized by extremist parents. By speaking negatively about those with different beliefs and simultaneously glorifying their own in-group, extremist parents may convey their ideologies to their children. Former right-wing extremist Michael reveals how his parents exposed him to various

forms of racist derogatory language from a young age. “They called black people ‘darkies’ and they used all kinds of slurs for Jewish people”, he recalls (Interview Michael). Similarly, US interviewee Jeffrey describes how his right-wing extremist father was very vocal in his anti-Semitism. “He would constantly talk about his hatred for Jewish people”, he recalls. “He actually came up with nicknames that he loved to repeat over and over again. You could tell he had a visceral hatred for them” (Interview Jeffrey). Former right-wing extremist Ethan similarly shares that his parents liked to display their racism. “It would be like: ‘Look, there’s a black guy, lock the door’ or they would use the N-word” (Interview Ethan).

In jihadist families, parents also use extremist language and othering techniques, the analysis shows (observed in five PP files and four court cases). Here, jihadist parents may try to instill a sense of superiority in their children. In PP File 2, a radicalized mother tells her children: “We must be in charge because we are Muslims. Allah made us Muslims, so we must be in charge” (PP File 2). The same mother refers to Al-Baghdadi as “our leader” and “our prince” to her children (PP File 2). Another excerpt from the file:

> “[The mother] explains to the children that, when they grow up, they will only need to look at others, and everyone will be scared. [The mother] says, ‘they are scared of us’ (...) [her daughter] asks if everyone is scared. [The mother] confirms that” (PP File 2)

Moreover, the data shows that younger children may be susceptible to these statements and eventually start parroting their parents. For example, Court Case 14 concerns a jihadist mother whose children were placed in foster care due to concerns about her parenting capabilities. However, after placement in a foster home, these children express themselves “very negatively and threateningly towards non-Muslims and disbelievers”, the Child Protection Service writes (Court Case 14). In Court Case 17, a child protection facility similarly states that a radicalized mother’s children make “very worrying statements” in the foster home where they reside. Furthermore, in PP File 1, children imitate their radicalized father in his extremist expression – for example, by attributing certain experiences to the Devil. Lastly, in PP File 2, the daughter of a female jihadist reportedly made several problematic statements at her elementary school, such as: “We are Muslims, the villains are *kaffir* [infidels]”, and “Those fucking *kuffar* [infidels], I’m going to kill them, I want to grow up quickly” (PP File 2).

While the children in these cases are presumably too young to fully understand what they are saying and are likely just mirroring their parents (following social learning theory as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, see Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961; Whitbeck, 1999), the examples outlined above illustrate how susceptible children are to these verbalizations. This respective susceptibility might be attributed to the fact that extremist narratives – characterized by a dualistic,

black-and-white, us-versus-them perspective – aligns with children's simplified perception of the world. In other words, where children categorize their surroundings into "good" and "bad", extremist narratives effectively do the same. Hence, the use of othering and extremist language by parents may potentially accelerate children's socialization into these ideologies.

INDIRECT SOCIALIZATION MECHANISMS

Romanticizing the ideology

In addition to the direct socialization mechanisms outlined above – which largely resemble those discussed in Chapter 3 – several indirect socialization mechanisms inductively emerged out of the thematic analysis as well. First, it was observed in the interview data that various interviewees recount their parents' extremist ideology having an enchanting effect on them, prompting a romanticized view of their parents and their belief systems (observed in four interviews). As indicated by the interviews, children may feel particularly fascinated or enthralled by the 'dangerous' nature of the extremist milieu. To illustrate, respondent Jeffrey vividly remembers sitting in the car with his parents and siblings – his right-wing extremist father behind the wheel – when their car was suddenly ambushed by a rival neo-Nazi group. The subsequent car chase remains a tangible memory:

> "It was very exciting, I mean my brother and I were in the back seat, the car was sliding from one side to the other and they were whipping around corners and stuff. You know, we couldn't believe this was really happening and we just thought it was like, yeah, it was super exciting" (Interview Jeffrey)

Due to these events, Jeffrey subconsciously started attributing a heroic status to his father, viewing him as some kind of superman. A few years later, Jeffrey's father taught him how to make improvised bombs and explosives, which was another similarly thrilling experience. According to Jeffrey, this altogether caused somewhat of a "psychological fascination" with his father and neo-Nazi activities, further fueling his romanticized perception of his father's right-wing extremist organization.

Likewise, relatives' involvement in violent events can have a similar magnetic allure to children (observed in three interviews). Within right-wing extremist movements, this seems particularly true for family members who fought for nazi-Germany in World War II. One interviewee recalls as a child being fascinated by the battle scars of his great-uncles and grandparents. When inquiring about these injuries, however, they refused to talk about their involvement in the war. This secrecy only increased his interest in right-wing extremism. "It just fostered my fascination with the history and the racism and the hate and all that. To me, they were some kind of war heroes" (Interview

Andrew). Another interviewee similarly remembers being intrigued by the Nazi history of her German grandparents. "Every time I visited [my grandmother], she would say 'Go to the bookshelf' and she'd give me some of her German books, which I just devoured" (Interview Madison). These observations also indicate possible manifestations of multigenerational transmission, which are elaborated upon in the section 'Multigenerational Transmission' of this Chapter.

In a jihadist context, children also seem to put their parents (and their worldviews) on a pedestal at times (observed in two interviews and two Public Prosecutor's files). For example, a mother who returned from Islamic State territory with her children, talks about her ex-husband – the father of her children – who at the time of interviewing still resided in a detention camp in Syria (Interview Nour). Due to his long absence, her children's perception of their father has become somewhat distorted, she explains. Her children have come to view their father as a "superhero", who, during their stay in the Islamic State caliphate, only did fun and exciting things with them – like taking them on daytrips and motorcycle rides (Interview Nour). "They have come to see that man [their father] as Nelson Mandela or something, completely romanticized. But soon he will return [to the Netherlands], and that will be a huge blow to them, of course" (Interview Nour). She reveals that in reality, the children's father has never distanced himself from his jihadist beliefs, and she fears that her children's idealized view of him might make them extra susceptible to his ideology. She is trying to make them resilient against these ideas, as to prepare them for their father's return:

> "It is one of the main reasons why we, as a family, are in systemic psychotherapy. I hope that before he returns [to the Netherlands], [my children] will already be able to stand their ground in terms of their identity and making their own choices. That is one of my biggest concerns for when their father comes back. (...) I just want my children to learn and be able to make their own life choices. I have four children, and all four of them are very different, also in terms of their religious faith and such. And yeah, I want that to stay that way, of course" (Interview Nour)

Here, the idealized perception children have of their father is reinforced by their physical distance. Overall, this illustrates that parents (and their ideologies) may at times even be more present in their absence – which may foster children's romanticization and subsequent ideological transmission. This indirect socialization mechanism might also apply to children who have to miss their parents due to their imprisonment – an hypothesis I was unable to explore further in this study.

Loyalty and trust

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, where the theoretical background of the concept of intergenerational transmission was discussed, it was already hypothesized that loyalty-induced symbiosis can foster the transmission of extremist worldviews. In such symbiotic relationships, children want to relieve the hurt or trauma observed in their parents, causing them to overidentify with their caregivers (see Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1988). In the narrative analysis of the data, interviewees often expressed or referenced such feelings of loyalty towards their parents (observed in nine interviews) – usually even despite having distanced themselves from their violent worldviews. Most of these participants do not necessarily view their parents as inherently 'bad' people. "I get that question very often: 'Why don't you just cut ties?' But for me, it's not as simple as that", Audrey, the daughter of American right-wing extremist parents, says. She explains that, for her, her parents' beliefs are to be separated from who they are as individuals. Children's unwavering loyalty to their extremist parents finds resonance in other interviews as well. Brooke, also from the US, shares that she loved her father a lot, despite his right-wing extremist beliefs. "On his deathbed, he cried and asked for my forgiveness. I gave it to him", she says. "And to be honest, I still love him, obviously. He was a charismatic person; he was an intelligent person (...) And yes, there are days when I cry, I still cry over my Daddy" (Interview Brooke). Her social surroundings find it difficult to understand why she still loves her father so much, considering the difficulties her father's ideology caused her in childhood. "But I truly loved him, and I remember being loved by him, too" (Interview Brooke). Another interviewee mentions that despite the violent nature of his upbringing, all he ever wanted was to be seen and loved by his right-wing extremist father. "I never ever stopped wanting him to love me or acknowledge me, or say he was proud of me. (...) I never, never stopped wanting to have a normal father-son relationship with him", he says (Interview Jeffrey).

Some children from extremist households even exhibit a blind trust in their parents (observed in four interviews and two Public Prosecutor's (PP) files). The partner of a former right-wing extremist father from the United States mentions that their children were very attached to him while growing up. "They followed his every move (...) If he said 'Jump' they wouldn't even ask 'How high?'– they'd already jumped" (Interview Audrey). This is also reflected in the interview with Jeffrey, who recalls never getting enough of his father's attention and acknowledgment. Today, he still looks back positively on his childhood – despite undergoing therapy for years to process his violent, right-wing extremist upbringing. "My father was a fun and loving man (...) I have very warm memories of him. Do I agree with the choices that [my father] made at the time? No, of course not. But I never resented him for that" (Interview Jeffrey). American respondent Ethan, who also grew up in a right-wing extremist family, even calls his love for his parents "unconditional". The fact that he had to cut ties with them several times – "for self-protection", he says – has never been an obstacle to this love (Interview Ethan).

This all goes to show that people who grew up in extremist families can still exhibit a profound loyalty to their parents. However, this does not mean this observation is unique to this population per se. Previous studies on children who are physically or mentally abused by their parents have come to similar conclusions, suggesting that children who suffered from maltreatment by their parents sometimes continue to stand by their caregivers (see, for example, Henry, 2002; Hodges et al., 2009; Van Gemert, 2019). Similarly, research on psychological phenomena like Stockholm Syndrome (where individuals who are held hostage may develop sympathy for their captors) also indicates that contrary to our rationale, people do not necessarily seek healthy distance from those that may cause us harm. For children growing up in extremist households, it is possible that the observed patterns of (unconditional) loyalty and trust may stem from insecure attachment styles – where children have not learned to express their boundaries or to adopt a critical stance towards the parental ideology. In the Chapter 'Parenting practices' the role of attachment styles will be further explored.

Rebellion and resistance

Nevertheless, not all individuals who grew up in extremist families exhibit unconditional loyalty to their parents. A narrative analysis of the data reveals rebellion and resistance as a recurring sentiment among some interviewees – although these stories appear to be less prominent than those expressing participants' loyalty. In total, three of the interview respondents indicate never having been susceptible to the extremist ideology of their parents. Moreover, these narratives do not reflect the deep devotion and blind trust observed in the paragraph above. British interviewee Jocelyn mentions never having felt at peace with her right-wing extremist father's worldviews:

> "Even as a young girl, I already witnessed the consequences of my father's ideas. Families ripped apart, many of my father's friends were injured at some point, some even lethally… And I understood early on that there was just no purpose to it all. (…) I sympathized with my father, still do, I mean, I get where he's coming from, but I never felt the desire to prove my love for him by getting violent or taking on these hateful ideas" (Interview Jocelyn)

American participant Brooke believes that her rebellious nature is the reason she never embraced her parents' right-wing extremist ideology. "I am a rebellious little shit", she says. "I saw what my mom and dad were doing and I was just like: 'Ehh… I'm going to do the complete opposite'" (Interview Brooke). According to her, this rebellion stems from the fact that she simply did not respect her parents. "See, I loved them, but I didn't respect them. I think that made a huge difference" (Interview Brooke). British respondent Omar, too, describes developing increasing

resistance to his parents' jihadist ideas while growing up. As a result, he believes their ideology never fully took hold. Nonetheless, he doesn't necessarily view his rebellious attitude from that time as a positive thing. "Because if you are doing the opposite of your parents, their behaviors or beliefs are still the anchor of your choices. (…) It may give you a sense of freedom, but you remain just as much a product of your upbringing" (Interview Omar).

These observations suggest that not all children blindly follow their parents' beliefs. Some respondents prove to be rather resilient to these ideologies. In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, I suggested that older children might be less susceptible to their parents' beliefs, as they likely have already formed their own identity separate from the family ideology, limiting parental influences. Additionally, from the socialization literature described in Chapter 2, we know that the role of parents in children's lives diminishes as children grow older (Hurrelmann & Bauer, 2018; Muller-Wolf, 1974; Smetana, 1999). Due to the qualitative, retrospective nature of the current study, I could not test the role age may play in processes of extremist intergenerational transmission. Nevertheless, it is not inconceivable that this factor played a role in the cases outlined above.

MULTIGENERATIONAL SOCIALIZATION MECHANISMS

In Chapter 2, various theories on the transmission of (collective) trauma and victimhood were discussed. Here, it was observed how trauma can continue to persist over multiple generations (see Lev-Wiesel, 2007). In the thematic analysis of the interview data, the multigenerational socialization of extremist ideologies emerged in six of the interviews – although notably, specifically in relation to right-wing extremism. The observation that multigenerational transmission appears to be particularly prominent among right-wing extremists may be explained by the fact that historically, compared to jihadism, right-wing extremism have a longer and more established presence in the Global North (see De Graaf, 2010; Klausen, 2021; NCTV, 2018). Additionally, five of the right-wing extremist interview respondents claim to be of German descent, which they explicitly declare to be proud of – with some even identifying themselves as "Germanic" (e.g., Interview Liam). For instance, British respondent Madison mentions identifying as German due to her family ancestry, despite her brother not doing so. While as a child, she spent hours delving into German literature, music, and history, her brother showed no interest. "It's funny, because we still grew up in the same household. But he identifies much more as British than I do" (Interview Madison).

Three right-wing extremist respondents reveal that their family members fought on the side of Nazi-Germany during World War II (Interview Madison; Interview Michael; Interview Andrew). Rather than concealing this uncomfortable truth, these respondents tend to speak proudly of their Nazi family members. British interviewee Madison, for example, refers to her grandparents as being "early adopters" of Nazism, emphasizing their high status and extensive network within the Third Reich. Former right-wing extremist respondent Andrew claims the same for his grandfather

and great-aunts. He explains that this family history played a significant role in his youth. “It was that fascination with my grandfather’s history and everything that led me down that rabbit hole so to speak. I asked more and more questions growing up so I got bits and pieces here and there” (Interview Andrew).

Some former right-wing extremist respondents believe that this ideology goes even further back in their family line. For instance, German interviewee Lukas reveals that his great-grandfather was already a high-ranking leader within a prominent right-wing extremist organization. “It was like a generational thing. Like, it was just part of the family fabric” (Interview Lukas). However, most respondents are not convinced that being descended from older generations of right-wing extremists leads to a higher status or more respect within right-wing extremist groups. “I think some [of the group members] thought my family history was a cool story, but I don’t think it helped me to rise the ranks [within the movement]”, one of them explains (Interview Ethan). Another interviewee agrees and emphasizes that he did not flaunt his grandparents’ Nazi sympathies. “My grandparents were still alive at the time I was in the movement. And there is a fear amongst German veterans that they’ll be accused of certain atrocities or things…”, he explains. “I also knew there were a lot of infiltrators and informants within the movement. So, I kept a lot of my family background quiet” (Interview Andrew).

Based on the data, multigenerational transmission seems less prevalent in Dutch jihadist families. Files or interviewees referring to grandparents with jihadist ideas are sparse. Regardless, the prosecution files indicate that there are often multiple radicalized family members within a family system (PP File 5, PP File 6; PP File 9; PP File 12). For instance, PP File 9 describes two brothers who are both suspected of planning and preparing terrorist offences. In PP File 5, three generations traveled to Syria – concerning a mother, her two children, and her grandchildren – to join Islamic State, although presumably, the daughter was the ideological driving force behind the decision to travel to Syria (PP File 5). Lastly, in Court Case 17, concerns about the role of grandparents in the radicalization of their grandchildren are raised, and in PP File 9, a suspect shares jihadist lectures from an extremist preacher in a group chat with his brothers and sisters.

While these files do not directly indicate the extent to which the suspects’ ideology is shared or supported by the broader family context, it is conceivable that, in addition to parents, other family members may (directly or indirectly) contribute to the transmission of extremism. Multigenerational transmission (through family narratives about extremist violence) may also play a larger role over time as the jihadist community in the Netherlands continues to evolve. In the context of right-wing extremism, we have already seen that this multigenerational and/or historical perspective can play a significant role.

ABSENCE OF SOCIALIZATION EFFORTS

Nevertheless, the data sources indicate that not all parents want try to socialize their children into their extremist ideas. In fact, in some instances, extremist parents have no intention of passing their beliefs on to their children. Five of the interview respondents, for example, mention that they do not wish for their children to follow in their extremist footsteps. "I didn't want them to have the violence that I grew up with. I didn't want them to have any feelings of, you know, everyone is an enemy until they're not", the former right-wing extremist father Michael explains. He elaborates:

> "I have cuts all over my body. I've been stabbed, I've been shot by a .22 in my shoulder, my teeth got kind of messed up from fighting. I have scars on my knuckles from human teeth getting stuck in them. It was a very violent, very not pleasant life, and I didn't want that for my kids" (Interview Michael)

Instead, Michael decided to keep his right-wing extremist involvement completely hidden. He describes that for many years, he was leading a double life:

> "I kept [my children] away from almost everything. Even to this day, they'd see pictures and they are like: "Why don't we remember? We don't recall you being a Nazi". (…) They were completely aloof to everything throughout the entire time I was a member. It was as if I was living two separate lives. A Dad during daytime and a Nazi by night" (Interview Michael)

This phenomenon of extremist parents leading "double lives" is also reflected in the story of Charlotte, a former right-wing extremist respondent from the US. She says: "When I was younger, my parents never talked about being involved [in a right-wing extremist movement]. They would never admit to that. They lived separate lives, which they wanted to keep away from us" (Interview Charlotte). Damian, another former right-wing extremist respondent, also states that he never wanted to pass on his beliefs to his children.

> "I just couldn't sit down with my kids and read a copy [of a book] that turns racism down to them. Kids deserve to know how the world works; they have so many opportunities. That's the way I saw it. There is so much to learn that is fun and great for kids – the last thing they need is this darkness, you know… "The world is ending because the people are being erased by the blacks." Like, how could you say that with a straight face to a kid when you know that that isn't actually what is happening?" (Interview Damian)

Andrew, a former right-wing extremist father, similarly says: "Every parent wants a better life for their kids than they had, and, you know, I did not want this life for them" (Interview Andrew). However, when raising his children, he felt conflicted: "Part of me was like: I like the ideology, and I'd want [my children] to get involved. But then also, I knew that the life I had in this [movement] was filled with stress, violence, and it's a hard life" (Interview Andrew). Seeing time and time again how violent ideologies would break families apart, he ultimately decided to keep his ideology separate from his role as a father.

Some participants indicate that at the time, the relatively young age of their children played a large role in their decision to keep their extremist activities away from them. Three right-wing extremist parents mention that they had planned to offer their children the opportunity to join the organization only when they were older (Interview Michael; Interview Andrew; Interview Vincent). "Some of my children would ask, "Why can't we go? When can we go with you [to the movement]?". When you're eighteen, then you can make your decision. That was the line," one of them says (Interview Andrew). Nonetheless, he ultimately left the extremist organization before his children reached this age limit. "In the end, none of my children came to anything like that, and I'm glad for that" (Interview Andrew).

A Dutch right-wing extremist interviewee, too, seems to limit his socialization efforts. "We are just a family. We are just part of society. It's not like I am constantly busy expressing my political views," he says (Interview Vincent). Vincent does not necessarily expect his children to adopt his beliefs or join his organization. "They will need to decide that for themselves. (...) If they want to, that's fine, but they don't have to. If one of [my sons] says, "Dad, it seems cool", well fine. But you shouldn't force anything on children," Vincent says. To exemplify his viewpoint, he refers to parents who go to church or who follow a vegetarian diet, and expect their children to do the same. "I'm strongly opposed to that, too" (Interview Vincent).

Three of the (former) jihadist respondents also mention that they never explicitly tried to convey their beliefs to their children. For example, a (former) jihadist detainee who returned from Syria with her children shares that her children never expressed much interest in her ideology, and she did not ask them to learn about it. "My youngest child didn't even know the difference between 'Allah' and 'Hollanda' [the Arabic term for The Netherlands]. So, when I said, "We're going back to the Netherlands, to Hollanda", he said, "I don't want to go back to Allah" (Interview Nour). Some of her other children are interested in Islam, but she thinks it is unlikely they will develop extremist beliefs:

> "Before dinner, they might ask for a blessing in God's name, that's it. And then I have an older daughter who occasionally listens a bit [to prayers], but she's not really interested in the rest of it. The eldest is more interested in religious stories than practicing faith. I mean, she took off her headscarf and such. And if she wants to put it back on, that's fine with me, of course, but if she wants to leave it off, that's also fine with me" (Interview Nour)

This shows that in jihadist contexts, too, not all parents are actively involved in conveying their beliefs, and some even encourage their children to develop their own (religious) identities. The quotes highlighted above, suggest that here too, children's age may play a role: parents are perhaps less willing to invest time and effort in ideologically socializing their children when they notice that their children become less susceptible as they come of age.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, I described the socialization mechanisms that emerged from the interviews, Public Prosecutor's files, and court files. Based on these data sources, I described that parents can convey their beliefs to their children in various ways, through (among others) social isolation, media control, and homeschooling. Children's loyalty towards their parents, the appeal that extremist ideas can have on children, and multigenerational dynamics may also play a role. This aligns with the findings from the systematic literature review (Chapter 3). The socialization processes described in this Chapter, however, are not unique to extremist environments: the literature indicates that these elements can also occur in the intergenerational transmission of "mainstream" political or religious beliefs (see, for example, Grob, Morgenthaler & Käppler, 2009; Jennings, Dalton & Klingemann, 2007; Van Ditmars, 2023). Nevertheless, a specific focus on extremist families is justified from both a security and child protection perspective. Thus, this study provides an important first insight into how violent ideas may be passed from parent to child.

However, in this Chapter, I also demonstrated that the intergenerational transmission of extremism is certainly not always successful. This is partly because, in addition to parental socialization efforts, there should be some level of receptivity among children as well. As illustrated in 'Rebellion and Resistance', the latter may be lacking at times. At the same time, some extremist parents have no desire to pass their beliefs on to their children. To protect their offspring from the violence and hatred of their ideological lifestyle, they choose to keep their children completely away from their "double lives" as extremists. Thus, in both right-wing extremist and jihadist families, not all parents seem to actively engage in socializing their children into their worldviews. The extent to which this is the case, however, is difficult to determine. Socially desirable responses from interview respondents cannot be ruled out. Moreover, intergenerational transmission in these families can also manifest itself indirectly, as children may be attracted to their parents' ideology on their own, as illustrated in the paragraph 'Romanticization of the ideology'.

Lastly, the observations outlined in this Chapter are not without limitations. For a detailed discussion, please refer to the section 'Methodological considerations' in the Discussion and Conclusion of this dissertation. Ultimately, extremist socialization mechanisms will differ from family to family. Nevertheless, this Chapter helps us form an understanding of the elements that may play a role in these processes. As such, this project aims to aid both policymakers and

practitioners working with these families. In the upcoming two chapters, I will zoom in on the two other dimensions that shape intergenerational transmission as a phenomenon: the parenting practices exhibited in extremist families, and the parental narratives and attitudes associated with these ideologies.