Formers & families

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In Memory of prof.dr. Gerard Keijzers

Summary

This report presents the outcome of research conducted as part of "Formers and Families", a two-year project made possible financially by the European Union, the Dutch ministry of Security and Justice, the UK Home Office and the Danish Ministry of Integration, Immigration and Housing. To investigate the possible role that family members play in the processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation of adolescents and young adults, researchers from the UK, Denmark and the Netherland collaborated to study whether the development of radicalisation is influenced by the pedagogical climate within the family, and by the responses of parents and other 'educators' during the process of radicalisation.

Due the extreme difficulty of reaching the target group, much of research into radicalisation is based on secondary sources, such as intelligence reports. Research which actually allows the voices of parents to be heard is particularly rare. The 'Formers and Families' study aims to fill this hiatus: 30 cases were investigated in the three participating countries, with around 60 interviews conducted with individuals who had left active radicalism behind them, as well as with at least one of their close family members. Although the qualitative character of the study forestalls any claim to representativeness, the research does present enriching insights which lead to a better understanding of the radicalisation process itself and further social, pedagogical and policy responses to this phenomenon.

In the past years, research on radicalisation has neither lead to unequivocal conclusions in determining the primary the causes of radicalization nor successfully identified the main factors that enable predictions on the outcome for any particular individual. For example, no correlation was found between poverty or social deprivation, and the membership of an extremist organisation. Instead, various studies have pointed out that affiliation with radical organization is often driven by the need of adolescents and young adults for ready-made answers with regard to identity-issues, or even a sense of kinship as a substitute for troubled family ties (most often father-son relationships).

Outcomes such as these underline the importance of supplementing the security perspective, from which radicalisation is most commonly regarded, with a pedagogical perspective. The latter was first applied some years ago in the (Dutch) research programme 'Ideals Adrift'. Interviews conducted with young radicals and their parents conveyed an image of youngsters with – on the one hand - dangerous, anti-democratic ideas, but – on the other – also manifesting themselves as budding active citizens, with a strong drive to counter perceived social injustices. It turned out, however, that parents, teachers and other 'educators' were hardly able to counterbalance the extremism of the youngsters. Many schools, for instance, ended up simply forbidding or punishing extremist expressions.

Internet and social media proved to be virtual meeting spaces for these young persons. Here, they could not only find their favored information without contradictions, but they also felt ideologically supported and emotionally at home. 'Ideals Adrift' concluded that i) the development of ideals is an essential part of adolescence, and ii) this development needs a powerful pedagogical environment to prevent ideals from 'going adrift'. However, it is this necessary mentoring of adolescents in the process of identity formation – against the backdrop of the temptations of extremism – that turns out to be extremely difficult for educators.

The 'Formers and Families' research can be seen as an international exploration and deepening of this line of reasoning. It consists of three studies, executed by Dutch, Danish and British researchers, each with their own emphasis. The Dutch study focusses mainly on the interaction between parents and children. The Danish reports zooms in on the development of youngsters and how this is influenced by persons and organisations who try to win them over for their ideology. Finally, the British report situates the process of radicalisation against the backdrop of the larger social and political context.

In total, the interviews make clear that there is no linear relationship between certain types of family or child raising practices and radicalisation. In very rare cases, interviewed persons have pointed towards the family as the main source of radicalisation or de-radicalisation. With respect to the latter: personal choices ('agency'), detention, and educational study were mentioned as the most important factors.

Although almost no one sees family as the direct cause of radicalisation, many interviews show all sorts of problems in the family environment. About two thirds of the families interviewed have to cope with divorce, an absent father, lack of emotional support, psychiatric issues, illness or death. In addition, a number of families witnessed violence and abuse. Our conclusion is that such circum-

stances do not in themselves explain the process of radicalisation, but can form a fertile breeding ground for it. For instance, the rage that some youngsters feel about the role their (absent) father did – or did not – play in their childhood, can make them extra sensitive for recruitment by extremists. However, it appears that other factors need to be in play, such as a sense of humiliation or disappointment in the institutions of society.

Each story chronicled in this study is unique, with its own complex play of factors and circumstances. Having said that, a number of 'routes' can be discerned that lead in and out of radicalisation. These routes, or ideal-typical 'journeys', contain common elements describing a series of transitions that youngsters undergo in their development from child to adult. A journey which usually requires a large amount of navigation - by the choices that each youngster makes, as well as with the help from the surrounding family and educators. These routes should not be regarded as fixed patterns into which each radical youngster will fit, but rather as an attempt to order a complex reality which in fact differs in each case. In real life, elements of the described journeys will interweave.

Grouped by their prevailing 'leitmotiv', the three most important journeys are:

1. *Being pushed away:* pushed away from problems in the family and/or neighbourhood, a polarized environment, experienced lack of emotional support. Pushed towards a surrogate family, towards authority figures with ideals that seem to give an answer to tensions and insecurities. Eventually, de-radicalisation is set into motion because the person has had enough of the hatred, the negativism, and the common violence in such movements.
2. *Being pulled towards:* pulled towards the magnetic force of extremist movements. Growing up in a warm and stable family context. Intelligent, ambitious youngsters, with a strong emotional response to injustice. A desire for depth, meaning and a clear goal in life. Because the family cannot meet this specific need, these persons break away and find a new destination in the radical movement. Ultimately, de-radicalisation is often triggered by boredom or sudden insight into the hypocrisy of the extremist organisation.
3. *Passionate personalities:* certain youngsters are drawn to special and extreme challenge, of whatever nature. Family and social environment cannot fulfill their powerful desires for which they will go to extremes. For example, such individuals are known to have memorized religious or ideological books word by word. In the end, de-radicalisation starts with dissatisfaction about the simplified content of these studies and of the extremist ideal.

The connection between these three journeys is the search for identity, described by almost all the interviewed 'formers'. In very different ways, every 'former' was in search for meaning: what is my role in life, where do I belong, what really matters? What the family context could not provide was provided for by the radical groups: a clear sense of identity, a secure hold, a clear purpose and a sense of belonging.

In the past years, a number of countries have developed intervention-programmes geared towards families with a radical or radicalising son or daughter. However, our research points out that parents are only very rarely a direct cause for radicalisation, just as they are almost never a direct trigger for de-radicalisation. Nevertheless, the family – together with other 'educators' like school, youth-work, church or mosque - can and must play an important role in the search of a young persons for identity and a place in society. It is in precisely this area of identity development that a major hiatus occurs.

Policy and action is therefore needed in five areas:

1. Strengthen authoritative coalitions between parents, schools and others involved. The forces working upon the youth are often too powerful and complex for individual parents and teachers to handle. Together, adults surrounding the youth can offer the moral authority that these youngsters need.
2. Support adolescents in their search for identity, on the basis of the insight that even radical identities are still in development.
3. Develop educational programmes to raise awareness around the issue of radicalisation. Focus not only on building resilience, but also teach youngsters how they can fight for their ideals in a peaceful way.
4. Offer radicals and their parents support in the exit from extremist organisations.
5. Offer young radicals alternative options for standing up for their ideals. Instead of condemning or forbidding ideals, pedagogical coalitions need to help adolescents shape their ideological or political involvement, so that they can deploy their energy and will-power in constructive ways.

Obviously, extremism is linked to public safety and security. The cases in this study show that the security perspective in itself is not the whole story. Behind radicalisation there are real and important needs having to do with the challenges of the transition between youth and adulthood. A pedagogical perspective demonstrates the interconnectedness of psychological mechanisms and ideological narratives at this life stage. A pedagogical contribution to understanding and dealing with issues of radicalisation and extremism will have to negotiate precisely this complex developmental reality.

Samenvatting

In dit rapport beschrijven we een studie naar de mogelijke rol die familieleden spelen bij het proces van radicalisering en deradicalisering van jonge mensen. In het project Formers & Families, financieel mogelijk gemaakt door de Europese Unie, het Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, de Britse Home Office en het Deense Ministerie van Integratie, Immigratie en Huisvesting, werkten onderzoekers uit het Verenigd Koninkrijk, Denemarken en Nederland samen om een antwoord te krijgen op de vraag in hoeverre de ontwikkeling van radicalisme wordt beïnvloed door het opvoedingsklimaat in het gezin en de reacties van ouders, familie en andere 'opvoeders'. Veel onderzoek naar radicalisering is, vanwege de extreem moeilijke 'bereikbaarheid' van deze groep, gebaseerd op informatie uit de tweede hand, bijvoorbeeld via rapportages van veiligheidsdiensten. Onderzoek waarbij ook familieleden aan het woord komen is bovendien nog eens extra schaars. Het unieke van de Formers & Families studie is dat deze twee lacunes konden worden vermeden. In de drie landen werden bij elkaar circa 60 interviews gehouden met individuen die hun actieve radicalisme inmiddels achter zich hadden gelaten, en in elk geval één van hun naaste familieleden. Hoewel de studie vanwege het kwalitatieve karakter en de beperkte steekproef geenszins representatief genoemd mag worden, levert zij wél een aantal verrijkende inzichten op die van groot belang kunnen zijn voor een beter begrip van radicaliseringsprocessen zèlf, als ook voor de ontwikkeling van sociale, pedagogische en beleidsmatige reacties daarop.

Radicaliseringsonderzoek heeft de afgelopen jaren niet geleid tot eenduidige uitkomsten, bijvoorbeeld over de oorzaken ervan, en over factoren die een mogelijk voorspellende waarde voor latere radicalisering zouden kunnen hebben. Zo werd er nauwelijks een verband gevonden tussen armoede, maatschappelijke deprivatie en het lidmaatschap van extremistische organisaties. Uit verschillende studies wordt echter wel duidelijk dat zulke organisaties voor jongeren vaak voorzien in de behoefte aan duidelijke antwoorden op het terrein van de identiteitsvorming en zelfs aan een (vervangend) familiegevoel als de échte familierelaties (veelal vader-zoon-relaties) verstoord zijn. Dergelijke bevindingen wijzen op de noodzaak om radicalisering niet uitsluitend vanuit een veiligheidsperspectief te bekijken, maar ook vanuit een pedagogische invalshoek. In het (Nederlandse) onderzoeksprogramma 'Idealen op Drift' werd enkele jaren geleden voor het eerst zo'n pedagogisch vertrekpunt gekozen. Uit de interviews die toen met jonge radicalen en hun ouders werden gehouden kwam een beeld naar voren van

jongeren die er enerzijds voor de samenleving gevaarlijke en antidemocratische ideeën op na hielden, maar die zich anderzijds manifesteerden als ontluikende actieve burgers die zeer gedreven waren om vermeend maatschappelijk onrecht te bestrijden. Ouders, docenten en andere 'opvoeders' bleken er echter nauwelijks in te slagen om tegenwicht te bieden aan het extremisme van de jongeren, en veel scholen gingen bijvoorbeeld over tot het eenvoudigweg verbieden of bestraffen van extremistische uitingen. Het internet en de sociale media bleken voor deze jongeren een virtuele ontmoetingsplaats te zijn waar ze niet alleen zonder tegenspraak de informatie van hun gading konden vinden, maar waar ze zich ook emotioneel thuis en in hun idealisme gesteund voelden. De conclusie was tweeledig: het ontwikkelen van idealen is een essentieel onderdeel van de adolescentie, maar die ontwikkeling heeft een constructieve en krachtige pedagogische omgeving nodig om de idealen niet 'op drift' te laten geraken. Juist het begeleiden van jongeren in het proces van identiteitsvorming – tegen de verleidelijke achtergrond van het extremisme met zijn eenduidige antwoorden- bleek voor vele opvoeders uitermate moeilijk te zijn.

Dit rapport bevat een drietal studies naar de hiervoor genoemde vraagstelling, uitgevoerd door Nederlandse, Deense en Britse onderzoekers. De drie onderzoeksgroepen kozen elk een eigen accent. Het Nederlandse rapport focust vooral op de interacties tussen ouders en kinderen, het Deense rapport zoomt in op de ontwikkeling van jongeren en de manier waarop die wordt beïnvloed door personen en organisaties die de jongeren voor hun ideologie proberen te winnen, terwijl het Britse rapport het radicaliseringsproces situeert tegen de achtergrond van de sociale en politieke context. De interviews maken duidelijk dat er geen lineair pad loopt van bepaalde gezinstypen of opvoedingspraktijken naar radicalisering. In een enkel geval slechts wijzen de geïnterviewden het gezin aan als de belangrijkste bron van radicalisering en deradicalisering. Wat dat laatste betreft: eigen keuze ('agency'), gevangenisstraf en studie werden daartoe als belangrijkste aanleiding gezien. Het feit dat het gezin door vrijwel niemand als directe oorzaak van radicalisering werd genoemd neemt niet weg dat in veel gesprekken melding werd gemaakt van allerlei problemen die zich in de gezinssfeer afspeelden. In ongeveer twee derde van de gezinnen was sprake van scheiding, een afwezige vader, gebrek aan emotionele steun, psychiatrische problematiek, ziekte of dood; in een aantal gezinnen was sprake van geweld en mishandeling. We concluderen dat dergelijke omstandigheden het

radicaliseringsproces op zichzelf niet verklaren, maar daar wel een vruchtbare grond voor kunnen vormen. De woede die jongeren bijvoorbeeld kunnen voelen over de rol die hun (afwezige) vader in de opvoeding speelde –of juist niet speelde- kan hen extra gevoelig maken voor recrutering door extremistische organisaties. Maar het lijkt erop dat er ook altijd andere factoren in het spel moeten zijn, zoals het gevoel van vernedering of teleurstelling in de instituties van de samenleving. Ofschoon elk van de verhalen die in dit project zijn opgetekend uniek is, juist in het complexe samenspel van factoren en omstandigheden, tekenen zich toch een paar routes náár en ván radicalisering af die gemeenschappelijke elementen bevatten. In dit rapport worden deze routes ideaaltypische 'journey's' genoemd, een serie transities die jongeren doorlopen in hun ontwikkeling van kind naar volwassenheid waarbij doorgaans heel wat navigatie-hulp vereist is. Deze journey's moeten niet gezien worden als vaste patronen waar elke radicale jongere per definitie in past, maar als een poging tot ordening van de complexe werkelijkheid die voor elke jongere weer anders in elkaar zit. In werkelijkheid kunnen elementen van deze journey's dus door elkaar lopen. De drie belangrijkste, geordend naar 'leidmotief' van het radicaliseringsproces, duiden we als volgt aan:

1. *Weg van de problemen;* problemen in gezin en/of buurt, gepolariseerde leefomgeving, door jongeren ervaren gebrek aan emotionele steun, op zoek naar 'surrogaat familie' en gezagsfiguren met idealen die antwoord geven op de ervaren spanningen en onzekerheden. Deradicalisering komt op gang doordat men geleidelijk genoeg krijgt van haat, negativisme en alledaags geweld in dergelijke bewegingen.

2. *Magnetische kracht* van extreme bewegingen. Opgroeien in een warme stabiele gezinscontext. Intelligente, ambitieuze kinderen die sterk emotioneel reageren op onrechtvaardigheid; behoefte aan diepgang en een duidelijk doel in het leven. Breken weg uit het gezin omdat het niet aan hun specifieke behoeften kan voldoen, vinden hun bestemming in radicale beweging. Deradicalisering vaak getriggerd door verveling en plotselinge bewustwording van hypocrisie in de extremistische organisatie.

3. *Gepassioneerde persoonlijkheden*, aangetrokken door bijzondere en extreme uitdagingen van welke aard dan ook. Gezin en sociale omgeving voorzien onvoldoende in deze sterke behoefte. Gaan tot het uiterste, kennen complete religieuze of ideologische werken uit hun hoofd. Uiteindelijk begint de deradicalisering met onvrede over de simplificerende inhoud van dergelijke werken en van het extreme ideaal.

De verbindende schakel tussen deze drie journey's is de zoektocht naar identiteit die vrijwel alle geïnterviewde 'formers' beschrijven. Op heel verschillende manieren zijn ze op zoek gegaan naar zingeving: wat is mijn rol in het leven, bij wie wil ik horen, wat doet er echt toe? Waar het opvoedingsmilieu kennelijk niet in kon voorzien werd geleverd door radicale groepen: een duidelijke identiteit, houvast, een duidelijk doel en het gevoel ergens bij te horen.

De afgelopen jaren zijn er in een aantal landen interventieprogramma's ontwikkeld die bedoeld zijn voor gezinnen met een radicaliserende zoon of dochter. Uit onze onderzoeksgegevens blijkt echter dat ouders maar zelden de rechtstreekse aanleiding voor radicalisering zijn, net zo min als ze een directe rol blijken te spelen als het om deradicalisering gaat. Maar het gezin is wel een omgeving die een belangrijke rol kan en moet spelen bij de zoektocht van jongeren naar identiteit en een plaats in de samenleving, samen met pedagogische instellingen zoals de school, het jongerenwerk of kerk en moskee. Juist op het gebied van de identiteitsontwikkeling blijken grote gaten te vallen. We constateren dat er beleid en actie nodig is gericht op een vijftal domeinen:

1. Versterk pedagogische coalities tussen ouders, scholen en andere betrokkenen. De krachten die op jongeren inwerken zijn immers vaak te groot en te complex voor individuele ouders en docenten om deze alleen te kunnen weerstaan. Samen kan men beter het morele gezag bieden waar deze jongeren en de samenleving behoefte aan hebben.
2. Ondersteun jongeren bij hun zoektocht naar identiteit vanuit de gedachte dat zelfs radicale identiteiten nog in volle ontwikkeling zijn.
3. Ontwikkel onderwijsprogramma's gericht op bewustwording met betrekking tot radicalisering. Besteed niet alleen aandacht aan weerbaarheid maar leer jongeren ook hoe je langs vreedzame weg kunt vechten voor je idealen.
4. Biedt radicale jongeren en hun ouders ondersteuning aan als het gaat om het willen verlaten van extremistische organisaties.
5. Biedt jonge radicalen alternatieve manieren om voor hun idealen op te komen. In plaats van deze idealen te verbieden of te veroordelen, moeten pedagogische coalities jongeren helpen om hun ideologische of politieke betrokkenheid op andere wijze vorm te geven, zodat ze hun energie en wilskracht op een constructieve manier kunnen inzetten.

Terwijl extremisme vanzelfsprekend verbonden is met publieke veiligheid, laten de interviews ook zien dat het weinig zinvol is om radicalisering enkel vanuit een veiligheidsperspectief te benaderen. Achter radicalisering lijken immers vaak belangrijke behoeftes schuil te gaan die te maken hebben met de overgang van jeugd naar volwassenheid. Een pedagogisch perspectief laat zien hoezeer psychologische mechanismen en ideologische wereldbeelden elkaar raken in deze levensfase. Een pedagogische bijdrage aan dit vraagstuk doet er goed aan om van die complexe realiteit uit te gaan.

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Preface

"...one of the first steps that extremists take on their path of de-radicalisation is to call their mothers"

This testimony, heard during a conference in Dublin in 2011 organized by Google-Ideas and Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) with former extremists and former gang-members, was one of the direct triggers behind the research presented in this report. If parents are so important to extremists, they should surely be of interest to those attempting to counter extremism. At the time, however, very few empirical insights were available beyond the anecdotal. Hence the idea was born to conduct a rigorous study into the role of family in the process of radicalisation and de-radicalisation. Taking the cue from the Dublin conference, where the stories from various extremist backgrounds in different countries showed a striking similarity, the study was aimed at persons who had radicalized from a right-wing, left-wing, and islamist perspective in three countries: the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherland.

The results of this study paint an interesting picture of the possible role of family members, especially of parents. The main conclusion is that parents are only rarely a direct causal factor in sparking radicalization or de-radicalisation. This is a clear signal against all easy assumptions of 'blaming the parents' for their derailed youth. Rather, the study offers a much more nuanced explanation of how difficult it is for parents and other 'educators' to mentor youngsters through their complex issues of identity formation in the modern world, and how much in need of support these families are. Support in dealing with general imbalances in the family that may be detrimental to the development of the children, or support in managing the forceful personality of one of the children. Support with the task of helping adolescents sensitive to injustice to deal with powerful triggers for frustration and anger on a social-political level; and support with re-embracing the young adult who has turned away from the extremist movement and is painstakingly making his or her way back to a stable life.

The study also highlights the role public institutions and practitioners can play in supporting these youngsters and their families. Obviously, the choice for violence is always up to the individual and one hundred percent security can never be guaranteed. But teachers, social workers and welfare professionals can work together to support the well-being and future preparation of young people. The government also has a responsibility for fostering democratic citizenship, for promoting a societal climate of respect and tolerance, and for safeguarding society from social destabilization and violence. Finally, this study confirms that for understanding the complex mechanisms behind radicalisation processes, and for supporting parents and other educators with a possible influence on young people vulnerable to radicalisation, the security perspective on radicalisation needs to be balanced with a pedagogical perspective.

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PART I:
THE RESEARCH PROJECT

(Dr. Stijn Sieckelinck & Prof.dr. Micha de Winter)

Introduction

Commissioned by the EU, this report examines the possible role that families play in the process towards and away from radicalisation. It intends to do this through in-depth conversations with individuals who have previously taken part in various radical agendas, and with some of their close family members. The research was located in three European countries: the United Kingdom, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Although many books and articles cover the problems of radicalisation and terrorism (Silke, 2008), we still see a lack of empirical studies on radicalisation, starting from the persons who hold or once held radical views themselves, or had relatives who did so. This lack is especially remarkable when it comes to the family context in which radicalisation takes place (Pels & De Ruyter, 2012). One reason for this lack may be that it is exceptionally difficult to gain access to these individuals and their families. Many studies are therefore based on media analyses or, at best, on second-hand data (e. g. filed documents) supplied by security services (e.g. Christmann, 2012; Weenink, 2015). This project set out to challenge this pattern and to trace former[1] radicals and their families in person.

As research on this dimension of radicalisation is still scarce and often lacks empirical grounds, we opted to centre our research on a collection of testimonies by citizens who have actually been very active in and/or affected by a radical journey in three different European member states. This study approached former radical activists and their families in the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherlands to discuss their childhood, upbringing and family histories. We were eager to learn: what kind of home was the child born in? What climate of upbringing was prevalent? How did the family respond to the onset of radicalisation? Was the parental response informed by anxiety or confidence? Was there any response at all? Was there any cooperation with other educational or civil society actors? Which parental strategies were effective, and which were not? How would one raise one's own children, with the insights gained back then? What role could educational institutions play? This set of questions relates unequivocally to questions of upbringing and development, and therefore the focus of this report is on socialisation and education in relation to radicalisation.

Literature overview

There is an abundance of radicalisation research based on second hand reports or theoretical risk models that may be indirectly relevant to our study, but little research is directly relevant to answering questions about the role of the family in the radicalisation and de-radicalisation processes. What is known about the relationship between families and radicalisation?
Before we try to answer this question, it should be stressed that families always function in the context of complex societies in which certain trends and events emerge, impacting differently on their heterogeneous population.
In 2014 the Dutch government published a brief report on the rise of violent Jihadism worth reading (General Intelligence and Security Service of the Netherlands, 2014). It defends the argument that one cannot overestimate the complexity and dynamics of the process that we call radicalisation. Research over the years has demonstrated the absence of static causes or predictable outcomes and a multitude of scientific explanations that understand the phenomenon in very diverse ways. Due to the lack of unambiguous roots of radicalisation, one cannot speak for example in terms of profiles of radicalising youth. Instead of set roots, the authors see different 'routes' that will only lead to extremism and terrorism in a small minority of cases. Apart from the (shakiness of) root factors, there are many differences in the nature and the pace of the radicalisation process. Often, we see a group of people who radicalise one another, but we also see young individuals who develop strong ideals on their own. The report states that no direct causal relationship was found between socio-economical background and relative deprivation on the one hand, and radicalisation on the other hand, however, it also says that it would be incorrect if we did not take these circumstances into account, for the Jihadis and other extremist groups do exacerbate the feelings and life conditions of their most wanted target individuals in their recruiting messages.

According to international academic research on radicalisation, the family is a factor with low explanatory power. A review by Christmann (2012) found that the evidence base for effectively preventing violent extremism interventions is very limited. 'Despite a prolific output of research, few studies contained empirical data or systematic data analysis. Furthermore, although a growing body of literature investigating the radicalisation process is emerging, the weight of that literature is focused upon terrorism rather than radicalisation.' In the work of Maleckova (2005) and Silke (2008), both very influential in the field of terrorism studies, no clear link

was found between a family background marked by poverty or deprivation and the membership of extremist organisations. We do know that very few parents put effort into indoctrinating their children and sending them off to a battleground that is not theirs. Even if there are strong sympathies for alternative worldviews at home, the aim is seldom to prepare the new generation for an armed uprising. Some exceptions are only there to confirm the general rule (see also: Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2015). Even in these exceptional cases where parents may have given the first push, there is often no agreement in the household about the child's ideals.

Unfortunately, few researchers have been able to dive deeply into the childhoods of extremists. Here and there in the literature we find indications that more research on this particular family topic is welcome. There are, for example, accounts of radicalisation in which challenge against the complacency of parents and elders is argued to be a distinct factor contributing to radicalisation (see Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). We also know that in a many families that face radicalisation, the children's upbringing was challenging, problematic or in some cases even unmistakably miserable. We also know, however, that various sorts of deprivation related to family life and the climate of upbringing affect radical pathways differently to those of other criminal trajectories (Silke, 2008). As yet, we do not know how this difference is best understood.

It is clear, however, that families entail interactive systems of meaning in which the climate of upbringing is a coproduction between various actors. In early childhood, parents are expected to provide an infant with food, clothing and love. The emphasis is on basic needs. Parents of older children experience a change in their role. When teenagers and adolescents become more and more active, as they attribute meaning to their expanding world, they are confronted with spiritual questions, moral uncertainties and a search for purpose and identity, for which they turn to parents and significant others in the first place, and to peers when these answers do not suffice (which they rarely do). Many young people in need of belonging find a surrogate family in the radical group (see also Lützinger, 2012). Bjorgo and Carlsson (2005) list ten elements that lure young people into racist groups. One is remarkable in this respect: 'Search for substitute families and father figures – many young members of extremist groups have less-than-ideal relationships with their families and with their fathers in particular. Provocations like joining a racist group can be a child's way of getting attention from their family, and older members of the group often fill the void of the missing father-figure (cf. Ezekiel, 2002). Even in our digital age, in which the internet and social media undeniably play a central role, it appears that online propaganda and/or internet ideologists remain secondary to real life relationships, the quality of daily flesh and blood interactions with the youth's most dear and significant others.

Well-known stories of participation in an extremist collective often show the use of a family-metaphor. Silke (2008) introduces a former IRA member saying:

"Everything I did, however trivial, could seem meaningful. Life outside the IRA could often feel terribly mundane ... I lived life with a weird intensity. I felt myself part of a large family whose members had powerful emotional links to each other. The idea of turning my back on the IRA had become as repugnant to me as turning my back on my own children. As soon as I left this intense environment I found myself missing my comrades: the dangers and risks we shared brought us close." (Collins & McGovern, 1997: 158, 363)

An excerpt like this indicates how the search for a shared family identity may offer a key for understanding the attraction of radical groups. Especially when the outer world is seen as dreary, sinful, exclusionary or stigmatising, young people will explore and find like-minded souls who can form an alternative family. Further research into the relationship between family and radicalisation would therefore be very useful, and even more so if it succeeds in not only investigating the original family in which the former radical grew up before the radicalisation, but if it also manages to consider the role of the family the former has managed to establish, and last but obviously not least carve out the stories in which the extremist group is understood as a surrogate family.

Family may stand for a degree of existential certainty, community and fraternalism, structure and morality, guidance and purpose. In addition, the family positions oneself in relation to other family-like alternatives. While it may be custom in literature to portray a radical group in terms of family, there is scant field research on the rapport between the original and the substitute family in the radicalisation process. The often reported move between the two and the reason behind the choice of 'family 2' at the cost of 'family 1' is largely unaccounted for. We will therefore ask: does the youth's choice for a radical family outside the original family make more sense when looking analytically at the family one grew up in?

Research questions

It should be made clear from the outset that we do not expect to find family climate to be a direct cause of radicalisation, nevertheless the family environment may serve as a valuable context for research. Although judging from the current body of knowledge on radicalisation there may be no common roots to radicalisation, we need more knowledge about the underlying mechanisms of radicalisation, or more straightforwardly, the life stories of people whose path eventually took a radical direction. Based on empirical data retrieved from in-depth interviews with former radical activists and their families, this report aims to answer the following main questions: what is the role of family in radicalisation and what might the role of the family be in de-radicalisation? The role of family is further subdivided into the actual role of the family one was born into and the role of the newly constructed family. Finally we ask what kind of action or intervention would pay justice to the role of the family found in our results? This knowledge of family roles and family dynamics should add to the expertise about how to prevent youthful idealism turning into hateful extremism.

Definitions

Two terms require explanation: first we deal with the meaning of the complex concept of 'radicalisation', and secondly we explain what can be understood by 'former radical activist'. We approach these main concepts from a pragmatic point of view in which their meaning is tightly connected to their use in reality.

The essentially contested concept of radicalisation is usually understood as a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2009). Radicalisation is, more specifically, understood by many as the process in which a person becomes increasingly hateful towards a part of society and anyone who defends the status quo. This process is, according to Mandel (2009) 'relative, evaluative and subjective'. He suggests that becoming radical is not merely a matter of being extreme, and in fact, is always in comparison with something, such as the law or tradition, and is therefore subordinate to an individual's perspective. It may be clear that whether an action or even an individual is (or should be) called 'radical' depends on these comparisons. He also suggests that the term 'radical' could be used by someone (for example authorities) to refer to something that is undesired or is even a threat to the community. Labelling someone or something as 'radical' is, in most cases, thus not only a partly subjectively charged opinion, but is also evaluative in nature (Mandel, 2009). Another implication is that, according to Sedgwick (2010), the concept of radicalisation focuses on individuals, and to a lesser extent on the group and ideology, omitting the wider circumstances and possible root causes. In Kundnani's (2014) analysis of the concept, the notion of radicalisation is seen as having undergone a multitude of remarkable transformations since its birth, mainly in the direction of practical usefulness in order to prevent violent extremism. (p. 14-35). The discussion demonstrates how use of the term 'radicalisation' should never be taken for granted in any context. The importance of this stance can be illustrated by considering the differences between the definitions in the three countries involved in this research project (see also Borum, 2011).

> The *UK Home Office, MI5's* parent agency, straightforwardly defines radicalisation as *"The process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then join terrorist groups."*
> The *Danish Security and Intelligence Service* (PET) defines radicalisation as *"A process by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective."*
> The *Dutch AIVD* defines radicalisation as *"Growing readiness to pursue and/ or support - if necessary by undemocratic means - far reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a threat to, the democratic order."*

The principal difference between the Dutch AIVD definition on the one hand and the UK and Danish definitions on the other hand concerns the use of the term 'terrorism'. In the UK version, radicalisation leads practically straight to terrorism, whereas in the Dutch version, terrorism is one of the means that could eventually be used by someone who is currently going through a process of radicalisation. In the Dutch version, radicalisation is understood as an autonomous process that can be explained without reference to the phenomenon of terrorism. This difference in definitions relates to the difference between radicalisation that funnels and results in violence on the one hand, and radicalisation that, although usually very annoying or unpleasant for its direct environment, remains non-violent in character on the other hand. Bartlett and Miller (2012) defend an elaborate view of the difference between violent and non-violent extremism, that it's not what people say or think, but whether they commit violent acts that counts. This difference is very important, since only a miniscule minority of individuals with radical opinions turn to terror (Dearey, 2009; Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010). Nevertheless, even if not all radicalisation leads to extremist actions or terror, all terrorism appears to be caused by a form of radicalisation. The link between the concepts of radicalisation and terrorism is therefore logical and deserves caution at the same time.

Now, what to make from this multitude of definitions? Where do we stand? From 2009 onwards, field research into the different routes of radicalisation was conducted in the Netherlands and in Flanders (Belgium) by undertaking interviews with several young persons who held radical beliefs and their family members. The principal topics of conversation were their upbringing, their school career and their hopes and dreams. These encounters were with adherents of various strong ideologies, ranging from almost peaceful squatters to animal right activists to far-right Nazi-sympathisers and to those who would turn out to become foreign fighters in the name of their version of the Islamic faith. In an attempt to be more attentive to the meaning experienced by our young respondents, we constructed the following definition (adapted from Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks & De Winter, 2015). On a theoretical note, this definition adds a pedagogical flavour to the aforementioned examples of definitions.[2]

> *Radicalisation occurs:*
> *When a child or adolescent starts to develop political or religious ideas and agency that are so fundamentally at odds with the educational environment or mainstream expectations that the pedagogical or educational relationship is increasingly put at stake.*

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[2] Unlike its use on the European continent, the term 'pedagogical' in English has a narrower, classroom-bound meaning. The European equivalent 'pedagogisch' (Dutch) or pädagogisch (German) has its roots in the continental philosophical tradition, and refers to the entire business of rearing children – educational, cognitive, social, emotional – in family, school, and society (De Winter, 2012). In the present report, the term we shall use refers to this broad definition, which entails daily practical upbringing as well as the more highbrow dimension of socialisation, because, in order to understand the pedagogical, these dimensions cannot and ought not be separated. The underlying question is: how could parents, teachers and others foster a democratic way of life?

A second term that needs clarification is our understanding of the term 'former'. A former radical activist is a person who once had extremist ideas or performed extremist behaviour. A 'former' is de-radicalised and/or disengaged. These terms require some minimal elaboration. To simplify an otherwise quite complex theoretical debate, this study has operated with an overall conceptual distinction between 'disengagement' and 'de-radicalisation', based on the work of contemporary radicalisation and terrorism research: as a working definition, disengagement must as a minimum imply behavioural changes such as a rejection of violence (Horgan and Braddock 2010). To be de-radicalised, however, a more fundamental change of the ideals underlying this behaviour also needs to have been taking place (Metzger 2013; Ganor and Falk 2013). All research partners were therefore requested to stick to the following rule: in order to fit into the category of 'former', their respondent ought to be disengaged and/*or* de-radicalised. Participating former radical activists have created distance from their extremist thinking or behaviour by leaving a particular group *or* rejecting the violence that they once used or condoned. Some may have even 'gone straight' after years of criminal or hate-driven activities, or have 'debiased' their thinking. These conditions are not a prerequisite for being included in the sample in this study. The interface between 'disengagement' and 'de-radicalisation' is undoubtedly of great significance in the attempt to extract more general knowledge from empirical studies and will therefore also serve as a conceptual tool for exploring interviewee accounts in the following.

Origins of the study

This study is a follow-up of the exploratory Ideals Adrift project in which the relative impact of the various domains in which young people do most of their coming of age (home, school and peer group) on the process of radicalisation was investigated through in-depth interviews (San, Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2013. Departing from the youngster's own narratives, a pedagogical view of radicalisation was developed. A pedagogical perspective may contain elements of the psychosocial perspective proposed by Weine, Horgan et al. (2010). The authors, an interdisciplinary group comprised of psychiatry, nursing and public health professionals, defend a psychosocial perspective of radicalisation, as they identify "a lack of adequate conceptualization of family and community processes impeding progress in the development of effective prevention strategies against extremism" (Weine, 2009: 2). Their basic assumption originates in a range of public health interventions concerning violence, drug use and HIV in highly adverse conditions: based on patient-oriented research, strategies are proposed for "managing the risks of violent radicalization that focus on ways to enhance community and family protective resources for those at risk." (Weine, 2009: 2).

Ideals Adrift, additionally, identifies young people interested in radical ideas not only as potentially violent offenders but also as adolescents in development, and emerging citizens with strong political or religious ideals. In many cases, the ideals of some radical adolescents did not differ much from those of their parents, but in all cases the ideals of the second generation were more extreme. Even though the parents sometimes pretended to be 'not at all like their children', it would appear that in many cases they tacitly approved of the ideas expressed by their children. These parents, for instance, professed not to share a son's extreme ideals (i.e. a radical interpretation of Islam) but were not fundamentally averse to the idea of martyrdom either. The comments made by one mother illustrated that she was not particularly keen on 'foreigners' herself. In cases where the parents explicitly disagreed with their children's views or actions, they generally found it difficult to deal with the behavioural changes displayed by their children.

A second set of outcomes was related to the school environment. School staff members often pick up signals (in some cases very explicit signals), but most of the parents interviewed said that the school had never contacted them. It would appear that extreme statements made by students in school were met with an inability to provide adequate educational support, and/or anxiety about the reputation of the school. This does not necessarily mean that the signals were not noted, but rather that these youngsters were given no other outlet for their opinions.

A third set of outcomes was related to the role of media and virtual communication. The research showed that the role of the internet in the process of radicalisation cannot be overemphasised. Not only did it serve as a source of information but also as a place where young people met (often for the first time) and formed virtual communities (see also Koster, 2010). Based on the outcomes of the Ideals Adrift project, a preliminary paradigm was developed in which the process of radicalisation was characterised as a problem or a (reaction to) crisis in the upbringing or the family life, as well as an opportunity for growing political awareness. In adolescence, the reasoning went, the development of ideals is elemental, and within the context of a constructive and strict pedagogical and educational environment this development can be conducive to emerging citizenship. It was therefore recommended that educational professionals should deal more explicitly with youth ideals and identity-related uncertainties. One of the questions was whether this current study would indicate similar directions.

Scope

Unfortunately, the scope of this report is limited by this focus, which implies that a comprehensive study of radicalisation as a complex phenomenon is not a realistic goal here, as this would be at the cost of urgency. Our contact with practitioners has taught us that their need is not for broad theoretical studies, but for evocative case-studies and practical insights based on real experience. While the theoretical basis may clearly be limited, this outlook may inform practice more than endless academic debate which risks answers to the most urgent questions in society regarding the phenomenon of radicalisation remaining elusive.

Interestingly, this research project took place at a time when countering violent extremism was increasingly understood in terms of a more multi-level approach covering the whole array of meaning from the national security level to the most intimate level of community, the family household. In different Western nations, some recently developed instruments try to tackle radicalisation by

taking into account the role of the family more than ever before. In it's Guide for Practitioners and Analysts (2014), for example, the National Counterterrorism Centre of the United States has already drafted a checklist that will score families on their vulnerability to political and religious violence on a sixty-point scale, based on factors such as "perceived sense of being treated unjustly," "witnessing violence," and "experiences of trauma". The tool encompasses an analytic framework that discerns three spheres of risk: community risk (access to educational resources/health care/ social services); individual risk (trauma/loss); and family risk (parental involvement/atmosphere). When we take a closer look at this latter category, we see that the measurement of family risk or family protection is operationalised in:

- Parent-child bonding, empathic connection
- Parental involvement in child's education
- Family members know each other's friends
- Family members aware of each other's activities
- Presence of emotional or verbal conflict in the family
- Family members violent or physically abusive towards each other
- Family members trust each other
- Family connection to identity group (race, nationality, religion, ethnicity)
- Perceived economic stress
- Family involvement in community cultural and religious activities

This list gives the impression that, these days, the role of the family is taken seriously in some preventive radicalisation interventions. On the other hand, the list raises questions about the rating system, the methodology behind it and why the document was marked 'For Official Use Only.' Most importantly: how do we avoid putting all weight on the shoulders of parents, knowing that the problem of radicalisation is too complex and bewildering to be tackled by individual parents or families?
Experts have suggested that intervention by law enforcement or other branches of the government in individual's lives, particularly young people, based solely based on the views they express, can potentially criminalise constitutionally protected behaviour (Shah, 2014; King, 2015). It is also highly unlikely that this technocratic approach will solve the highly complex and dynamic problem of radicalisation, as explained earlier. Indeed, how certain transitions towards radicalism are experienced in the families remains one of the big black boxes in radicalisation research. As Lisa Monaco, assistant to the U.S. President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, somewhat awkwardly asked:

> What kinds of behaviors are we talking about? For the most part, they're not related directly to plotting attacks. They're more subtle. For instance, parents might see sudden personality changes in their children at home—becoming confrontational."

As the family context of radicalisation still is one of the remaining 'black boxes' of the radicalisation process and former radical activists can be very helpful in this matter, our aim is to learn from 'formers' and their relatives about their role in the process of radicalisation and the process away from it. In the next section, the study is presented in terms of methods and ethics, and towards the

end the interdisciplinary research team is introduced. The backbone of this report is a collection of three country contributions, in three parts. Part Two presents the country report of the Netherlands, Part Three contains the research from Denmark, and Part Four describes the country report from Britain. Part Five presents the overall results and offers an analysis of the project, based on the three country reports. The focus of this more theoretical exploration is on the transitions that seem to mark the journeys of individuals and their families. In the sixth and final part, the main findings are translated into advice for future practice, specifically in the field of family support programmes, education, and youth work.

The study and the participating research teams

This section elaborates the methodological issues of the research project, such as the identification and soliciting of participants, the tools for data collection, and the formulation of procedures. As we have seen, there is an abundance of radicalisation research based on second-hand reports or theoretical risk models which may be indirectly relevant to our study, but little research is directly relevant to answering questions about the role of the family in the radicalisation and de-radicalisation process. What was the initial reaction to the first signals of (possible) radicalisation? How can the climate of upbringing be characterised? Which responses have contributed to radicalisation and which responses have countered the process and even helped people to eventually denounce the use of violence? To answer these questions, one could make use of existing studies of the backgrounds of convicted terrorists, however, drawing on investigative reports about the childhood of convicted terrorists will not be sufficient for studying the details of a (former) extremist's journey. We are interested in the meaning assigned by former radicals and their family to the different elements of the process, a process that we want to investigate in depth. Phenomenological in-depth interviews with former radical activists and their family members about their experiences during the radicalisation process thus seems an appropriate way to learn more about the role of family. Due to the relatively small sample, which is a liability in every radicalisation research project, as the phenomenon has never been widespread, and given the fact that the study is aimed at greater understanding of the perspectives of the persons involved in radicalisation, a qualitative research design is most appropriate for answering our central questions. A qualitative ethnographic study was thus designed to collect stories about radicalisation from the inside out; starting from the motives, meanings and experiences of the people involved.

Sampling and research recruitment

The educational (family) dimension of radicalisation is reconstructed by collecting the stories as told by the respondents, the former radical activists and their families. Relatives may be the mother, father, siblings, other close (extended) family or people in the proximate environment in the case of absent parents. Since many youth attracted to radicalisation (have) live(d) in a single parent

household, and the father is often missing, the focus is on the mother (or father), sisters or brothers, and in second instance influential community members. These participants are, if you will, the experiential experts on the phenomenon being studied. Given the nature of the target data material, the use of statistically representative sampling methods was not viable. As the objective was to investigate particular cases or clusters of types in depth, the researchers in the three countries used criterion sampling, selecting participants who closely matched the objectives and criteria of the study, however, since radicalised persons only make up a very small percentage of all citizens and there are not unlimited numbers of potential interviewees or informants who may participate in the study, it was decided to contact every suitable person who was available at the time of our research, thus also making use of convenience sampling and snowball sampling. In some instances, the people who once had extreme ideals responded in person to our invitation. More often, a gatekeeper or conduit for accessing the group had to be contacted as intermediary. Once contact has been established, respondents were approached to participate according to the criteria. Contact with the interviewees was generally obtained through snowball sampling, starting with contacts mediated through former research acquaintances. Of these, only a fraction eventually responded, and the number of people willing to involve their family was even smaller. In the end the different country teams were able to establish close contact with ten formers and their families. These included former Islamists, former right-wingers, former left-wingers and former animal activists.

In terms of quantity, an estimation of retrievable data was formulated: ten cases in three countries. A case is a combination of at least two in-depth interviews relating to the radicalisation process of one former radical activist. One of the interviews was always held with the former extremists themselves, who most of the time functioned as the gateway to their own family members. The second in-depth interview was usually with one of the parents. Sometimes the first contact was with a parent or a sibling of a former extremist instead of the former themselves, and the second interview with the former followed on from this encounter. The order of interviews was not deemed to be of any particular importance. In case none of the parents were available, due to refusal by the former radical or the parents, another close family member or close friend was elected as a suitable participant. The majority of the interviews were held privately, in individual meetings. In some cases other family members would be present during the interview and in the course of the conversation they might be asked to comment on the statements made by their interviewed family.

We strove for a mix of Islamist and far-right cases. Formers with other ideologies (e.g. Far leftist or animal right activist) were very welcome but were not expected to make up the majority of the cases. Although respondents advocated totally different ideals, we did expect to find more similarities than differences in their development and family context (see San et al., 2009; Lützinger, 2012). We first focused at recent formers, those persons who had denounced the use of violence not long ago. Only when this limit started to cause problems were some former extremists who were

active a longer time ago contacted. The gender proportions were arbitrary. We looked for women as much as for men.

Preparation and procedure

An important reason why empirical research *on* radicalisation *with* radicals is not widespread is that many scholars of radicalisation report difficulties in finding respondents willing to talk openly about their motives and convictions. These difficulties can be overcome by a certain methodological rigour and a particular style of narrative research. The style of interviewing adopted by the entire research team has been inspired by, and employed techniques from, narrative analysis and elicitation interviewing[3], since the nature of the required data, as well as the actual context of recruiting and interviewing, were all characterised by a certain air of informal, but genuine intimacy and confidence. Although the interview itself was loosely structured and flexible, some key questions were prepared in advance, allowing the interviewer to alter them if it seemed appropriate as the interview progressed. The interviews varied from open to semi-structured, guided by a topic list. Three different types were developed: one for the 'former', one for the 'former's parents' and one for the 'former's siblings'. (these documents are attached at the end of the report). Although the precise wording of questions must have varied from time to time, certain types of questions were proscribed and mandatory for the interviewer. The length of the interviews varied from one hour to three hours. The bulk of interviews were held in 2014 and 2015, in a societal atmosphere marked by considerable tensions around radicalisation and identity politics[4]. The challenge was to collect sufficient data to represent the breadth and depth of the phenomenon without becoming overwhelmed. Each of the country teams wrote a scientific report on its ten cases, following a format that made comparison possible. Each individual case took about eight days of work, including recruiting, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, and finally reporting. Every case was reported in ethnographic narrative interview style and the final complete case was followed by a summary in which main subjects and findings were brought together and some preliminary conclusions formulated on a case level.

Ethics and scientific integrity

Talking about deeply personal, often difficult, experiences may make people feel very vulnerable and thus puts a great responsibility on the researcher – not only in terms of protecting their informants' identities (which in this project is for obvious reasons key), but also in terms of ensuring that if or when painful memories are brought up, the interview context in itself provides a 'safe' and externalising framework in which the interviewee can contextualise

[3] 'Deep interviewing', an approach inspired by cognitive studies and psychoanalysis, where the interviewee is invited to, and supported in, exploring micro-processes and psychodynamic mechanisms, while communicating their subjective experience.

[4] Literature shows that all three countries of the study have experienced a culturalisation of citizenship' in which who-belongs and who-does-not – belong has become defined in cultural terms (Slootman, 2014).

the narrative. This beneficial attitude may help ensure that the interview is a rewarding, or at least neutral, experience for the interviewee, both during and after the fact.

If agreed, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. For reasons of academic integrity and validity of the data, full transcripts and/or audio-recordings of the interviews conducted are safeguarded by the 'national' research teams and available to the head of project for analysis. When possible the interviews were audio recorded but, as noted, this was not possible in all cases, since some interviewees made it a condition of participating that the researcher did not do so. For reasons of privacy every interview was immediately transcribed as an anonymous version: names of persons were altered, locations changed, and any detail that could lead to identification of the person involved is either blurred or removed, but all in a way that their main stories, insights and interpretations remain intact for further analysis and comparison. Participants were only included in the definite sample if there was consent. Due to the high security profile of our respondents, none of the interviews was made available to third parties, and transcripts were only made for scientific purposes, although obviously, if a participant wanted to read their transcript, they could do so. As we did not interview any minors, there was no need to address the problematic question of parental permission in this type of research. We reflected continuously on the principles and the consequences of our actions, since many of the dilemmas encountered could not be solved beforehand without taking into account all the particularities of the given situation.

Analysis

Several international and interdisciplinary meetings were held throughout the process to discuss the preliminary results. The country reports were concluded in the first half of 2015, and based on this material and an expert meeting with European practitioners and policy makers, the coordinator and the project director added an introduction, worked on the overall results section, developed an analysis and wrote five policy recommendations.

The team

Unravelling the complex and dynamic nature of radicalisation and de-radicalisation requires extraordinary scientific efforts and strategies. This challenge is reflected in the configuration of the international research team. The team was assembled around researchers from various European countries with ample experience working around social-psychological topics in general, and radicalisation or extremism studies in particular, in interdisciplinary and international settings. Although some researchers were supported by colleagues from other countries such as Belgium and Canada, the team members were predominantly selected from the three countries of investigation. All three countries had recently experienced a considerable level of polarisation around issues of religion and immigration, and as such were considered comparable in their approaches against far-right extremism, violent jihadism and other extremist ideologies. Researchers with backgrounds in sociology, anthropology, developmental psychology, and educational studies were assigned and grouped. This configuration of

countries and disciplines led to a multi-focused study that set out to discover various layers of the radicalisation process. Thanks to the interdisciplinary configuration of researchers, a certain level of triangulation was reached, and an 'ecology' of the radicalisation process was revealed.

Social ecologist, Uri Bronfenbrenner (1979), developed a framework with which community psychologists could study the relationships of individual contexts within communities and wider society. In his Ecological Systems Theory, he discerned environmental systems with which an individual interacts, of which we selected the following three:

- Microsystem: the institutions and groups that most immediately and directly impact the child's development, including nuclear family, classmates, peers. The focus is on intricate direct interactions between relatives or close significant others.
- Mesosystem: interconnections between the microsystems, between the social, individual, identity and ideology related environments, interaction with the non-parental sphere. Interactions between the family and teachers, relationships between the child's peers and the family, between the child and a charismatic leader, or between the family life and the internet.
- Macrosystem: the culture in which individuals live. Cultural contexts include developing and industrialised countries, socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity. A child, their parents, their school, and their parent's workplace are all part of a larger cultural context. Members of a cultural group share a common identity, heritage, and values which accounts for the impact of trends, events and collisions in wider society. The macrosystem evolves over time, because each successive generation may change the macrosystem, leading to their development taking place in a unique macrosystem.[1]

Clearly these spheres are not always separable. Fourteen-year olds who are accustomed to reading news headlines on their private smartphones in the classroom, can be located in different ecosystems at once. Nevertheless, the diversification of emphasis allows for a different type of analysis. All research parties were thus asked to take a different position on this rudimentary micro-meso-macro scale.

- In the Dutch country report the focus is on the micro-level interactions between parents and children, the climate of the upbringing and the turmoil that families experience during a radicalisation process. Keywords are: household, parenting styles, emotional support, limits, development and education.
- The Danish report focuses on the interface between individual coming of age and the spiritual and ideological suppliers that impact heavily on the radicalisation process. Keywords are: uncertainty, violence, idealism, encapsulation, recruitment, and cultic milieu.
- The British report considers radicalisation mainly as a phenomenon in a complex societal context. Keywords are: social context, politics, history, power, communities.

Methodologically this design is complex and rather unusual. Due to these various foci, the reports of the three countries, apart from

their expected similarities, were bound to show many different elements of the radicalisation and de-radicalisation process. Combined with the small numbers characteristic of every empirical in-depth study of radicalisation, this wide and diverse approach is remarkable, and open for scrutiny. Discussing results across representatives from very different research traditions is a huge challenge and an overall consensus was not immediately expected. At the same time, a plurality of viewpoints regarding the role of families in the different ecologies of the radicalisation process could offer the reader a comprehensive view that would be more true to the complexity of the processes under investigation than a mono-disciplinary inquiry, and, as such, ultimately promised a genuine and valuable guide to drawing conclusions about this sample.

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PART II:
COUNTRY REPORT THE NETHERLANDS

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1 Introduction

1.1 Historical and geographical background to extremism

In the 1970s, the Netherlands were faced with violent actions by Moluccan young people who demanded a free and independent Moluccan Republic and an improvement in their living conditions (Witte 2010: 71). Also in the early 1970s, the Red Youth (*Rode Jeugd*), a small left-wing organization of radical communists, made several attempts at terrorist attacks in the Netherlands (Dekkers & Dijksman, 1988). From the 1980s until the early 1990s, left-wing activists from *RaRa* (Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action) carried out actions defined as 'politically violent activism'. The organization committed several attacks that caused a great deal of financial damage. In the years that followed, however, home grown terrorism was no longer a big issue.

This all changed again when The Netherlands was rocked by the murder of politician Pim Fortuyn by an animal rights activist in May 2002. The Dutch politician had founded a new political party, the Pim Fortuyn List *(Lijst Pim Fortuyn or LPF)*, participated in the 2002 general parliamentary election for the first time, and appeared to be heading for a massive victory. The media coverage of his political party was huge. Much of this attention focused on Fortuyn's critical attitude towards the multicultural society and, in particular, Islam.

In September 2004, Geert Wilders, another Dutch politician who is known for his anti-Islam statements, tried to continue the legacy of the murdered Pim Fortuyn. He left the political party he had been part of for many years and founded a new party called Group Wilders (*Groep Wilders*). Group Wilders was later renamed The Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*) and took part in the Dutch elections in 2006 for the first time. Group Wilders was electorally successful from the outset of its creation. At the time, there was an ongoing and heated debate about Islam, following the murder of filmmaker and columnist Theo van Gogh.

Van Gogh, who was also an ardent critic of Islam, was murdered on the street in Amsterdam in November 2004 by the then 26-year-old Muslim extremist Mohammed Bouyeri. After the attack, the offender stuck a knife in Van Gogh's body with a letter attached to it. In the letter Bouyeri claimed a religious motive for his attack (Douwes, De Koning and Boender 2005: 9). Shortly after the murder, several other young people in Bouyeri's network were arrested. They were suspected of belonging to the so-called Hofstad group, the

name that was given by the General Intelligence and Security Service of the Netherlands (AIVD) to a group of fourteen young Islamic radicals. Its members were suspected, among other things, of having planned attacks against Dutch politicians. In March 2006, the defendants in the case of the Hofstad group were sentenced from one up to fifteen years in prison.

After Van Gogh's murder, the municipalities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam drew up policy plans (*Wij Amsterdammers* and *Actieprogramma Meedoen of Achterblijven*) designed to prevent radicalization among their citizens. In the following years, various other plans were developed. In August 2007, former Minister of Interior Guusje ter Horst rolled out a national plan titled *Polarization and Radicalization Action Plan 2007-2011*. The plan was conceived as a national strategy, outlining goals, actions and responsibilities for countering polarization and radicalization (Vidino & Brandon 2012: 29). In addition to plans to prevent and counter radicalization, new legislative measures were introduced. The attacks in Madrid, the bombings in London and, especially, the turmoil caused by the murder of Theo van Gogh and the actions of the Hofstad group led to an expansion of anti-terrorism legislation in the Netherlands. In 2004-2006, various anti-terrorism laws were passed which extended the power of the government to counter potential terror threats through criminal law. In 2003, two new articles were added to the *Crimes of Terrorism Act*: the criminalization of recruitment for the jihad (art. 205) and the criminalization of collusion to commit terrorist offences (art. 96). These changes significantly expanded criminal liability. In addition, the *Protected Witness Act* authorized the examining magistrate (*rechter-commissaris*) to examine official reports by the General Intelligence and Security Service, and to hear employees of the Service behind closed doors. The *Expanding the Scope for Investigating and Prosecuting Terrorist Crimes Act*, the law on the extension of the possibilities for detection and prosecution of terrorist offences, was set up after the bombings in Madrid. No longer was a reasonable suspicion needed of a person having committed or plotting to commit a criminal act in order to deploy (special) detection powers: mere 'clues' were now sufficient. In addition, the law makes it possible to stop and search persons without any concrete suspicion or an order from the public prosecutor. Furthermore, the possibilities have been extended to gather information within the framework of an exploratory investigation, for example, by means of wiretaps or the monitoring of email correspondence (Van der Woude, 2012).

Shortly after the murder of Theo van Gogh there were concerns about the influence of Salafist centres on young people, the emergence of an Islamic youth culture inspired by radical Islam, and the fierceness of the debate on Islam in the Netherlands, which, according to the General Intelligence and Security Service, could lead to growing polarization (AIVD, 2007). But the turmoil subsided in the following years. In 2009, the Service published a report named *Resilience and Resistance*. One of its main findings was that Salafist centres and mosques in the Netherlands were no longer breeding grounds for jihadist terrorism, but instead were speaking out against violence in the name of Islam. The growing resistance in society and the decrease in breeding grounds for extremism and jihadism were seen as positive developments. During the next few years, radical young Muslims disrupted several public meetings, made provocative statements, organized small-scale demonstrations or tried to join the armed struggle in other parts of the world (AIVD 2014: 5), but there were no more violent eruptions.

Although in the decade, following the murder of Theo van Gogh, anxiety about Muslim radicalism in the Netherlands gradually died down, this all changed dramatically in 2012 when new concerns emerged about the increase in the number of young people travelling to Syria with the purpose of joining the armed struggle against Assad. In March 2013, the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism announced that the terrorism threat level in the country had been raised from 'moderate' to 'substantial', the second highest alert level (NCTV, 2013). The agency estimated that about one hundred young Muslims were on their way to Syria. According to the Dutch National Coordinator there was a foreseeable risk that traumatized 'jihad travellers' who had become accustomed to violence, could pose a threat to national security after their return to The Netherlands. In subsequent months the number of fighters who departed from The Netherlands to Syria increased gradually. By the end of 2014, the number of Dutch fighters in Syria was estimated to have risen to 160.

Muslim radicalism is currently a hot topic in the Netherlands because of the recent events. But this has not always been the case. In the past there was more attention for the danger of left-and right activism and extremism. There have even been times that they were seen as a greater danger to the democratic rule of law than Islamic radicalism and extremism.

A broad leftist 'movement' involved in all kinds of activist areas has existed in the Netherlands for nearly four decades. Left wing activism was characterised by intense burst of activity, followed by (sometimes lengthy) periods of silence. Initially, the movement was rather compartmentalized. Most activists and extremists focused on one particular item, so called ´single issue´ activism. In the nineteen nineties the Dutch asylum and immigration policy gave rise to various acts of violence. Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action (*RaRa*) was responsible for several bombings. In subsequent years some more moderate forms of activism arose, due in part to the self-dissolution of *RaRa* in 1996. Bombs were replaced with church asylum and direct support for homeless asylum seekers who had exhausted all legal avenues (AIVD 2014: 7). In 2009 the General Intelligence and Security Service noted a resurgence of left-activism and left-wing extremism, especially around resistance against the Dutch asylum policy. About the growing resistance against the Dutch asylum and immigration policy they published a report called *The Flames of Resistance* (AIVD 2010). Around that period was a gradual change across the entire left wing activism and extremism spectrum. Various groups, such as anti-fascists and animal right extremists, joined forces. In subsequent years this trend continued to spread: anti fascists started helping asylum extremists, who, in turn, received help from environmental activists. In addition, those opposed to the Dutch asylum and immigration policy took over the modus operandi used by animal rights extremists and resorted to daubing and vandalising property, committing arson and conducting ´home visits´.[5] There has been broad co-operation or at least mutual support ever since (AIVD 2014: 5-7). The use of violence has, however, decreased (perhaps temporarily) over the past years, just like the number of actions and extremists (AIVD 2014: 9).

A common characteristic of extreme right wing parties in Holland, from which the Central Party (*Centrum Partij*) and *CP'86* were the best known, was a xenophobe or nationalist ideology that they aimed to realise through legal means. In 1994 this so-called 'Centre movement' was at its political peak – in addition to three seats in the Lower House it also occupied many city-council seat. The decline set in soon after (AIVD 2011: 7). Next to these organizations were several right-wing extremist groups active in Holland (for example Dutch People's Union (*Nederlandse Volksunie*), the National Socialist Action (*de Nationaal Socialistische Aktie*), Blood & Honour, Combat 18 etc). They were characterized by their intentions to pursue antidemocratic objectives and used undemocratic means to accomplish them (AIVD 2011: 17). Also there was concern for a long time about the so-called Londsdale youth, a subculture of Dutch teen-agers with extreme right-wing tendencies who wear the British sportswear label as a kind of uniform.

Typical to right-wing extremism in the Netherlands is that it, according to the General Intelligence and Security Service, seems not to be a threat to the democratic legal order for several years (AIVD, 2010). From year to year it has been reported that there is small following in the movement, mutual disagreement and personal animosity, ideologically different views and organisational fragmentation for years (AIVD 2011: 17). After the murder of Theo Van Gogh, right-extremist circles responded with renewed ferocity – especially on extreme right-wing internet forums – against Muslims (AIVD 2005: 49). In the days after the murder there were a number of arsons in mosques and Islamic schools. But in the years that followed, right-extremist groups hardly caused any problems (AIVD 2012: 29). In the most recent annual report of the General Intelligence and Security Service of the Netherlands, right-wing extremism has been described as 'a splintered and marginal force' (AIVD 2013: 25).

[5] A home visit is a clandestine (night) ´visit´ to send a message of intimidation to activist targets.

1.2 Radicalization, de-radicalization and the role of the family

In the Netherlands, remarkably little attention has been paid by researchers to the role of families, in particular parents, in the radicalization process of their children. In addition, based on the research that has been done, there is no unanimity about the influence of parents. In many cases, there is only casual attention for the role of parents in the radicalization of Muslim youth, as in Buijs et al. (2006) and Slootman and Tillie (2006). These publications show that most radicalizing young people did not have a strict religious upbringing. Buijs et al. mention the 'resistance identity' of these adolescents and young adults. Various empirical studies have shown that there is a relation between real and perceived deprivation, feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem on the one hand and radicalization on the other hand (Buijs et al. 2006). The majority of young Muslims in the Netherlands are growing up in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods where there is an accumulation of problems: poverty, school failure, health and behavioural problems, unemployment, disruptive behaviour and criminality. According to Pels & De Ruyter these circumstances also influence parental upbringing, because parents have fewer social resources available to them (Pels & De Ruyter 2012).

Demant et al., has shown that Muslim parents often have too little insight into Dutch society to be able to understand and guide their children. In addition, young people tend to create their own identities as well as their own ideologies. Often they can only be convinced by religious arguments and most parents are not well versed in this method of discourse (Demant et al. 2008: 99). There is a great divide between parents and children, and many children accept little guidance from their parents. The parents on the other hand, do not have many convincing counter-arguments at hand (Demant et al. 2008: 197). Gielen (2008) has shown that extreme right-wing people often share the xenophobic and nationalist views of their parents. A similar conclusion emerges from research by Van Donselaar (2005), who found that young people often pick up anti-immigrant feelings from their parents. Linden's research (2009) however, shows a different picture. Many adolescents and young adults with radical opinions mentioned that their parents taught them that discrimination is unacceptable and that all people should be treated with equal respect (Linden 2009: 105). Linden's research, by the way, was primarily focused on middle class families, whereas Gielen studied mostly lower class families. In previous research we concluded that parents often did not seem to be aware of their children's increased susceptibility to radicalism. There was also a general lack of response among parents towards their children's ideas. The children's radicalization often had more to do with the lack of response – or the wrong response – from their environment than with the young radicals themselves (Van San, de Winter & Sieckelinck, 2014).

In the Dutch literature on de-radicalization there is only casual attention for the role of parents. According to Demant et al. (2008), there are several reasons why young radicals disengage. Family ties are in themselves not seen as valid reasons, but they can have a powerful legitimising effect during an initial phase of doubt and therefore help to overcome barriers (Wright 1988). In the case of Islamic young people, contact with significant others is often mentioned as an important factor in the de-radicalization process. This involves people who are respected by the adolescent – such as family members - and who are willing and able to discuss his or her ideology. Because the young radical considers these persons as legitimate conversation partners, they are sometimes able to introduce the adolescent to a new train of thought (Demant et al. 2008: 149).

Although remarkably little attention has been paid by researchers in the Netherlands to the role of families in the radicalization process of family members, public opinion seems to be rather certain about the importance of the role they play. However, the question is whether this is justified. Since so many young people have left for Syria, all over Europe testimonials have emerged from parents who do not support their children's decision. This is consistent with the findings of our own research (Van San, 2015). Young people can apparently go through a process of radicalization without being influenced by their parents. In addition, the empirical evidence is still too thin to conclude that parents play an important role in the process of disengagement and deradicalization of their children, although this is assumed in much of the international literature (see for example Bjørgo, 2009).

1.3 Specific theoretical angle of our research group

This report focuses on radicalization from a parenting perspective: we approach radicalization as a possibility within adolescent development, partly influenced by the interaction with the social environment and socialization of the adolescent. Previous research shows how families, when confronted with radicalization, experience significant turmoil; family life shakes to its foundations when a child obtains ideals that are extreme (Sikkens, Sieckelinck, Van San & De Winter, submitted). It was found that parents often change their reactions towards extreme ideals during the radicalization process, possibly because parents do not know how to handle the new situation. Two dimensions can be used to categorize the parental reactions towards radicalization: "control" and "support". Control means: the amount of rules, monitoring, and control that the parent displays (Schaffer, 2009). Support is defined as: the amount of support, warmth, and affection that the parent displays, and whether the parent tries to see things from the perspective of the child (Schaffer, 2009; Bonnet, Goossens, and Schuengel, 2012). We discern four different parental reactions towards radicalization: *discuss* (high control and high support), *reject* (high control but no support), *applaud* (high support but no control), and *ignore* (no control and no support). In general, parents first try to *discuss* the ideals with their child, but when the ideals become more extreme, parents often change to *ignoring* the ideology (Sikkens et al., submitted). Due to parental uncertainty, powerlessness, dissocia-

tion, and out of fear of arguments with their child, parents seem to become less demanding and less controlling towards their children. They seem to give up because they do not know how to respond to the ideals of their children. Of course it is comprehensible that parents do not know how to react, because they are struggling with the radicalization of their adolescents. And perhaps that parents also react differently because they feel that the radicalization needs a different approach than the normal upbringing (Sikkens et al., submitted). In this country report we will keep in mind that parents may both influence and are being influenced by the radicalization of their children. We will therefore demonstrate how these parents interacted with their children during the radicalization and deradicalization process, and examine how this may or may not have influenced the process.

2 Methods

2.1 Sampling and recruitment

In our research we aimed to speak to formers who used to have extreme-right, Islamic extremist, or extreme left-wing ideals. Our research focused on people with various types of former extreme ideals, as there exists a growing evidence that processes of radicalization among widely divergent groups show parallel developments (Gielen, 2008; Van San, Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2010). It was therefore hypothesized that the same would account for the process of deradicalization. Furthermore, we made sure that our study contained both male and female respondents, to create a more representable study.

Before we had started our field research, we expected it to be easy to contact formers, because they were no longer involved in an extreme ideology, and would be able to share their 'success story' with us. But the opposite appeared to be true: some formers struggle with feelings of shame and guilt, and/or do not feel like raking up the past. Furthermore, it was especially difficult for us to find and contact former Islamist extremists. This is possibly caused by the fact that they became less extreme in avowing their believes, but do not recognize themselves to be a *former*, as they are still Muslim and may believe in similar ideals. Another possible explanation would be the current political climate, in which (radical) Muslims are under severe scrutiny due to the perceived terrorism threat. Formers may therefore not be willing to participate in research on this topic.

Eventually we successfully found respondents by the help of multiple key figures. Thanks to their efforts, we were able to draw up eleven case studies, that consisted of seventeen in-depth interviews with eleven *formers* (eight males and three females), eight parents and three siblings.

2.2 Interview specifics

During this research, seventeen in-depth interviews were conducted using prepared topic lists. The majority of the interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting. We spoke to most of our respondents in the privacy of their own home, which gave insight in the settings our respondents grew up in. Three respondents were interviewed in a public place on their request. Four interviews were conducted through Skype. A webcam was then used to simulate the face-to-face setting.
All of the interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. In order to guarantee anonymity, all information that could lead to a participant's identity was deleted.

Eleven interviews were conducted with "formers". This study defines a former to be a person who once had extremist ideas or performed extremist behaviour. To fall into the category of 'formers', this person ought to be deradicalized *or* disengaged. Participating respondents have taken distance from their extremist thinking or behavior by leaving a particular group *or* swearing off violence that one once used or condoned. Deradicalization, according to Neumann (2010), signifies substantive changes in ideology. Disengagement facilitates behavioural change such as rejection of violence (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Ergo disengagement does not require a change of the radical ideas as such. Yet it does require a change in readiness to use violence in striving for change.

Five respondents used to have extreme-right ideals, three used to be active animal activists, and three respondents were former Islamic extremists, of which two were involved in violent jihad.

The age that the formers got involved in these extreme ideologies ranged from 12 years old to 16 years old, with a mean of 14 years old. The age that they desisted lies between 15 and 27 years old, with a mean of 21 years old.

Besides eleven formers, we interviewed eight parents and three siblings to complete the case studies.

BOX 1: Francis

We meet with Francis in his student flat. Francis grew up with his mother and older sister; he hardly had contact with his father, who separated from his mother before Francis was born. Francis did not have a carefree childhood. His mother's depressions and personality disorder restrained Francis to bring home friends, or to leave the house too long, as his mother easily felt abandoned. When he was thirteen years old, his older sister was placed into care after severe self-mutilation. At that point in his life, the young Francis was very much intrigued by philosophy, and tried to find answers to existential questions in books by Aristoteles, Plato and Marx. But these books did not help him find 'the truth'. The Quran did, and he engrossed himself in Islam.

In an interview with Francis six years ago, he outlined why he had engrossed himself in Islam: "The Islam was often displayed in a negative manner. Just think about the statements of Rita Verdonk, Geert Wilders, George W. Bush and the war on terror. I just wondered to what extent that image was true, or whether it was a case of discrimination and racism. That is why I read up on Islam. I wanted to know what that religion, that was constantly under attack, was all about."

Furthermore, Francis was looking for "the ultimate truth in life" and felt that Islam answered to this need. "Besides looking for the truth, it [converting to Islam] might have been led by my family situation, as it was a radical rift with the home situation. If my home situation had been different, there had probably not been much reason to develop a new identity so rigorously. In that case I could have easily done it step by step instead of so radical with huge steps at the time."

When Francis was fourteen, the family situation became even more instable when his mother attempted suicide. Francis felt relieved when the Youth Care Office decided to evict him from the parental home as well: he did not want to betray his mother by asking for help, but he knew that help was needed. The youth care facility he then lived in, allowed him to practice his religion.

Six years ago, Francis rejected democracy and solely acknowledged the Islamic khalifah [caliphate]: "I don't see the Dutch democracy as the right form of government. The only form of government that I acknowledge is the khalifah, the caliphate, like it is set out in the Islam. The majority of Dutch people feels that establishing a democracy is the solution, but I feel totally different. I feel that it is totally ridiculous that people still think that they have the right to go on crusades to the Arabic world to impose the Western body of thought upon them. First it was the moral superiority of Christianity and now it's about establishing democracies and imposing atheism."

Interviewer: That sounds quite anti-Western.

"Anti-kuffar [anti believers] I would say. And the West still is a major advocate for that so yes, I'm not pro-West. The West has a lot of money at the expense of Africa, Asia, and the Arabic world, and the West has been trying for centuries to force her ideas upon others. That revolts me. I can't be proud on a country that fights my brothers and sisters in other countries."

Francis dreamed of becoming an imam in Yemen, and therefore focused more on reading about Islam than he focused on school. He changed from A level to O level, and left high school altogether when he turned 18.

In the meantime, his guardian arranged a part-time job at the local Islamic organization. Not a Salafi group that Francis was so intrigued by, but a more moderate Islamic group. Though he liked the people he worked with, they did not change his religious views. His father, who had re-entered his life, confronted him with different world views as well. At that time, Francis did not embrace his father's words, but he did not forget them: "my dad plainly confronted me with things I already had doubts about, but which I tried not to think about. I didn't really embrace what he told me, but I remembered it. And afterwards, when I gave way to my own doubts, it played an important role."

Francis stresses that no one influenced his deradicalization process. Not his Islamic co-workers, not his father who confronted him with a different perspective, not his high school teacher who kept asking how such a brilliant philosophy student could live with religious dogma's, not his non-religious school friends he liked so much, and not the imam who urged him not to go to Yemen but become a doctor for the Muslim community instead. No, it was he by himself who turned the wheel. "I didn't need help with that. I really think that this is something you have to do by yourself." More and more Francis felt confronted with the moral dilemma that the people he cared about, were to be excluded according to his interpretation of Islam. And so he started breaking the Islamic rules by for example smoking weed with his friends, and he started to read, write, and talk about philosophy again. Now he changed his Islamic ideals into philosophical ones, and is no longer looking for truth but strives after wisdom and happiness. In the words of Tolstoy, Francis his new ideal is "a calm quiet life in the country, to live for others, surrounded by the right people, such is my idea of happiness".

3 Results

3.1 Family climate prior to the radicalization

The families that our respondents grew up in, were very different from each other. In some families the situation seemed to be warm and stable, like the family where Laura (box 3) grew up in, or for example Andre who states that the relationship with his parents has always been good. Other families went through turbulent times prior to the radicalization of the child. Divorce, health problems, mental health problems, and financial problems afflicted these families. In seven out of ten families, the parents were divorced; three of the respondents grew up without knowing their father. The large number of absent fathers due to divorce or work is striking: in seven cases the formers describe that they could not see their father as much as they would have liked. In five families one or more family members struggled with mental health issues like personality disorder, autism, anorexia, and depression. The problematic family climate may have played a part in the radicalization process of the child: parents struggled with all sorts problems, therefore they might have lost sight of their child and his/her ideals. In the case study of **Daniel**, a former Muslim extremist, his brother for example stresses:

"My mother has had psychological problems all her life, and my sister required a lot of attention and care. She had to run the household all by herself, and so she was hardly able to get a handle on the situation."

This indirect influence of (a lack of) parenting was found in various of our case studies. We will further address the possible role of the parent on radicalization in the next paragraph. Still, it is important to address that not every respondent grew up in a troubled family. Laura, for example, grew up in a warm and stable home, but still radicalized in her animal rescuing (see also Box 3).

3.2 The role of upbringing on radicalization

According to our respondents, family and parents in particular had little direct influence on their radicalization process. Most of the formers we interviewed, did not learn their ideals from their parents. On the other hand, some had ideals that were in line with the ideals of their parents, though usually more extreme. The parent of an extreme right-winger would then, for example, vote for a political party on the right political spectrum. Like the father of **Tijmen**:

"My dad basically agrees with the somewhat political right views, but he's more of a Fortuyn [former Dutch right-wing politician] voter."

Only one respondent answered that she was directly influenced by her mother. **Katie**'s mother was involved in animal activism, and brought her daughter up with the same ideals:

"I can be short and clear about that: I got my ideals from my mother. It can't be any other way, you learn your ideals from your parents. First you have them [ideals] as a child, but after the years I discovered that they are ideals that I 100% agree with. And I just got involved, especially when my mother joined a group of animal activists. In the beginning I was too young and stayed at home, but I knew that my mum was carrying out actions, and later on I joined her."

Except for Katie and her mother, the remaining respondents did not mention a direct influence by their parents on the development of their extreme ideals. Alternatively, an indirect influence of parents on the radicalization process seems to exist. Some respondents, for example, address that they could not talk to their parents about their ideals. Because their parents were unable or unwilling to talk about politics and/or religion, these young people tried to find answers themselves. Like **Laura**, a former animal activist, who was interested in social and political issues at a very young age:

"Kids in my class were interested in other things while I was worrying about the war or about Chernobyl. Back then I was 7 years old, and I asked my parents what was going on over there, and I had nightmares about it. When I was reading about the Holocaust, I would ask my parents questions about it, and adults would always answer "you're too young for that!" And if you keep hearing that, you start interpreting things the wrong way. If you keep hearing that you're too young for that and you should play with your dolls… but I didn't care about my dolls! So I had all this information, all by myself, and I started interpreting it in my own way. Now I can make sense of it, but back then…"

In this study we discern four different parental reactions towards radicalization: *discuss* (high control and high support), *reject* (high control but no support), *applaud* (high support but no control), and *ignore* (no control and no support).

It was found that two parents *ignored* the ideals of the child. Other parents *discussed* (4) or *rejected* (3) the ideals at first, but *ignored* (7) the ideals later because they felt they could not influence their children's ideal development. Two parents *applauded* the ideal development of their children.

It is likely that parents switch from *discussing* the ideals to *ignoring* the ideals, because they lack knowledge about the religious or political views of the child. Our interviews showed that parents often had no knowledge about the religious or political views of their child, so it was hard for them to discuss these ideals, or to set boundaries. The mother of former right-wing extremist **Sylvia**, for example, reminisces that she was clueless about the signals that showed that her daughter was involved with the extreme right-wing ideology:

"And then she got more of those right-wing.. more of those t-shirts with.. well name it.. swastika's and such. I thought that was really... And then I was called to account by the school, because the school thought it wasn't normal. I said 'well, what am I supposed to do? How should I interpret her rolled up jeans and army boots?' See, if I don't know! Because I wasn't occupied with that at the time. She was."

Sometimes the parents severely rejected their children's ideals, causing a break-up between the parent and child. Due to this break-up, parents no longer were able to monitor the ideal development of the child, and no longer had influence on the radicalization process. This is an example of a parental reaction changing from *rejecting* to *ignoring*. **Rowan**, for example, fled the house when he and his father kept fighting about his far-right ideas. Rowan wanted to hang a flag with swastikas:

"Yeah of course my dad would become furious, and he would pull that flag right off the wall. And that was something you shouldn't do, because then you'd come between me and my ideals. So a couple of times we fought each other over this. *So what happened to this flag in the end? Did you hang it or not?* In the end I got up all my stuff and left for like-minded people. And that's how I left home when I was 15. I went my own way, apart from everything and everyone."

It was also difficult for the parent to monitor the radicalization process of their child or to intervene in this process, once the child was radicalized. Daniel, a former Islamic extremist, illustrates this as follows:

"What can parents do? You don't share anything with them [parents], you don't talk to them, you don't tell them what you're doing, so you keep them out very consciously. Your life is outside, in the mosque, with people on the Internet, so she [mother] has no insight in those matters and so she doesn't know. She only realizes it when you get caught for what you've done."

Furthermore, it seems that parents usually did not ask for help to confront the radicalization: possibly because they feared to worsen the situation, or because they were ashamed of the situation. Parents Laura: "When you notice it [radicalization], you don't show anyone. It was hard as it was, trying to manage it, so you don't spill the beans. And you get isolated as a family. We tried to take the necessary steps like by going to a child psychiatrist, but after a while you just don't know where else to look for help."

Rowan stated that the involvement of authorities was not helpful because soon he was radicalized beyond the point that anyone could have influenced him. **Francis**, a former radical Muslim, confirms this as he claimed that no one could have deradicalized him at that point in time:

What would have worked? Nothing I think. I wasn't open to different ideas or ideologies. My teacher asked me many times "you're an intelligent boy, you have straight A's in Philosophy... why do you believe in this?" That didn't influence me. Me and some other orthodox Muslims had discussions with Christians, but we just tried to convert each other. So that didn't influence me. More than that: such attacks only made me more convinced!

3.3 Role of the parent in deradicalization

According to most of our respondents, parents would have had little influence on the deradicalization or disengagement process. The sister of Tijmen, for example, claims that they did not have any influence at all:

"But did you or your parents influence his desistance?" No, I don't think so. No, absolutely not. It started apart from us and it disappeared apart from us as well."

Few of our respondents believe that parents influence the disengagement or deradicalization process, though Francis feels that his father played a role in his deradicalization process in an indirect way. When his father confronted him with a different perspective on his religious views, this did not immediately change the way Francis avowed his extreme believes. But his father's words indirectly worked as a catalyst, and played a role once the deradicalization process started:

"Well, it wasn't really a reason, it was more like a possible catalyst: I got back in touch with my dad and the things he told me... he plainly confronted me with things I already had doubts about, but which I tried not to think about. I didn't really embrace what he told me, but I remembered it. And afterwards, when I gave way to my own doubts, it played an important role."

Furthermore, some respondents experienced support from their parents during the disengagement or deradicalization process, of which they felt it was indispensable. Like Laura, who was incarcerated for years after she had planned and executed multiple attacks in order to safeguard animals. She started disengaging while imprisoned, and feels that her parents played a supportive role in her disengagement process after she got released:

Do you think you would have made it without your parents' support? "I think after my release, I've known so many women who got out, and who stood at the gate with their carton box without knowing where to go, and without any guidance. My parents were

there for me when I got out, and when I just got out I lived with them as well. If I hadn't had my parents, I wouldn't have known where to go with my carton box either."

Most formers and their families did not receive any professional help in the deradicalization process. One mother argued that the authorities were aware of the situation, but did not intervene:

Mother: She was under probation. They came over every once in a while and blabbered for a bit and that was that.
And did you speak to them about your rightwing ideas?
Mother and Sylvia: Yes.
Sylvia: It is written in all the reports but they didn't do anything about it.
Mother: They didn't do anything about it.

3.4 Other factors that may have influenced de-radicalization

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, most respondents stressed that their parents played no role in their deradicalization or disengagement process. We therefore asked them who or what they thought that played part in their deradicalization process. Our interviewees stress that they disengaged or deradicalized because they were caught by the police and/or were incarcerated, that they were positively influenced by a peer or life partner, or that they disengaged or deradicalized because they entered a new phase in life (for example by starting a family or a new education). Katie, for example, says:

"The fact that I have children now, is one of the reasons that I don't join those kind of actions anymore."

Animal activist **Jean-Paul**, who got arrested after he broke into a mink farm and assaulted a man, no longer participates in these kind of actions either. He explains that the legal consequences of former actions made him rethink his strategy:

"But when you've done things, and you experienced the legal consequences of it, you'll think 'what shall I do now?'. And then you'll go from there. It hasn't been an intentional choice. Actually, I'm still doing exactly the same, but with a different sort of methodology."

Some of our respondents state that they disengaged or deradicalized under influence of their partner or a friend. Tijmen his best friend, for example, confronted him with the intolerability of his far-right ideals. And Sylvia deradicalized with the support of her new boyfriend:

"I think it really helped us that he was able to support me and I was able to support him. Because getting out all by yourself, that's quite stiff."

Another factor that might have influenced the disengagement and deradicalization of our respondents, is human agency. *Human agency* means that someone intentionally influences one's functioning and life circumstances. "People are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. They are not simply onlookers of their behavior. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them" (Bandura, 2006: 164). In literature on desistance, human agency is found to be an important factor in desisting from crime (Laub & Sampson, 2003). And it seems that a person's own agency is an important factor in deradicalization as well. Francis stresses that he basically deradicalized all by himself:

"Because again, this [deradicalization] was mainly a rational process, nourished by doubts that came from my moral dilemma. And eh... I didn't need help with that. I really think that this is something you have to do by yourself."

Furthermore, the existent literature on desistance from crime names sheer maturation as an important aspect in restraining from crime. Possibly, the same accounts for deradicalization as Daniel states as follows:

"When you're young, you're much more impulsive, and you think more black and white. But when you become older, you start thinking more balanced, and you become more rational. The outlines may stay the same, but the necessary differentiations are made."

BOX 2: Tijmen

"My brother Tijmen is an extreme person. That used to be in a negative way and now it's in a positive way. He is very… how to put it? Dedicated. And then it doesn't really matter what it's about, there are always one or multiple things he wants to excel in. He doesn't do anything with half effort, and I find that really cool about him."

When Tijmen was four years old, his parents separated, and he grew up with his mother and sister in a multicultural neighborhood. Tijmen was a boy who liked the dark and creepy characters in movies, and drew pictures with a lot of violence and blood in them, while his mother and sister were very sensitive and rather drank tea or practiced yoga. Tijmen saw his father, who was more similar to him, only on the weekends. On those weekends he had to share his dad with his stepmother, who did not like to share the attention of Tijmen's father with two children.

Though Tijmen grew up in a multicultural neighborhood, he only started realizing in high school that he and his friends were a minority in the school they attended. They were bullied, called "cheese heads". One night Tijmen was looking out of his bedroom window and saw African children scare away a white child from the playground. The playground Tijmen used to play when he was little. This triggered him to look for "white power" on the Internet, and that's when it all started. He joined an online right wing forum, listened to skinhead bands like Screwdriver and White Noise, and eventually met some forum members in real-life at a gathering. Tijmen: "Back then I said to myself 'those people are quite dangerous', but I thought 'if I can't beat them, I'd better join them'. So I thought "the more I will go to these events, the stronger I will get in the end". Gradually he changed his appearance by shaving his head, and wearing stereotypical far-right clothes: "I had the feeling that I would achieve more on the radical side of the spectrum than on the moderate side. I wanted to look for true answers so badly, the real answers to my questions, and I was quite naive back then, so I automatically assumed that people who were in the movement longer, had the right to speak and knew what they were talking about."

Interviewer: What was your idea? What did you want to achieve?
"That's a good question [laughs]. Eh… foreigners away, foreigners out actually. That was my first line of approach, because I lost a sense of safety." His mother and sister noticed that Tijmen changed. He would utter his frustration during dinner about being the only white person on the tram, views that his mother and sister did not share. They kept silent, and Tijmen felt that he could not share his problems with anyone. "In hindsight my dad asked me "why didn't you come to me? I could understand your frustration to a certain point." Then I just said "well I didn't think about it. You come home and you just want to be difficult about something. You don't save it for the weekend to tell it then."
In the meantime Tijmen got suspended from school for proclaiming Nazi beliefs, and continued his far-right activities against his parents' wishes. The situation became unbearable, and his mother asked him to leave. Tijmen left home when he was 17 and gradually climbed up the ladder in the Neo-Nazi world, because "I thought it was important that we were the most dangerous, and the most radical". Tijmen then changed from the NVU [Dutch Folk Union] to Blood & Honour and Combat18: "I really wanted to be part of something, an official name to it was very important to me. I don't know why, some sort of recognition I guess. Like some sort of step upon the career ladder, that's how I really looked at it. If I would be part of that for 100%, that would be the highest possible achievement."

Tijmen eventually felt that he was leading a double life: during the week he was just working, while at the weekend he was a radical activist. Besides, he had the feeling that it was difficult to combine his radical lifestyle and armed struggle with the suburban bliss he would like to lead with his girlfriend. "I just had a mega burn-out. And because of her [girlfriend] and my best friend… they have eventually convinced me to see quitting as an option."
His best friend started asking critical questions, and Tijmen found that his life was filled with frustrations, negativity, alcohol, and was not leading anywhere. His girlfriend helped him to quit drinking, his friend helped him to rethink his life. He gradually stopped visiting meetings, and once the other extreme right-wingers saw this through, there was no way back. "They thought I was an anti-fascist, a member of the Secret Service, a traitor, so it was impossible to go back. Which I did not mean to anyway."
It is difficult to imagine that the young man who is sitting across the table, was once a Neo-Nazi leader. The only things that give away his Neo-Nazi history, are his tattoos. Many he changed already: the extreme right symbols are filled up with ink. But the word skinhead can still be seen, though it is currently being removed by laser. Just like his tattoos, his ideals changed: Tijmen now is actively involved in saving the environment.

4 Analysis

4.1 What do the findings tell us?

According to our respondents, parents usually do not play a direct role in the radicalization- or deradicalization process. A latent role, on the other hand, seems to exist. Previous research shows that parents often change their reactions towards extreme ideals during the radicalization process, possibly because parents do not know how to handle the new situation (Sikkens et al., submitted). This study confirms that most parents discussed or rejected the ideals at first, but ignored the ideals in the end because they felt they could not influence their children's ideal development. In the radicalization process parents often did not interfere because they did not recognize the signals, or they changed to ignoring the ideals because they did not know how to handle them. A parental uncertainty existed within these parents, and parents did not know whom to turn to for support. Furthermore, our study showed that some formers came from turbulent family situations. The parents may therefore have been struggling with different matters, which potentially led to not recognizing the radicalization process, and being less controlling.

The same accounts for the disengagement and deradicalization process: no direct influence was mentioned by our respondents. But again a more latent influence seems to be at play: formers stated that the support that their parents gave during the deradicalization, was indeed helpful. Moreover, the formers mentioned that the counterarguments that were given by their parents, were memorized, and were used once they started their deradicalization process.

4.2 Relevant insights that have come up during the research

What is interesting to see, is that some formers we spoke to, did not change their ideology but changed their ways in which they strived after their believes. Often the amount of passion for the ideals decreased somewhat. **Andre** for example, used to have radical rightwing views. His views have not changed much over the last five years, but he now tries to nuance his ideals somewhat. In order not to jeopardize his career, he no longer is involved with political parties that are considered extreme rightwing, but moved towards a political rightwing party that participates in parliament. Furthermore, he no longer dresses according to extreme rightwing fashion, and chooses not to discuss his ideals at school or at work.

We also found the opposite: some formers changed their old ideals for ideals that are more socially accepted. These new ideals are then strived after with the same passion and dedication as was the case when they still had "radical ideals". These formers deradicalized from a certain extreme political or religious ideology, and replaced it by a different or even opposite ideology. This is for example the case with Tijmen, who departed from his extreme right goals, and now stands up for animal rights and focuses fanatically on healthy living. His case is further described in Box 2.

We found the same for Daniel, who once was a violent jihadist, but now seems to combat the Islam with the same fervor. His brother worries about this: "When Daniel starts something, he immediately has to become extreme again. First he was an extreme Muslim, and now he's posting anti-Muslim articles on Facebook. That's really the opposite and… I don't know… I worry about him." It seems that these young men have somewhat of an extreme personality that was influenced by the people they have met or by certain circumstances, though of course we are no psychiatrists, and will not try to diagnose them.

Another relevant insight that has come up, is the existing lack of professional support for parents who struggle with the radicalization of their children and for radical young people who want to leave the radical scene. Some formers and their families would have liked professional backup, to ask for information, discuss the situation, and/or to help them exit the radical scene. Some refer to the German exit-program. Other formers and their family members do not feel that professional support would be a necessity, though it might have a positive influence on the deradicalization process. Of course the formers we have interviewed, radicalized and deradicalized in earlier times. Due to the amount of Dutch young people who recently left for Syria to fight, the Dutch secret services and care institutions would nowadays be better prepared to react upon radicalizing youth (NOS, 2015). The Dutch government has developed an action plan to counter jihadism (Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, NCTV & Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2014), the Cooperation of Dutch Moroccans has installed an emergency phone number for parents who fear their children's potential flight to Syria (SMN, 2015), and training sessions are in place for teachers, police officers, and youth care professionals to recognize radicalization (see also NCTV, 2015; Spectrum, 2015). A shift seems to have taken place in the existence of professional support in the last couple of years and months. However, at

the same time mayors from several cities claim that they still do not know how to handle radicalization (Meinders, 2015). Professional assistance might now be in place, but the effectiveness of most programs has not yet been proven.

Moreover, we see a lot of similarities between the de-radicalization process of former radicals and the process of desistance from crime in former criminals. Our respondents stated that they de-radicalized due to police involvement or imprisonment, they were positively influenced by a peer or life partner, or because they entered a new phase in life (for example by starting a family or a new education). This is consistent with the existing literature on crime and desistance. In this literature, it is written that a major event in the life of a recidivist (for example a marriage, military service, or an imprisonment) can lead to the desistance from crime (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Nuytiens, Christiaens & Eliaerts, 2008; Farrall, 2004). Nuytiens, Christiaens and Eliaerts (2008) describe these life events to be possible catalyzers in the desistance. However, it is the delinquent itself who must actively seize this opportunity to quit crime. Thus, a major life event only is an opportunity for change: it does not automatically lead to someone's desistance from crime. The delinquent needs to seize the opportunity by him- or herself (Nuytiens et al., 2008). This personal initiative is also known as human agency. *Human agency* refers to the intentional influence of someone on one's functioning and life circumstances and seems to be central to the process of desistance, while most former delinquents have actively contributed to the determination of their criminal career path (Bandura, 2006; Laub & Sampson, 2003). In our study on deradicalization, we have found the same human agency in the interviews: many respondents pointed out that it was solely their own effort that helped them to exit the radical scene.

4.3 Recommendations from respondents on how to deal with radicalization

It was recommended that schools start programs to warn their students about radical groups. These school programs should warn about the manipulative character of some of the group members (Sylvia: "It's not as pretty as it seems. They are not your friends, even though they pretend they are") and about the potential consequences of their own membership. Many formers claim that they would not have gone down this road, if only they had known about the consequences.

Furthermore, it was recommended that parents stay on speaking terms with their children. Many of the formers felt that they could not talk about their ideals outside the radical groups. It is important to take the young person seriously. Tijmen: "I would definitely not ignore it and wouldn't handle it like it's just nonsense, so to speak. Because well.. that frustration surely has a certain cause, and if you'd handle it right away, and listen, you would stay informed. And then you may sooner be able to change things."

Our respondents feel that adolescents will search for answers by themselves, in case there is no-one to discuss their ideas and questions with. The recommendation by formers and their families to listen to the adolescent and take him or her seriously, confirms the work of Spee and Reitsma (2010) who recommend educators to start a dialogue with an open attitude, to be interested in their motives and to ask questions. It also confirms the work of Bartlett & Birdwell (2010), who state that it is important to listen to young people their extreme ideas, so that they can be critiqued and subsided. Debating their ideas would be a good method to subside extreme ideals, as through debate the adolescents could possibly find out that their ideals do not match reality (Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010).

Parents would have liked information about the radical ideology of their child. They feel that they cannot counter the ideas of their child without knowledge about the topic. Spee & Reitsma (2010) on the other hand argue that anyone could start a conversation about ideology, as long as you are genuinely interested in the motives of the young person. Francis, furthermore, argues that adolescents will remember the counterarguments of their parents, even when they disagree at that time. Francis: "I think that I would not immediately try to change his [my sons] mind, but try to feed him different knowledge as well. That way I hope that he would go through the same process as I did, [be]cause that other knowledge will stick with him. And he is allowed to disagree, but he'll remember."

Furthermore, it was suggested to offer the adolescent or young adult an alternative. Instead of solely banning the ideals, parents could provide the child with a new hobby. The father of Andre stated: an alternative to spend their time, something active: a group or club that they can join. We gave him a set of drums so he was busy drumming, and on Saturday mornings he would work on a farm. He was out being active, occupied with other things. Mother Andre: Yes, an alternative. We made sure not to just forbid everything, but to give something as well.

BOX 3: Laura

Laura grew up in a warm and stable Dutch family, together with her parents and her younger brother. But Laura was different, and children in her class bullied her. Therefore she mostly played by herself, watching frogs and rabbits in the fields close to her house, or you could find her in the library where she read about biology and the environment. Laura had very different interests than her peers: as a seven year old she worried about Chernobyl or read about the Holocaust.

According to Laura's parents, she developed far beyond her age. A psychiatrist told them that though Laura was only thirteen, she had the mental capacity of an eighteen year old. And Laura wanted the same privileges: she wanted to hang out with her eighteen year old friends, and stay out past midnight. Laura and her parents clashed often, and when Laura was 15 she hardly came home anymore but stayed in squats with likeminded people: "from the moment I ended up in squats I felt that I found likeminded people, who understood me, and who were occupied with themes I couldn't discuss with peers, cause they were still playing with Barbie dolls."
Her parents did not succeed to get a grip on her, but Laura states on this: "my parents did absolutely nothing wrong. I didn't have a bad childhood. My parents had no grip on me. They would come to look for me, but if I would see them from a distance, I would turn around and just go the other way."

Radicalization

Through the squatters lifestyle Laura got introduced in all sorts of activism. She would organize dinners with left-over food, pleaded in a playful manner for free public transport in the city, and handed out flyers about biological food at fast-food restaurants. Most of the times the police would end these actions, and gradually it crossed Laura's mind that legal actions did not help her cause. She switched to spreading her ideals with graffiti, releasing minks, and terrorizing companies that had animal-unfriendly policies: "We were constantly intimidated by the police, and we felt that they were watching us. And that's when it started to click that we could keep campaigning in legal ways, we used no violence, but we felt... Because of the grimly atmosphere that was created by the police actions, we kind of felt like "what are we doing?" And that's when someone from the older generation said "why don't we go a bit further?" It's not like we signed a contract or anything but that's when a small group of us decided to take things a little further. In the beginning it was just spraying graffiti but after a while we took the step that if we could not stop multinationals, we would try to hit them where it hurts most."

Laura's parents were powerless to do anything about it: "you try to raise them as good as you can, but we think it also has to do with bad peer influence. And when you notice it [radicalization], you don't show anyone. It was hard as it was, trying to manage it, so you don't spill the beans. And you get isolated as a family. We tried to take the necessary steps like by going to a child psychiatrist, but after a while you just don't know where else to look for help."

In the end Laura got caught and was sentenced to prison. There it took a while for Laura to change her mind about the things she had done: "back then I still felt that it was unfair that I was in prison, while the people who were cruel to animals could just go on." But that changed once she realized that she did not achieve any of her goals. Besides, she started realizing what an enormous effort it took from her parents to deal with the situation. Laura: "And yeah, when you add it all up, you're in prison, it kills your mother, and that really brought me to think: what on earth did we achieve?" Laura came to the conclusion that she had not helped the animal rights movement at all, quite the reverse: her illegal actions made all animal rights actions look like terrorism. But before, she had not cared out of unhappiness and inner discontentment with everything.

Laura did her time and her parents were there for her when she got out of prison: "My parents were there for me when I got out, and when I just got out I lived with them as well. If I hadn't had my parents, I wouldn't have known where to go." She is still socially active, for example participates in climate camps, but Laura makes sure that no violence is involved. She has seen how illegal actions were not accepted by society, and therefore did not help to change society. "Even if I now only reach 10 people, that's fine. With what I do now, I feel much happier."

5 Discussion

5.1 Strengths and pitfalls of this research

A strength of our research was the in-depth character of the interviews. Especially the interviews with formers and family combined, gave a remarkable insight in the family dynamics within the radicalization- and deradicalization process.

However, one of the pitfalls in this study is the scarce number of former violent jihadists that we have interviewed. Moreover, it would have been interesting to compare the radicalization- and deradicalization process of born Muslims with converted Muslims. Unfortunately, our study only contained one interview with a parents who is Muslim, so we were unable to obtain sufficient and admissible information about the parents' role within Muslim families.

5.2 Recommendations for further research

A challenging task for further research is to find more former Islamist extremists to engage in research, in order to obtain more information about the potential influence of family members on radicalization and deradicalization. It would be interesting to compare the radicalization- and deradicalization process of born Muslims with converted Muslims, and study whether the influence of the parents or other family members on this process differs. Parents with an Islamic background, for example, often have more knowledge of Islam than parents of converts. This might influence their ability to discuss and define their child's ideology.

5.3 Country Conclusions

From this explorative study it appears that most parents do not directly influence the radicalization- and deradicalization process. On the other hand an indirect influence was found: it seems that parents often do not recognize the radicalization (in time) or do not know how to handle this change in their children. Though future research should proof that a parental response can positively counter radicalization, we believe that the role of the parent is an important one. The ideology of young people is usually led by a search for purpose in life, a search for identity and for belonging,

and an urge to improve the world. These needs and moral questions are to be addressed and steered in the right direction in order to prevent adolescents and young adults from becoming extreme in their ideology. A lack of debate about and attention to these issues may have severe consequences for the influence that parents can have at a later stage (Van San, Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2013; Sieckelinck & De Ruyter, 2009). It is therefore alarming to see that most parents did not (know how to) react upon the radicalization of their children. As an alternative, parents and other educators should be genuinely interested in the adolescents' ideas but should also provide the necessary counterarguments to show alternative perspectives and preserve boundaries when needed (Van San, Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2013).

Furthermore, the respondents in this study claimed that parents had no direct influence on their deradicalization, though support by their parents and the memorization of their parents' counterarguments were seen as useful once they started to deradicalize. The factors that seem to have influenced the deradicalization are very similar to the reasons that offenders quit crime: police involvement or time in prison, influence by a peer or life partner, starting a family or education, maturation, and human agency were all factors that influenced the deradicalization of our formers. These insights might help to direct future practices to counter radicalization.

Another important finding is the lack of professional support. Our study showed that most parents did not know how to handle the radicalization process of their child, and the same seems to apply for professionals in the education and youth care field. Apparently no backup exists. It is therefore important to confront this lacuna and teach professionals how to support families that are confronted with radicalization. Parents have a need for knowledge about the different ideologies, and for tools how to respond to the radicalization in their children. The formers recall that they wanted to be heard and to be taken seriously. Furthermore, the families in this study indicate that there should be education in place in schools to inform teenagers about the dangers of extreme ideologies. Formers could perhaps help to shape these lessons.

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PART III: COUNTRY REPORT DENMARK

(Dr. Sita Kotnis)

1 Introduction

Until Valentine's Day February 14th 2015, there had never been any deadly extremist/terrorism attacks in Denmark. On this winter afternoon/evening, however, two men were killed at two different sites in Copenhagen.

The first killing took place at a public meeting in the community arts centre 'Krudttønden' themed 'Art, Blasphemy and Freedom of Speech', which was arranged by the Lars Vilks Committee (a committee devoted to foster debate and arrange meetings with Lars Vilks "The Swedish Muhammed-drawer", who has been under police protection since 2007 where he began to be threatened for drawing the prophet as a dog). Suddenly the meeting room was filled with shootings from a M95 automatic rifle. It is estimated that more than 40 shots were fired. A 55 years old film producer was killed when he tried to subdue the would-be assassin. Four policemen were injured (dr.dk 17. February 2015; politiken.dk 15. February 2015).

After the killing, the assassin hijacked a car and flew. Later, after having changed his clothes and thus camouflaged, he went to the Jewish synagogue, also in Copenhagen. In the synagogue a Bar Mitzva was being held, attended by 80 people. At 1 AM, the assassin shot a 37 years old man, who was standing guard at the door. He later died from his wounds. Later that night the assassin, the 22 years old Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, was recognized by police in a different part of the city. When they called out, he responded by firing shots at them. In the shooting that ensued, Omar was killed by the police special troops. The Danish Intelligence Service later identified him as an earlier offender, well versed at the gang scene and well known by the police for violence and arms possession. He had come out of imprisonment just a few weeks before the incidents. The police theorized from early on that the incidents were inspired by what had taken place at Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January (dr.dk 15. February 2015; dr.dk 17. February 2015; Politiken.dk 14. February 2015; Politiken.dk 14. February 2015).

Before the incidents, the closest Denmark had been to deadly terrorism was in December 2010, when the Danish police arrested five men on suspicion of planning a 'Mumbai-style' attack on the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, the paper that printed the so-called 'Muhammad cartoons' portraying the prophet Muhammad in a series of satirical and blasphemic situations in September 2005. Thereby they foiled what has afterwards been described as the most serious terror operation ever uncovered in Denmark so far. The men had planned to storm the Copenhagen

offices and "kill as many as possible of those around". The head of PET (the Danish police security and intelligence service) described some of the arrestees as 'militant Islamists', with links to international terrorist networks. He added that it was an imminent terror attack that had been avoided (Jyllands-Posten 29. December 2010; The Guardian 29. December 2010).

Unlike the majority of countries in Europe, deadly extremist/terrorism attacks or assassinations of politicians or other spokespersons in Denmark only just became reality this year. While this may be partly due to luck, partly due to thorough intelligence and police work, it also seems quite clear that Denmark does not experience/suffer extremism at the same level and gravity as elsewhere. Founded as a social-democratic welfare state of 'The Nordic Model' with an extensive public provision of welfare, comprehensive taxing and income redistribution, reduced concentration of top incomes and a an ensuing social mobility and comparatively very low levels of social and economic inequality, the socio-economic experience of the public of general fairness and egalitarian conditions of life may serve as a significant contributing factor (Andersen & Bjørklund 2000; Togeby 1998).

When it comes to violent demonstrations, street fights and destruction of public and private property as expressions of political discontent, however, Denmark has seen quite some action. Nørrebro, a central, multi-ethnic quarter of Copenhagen, is known as the site of many riots over the years. During the 1980s, it often provided the setting for clashes between the Danish police and militant squatters known as 'BZ'. The battles were often of a quite vicious nature, often involving Molotov-cocktails and pipe bombs being used by the squatters, as well as batons, tear gas and firearms used by the police. In 1993 Nørrebro was also an arena of street fights between young leftists and the police. The events took of as a reaction to the referendum for the Edinburgh ratification of the Maastrict Treaty, where the Danish exceptions to the Treaty were modified and many young people felt cheated as if their original vote had not been accepted (Denmark voted 'no' to membership of the EU in 1992). The international press spoke of 'a capital on fire'. In the spring of 2007, the biggest riots in recent Danish history broke out in this same neighborhood when the police moved in and evicted squatters in Ungdomshuset, which was followed by the demolition of the building. It is estimated that the eviction of the house and the material damage done during the following riots has cost the city and the state around 100 million Danish Crowns (around 13 million €) (Holmsted-Larsen 2012).

However, Sweden and Norway, countries of a very similar constitution, have both suffered more person-oriented violent and deadly events, with the assassination of prime minister Olof Palme (1986) and politician Anna Lindh (2003) in Sweden, and the killings/bombings by Anders Behring Breivik (2011) in Norway. Political extremist movements in Sweden are roughly the size of those found in Denmark when measured on a per capita basis, but left- and right-wing groups in Sweden are more prone to violence[6] (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and Swedish Security Service 2009). This puzzle of the apparently very different growth conditions for (violent) extremism in the Scandinavian countries has sparked a considerable comparative literature, aiming to use the deriving insights in preventive work (Rydgren 2010, Demker 2010, Bjørklund & Andersen 2002 and 2002, Karpantschof 2003).

All things considered, the apparent repose in Denmark may be about to change. As extremism researcher Holmsted-Larsen (2012) points out, extremism thrives in times of crisis. During the current financial recession, cutbacks and increased national youth unemployment serve as marginalizing factors, and some of these marginalized youngsters are drawn to extreme political organizations. Also, since 2013 Denmark is experiencing a growing number of youngsters travelling to Syria to support the fight or support the fighters, the consequences of which are still very unclear.

1.1 Historical and geographical context of societal conflicts

Concerning the geographical distribution of extremist political and religious conflicts in Denmark, quite an interesting division manifests itself. When it comes to political extremism, there is a clear center of gravity for right-wing activity in Jutland (the Eastern part of the country) and a clear center of gravity for left-wing activity in Copenhagen and the suburbs. This has mainly historical, but also infra-structural and social causes. In Copenhagen, the leftist milieu has had a strong foundation since app. the 1970, with 'Ungdomshuset' ('The Youngster House') as a physical framework for meeting activities and networking[7]. According to the left-wing, the right-wing activities in Jutland are a result of the leftist milieu having 'driven them out' of Zealand. According to the right-wing, the central figures of right-wing thinking just happen to live in Jutland. A contributing factor to this distribution could also be that Copenhagen is the only 'big' city in the country, whereas the majority of the population living in Jutland has a less cosmopolitan orientation and life-style.

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[6] Members of the Swedish white power movement, for example, have a greater tendency to arm themselves, while left-wing extremists in Sweden are more clearly focused on systematically attacking elected officials.

[7] The house was sold by the Copenhagen municipality and later demolished under dramatic and very destructive events. It is estimated that the eviction of Ungdomshuset and the damage done during the following riots has cost the city and the state around 100 million Danish Crowns (around 13 million €). The site where the house used to be was later named 'Ground 69' (with reference to Ground Zero) by its former users and devotees.

Even with this distribution of (radical) political arenas, clashes between the left and right are not uncommon. The groupings are completely fundamental in each other's enemy images. The right-wing groups fight for 'an ethnic Denmark freed of Islamic influences'. The left-wingers see this agenda as fascist and racist and fight to dictate anti-fascism, pro-immigration in addition to environmental issues, animal welfare etc.

When it comes to religious extremism, activities in Denmark are not so conspicuous as is the case with political activism. Activities mainly concern meetings and education, religious services and running of Koran school. Since 2001, however some groups have emerged that are explicitly against democracy and focus on changing Danish society. The group 'Kaldet til Islam' (Called to Islam) were in the autumn of 2011 very active in making propaganda against the Danish national elections, and claimed to have established special 'sharia-zones' in a particular neighborhood of Copenhagen. Hizb ut-Tahrir is also active in Denmark, some experts indicate that there might be something like 100-200 active members and around 1000 sympathizers, but these numbers are highly dubious and hard to confirm.

Also, Denmark has committed troops to the war in Afghanistan since 2002, and Danish soldiers were also stationed in Iraq after the US invasion. For some of the interviewees for this study, Denmark's involvement in the Middle-East is regarded as treason and has been a direct factor for their decision to go to Syria and support the fight.

1.2 Anti-extremism policies / provisions / facilities

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a detailed assessment was conducted of whether Danish legislation ensured adequate and effective action against terrorism. Based on the conclusions, a number of amendments were made to the Danish Criminal Code and the Administration of Justice Act, etc. in 2002 where the *Anti-Terrorism Package I* was adopted.

After the terrorist attacks in London in 2005, the Danish government set up a cross-ministerial working group commissioned to undertake a general review and assessment of the Danish society's efforts and preparedness with regard to acts of terrorism. The working group published its report on in November 2005. On the basis of the working group's recommendations, the government drew up the *Action Plan for the Fight against Terrorism*, which contained a number of initiatives in relation to organization, cooperation and resources, investigation of terrorism, foreign nationals residing in Denmark, civic preparedness, dialogue with the Muslim communities as well as further research.

Subsequently in 2006, a number of amendments were made to the Criminal Code, the Administration of Justice Act and various other pieces of legislation (the *Anti-Terrorism Package II*). The legislative amendments resulting from Anti-Terrorism Package I and II encompass a number of measures that enhance PET's opportunities

to prevent, investigate and fight acts of terrorism (Danish Security and Intelligence Service http).

Recently, Denmark has become known internationally for taking a very different and 'integrative' approach to returning Jihadis. The exit program is based on the principle of inclusion. The aim, rather than to pass stricter laws, punish and incarcerate the youngsters is to "go through a real process with the individuals: a panel of experts, counseling, healthcare, assistance getting back into education, help with employment, maybe accommodation – and finally returning to everyday life and society" (Berlingske 16. September 2014; The Guardian 2014). The police officers in charge of the program states that: "We don't do this out of political conviction; we do it because we think it works." (*ibid*). Combined with a newly opened, intensive and sometimes difficult dialogue between city officials and leaders at the Grimhojvej mosque, traditionally a 'hatching nest for extremism', the program indeed does seem to work. Official numbers indicate that from late 2012 until the end of 2013, 31 men aged between 18 and 25 left Aarhus, with 325,000 people the second largest city of Denmark, bound for Syria. Last year, to the best of anyone's knowledge, this was down to just one (*ibid*).

In 2012, the Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs launched a comprehensive mapping of anti-democratic and extremist groups and milieus in Denmark. The mapping was organized according to police municipalities and resulted in 12 area studies and a national report. The highly controversial study has been heavily criticized, especially by the groups and organizations described in the report, and has thoroughly influenced people's inclination to talk with researchers about their political views.

1.3 Research available with focus on country

In Denmark, the last decade has seen a number of significant, academic and practitioner-oriented in-depth studies of national radicalization, political extremism, Islamism, Jihadism and counter-terrorism specifically exploring Danish affairs and local configurations in Denmark. However, the specific role of parents and the family as such is not very outspoken in the Danish de-radicalization literature. This is remarkable, not least, as it seems to be silently implied that more often than not there is a family implied, actively or passively, who usually does not support and approve of the youngster's dispositions. This background assumption does and does not fit with the empirical findings of this study in the Danish context. In some cases, the parents/family was not even aware what the youngster was doing and involved in. In others, the radicalization process of the youngster influenced the family in such a way that they became radicalized themselves rather than helping the youngster deradicalize. Most conspicuous, however, is the fact that in none of the Danish cases the former mentions the role of the family as an important factor in their de-radicalization process.

Other recent studies that, although not paying particular attention

to the role of families, but traversing related topics and therefore should be mentioned in this context include:

The Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs' 2012-2014 mapping of anti-democratic and extremist groups and milieus in Denmark (Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs 2014) was among the largest and most coordinated recent attempts to map current tendencies for preventive national action. The aim was to gain a comprehensive overview of the scope, tendencies and 'life cycles' of radical groups in Denmark and how they were distributed throughout the country. Among earlier national attempts to provide a deeper understanding of the history, developments and internal dynamics of radicalized groups should be mentioned Holmsted-Larsen's study of political extremism in Denmark (2012) contracted by the then Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration (Social- og integrationsministeriet). This report was less focused on mapping and numbers, and did more in the way of providing a historical and ideological background to contextualize the developments of Right and Leftwing radicalized groups in Denmark.

Also, the PhD dissertation of Hemmingsen from the University of Copenhagen: "The Attractions of Jihadism: An Identity Approach to Three Danish Terrorism Cases and the Gallery of Characters around Them" (2010) is an interesting contribution to this debate. Hemmingsens approach is not unrelated to the approach of the Formers & Family study.

From the University of Aarhus, Kühle and Lindekilde's 2010 study: "Radicalization Among Young Muslims in Aarhus" carried out at the Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalization (CIR), Aarhus University is also of obvious and immediate interest, as is Lindekilde and Sedgwick's study of the: "Impact of Counter-Terrorism on Communities" This report is a background report on Denmark carried out for the Institute for Strategic Dialogue in London.

Of more historically focused sources should be mentioned M. Hussain's article "Islam, Media and Minorities in Denmark" (2000) as well as McCauley and Moskalenko's (2008): "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism.

1.4 Specific angle of the research group (theoretical perspective)

The Danish researcher has chosen a meso-theoretical perspective for contextualizing the empirical case material, with particular focus on the interconnections between the social, the individual, identity matters and ideology. To these ends, two theoretical perspectives are brought into play:

1) 'Uncertainty-identity theory as described by Hogg (2014);
2) NRM (New Religious Movements) theory, where 'milieus' and in particular 'the cultic milieu' is considered as a central unit of analysis. (Campbell 1972, 1978)

2 Methods

Overall, the Danish study has been approached in ethnographic terms. This has been due to the format of the overall 'Formers and Family' research design as well as the Danish researcher's disciplinary expertise.

2.1 Sampling and recruitment

Due to the nature of the wanted data material for the study, an application of statistically representative sampling methods was not possible. Denmark is a small country and does not have unlimited numbers of potential interviewees with 'extremist' backgrounds and experiences, and informants who fit the profile for interviewees and were willing to participate in the study, ideally with some of their family members, turned out to be quite a scarce crowd. Contact to the interviewees were largely obtained through snowball sampling, starting with contacts mediated through former research acquaintances of the Danish researcher at universities, the Danish Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs and various exit programs and think tanks. The gross amount of identified potential interviewees, who indicated an initial interest, was contacted. Of these, only a fraction eventually responded, and the number of people willing to involve their family was even smaller. In the end about 15 cases remained as possible examples for the study. These were distributed between former Islamists, former right-wingers, former left-wingers and a former animal activist.

2.2 Interview specifics

As mentioned in the introduction section, the Danish study was characterized by quite a few cases where the interviewee set as a condition for participating that the interview could not be audio recorded. Denmark is probably neither unique nor special when it comes to extreme suspiciousness or paranoia in relation to documentation of activism-related behavior as such, but I do think the Danish national mapping project (2012-14) has severely influenced Danish political radicals' and, apparently, thus also formers' willingness to participate in research, at least for the time being. For those who do choose to talk about their personal views and experiences, almost extreme measures of caution seem to have become a common occurrence at this point in time. This has of course conditioned how the interviewing has taken place in the Danish leg of the Formers & Family project.

The Danish study consists of 17 interviews in total. All of these have been conducted in a face-to-face setting with the Danish researcher at various localities; some at her office (at her university) or in her home, some in interviewees' homes, some in neutral places like cafés or parks.

2.3 Numbers of respondents, ideas, age in and out

The Danish study consists of a total of 10 case studies; each conducted with a former and in most cases one or more family members. In one case, a former high-school teacher, who played a significant role in relation to the de-radicalization process and thus (at least from this study's perspective) performs the role as a significant other, was also interviewed. Of these 10 cases, four are conducted with persons, who used to adhere to Islamist ideals, three with persons, who used to adhere to Right-wing ideals, two with persons, who used to adhere to Left-wing ideals and one with a person, who used to adhere to Animal-rights ideals. All of these persons have since disengaged from their 'extreme' ideals and/or behavior[8] and most have, arguably, been de-radicalized completely (see the Analysis section for a more elaborated discussion of this).

The age of the interviewed range from 21 to 42 and the estimated time passed since de-radicalization (estimated by the interviewee) from 1 to 9 years. The age, which the interviewed formers state as having had when entering the extreme ideologies, which they have been adhering to, ranges from 14 to 18, with a single interviewee entering at age 23, with a mean of 16,5 (15,8). The age, which the interviewed formers state as having had when exiting the extreme ideologies, which they have been adhering to, ranges from 19 to 33, with a mean of 25,5. (Obviously, these low-key statistics are in no way representative in a general sense, due to the snowballed sampling nature of the data material, but it does give a picture of the nature of the study in its own right.)

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[8] In one (former Islamist) case, however, it remains unclear whether the former has actually, permanently disengaged. In another case, the interviewee's 'extremist' engagement has historically been deeply intertwined with mental and social problems. Her disengagement from 'extreme' behavior and sympathies may thus be an indicator for the present being a fairly stable period in other areas of her life.

Box 1: Benjamin

"The first thing I remember is my Dad beating me with clenched fists. Over and over and over again…" Among Benjamin's earliest experiences is the conviction that all problems one may face in the world can be solved with violence. This conviction has been a defining trait of his whole life; childhood, teenage-years and adulthood.

He was an only child and, with his parents moving around quite a bit in his childhood, experienced a hard time 'settling in' in the various schools, he was put in. At age 7, he was generally considered 'one of the tough guys', at 10-11 he started to smoke hash on a daily basis with his friends [from other schools, he points out] and after yet another change of school at age 12, after experiencing yet again how the class he was put in was (felt) socially quite close-knit and difficult to be accepted in as a new-comer, he became a victim of bullying. At 13, he begins to experiment with hard drugs (amphetamine, pills). Criminal activities soon fill out much of his daily life. Together with a friend, who had also been a victim of bullying, he now begins to seek out their childhood tormentors – and beat them up. This further confirmed Benjamin in his basic assumption that 'violence pays'. And his general hatred to the world – which he explains as installed by his Dad and the lack of parental love and closeness he suffered – just keeps growing: "My Dad has never said to me that he loved me. And I have a mother that literally just stood and watched when he beat me up. Today I have no contact to either of them. And I don't want it either."
Later, when school ended, he got a job as an apprentice, but rather than go to work spent his time drinking beer and taking drugs. This was also when he formed a criminal gang with some other local boys – and first heard about the Danish branches of Blood & Honour and Combat 18. He then discovered heroin, was sent to a rehab, and here met a person, who later introduced him to a right-wing radical and nationalistic network: "It was just the place for me. It was full of hatred and full of violence, so I felt right at home."

"I have always been a complete front runner – I always needed to be in the foreground and show off, be the leader, the centre of attention. I think it stems from my childhood and the lack of attention from my Dad. I have never gotten the love and attention from my parents that I so needed, I never felt the community of 'family' that a child needs and I had never felt a sense of belonging before - but I found that here, with my new buddies, in the gang-milieu. I very soon realized that I was willing to do *anything* for my buddies, willing to take on remands and imprisonments anytime, because they gave back so much to me – and so I felt that I owed them." "In the organization I really found a way to channel my hatred. It was so much easier to just direct it at somebody foreign-looking and – bam! – get it over with. It was a good thing I could do for myself, I felt, to just act out instead of looking inward and feel responsible for all the shit that had happened in my life. I lived like that for many years."

Benjamin's account of how his de-radicalization came across goes like this: "I can't really remember what happened, but one day I just woke up thinking 'This is just fucking enough. I can't do it anymore. I cannot anymore just run around spending my life, and my kid's time, on hating and fighting.' And so I called an old childhood friend, who was not part of all this, and told him to come and help me. It was Sunday and there was a meeting in Blood & Honour that evening. We armed ourselves, and then we went up there and I opted out."

3   Results

The data material collected is very heterogeneous. In many ways, the real value of the case studies lies in reading them as unique narratives contextualized on their own terms. Also, it is important to stress that since the material is not generalizable and thus not statistically representative, it is at best very difficult to hypothesize which courses of development are prevalent and which are especially unusual in relation to the majority of youngsters 'out there'. However, when going systematically through the material, some patterns and apparent connections certainly do appear.

3.1 Family climate prior to the radicalization

Regarding the family climate prior to and during the radicalization, the data material demonstrates a bias towards broken or dysfunctional family structures, a lack or shortage of physical or emotional presence on the part of the parents (or closest significant others) and a prevalence of psychological problems and mental disorder. In five out of the ten cases, the former actually grew up in a family with both parents (physically) present and under fairly stable economic conditions. However, this did not necessarily mean that the emotional climate was especially accommodating for the child.

In only one case does the former describe her relations with her parents as genuinely warm and loving, as "a safe haven" all the way through childhood and youth. In another, the former do describe a very affectionate relation to his mother, but rather of a protective nature in that he tries to spare her from painful knowledge and emotions. Also, he states that the character of the relation today is very much influenced by the death of his Dad six years ago, which left his mother quite lonely. In the remaining eight cases, the informants all grew up with an overriding feeling that, at the end of the day, they had to take care of themselves (for some: downright protect themselves), even from a very young age. They did not fundamentally linger in a consciousness of somebody taking care of them. Most of them explicitly reflect on their feelings and experience of an absence of genuine intimacy with their parents – that they grew up with a sense of something lacking. That they could never fully let down their guard, but had to keep the most private, inner part of themselves to themselves, lest they'd be exposed. This most basic feeling of lacking trust and emotional security seems to be the perhaps most striking common feature across the cases. Even in the case where the interviewee speak of genuinely warm and loving relations with her

parents, there is a modifying condition at work: Melody's parents did everything they could to make their children feel loved and appreciated, help them with their problems and support them in developing into 'whole' people, aware of their own opinions and meanings. But especially the Dad sometimes made perhaps too much of a point out of this. The children were often told to elaborate and explain quite detailed why they meant something, concluded something or stated something:

> "He liked to really make us defend our opinions, e.g. over dinner, and did what he could to shoot them down. It wasn't mean or threatening – just annoying. And now, in retrospect, I actually think that this way of what he clearly felt as some kind of educational 'teaching us to hold on to our opinions' also had unintentional effects... I started doubting what I felt/meant/said more than I became surer of it, even if that had been my Dad's goal. It unsettled something."

For Melody, her Dad's constant attempts at challenging her opinions – no matter how innocent and benign they were – at some level worked against her (ontological) feeling of trust and safety. And even though she kept feeling that she "could tell everything and share everything within the bosom of the family", she nevertheless experienced a completely new sense of meaning, urgency and empowerment, when she became part of the in-crowd at the now demolished 'Ungdomshuset' (litt. "The Youth House"):

> "It was such a rush! Here I had been living all my life in [a suburb in the vicinity of Copenhagen], minding my own business, while the center of the universe had been there, waiting for me to discover it, all along. It all made so much sense! Everything that took place there felt so important, so grown-up – way more grown-up than common, boring grown-up stuff, you know... there was this enormous, massive sense of common ground, common purpose, importance, urgency, togetherness. I felt so elevated, so confirmed."

For the remaining interviewees, being close to or even able to rely on their parents was not at all such a matter of course. For Terry, being able to take care of himself and his sister was simply a necessary dimension of life – this was just the way it was:

Terry's family had a little grocery store and the parents worked hard 24/7 to make ends meet. The family's life was very much characterized by the needs of the store. Dinner was usually something that each person made for him or herself, even when the children were very young food was often something they had to grab from the

fridge themselves and warm in a casserole or eat cold. The parents had their own problems. The mother suffered from various forms of psychiatric illness and depression; the Dad had some undiagnosed physical issues, some of which later turned into a form of sclerosis. The children felt – and still feel – that their Mom always talked way too much and their Dad way too little. They didn't feel like they knew the man he was. Their mother, on the other hand, showed them all her weaknesses, right in their faces. It was very often very embarrassing and very annoying, they felt: "She just has absolutely no limits!" Terry says.

For yet another interviewee, Benjamin, the parental relationship was not just troubled, distant or less than ideal – it was negligent and downright violent:

> "The first thing I remember is my Dad beating me with clenched fists. Over and over and over again…" […] "My Dad has never said to me that he loved me. And I have a mother that literally just stood and watched when he beat me up. Today I have no contact to either of them. And I don't want it either."

However, not all families in the study were from the outset characterized by malevolence or disadvantageous internal dynamics. For some, an unfortunate chain of events was rather set in motion by contacts or exposure to influences from the surrounding environment; formative milieus, school or after-school networks.

3.2 Influence of the upbringing on the radicalization

The theme of fundamental insecurity and absence of ontological safety continues as a connecting thread if we shift our perspective to the theme of the influence of the upbringing on the radicalization.

The data material reveals at least three different profiles, where the lack of a grounded identity based on parental solicitude and existential safety seems to have played an important part. For some interviewees, like the before-mentioned Benjamin and also for Leslie, who grew up as an only child with her mother, the absence of love and attention most certainly seems to have directly affected their drive towards radicalized worldviews and lifestyles:

> "With Jeff, I discovered piercing and then it was that for a while. Through Mike I got involved with the really angry Nazis, the ones that beat up drug addicts and immigrants. In between Tony and Bob I discovered S/M and started to frequent swinger clubs. Here I met Leeland, and we'd actually dated for a while before I realized that he was Left-wing. But – he was so different from the others! And then I realized that hey! maybe Left-wing is all-right!"

Leslie's mother, according to Leslie, had 'always' been on psycho-pharmaceuticals and was treated for 'all kinds of stuff' (anxiety, depression, bipolarity), worked odd jobs, had long hours and went out a lot to party and meet men – and besides was herself barely more than a teenager when she had Leslie. It was, in any way, too much of a handful for her to take care of her child, and more than a few foster families were, over the years, involved in easing the responsibility, housing and taking care of Leslie during weekends and

school holidays. Leslie never felt that she could rely on anybody and trusted her own experiences of individual power and agency as key to surviving. This often involved seeking out 'the extreme' in order to impress and scare others – and to obtain maximum attention.

For Benjamin, a deep feeling of spite and discontent that had followed him like a shadow all his life found a vent through his extremist behavior:

> "In the organization I really found a way to channel my hatred. It was so much easier to just direct it at somebody foreign-looking and – bam! – get it over with. It was a good thing I could do for myself, I felt, to just act out instead of looking inward and feel responsible for all the shit that had happened in my life."

For Leslie as well as for Benjamin, the feeling of community was decisive, it seems – much more than the specific ideology of the group/organization they had joined:

> "I have always been a complete front runner – I always needed to be in the foreground and show off, be the leader, the centre of attention. I think it stems from my childhood and the lack of attention from my Dad… I was willing to do anything for my buddies, willing to take on remands and imprisonments anytime, because they gave back so much to me – and so I felt that I owed them." (Benjamin)

Another profile, which is also easily recognizable in the data material, may be outlined through Malcolm and Andrew. Both come from fairly well off, middle-class nuclear families with resources and a situated place in their respective local communities, although the parent-child relations may not be unproblematic. And both have, since they were kids, had an enormous need for 'capturing floor space', getting attention, dominating and showing off, intellectually as well as personally.

Andrew, for example, had always been aware of his eloquence and the ease with which he would usually 'win' a discussion – even when discussing grown-up topics with people much older than himself. He was generally interested in politics, religion and philosophy and these were also among his favorite discussion topics. In school this was both good and bad – good because it gave him respect and credit such as being nicknamed 'the professor' and a reputation of being 'super-clever' – and bad because he sometimes went to far, crossed the line and wouldn't stop arguing, not even when the context was completely inappropriate and the topic unrelated to whatever else was on the agenda in class, which annoyed both his teachers and class mates. With time, this intellectual drive became an ingrained part of his identity, as a tool to search for meaning and also a way of showing off. He was becoming a 'real' teenager. It was at this time, at age 14, that he was first acquainted with Hizb ut-Tahrir. Andrew was very persuasive. Rather than talking him out of joining HT, his mother and sister later joined the organization themselves.

For Malcolm, the somewhat inflated sense of self seems quite reminiscent of Andrew's, but where Andrew was attracted to the

intellectual system and challenges of HT, Malcolm was attracted to extreme Left-wing ideology and contexts. For both, their upbringing most probably did influence their need for an arena to excel, express their views and play with developing their identity, but rather as a background where their sense of self had begin to form than a direct cause for their choices and actions.

Finally, a third profile may be represented by e.g. Julia, who simply more or less inadvertently happened to be in the wake of things, as they happened, and in a process that she herself refers to a 'a kind of brainwash' suddenly found herself deeply involved in an extremist organization. Julia had fairly close relations with her parents while growing up, but as her mother did not like her choice of husband and the fact that she converted to marry him, she was in a situation where she felt quite lonely and decoupled from her family when she met the recruiters from HT. Julia refers to the letdown and disappointment that she felt when her mother disapproved of her husband as highly traumatizing and a direct cause for her (and her husband's) vulnerability and comparative ease in being lured into the organization.

3.3 Influence of parents/family/very important persons on the de-radicalization

Almost all informants describe their parents' role in the de-radicalization process as non-existent. This could of course be due to a certain impression they want one to get (of them as persons), but nonetheless it seems quite striking. Some mention siblings as having had some impact, but nobody really sees their siblings as primus motor in the de-radicalization process. My Islamist interviewees tend to mention their own intellectual reasoning as the primus motor, one Leftist and one animal-activist informant mention solitary confinement (in prison) as the trigger, and for the rest the onset had mixed origins, but none really mentions a single (formative) person. In most of the here recorded cases, the parents literally had no or very little idea what their kids were doing before their radicalization was full-blown.

3.4 Other factors that may have impacted the de-radicalization.

When one compares the ages of entry into and exit from an extreme organization and/or way of life, it is quite obvious that growing up in itself represents a weighty factor. Also, changing one's social and/or intellectual environment may be crucial; for example does the material represent at least three cases (Andrew, Terry and Julia's husband) where starting an (university) education make it increasingly more difficult to maintain a black/white template of how the world operates. For the Left-wingers, aggression tends to cease when the primary political group structure/grass root dissolve.

Box 2: Salvador

Growing up in the ghetto, Salvador tells me, meant that "everybody is criminal! Not, you know, necessarily big business, but you had to make money somehow". For Salvador, though, it soon became kind of big business. He started dealing drugs when he was 14, and as a 17-year old, he made around 5000 € a month. "It was a huge amount of money for a snot-nosed brat like me" he laughs.

When entering the topic of his radicalization, Salvador explains his journey like this: For fun (? – the exact reason for joining remains a little unclear in his account – it for sure wasn't for the money!) he joined a local branch of Amnesty International as a 'facer' at 17. Here he was confronted with people's indifference to injustice and suffering in the world: "I asked them: Do you have two minutes to talk with me? and held up some of these terrible, terrible pictures of innocent people who's been tortured, murdered and I don't know what – but they (people in the street) just rushed through and said they don't have time. Don't have time??? That really pissed me off! And then it started growing". The feeling of a need to fight injustice in the world kept growing and when the fighting started in Syria, Salvador was among the first Danes to go.

From the listener's perspective, many things do not really seem consistent throughout Salvador's account. But then – this may actually be a characteristic of radicalized/de-radicalized youngsters' attempts to frame their fragmented feelings and experiences into a narrative? For Salvador, a coincidental interest in a human rights' local activist group made him give up everything he used to be and have in a few months. He started to care passionately about 'injustice in the world' as a very, very abstract category, defined by very idiosyncratic values and truisms, but targeted towards high political persons and cases: "I just hated them so so much! I thought they deserved to die! They are criminals and traitors! They killed so many people…" [speaking about the Danish Prime Minister and the American President]. Salvador 'just decided to go' to Syria, when the fighting started. He and a friend flew to Turkey without telling anybody, but before they crossed the border to Syria, he called his parents. When I ask him why, he just shrugs: "I didn't mean to keep it hidden from them", he says. When I ask him about their reaction, he says that they just told him to look after himself. He seems quite emotionally unaffected by the topic – "It was just something I needed to do, and they respected that", he says. After coming back, according to Salvador, the child-parent relationship was not affected at all by the onset of radicalization. They did talk about what he had done and experienced, but his parents did not try to change his views or opinions at all. "They just treat me as an adult", he tells me.

Salvador is/was not really a member of an extreme organization as such, except from being member of the most (by the Intelligence Service) surveilled and monitored group of youngsters in present day. Salvador clearly developed his views and went to Syria out of his own interest and wishes rather than because of some generic type of 'brainwashing' or 'recruitment', but it is very obscure what he really did or experienced while away. He tells me that he was well respected by 'the leading group' among the fighters and spent much time discussing strategy and politics with them, and that this was very flattering and exiting for him. He wasn't 'just a fighter, more of a leader' and experienced this as very fulfilling, personally and ideologically.

Salvador has been to Syria 'a couple of times' and is now 'done with that'. No further explanations are given. He hasn't distanced himself from whatever he found so intriguing in the camps – he just doesn't need to proactively contact 'it' anymore. According to his brother, nobody who knows him are really surprised, "we've always known that he takes his own road, and that he's going to make it, no matter what". They are relieved that he's not in Syria anymore, but nobody in his family or network has really tried to after-rationalize with him (except from the Intelligence Service, as he tells me, smiling, "but they don't raise their voices or anything – just asks me how I'm doing").

4 Analysis

For most interviewees in the study, the journey from childhood to adulthood has not been an easy road to travel. Though their personal stories as well as their more objective individual circumstances in the years before and during their radicalization have been very different, a recurrent characteristic in most of the accounts is the importance attributed the theme of *uncertainty* – uncertainty about who one is, how one should think and behave, and who one's peers are. These themes are indeed an ingrained and common part of growing up altogether, but for the interviewees, apparently, they seem to have taken on a bigger, more urgent and more troublesome format than for most other youngsters.

Hogg (2014) describes how, in recent years, social psychologists have "explored the relationship between people's feelings of uncertainty about themselves and the world they live in and extremist belief systems and behaviors" (*ibid*: 338). Zooming in on this particular coupling between self and world allows for very particular inquiries into the dynamics of growing up and the vulnerabilities connected. That uncertainty motivates behavior is not a new insight. Neither is it particularly new or surprising that problems relating to identity may be sought answered qua group affiliation and that seeking out extremist groups with distinctive, deviant and/or conspicuous conducts may be regarded as a highly meaningful strategy for conflicted youngsters. What is new in Hogg's framework, which he calls 'Uncertainty-Identity Theory', however, is the systematic and elaborate exploration of just *how* social and/or existential serenity is experienced through identifying with a given group. Hogg's analytical perspective highlights relations between 'the social', 'the ideological' and 'uncertainty' and in particular lends credence to the social component, which makes his approach particularly suitable to contemplate the particular aspects of the case studies that the Formers & Family project originally set out to explore. Foregrounding how in many cases 'the social' and 'the ideological' are mutually constitutive, that is, how an ideological conviction may grow out of social affiliations (e.g. Julia and Benjamin) as well as how ideology may serve as a conscious strategy to seek out particular social groups and settings (Malcolm) provides a fruitful framework for grounded theory. By employing key analytical concepts from Hogg's approach and exploring the implications of 'uncertainty' more broadly, tendencies in the empirical material begin to emerge.
Another useful angle is the literature concerning *New Religious Movements* theory (NRMs) has proved to be a very useful source of inspiration for dealing with the relation between youngsters and extremist groups. Not least Colin Campbell's (1972, 1978) reflections

on cults and 'the cultic milieu' may serve as a helpful analytical 'one-level-up' perspective to elucidate the interviewed youngsters' strategies for opting in and opting out of ideological communities.

4.1 What do the findings tell?

All in all, the interviews uncover stories about and a number of strategies for dealing with troublesome transitions from childhood to adulthood. Although the stories are very different they nevertheless have common traits in that most of them revolve around common themes like 'identity/being somebody', 'loneliness/emptiness', 'the individual vs. the group', 'a sense of belonging', 'recognition and understanding', 'meaning', 'alienation' and the like. In each their way, the interviewees' drift towards (in one way or the other) extreme ideologies, groups, communities and/or behaviors is, in all or almost all cases, somewhat socially mediated. And what is particularly striking, when taking a broad view over the 10 case studies, is that no major differences related to background, socio-economical conditions or early socialization seem to have been particularly determinate in relation to the which strategy was chosen by which interviewee. Local conditions, friendships and coincidences seem to have played a much bigger role in relation to which kind of outlet or group/ideological affiliation the interviewee identified with. In other words – the similarities between choosing/identifying with a given group or ideology seem much bigger than the differences between 'who choses which group'. In other words, seemingly very heterogeneous groups may in fact be characterized by particular generic properties in certain contexts. This is interesting in that it opposes common, stereotypical assumptions that certain profiles are inevitably drawn towards certain ideologies (such as low social class presumably generating a preference for right wing ideology etc.). The empirical material simply does not confirm this pattern. However, this does not mean that no inner coherence between the choices can be deduced. Hogg's Uncertainty-Identity Theory may be just one way to do so. According to Hogg, the main drivers in choosing/identifying with a particular group should be sought elsewhere than in ideological convictions. A bulk of studies confirm that very different vectors may be in play; namely that the more uncertain people are, the more likely they will be to identify with a so-called *entitative* group, that is, a well-structured group with clear boundaries. A highly entitative group is very effective in reducing self-categorization-induced uncertainty – the more entitative, the more effective. And the

more entitative, the more interaction between members and the more sharing of group attributes and goals, which serves to integrate the group even further (and distance it from the surrounding world) (Hogg 2014: 339). This mechanism is quite recognizable in the accounts from e.g. Benjamin and Melody, who both went 'all the way' in their social milieus. For Benjamin, the meaningful role and situatedness he found in the Right-wing extremist network *Dansk Front* clearly and quickly became a substitute for the family identity, belonging and safety he had lacked in his childhood. Melody, who was in fact quite close with her parents as well as her brother also found 'the missing link' in a milieu, where more or less extreme ideals prevailed.What seems to also be characteristic for highly entitative groups is that they often generate a modus where their members literally cultivate this entitativity as a value in itself and strive very hard to accentuate it, to themselves and to the outside world (*ibid*: 339). We see this tendency in Terry and especially Malcolm, who both felt so at home in the parallel universes they lived in (they both use this expression) that they held on to it even long after they had started to dismantle the prevailing ideals and grow tired of the expected behavior. For many, maybe most, of the interviewees in fact it seems like the particular group they chose to join could have actually been 'just about anything', and what they ended up in to a large extent was somewhat coincidental and chosen because it happened to be there and because it to fulfilled the needs the youngster had at the moment. Once there, however, as Benjamin, Melody, Malcolm and Terry's accounts clearly reveal – together with most other interviewees' – involved in a community, one's ideals as well as actions take on a whole new level of importance, partly because of their now also social dimension. This integration of ideals/ideology, sociality and identity weaves the net of meaning progressively tighter and with time makes it less and less thinkable for the members to opt out. From this follows, according to Hogg, that highly entitative groups – by way of their rigid structure, strong directive leadership, all-encompassing exclusionary and ethnocentric ideologies and intolerance of dissent – actually lays the groundwork for extremism.

That group identification can indeed serve as a very effective tool for ideological self-development and relief from self-uncertainty, but may in fact not be limited to a particular group to serve these ends – and that 'the group' may in fact not be the most central level of analysis – is a key point in *New Religious Movements* theory. Campbell's notion about 'the cultic milieu' (1972) is a classic, but analytically still very strong framework for integrating the individual level of analysis with social dynamics. At the same time 'the cult', despite its literal meaning in a religion-sociological universe, also serves as an apt concept to describe some of the mechanisms and undercurrents of extremist political and religious groups – and the relations between and above them, 'the milieu'. Campbell maintains that the cultic milieu, despite its diversity, may usefully be described as a single entity, and that this in fact accounts for the steadiness in its members' allegiance, despite the instability of the actual groups, in which they organize:

> Given that cultic groups have a tendency to be ephemeral and highly unstable, it is a fact that new ones are being born just as fast as the old ones die. There is a continual process of cult formation and collapse, which parallels the high turnover of membership at the individual level. Clearly, therefore, cults must exist within a milieu, which, if not conducive to the maintenance of individual cults, is clearly highly conducive to the spawning of cults in general. Such a generally supportive cultic milieu is continually giving birth to new cults, absorbing the debris of the dead ones and creating new generations of cult-prone individuals to maintain the high levels of membership turnover. Thus, whereas cults are by definition a largely transitory phenomenon, the cultic milieu is, by contrast, a constant feature of society. It could therefore prove more viable and illuminating to take the cultic milieu and not the individual cults as the focus of sociological concern. (Campbell 1972: 121-122)

This kind of 'milieu' seems to be a very operational way of understanding the mechanisms of involvement for several of the interviewees. In each their way, e.g. Salvador, Malcolm and Nicko moved around and shopped around in the larger milieu – of which the particular groups they joined were part – and this ability to explore further, research further and experience further across and around their ideals led Salvador on to Syria, Malcolm to the Basque country and Nicko around the Internet. Again, no major differences between the strategies deployed to navigate the different (Islamist, Left-wing, Right-wing) milieus seem prevalent, the similarities far surpasses the disparities. For all three, the milieu's ability to fulfill deeper questions about meaning, world and identity ('who am I and who are my peers') seemed key.

When it comes to the (narration and making sense of) de-radicalization processes, it is quite striking that close to no interviewees mention external sources as significant in their decoupling from a former ideology/former ideals. Almost everybody describes their own exit as a personal decision, an act of strong decision-making and a demonstration of individual will-power. Benjamin and Andrew are perhaps the most conspicuous examples, but even for interviewees where the insight (to exit the extremist group/ideals) followed an imprisonment or some other sanction, like for Malcolm, Melody and Terry, it is maintained that 'I figured this out myself – the decision was mine alone'. Of the 10 interviewees, Nicko and Salvador are the only two to have been actively enrolled in formal de-radicalization programs, and of the two only Nicko admits this external 'de-programming' to actually have played a role in changing his mind and his ways. Salvador, as mentioned in the previous, has probably rather disengaged than de-radicalized.

All in all, when going through the case material and the interviewees' accounts it is hard to find much argumentation for parents and families in general playing a central role in either radicalization or de-radicalization processes of Danish youngsters. In about half the cases, and especially those where direct neglect was not part of the familiar scene at home, the parents did have some sort of insight in what was going on, but did not do much to avert their children's thinking. In some cases, like Malcolm's and to a certain degree Melody's, the parents did discuss (political) matters with their

children, but did not try to intervene directly – and in Andrew's case, his radicalization enrolled both his sister and mother too. What is quite significant, though, is the level of emotional neglect on various levels that is repeated in all interviewees' accounts. This factor is clearly the most striking single factor standing out across the material.

4.2 Relevant insights that have come up during the research

It is a general pattern that the passion with which the radical ideals of the interviewed youngsters were enforced in practice in all cases began to cease with time. A certain fatigue seems inevitable as time goes by. Being politically active with the intensity that most interviewees describe from the beginning of their period of radicalization demands a lot of physical and mental energy. For some, like Salvador and perhaps Malcolm, however, the de-radicalization seem to rather take the form of disengagement than genuine de-radicalization, in that their fundamental ideals may not be changed much – they just cease to act on them.

It is also evident that while about half of the interviewees feel somewhat annoyed with themselves when the topic of the time they spent on radicalization-related activities are brought up, the other half reason about and make sense of the experience in relation to their life and narrative as a whole. This last half consider radical experimentation a meaningful experience in its own right, they do not regret what they have done and think that what they have learnt is not all that bad and contributes to making them the kind of person they are today.

In addition to the prevalence of emotional neglect as a general sentiment among the interviewees, it is conspicuous how criminal activities, from petty crime to organized crime and e.g. large-scale drug dealing, are clearly overrepresented in the population. In connection with this, it is also conspicuous how a number of formers seem to (still) demonstrate a pronounced silo mentality when talking about, contextualizing and not least rationalizing their done deeds. Benjamin is probably the most severe example – he seemingly is not able to objectively consider his own actions, even six years after his exit from the extreme Right, as the least illegal, unethical, violent or just 'wrong' in a general sense:

> "I have calculated that I have spent 19 million Crowns [2.5 million €] on drugs. Instead I could have had a huge mansion and the worlds biggest Harley and a huge Mercedes AWD! But fuck it! I like the person I am today and my little Hyundai 1.6. And my hi-fi. It's perfect! It's just me! I don't want to sit there and be sorry about what I don't have. And I don't want to wake up every morning and regret all the things I have done."

Benjamin seems to understand his radicalization/de-radicalization process as something that just happened; that he is not to be blamed for anything at all and that he, if anything, is the victim himself. His self-understanding seems to start out from this as the basic criteria, and thus he finds that everything can be explained and makes good sense. In the empirical material, this ability to

completely loose moral or ethical perspective, which may be somewhat identical to the inability to feel guilt, is perhaps not an inevitable feature among the population, but it is certainly thought-provoking that most (all?) interviewees spend much more time and energy contemplating how their choice of political/religious perspective on life has had consequences for themselves rather than how it has affected their relatives, friends and the outside world in general. There is certainly a huge predominance of 'me'-thinking. For Benjamin, this somewhat narcissistic focus is even extended to his kids, whom he also seems to consider exempt from the rules that count for the rest of society.

Finally, when it comes to de-radicalization as a general aspect, quite contrary to common assumptions, the material in fact indicates more cases where radicalization seem to gain a footing *because* the seed is already there, than cases where radicalization takes place *despite* parents' directed efforts to 'weed it out'. In Andrew's case, his mother and sister were basically radicalized because of him, while Malcolm's and Melody's parents were eager to discuss politics and did not exactly curb their children's enthusiasm. This is of course much too weak and inconclusive to form more solid hypotheses in any way, not least due to the non-generalizable nature of the data material, but it does invite for a rethinking of the general assumption that parents usually do all they can to counter their children's 'attempts to radicalize'.

4.3 Recommendations from respondents on how to deal with radicalization

It is in fact quite striking how little concrete advice and how few general recommendations the informants want to contribute[9]. Almost all seem to consider themselves 'special cases' in the sense that they believe their story is completely unique. There is, however, some sort of pattern of lacking knowledge about existing networks where young people can receive social, emotional and psychological support in times of crisis. For one, Nicko was 'discovered' and enrolled in a de-radicalization initiative initiated by the Danish State and administered locally by the school district, but this was initiated by his teacher, who acted as the prime mover in the practical arrangements, as well as made the effort to convince Nicko to get involved. According to both Nicko and said teacher, this was key. Otherwise it probably would not have happened. Salvador is today monitored by the Intelligence Service, who also provides some sort of psychological/emotional support should he need it. In Denmark, quite a few networks, institutions and programs dealing with advice, exit and other kinds of support for radicalized youngsters, parents and other interested parties are already in place, and apparently these work well and do a fine job, so the real challenge may actually be that the target group is not sufficiently aware of these opportunities.

9 It may be of interest that this was also the case when the Danish national mapping project (2012-14) asked the same question.

When it comes to parents and other concerned and interested parties, much the same conditions apply. In the case studies where it was possible to interview parents and significant others, who had been present all the way through the youngster's radicalization journey and de-radicalization process, it was a general feeling that it would have been easier to help out, had there been more knowledge of available networks, institutions and programs where advice and support could have been found. Also, some interviewees mentioned that schools should perhaps invest more in teaching the children about 'radicalization' as such and how (ideological) communities that make you feel welcome and a part of 'something bigger' are not necessarily your real friends or an overall good and healthy place to be.

Malcolm perhaps represents the absolute extreme regarding suggestions for which measures make a real difference in the process of de-radicalization, or more precisely in getting from "being absorbed in extremist thinking to being able to see things clearly again", as he put it: "I would probably never had been de-radicalized had I not been put in solitary confinement for two months." One can only wonder how else it would have been possible to reach Malcolm, as such extreme measures can obviously not be recommended or desirable.

Box 3: Melody

"It all started with me meeting this guy. He was, like, just *really* into animals, and told me about how cruelly they're treated and how sadistic industrial production is. I knew he was right. I'd just never thought about it before". Melody was a happy, although perhaps a bit shy girl, and uses the expression 'a real Goody Two-Shoes' about herself when she describes her childhood and upbringing. It wasn't really in the cards that she would end up in PETs archives of terrorists and spend two months in solitary confinement in prison, after having ruined for more than 50.000€ of fur at Danish Fur's high street head quarter in Copenhagen.

Melody grew up in a middle-class nuclear family. Her parents were both teachers, politically conscious (though not particularly politically active) and her relationship with her brother was very strong and affectionate. In high school she became friends with some 'cool kids' that played music, experimented with recreational drugs, and were among the in-crowd at a now demolished underground music scene/ recreational/political house in Copenhagen. Here, she was introduced to political talk, ideas and activism filtered through friendships and all kinds of teenage/youth approaches to the world and the need to 'act and do something about it!' She was totally blown away by the 'all in one place' deep sense of meaning, urgency and empowered feeling of actually being able to 'do something and make a difference'. She became a vegetarian and later a vegan, started buying only politically conscious food, clothes and other things, started reading political books and pamphlets and wore only black – 'the color of anarchists'. Her metamorphosis happened in just a few months. Melody also met her boyfriend in this milieu. He was very politically conscious, hardcore vegan and linked up with animal activists abroad, especially in England, where he had joined various events, demonstrations and raids where industrial animals were 'freed' and minkeries vandalized. Melody were intrigued by his enthusiasm and strong imageries, and found his battle against animal tormentors fascinating and worthwhile. And soon she found herself in demonstrations and contexts where events and raids were planned.

Melody grew into a very politically conscious teenager, but still kept her parents close and talked with them about most other things in her lift. She just didn't tell them much about what was really going on with her political development. "I guess I had this split feeling that I knew I had to remain true to this new identity I had found/realized, and all that came with it, but also that my parents probably wouldn't appreciate it if they knew everything, and so I left them partly in the dark about what we were doing and where we were going".

She never joined a particular political organization, but was rather 'just part of the community' and thus exposed to and involved in shifting grass-root formations, events and 'demos' (that were very frequent in those years and served as one of the most important purposes for the community – a way to express their views). She was more of a background person all along and never felt the urge to become particularly trend-setting, but had moved in together with her boyfriend, who was very charismatic, and enjoyed the privilege of being 'in the eye of the hurricane' much of the time. She joined various raids to free animals and destroy/vandalize industrial farms and high-street shops selling fur, but didn't really at any point feel that she was 'particularly radical'. It all made much sense to her and she was very much surrounded by people agreeing with her and haring her views about animals, justice and 'a better world'. After some years, however, a certain fatigue began to enter the picture. She felt that she had heard most conversations before and she realized that she didn't really feel happy. She didn't act on it however.

The turning point only came a year later. Melody, her boyfriend and some other people had planned an event where they would drive out to a minkery and let the animals out of their cages. However, what they didn't know was that they had in fact been under close surveillance and had their phones tapped by the Intelligence Service/Special Counter-Terrorism Unit for more than a year. "We were driving out there in a big van, in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the night - 5 young, skinny, scruffy post-teenagers – when suddenly there's so much fuss and confusion. Four police cars, projectors, loud speakers – just like in a movie. 'Get out of the car with your hands over your heads' they shouted, and when we stumbled out, we were forced to lie down on the surrounding fields, our hands tied with plastic strips, our hearts pounding, while the car was searched and everything ripped apart. We didn't have anything, no money, no drugs, no weapons of course, but we did have a huge bolt cutter and some other tools for wire cutting, and were soon escorted to [a local police station] – in separate cars. We weren't allowed to talk to each other and were all put in solitary confinement cells."

A long litigation in the criminal court followed and Melody went to jail. Before and after the hearing, she spent a considerable time in solitary confinement, as the police wouldn't allow the arrestees to talk with each other or anybody else from the outside world, before the initial hearings, due to the evidence/stories and legal process. This has subsequently had a very thorough influence on Melody's life: "I'm not the person that I used to be", she tells me when we talk about her life now and then. She has become very quiet and don't feel the 'fire' anymore – the feeling, she used to have when discussing political matters and animal rights. She's more easily tired, she doesn't often raise her voice and she don't feel the need to speak up, for example in class (she is studying at the university) even when she knows the answer or has something to add: "It's like something is stopping me, like it's not really worth it anymore, like somebody put a lid on me" she explains.

When in solitary confinement, Melody's worldview shattered. She was really afraid what would happen to her and all kinds of anxieties came tumbling down upon her head. When later in court the counts of the indictment were read out loud, she was almost thunderstruck. She had never experienced it that way. That what they had done was deeply criminal. That they had been ruining property for that kind of money [more than 50.000 € just in fur]. It was very surreal for her. Like she had been 'somewhere else' than in this world for the longest time. But now the world was waiting to catch up.

5 Country Conclusions

From the Danish study it seems quite clear that when summarizing the enablers and barriers that impact radicalization as well as de-radicalization of Danish youngsters, overall families cannot be said to constitute a major factor. The main drivers and influences for youngsters' reasoning and actions must thus be found elsewhere – and it makes good sense to keep a keen eye on social networks and dynamics when searching for these. This state of affairs may be partly a general observation of the Formers and Family project and partly a particularly Danish phenomenon, but it is probably safe to say that since Danish youngsters are generally held to be tremendously independent of their parents from a very young age, compared to the average in most other European countries, the inability of parents to influence and monitor their children's ideological development could in fact be expected to be more pronounced here. This does not mean, however, that families cannot make a difference in the course of events unfolding when a young person begin to take an interest in extreme ideological/religious/political thinking or activities. Though judging from the empirical material, parents' and other significant others' interventions may rather be considered a safety net or a broad backdrop of emotional assurance 'to fall back on' than a main influence in itself, it is clear that parents maintaining a good communication with their offspring all the way through their radicalization process have a much better chance of stepping in and making an impact in helping the youngster change his/her course later on, in case an opening occurs.

On a contextual note it is also clear that the Danish national mapping project conducted from 2012-14 definitely has had an overall impact on the field (to the extent that it makes sense to talk about a 'radicalization field') itself. Although the target population of the Formers and Family project ('formers' and their families) may be expected to be a semi-difficult population to access and research in general, the structural wariness and reservation that surrounded the Danish leg of the project was way beyond average. The Danish national mapping project aimed to collect knowledge about the character, activities and geographical distribution of 'radical and extremist groups' in Denmark and soon became the target of much critique due to its objectivist mode of naming certain groups 'extremist'. Especially Right-wing and Left-wing groups widely resisted this categorization and insisted on being unproblematic in the ways they chose to express their ideological convictions. When entering the 'radicalization' field as a researcher today, it is quite clear that there is a heightened awareness surrounding it. Potential interviewees ask much more questions about the intended use and distribution of the information than they would have done earlier, more refuse to participate than would have been the situation earlier and the ones who do participate make particular demands they would not have made earlier, such as refusing to be audio recorded etc. All in all this has made the data collection a bit more difficult than would otherwise have been the case, but it has perhaps also had the side effect that the participating interviewees really wanted to tell their story and as such went all in.

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PART IV:
COUNTRY REPORT
UNITED KINGDOM

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1 Introduction

1.1 Historical and geographical background to extremism in UK

The contexts that fuel the motivation for people to join extremist groups or movements can be discerned at international, national and local levels. At the international level comes the wider impact of foreign policy and transnational conflicts, which mostly affect Islamist extremists (Savun and Phillips, 2009); Zhirkov et al 2014). Transnational conflicts ranging from Chechnya, Bosnia and Syria continue to be invoked in the political context of extremist participation in wars overseas, and merge with the UK's post 9-11 military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a key point of tension, and reverberates to this day in the security arena (Collard-Wexler et al 2014). Islamist extremists along with many in the wider public remain angered at the continuing Palestinian conflict, and the long-term cumulative effect is the credibility of narratives, which use these examples to suggest a wider global war on Muslims (Hoffman, 2003; McDonald 2012). Syria, Iraq, and the 'Islamic State' group are the current catalysts, and fighters from around the world as well as locally to the conflict areas are being successfully recruited. While the UK may not always be directly involved in each conflict, any actual or perceived support of other countries who are, for example Israel or America, fuels conspiracy theories and increases levels of anti-Americanism and anti-Israeli sentiment – often crossing into anti-Semitism. These narratives build on a sense of 'us' and 'them', and underpin justifications of counter-violence (Spalek et al 2008 & 2009).

Further exacerbation continues through international social media with the swift relaying of messages and counter-messages, used in sophisticated ways by extremist groups as well as governments and their military and security services, creating a propaganda war based on increasingly sophisticated psychological operations otherwise known as "psyops" (Klausen 2015; Richey and Binz 2015).

At the national and European level, economic and social change means declining economic opportunity for increasingly large segments of the population. For supporters of the far right, the trope that 'foreigners are taking our jobs' has returned with increasing vigour, alongside anti-Semitism in the location of power and privilege amongst Jews. Some generations of working-class families who may never have been in stable work and who may rely on state benefits or remain in the low income bracket are vulnerable to persuasion that this is the fault of immigrants and the

disconnected ruling classes (Atton 2006; Kehrberg 2014). A sense of political disenfranchisement can characterise all marginalized groups: there can be frustration with the slow pace of change under the normal democratic processes, and a turning to swifter, sometimes more violent ways of making one's voice heard. Thus extreme Islamist and far right groups share a number of similarities – a strong sense of injustice and the urge to change things, of 'us versus them' and the hallmark of anti-Semitism (Pruyt and Kwakkei 2014; Meer and Noorani 2008).

In the UK at the local level, these dynamics play out with challenges for particular communities, with racism and class conflict intersecting. Apparent competition for jobs, housing and education fuels social conflict and greater polarization. Ethnic minority groups are traditionally concentrated in particular urban areas – as a result of both historical housing policies and social, economic and community practicalities: these are not necessarily the most deprived or isolated areas as characterized by some of the 'banlieues' in France, but can still be perceived, especially in the media and by those from outside, as inner city 'ghettos'. In the context of economic instability and its associated politics, especially anti-immigration rhetoric, there can be a decline in trust, whether across ethnic and/or religious communities, and between communities and the police. Since 9/11, much focus and increasing levels of Islamophobia have been noted in discourse around Muslim communities, compounded by the elision between culture and religion, and continuing stereotyping of Muslims as homogenous and as not holding to implied 'British' values or multicultural concepts. Immigration from the Asian sub-continent is more long standing than other parts of Europe, so that there are second, third or even fourth generation minority ethnic communities. This can mean greater 'integration' but also complex inter-generational conflict and disconnections over values, life-styles and identities. Children of some East and South Asian heritage such as Chinese and Indian descent are actually doing better at school overall than their white working class counterparts, particularly boys, and other minority ethnic groups such as African Caribbean and Pakistani, illustrating the intersectionalities of class and economics with ethnicity. But it is a very fluid situation, and diverse across different parts of UK, so political mobilisers whether Islamist or far right, will always find ammunition. Additionally, perceptions of the government's failure to act in instances of physical threat gives rise to the search for alternatives means of protecting one's community (Kapoor 2014; Abbas 2007; Modood 2013).

1.2 Anti-extremism policies and provisions

The UK was already familiar with terrorism legislation before the 9/11 attacks in America due to its experience of dealing with terrorism in Northern Ireland, but the London tube bombings in 2005 spurred the government to take a renewed approach. The Terrorism Act (TACT) 2000 consolidated the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1989 and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1996, both of which were developed specifically to manage the threats associated with Northern Ireland, into its legislation. TACT 2000 simply consolidated laws specifically developed for Northern Ireland, and applied them to all of the UK, and simultaneously removed the provision that they were temporary or required a periodic review[10] by Parliament. Likewise, there are now 6 key[11] pieces of UK legislation, which underpin the response to security and terrorism. These are the Terrorism Act (TACT) of 2000[12], the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001[13], the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005[14], Terrorism Act 2006[15], Counter-Terrorism Bill 2008[16]and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015[17]. In the UK, terrorism had been defined under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974 (PTA 1974), as "…the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear", with an expansion of the definition through the Terrorism Act 2000 to allow the concept of terrorism to be broadened, including that terrorism could be religiously and ideologically motivated, but that certain actions, even though not violent, could have a significant impact on the public, and therefore constituted an act of terrorism[18].

Britain's core counterterrorism strategy, introduced after 9/11, is called CONTEST and it contains four key strands known as the "4 P's". These are Pursue, Prepare, Protect and Prevent[19]. The latter strand known as Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) is the public

facing part of the revised strategy[20], which includes, amongst other things, the government funding of various community, police and statutory agency partnership schemes nationally - including Islamist and far right focussed programmes and projects[21]. Prevent includes one-to-one interventions for those who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism related activities as part of the "Channel" programme[22] in the pre-criminal space, alongside similar interventions with convicted terrorism offenders who have served their prison sentences and who are now in the post-criminal space. Critics[23] argue that the PVE strategy stigmatises the Muslim community and securitises their relationship with the police decreasing trust and confidence, whilst others argue that despite the investment and cooperation between communities and police and the on-going number of arrests, the evidence around whether all these schemes work remains unanswered as the data is not in the public domain and cannot be independently scrutinised.

In 2015, with concern around British fighters returning from Syria to the UK, the British Parliament passed[24] the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which amongst other things will seek to ban returning terrorists, geographically relocate those individuals who are subject to terrorism intervention measures in the UK[25], and place a statutory obligation on public bodies (including the health service, universities and councils) to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism.

In addition, the UK Prime Minister recently announced a new counter –extremism strategy will be released in November 2015 where specific measures around tackling violent and non-violent ideology, addressing online messaging and developing a community engagement forum will be delivered (Cameron, 2015).

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[10] Weeks 2013

[11] The most important regional treaty is the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) 1950 which has direct effect on UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998.

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-the-uk-against-terrorism#bills-and-legislation

[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/157975/consultation-paper.pdf

[14] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/2/contents

[15] ibid

[16] http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2007-08/counterterrorism.html

[17] http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/counterterrorismandsecurity.html

[18] Weeks 2013

[19] Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks. Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack. and Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack. https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-the-uk-against-terrorism

[20] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

[21] Officially, the British government still sees the biggest international threat to UK interests emanating from Al Qaida and so funding is more heavily skewed to organisations countering the Islamist threat.

[22] The Association of Chiefs of Police (ACPO) state that a total of 3934 referrals were undertaken between April 2007 and March 31, 2014. A year-by-year breakdown is provided though this does not indicate the categories of interventions such as far right, Islamist etc. Between April 2007 and the end of March 2014 Channel received a total of 1450 referrals that were under 18 years of age at the time of referral. http://www.acpo.police.uk/ACPOBusinessAreas/PREVENT/NationalChannelReferralFigures.aspx

[23] There is a body of research that suggests that the PVE strategy, which is part of a wider movement towards developing and implementing community-based approaches to counter-terrorism, stigmatizes Muslim communities (Pantazis & Pemberton, 2009; Spalek, El-Awa & McDonald, 2009; Kundnani, 2010; McGovern, 2010; Hickman & Silvestri, 2011; Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). Community-based approaches can be used for the purposes of gathering intelligence, which can reduce community trust towards the police, and which can also change the ways in which targeted communities experience state citizenship (Spalek, 2010; Spalek, 2013).

[24] Though the Act still requires UK Parliamentary approval of secondary legislation before March 2015

[25] Also known as Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIM's)

1.3 Research on the family and extremism in the context of UK

Within the large body of post 9/11 literature on terrorism and violent extremism, families have been viewed as playing a psychological role in radicalisation concerning identity and trauma, and deradicalisation in relation to support and persuasion. For example, according to Baker (2012), second and third generation Black young people at risk of radicalisation might be viewed as searching for an identity, alienated from their parents and wider family circle. Gravitation towards radicalisation may therefore connect to a desire to feel part of and belonging to a secure group identity. According to Wiktorowicz (2005), families are relevant when individuals are radicalised out of 'cognitive openings' triggered by psychological crisis. Such 'cognitive openings' lead people to search for new ways of understanding, and relating to the world, which may involve them adopting radical ideologies. Wikotorowicz (2005) lists a number of crises that can instigate a cognitive opening through emotional distress, with a death in the family cited as one recurring trigger. Additionally, Githens-Mazer (2010) explored North African immigrant radicalisation in Britain. He argues that the brutalising effects of the colonisation of North Africa, combined with harsh contemporary economic and political realities, including the violent state repression of Islamist political parties in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia involving torture and violence, has left a devastating legacy. Such repression has created prolonged suffering, leading to unrelenting anxiety about the fate and loss of one's family. For Githens-Mazer (2010), trauma in relation to experiencing prolonged anxiety about the fate of one's family (alongside other factors) can come to form a basis for radicalisation.

Alongside psychological factors, socialisation can also be a key mechanism through which families may be viewed as part of the processes underpinning radicalisation. It may be that family members themselves hold radical views, which influence the ideas that young people have (Van San et al. 2013). For example, according to a recent EU study led by Bigo et al. (2014), family, as well as friendship networks can play a significant role in recruiting young people to take part in high-risk activism, which may in some cases lead to terrorism. Some violent actors also experienced unstable family home structures, which may also underpin processes of radicalisation. Baker (2011) cites the case of one of the 9/11 perpetrators, Zacarias Moussaoui, who was on trial in March 2006 for conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism in the US on 9/11. For Baker (2011), the childhood of Moussaoui is significant in understanding his radicalisation. Baker (2011) highlights that the jury decision in Moussaoui's case, which was handed to the trial judge, argued that a sentence of death should not be imposed as a majority of jurors accepted that he had had an unstable childhood, involving a home life without structure, with little emotional or financial support, and a father with a violent temper. For Baker (2011), a further family element to consider in the radicalisation of Moussaoui, is that he was never taught about his cultural or religious heritage at home, and so when then reverting to Islam as a young man Moussaoui did not build a secure adult revert identity, but rather was distracted by extremist rhetoric at the most vulnerable stage of his religious

development. In Wali's (2013) study of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), a radical Islamic group, families are seen to be one factor in understanding why young British Muslims join. For Wali (2013), it is the class structure of the families that HT members group up in, and the cultural gap between first and second generation, that can help explain the membership of HT. HT members often tend to come from middle class backgrounds, living in white areas even though they are predominantly of South Asian ethnicity. Wali (2013) argues that whilst HT members can come from stable and loving families, it is the differences in cultural values between parents and their children that can play a role in young people's radicalisation, with young people trying to create independent value systems from that of their parents.

Families have also been viewed as potentially comprising of a protective factor in relation to radicalisation, thereby playing a role in deradicalisation. Within the literature there is some discussion of the merits of providing violently and non-violently radicalised individuals who are undergoing deradicalisation with access to their families, in cases where these are supportive of their rehabilitation. Here, families are seen as key in helping radicals to abandon their ideologies and/or violent behaviours. Programmes in Far East countries are observed in this regard, although US observers, for example, have cited the success of Saudi Arabian deradicalisation programmes, as 'imperfect', and not necessarily replicable elsewhere[26]. In Britain, a study examining a mentoring intervention scheme aimed at supporting individuals identified as at risk of violent radicalisation, refers briefly to the potentially important role that families play in supporting radicals. According to Spalek & Davies (2012:21), a positive sign that a mentor might look for when working with an individual is a re-connecting with their family, as the following quotation from a mentor illustrates:

> You would look for positive life decisions where they're starting to engage perhaps with a community group or a project or they're seeking work or they're reinvesting in their family, not a group of friends who've led them astray . . . somebody taking responsibility for themselves and for the people and things they're responsible for, and those are becoming more important than perhaps a slightly selfish politically led or extremist agenda.

In the above quotation, the mentor stresses that families can provide radicals with a sense of responsibility, which may play some role in their deradicalisation. The role of female family members has also been identified by research. According to Hearn (2009 in Guru, 2012), women have been identified as being able to prevent violence through their potential to deradicalise men by creating strong family bonds, although critiques have pointed to the gendered assumptions underpinning this notion alongside many examples of women involved in active recruitment (McDonald 2012). Women are also seen as preventing their children from becoming the victims of predators seeking to radicalise them, through the relationships that they have with their children (Hearn,

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[26] http://www.cfr.org/radicalization-and-extremism/saudi-deradicalization-experiment/p21292

in Guru, 2012). Nonetheless, a recent study by Van San et al. (2013) of young radicals in the Netherlands would suggest that parents often take little interest in, or are not party to, their children's ideas (although the authors suggest they should be). This study also found that the internet was a key factor in the radicalisation of the young people concerned, providing young people with images, words and discussion forums that shape young people's ideas. Many of the young, radical, people taking part in Van San et al.'s (2013) study spent long periods of time on the internet. With the global reach of the internet, this study would thus be of relevance to UK as well as further afield.

1.4 Theoretical framework

Insights from Complexity Theory have been chosen as most useful for informing the current analysis. This means firstly the recognition that change is non-linear, rather the result of complex, intersecting junctures. Neither embracing extremism nor disengaging from it will be the result of some linear 'path'. From this perspective, the family will be only one factor, with varying degrees of importance. However, extremist movements will have linear, often simplistic ideologies: this is their attraction. Complexity allows us to see processes of funnelling and also amplification. Under this analysis, fundamentalism and becoming an extremist are processes of complexity shutdown (Davies 2004). Issues are increasingly seen in black and white, people are either enemies or friends, and strategy to achieve ends is always justifiable. Generalisations are made and conspiracies accepted – for example, that 300 Jews are taking over the world, or that all Muslims are rapists. Once this begins, there is a process of amplification: only the people or the texts that support this view are chosen to interact with. Alternatives are ignored. Rumours feed on each other. What triggers this shutdown is hugely varied. There are usually one or more 'critical junctures', which act as a tipping point for already existing predispositions. This can be the experience of racism or brutality, confirming 'us' and 'them' and triggering 'cognitive openings' which can be channelled into radicalisation (see previous section). For some, there is a sense of mission which started early in life and had family influences (not necessarily in the same direction); and/or there can be the search for a family (either because the family was dysfunctional, or conversely a replacement is sought for a loving family or parent who is lost). Others experience a sense of alienation from one's family as a result of being second or third generation and having different cultural values.

Gangs and movements act as a new family, with their support and apparent care again amplifying the incipient ideology and sense of being with 'good' people. Self-definitional uncertainty is strongly associated with wanting to identify with groups that are highly orthodox, simple and consensual. These provide certainty and resolve the ambivalence of competing values in a globalised world. Dogmatism, authoritarianism, the inability to engage in trade-offs and 'low integrative complexity' (Liht and Savage 2013) all seem to be underpinned by similar cognitive processes in which either freezing or seizing on to certain outcomes makes thinking rigid. It is

important to note, however, that other research suggests that in relation to Islam, young people may challenge the cultural understandings of their parents and seek even more complex ways of understanding Islam (Khan, 2015)[27].

However, a participant's increasing degree of commitment to violent action, Suedfeld, Cross & Logan's study shows, is attended by an increasing and significant lowering of integrative complexity. Similarly, when an individual starts to renounce extremism, this takes different and complex shapes – deradicalisation, disengagement, desistence or debiasing (Spalek and Davies 2012). The family may or may not be directly involved. Their influence may be dormant or latent, but re-invoked. What appears common is increasing or re-establishing value complexity. From intervention programmes, it has been found that participants can be encouraged to maximise a wider range of their own values in order to increase the complexity of their thinking (Liht and Savage 2013). Rather than focusing on the content of ideology or beliefs, the focus is on the structure of thinking. Espousal of value complexity or pluralism means seeing concepts such as 'justice' or 'liberty' not as an either/ or, as a magnetic pull in only one direction, but as compatible. Becoming a 'former' often involves a new range of reading, particularly within sociology or philosophy, which would give complex and nuanced views of the world. The theory then is that deradicalisation is associated with acceptance of value pluralism, the discovery of realistic but value-complex solutions to moral and social issues. Liht and Savage argue that,

> It is value-complex solutions that protect both sacred and secular values of different groups, and it is this protection of sacred and secular values that enables peaceful and stable resolutions for inter-group conflict in the context of globalisation, thus protecting people from the lure of value-monist radical discourses'. (pp.50)

The promotion of value pluralism would support the range of prevention initiatives that explore new narratives, engage in exchanges, develop empathy for victims of extremist violence or hear cautionary tales from ex-radicals – all of which involve seeing the world through others' eyes and in more complex ways. It must be stressed that in the UK context, this is not the same as the simplistic promotion of 'British values'. Not only is there no agreement on what these are, but they can act to exclude certain groups. Holding complex values on the other hand permit people to hold values that others may tell them are contradictory: diversity and Britishness, Islam and democracy, freedom of speech and respect for dignity, being British and celebrating religious diversity. In terms of understanding extremism, the framework of complexity facilitates methodology and analysis, as well as future recommendations and action.

[27] In this context perhaps it is important to distinguish between extremism and radicalisation. Extremism might relate to complexity shutdown, but radicalisation may actually point to a search for complexity, where radicalization is defined as 'a collectively defined though individually held moral obligation to participate in direct action, often textually defined' (Githens-Mazer: 2012: 563).

2 Methods

The methodologies used in this study to interview former extremists in the UK were discussed in the development of a research plan. Two research teams were established, one based in Birmingham and another in London.

2.1 Sampling and recruitment

The goal was to develop ten case studies comprising of one former extremist and at least one other person who knew the individual well enough to assess his or her path through extremism. Sometimes that was a family member and other times not. Ethnically, there was a mix of backgrounds of Muslim participants, with one participant who was a convert to the faith. The case studies included a mixture of both former 'Islamist' extremists as well as former 'far-right' extremists. Of the ten case studies developed, seven are categorised thematically as Islamist and three are thematically far-right. Additional interviews were also completed with individuals who knew the 'formers' well enough to assess their journey through extremism. Those interviews included two parents, three spouses, two children and four close friends. Access to individuals was gained through trusted contacts and specialist organisations working in this field, with the exception of one individual who was identified using social media. Of the ten extremists that were interviewed, nine were male and one was female. One far right participant was living in Canada, and he and his brother were interviewed through Skype.

2.2 Interview specifics

All the interviews were conducted face to face whenever possible. However, out of the twenty interviews conducted, for logistical reasons or because individuals were uncomfortable with face to face meetings, three interviews were conducted via Skype, one filled out a questionnaire and another spoke on the telephone. Face to face interviews took place in a variety of public spaces ranging from coffee shops, offices and at the former's home. Interviewees were given the opportunity to choose the location to ensure their comfort and privacy. Interviews with the formers were generally the longest and lasted between one to three hours. Family interviews generally lasted between forty-five minutes and one and a half hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed with the exception of three. In those cases, the individuals objected to being recorded and would only consent to the interview if notes were taken.

In all cases, full disclosure of why the research was being completed, who was funding the project, and how the data would be used was provided to those interviewed in advance. An information sheet that contained that information as well as the full contact details of the entire team was provided to all interviewees. A guarantee of anonymity was also provided to all participants. This was particularly important to Muslim interviewees against the backdrop of the current Syrian conflict and rise of the Islamic State where there is a genuine fear of implication with British authorities.

Data storage was facilitated through a secure, fully encrypted portal whereby only members of the research team had access. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, recordings were not shared even amongst team members and all identifying information was redacted before being shared on the information portal. Furthermore, no external organisation or body was provided access to any of the recordings or transcribed interviews.

The analytic framework for the data was carefully considered with the team agreeing to utilise narrative analysis and capture ethnographic experience, with the concept of narratives as the stories we tell. Some participants had clearly rehearsed narratives, appearing in previously written accounts or websites; other accounts appeared more spontaneous. Our stance is that of 'believing' whilst acknowledging the participants' own interpretive standpoint regarding their lived experience. We also consider these narratives as reflective of a participants' ongoing life journey. Interviews were conversational, often deviating from the set thematic questions, non-leading and non-judgmental. Analysis of transcripts was conducted through repeated immersion in text and by trying to establish patterns (or lack of them).

Box 1: Kevin

Kevin had been a member of the National Front, graduating to the British Movement and later an early member of Combat 18, active in demonstrations and the accompanying violence. He was radicalised at the age of about 15, by the National Front who were leafleting outside his school. He was recruited into the Young National Front (YNF). His family was political, but left wing, with both parents trade unionists and shop stewards, organising strike action.

Key left wing figures visited their house. Kevin's parents left the Labour party in the 1980s, and the father was in the Northern Ireland Independent Orange Order (a split from the main Orange Order, supporting Protestantism but promoting Liberty of Conscience and the right to think independently). His parents later joined the Communist party. They were mortified when Kevin joined the YNF, and thought he had been brainwashed. Kevin became a skinhead and part of a band, rehearsing in the garage at his home. At school he used to wind up 'red' teachers and the religious education teachers, contesting their views and bringing in other 'facts'. His parents would however go through publications with him, pointing out it was the Nazis who killed the communists. Home was 'chaotic' for a number of years in terms of political argument. Kevin, with a keen sense of irony, blamed his parents for making him militant. Kevin's mother died when he was 18, and the right wing movement he belonged to were very good at looking after him, acting as an extra parent. There were about 30-50 in the group, with a drinking culture after the political meeting, swapping books about nationalist history, Aryan nations and the New Order. He was told the Jews were taking over the world.

He found it difficult to understand white poverty, and blamed the government. He recounted turning to violence because of frustration at the democratic political process, which he had been brought up to believe in. With being drawn into violence, Kevin then had experience of the brutality of the police. The NF was a very male environment, with drinking and football; however part of the strategy was to look after women, children and old people, giving them hampers together with recruiting leaflets.

Kevin thought the NYF were not going to achieve much so he joined the British Movement, which was all about race and eugenics, British and anti Irish Republican Army (IRA). One aim was to establish white enclaves in various parts of Britain. There was an intense grooming process for new members. His reading then was on strategy – from IRA manuals, how to disable people and on urban survival. As well as survival courses, he went to Ulster and met prisoners. He then switched to Combat 18. He told how on joining Combat 18 you have to take an oath, on a copy of Mein Kampf, the oath being that you either end up in prison, killed or would have to kill. He got married: his wife knew his political views, but after two years she said gave him the ultimatum of either Combat 18 or her; he said 'this is life or death. If I don't stand up, nobody else is going to'; so they got divorced.

In terms of deradicalisation, this divorce was one trigger; others were events such as when his group wanted to attack a black family at a bus stop who had done nothing. He told the group these were economic immigrants, as much victims as they were, and he had to physically defend them. He thought one could learn from hardworking Asian families; his view was that it was those in power – government, judges – who should be the focus of attack. Community politics was the way forward. So he 'walked away'. He read for over ten years – from Mao, Marx, and environmental literature. His heroes were Robert Owen and William Morris – the philosophers. His life now appears a complete turnaround: his partner of twelve years is mixed race, and he is bringing his daughters up as Muslim to reflect his partner's faith. He now describes himself as a democratic socialist – and thinks his parents would be very happy. He has said to his partner's father if he had had sons he would have wanted them to join the Independent Orange Order because of his own father. It would seem that underneath the violent nationalist period the family influence, while dormant, could reassert itself later. Kevin is now highly active in deradicalisation organisations, talking to schools and advising government strategy.

3 Results

In this results section, we often separate the findings according to the strand of extremism, but the analysis section will draw out underlying similarities in aspects of peoples' – albeit very personal, individual and unique – journeys that point to human experience more broadly. In our sample, on the Islamist side some had been involved in fighting abroad, going to known war zones, whilst another was convicted of terror offences. On the far right side, there were those who had been involved in groups who were involved with violence, or were part of groups wanting to create "white enclaves". The age that a former got involved in extremist ideologies ranged from eight to twenty five years with the median age being nineteen. The average age that each desisted varied significantly, and two people indicated that whilst they were formers, they still retained their previous beliefs or would make the same decisions that they had previously taken of going abroad to fight for their cause.

3.1 Family climate prior to the radicalisation

With the Muslim participants, neither clear patterns nor causal connections can be deduced. The majority had well-functioning, stable, close childhood families with loving parents. A minority had dysfunctional family relations, including abuse or feeling rejected by parents,and one came from a stressful broken home. All had siblings who did not become involved in violence. This matches Christmann's extensive survey (from the London Youth Justice Board 2012), which found little on family influence, except to confirm that Muslim extremists and terrorists – violent or otherwise – came from a wide range of family background.

Of the far right participants, a common feature would be a 'political' family in the sense that politics and social issues were discussed in the home. Interestingly, in the two UK families, the parents were left-wing – for example they were trade unionists, supporting miners' strikes and with discussion of Northern Ireland taking place in the home. These parents were politicised Labour voters. 'By the time I was old enough to vote, my Dad said, "you're voting Labour"'. The climate therefore would be one of wanting to see change and seeing socialism as the way forward. Joining a far right group might have been some sort of rebellious reaction to this, and was therefore a shock to those parents. Joining a far right group might also be about the individual searching for different

social, political or religious values from that of their parents, and so there may be similarities here with Islamist extremists. In two families, the father had been in the army, one being 'very Queen and country'. Both these participants insisted they had not been brought up racist. There were no discernible patterns with regard to violence in the home – at one extreme was a severely violent family, with physical and sexual abuse, drug taking, and a mentally ill mother who tried to burn the house down.

Others, as with the Muslim participants, were from close, stable families. One did admit to seeing fighting as normal – he was the youngest of 11,

> *'so when you're growing up with a lot of guys you tend to get slapped about a bit and you grow up without much fear…So that's how I grew up. You deal with your arguments… If somebody wanted to get rude and disrespect you, then they got a smack in the mouth'.*

Having one's own children could go either way: for one far right participant, the desire to protect his own children against Muslims was instrumental in joining a group; for another, it was the experience of becoming a father that led him to question violence, and not wanting this for his own children.

3.2 Influence of the upbringing on the radicalisation

Some of the Muslim participants highlighted the focus on being decent, to care for and protect people, and to have a social conscience. Most were brought up conscious of politics and/or religion and the injustice in the world – all had and still have a strong sense of justice and responsibility towards both free thought, questioning societal norms, idealism and action. However, there are no apparent causal links to the relevance of family upbringing. Three explicitly stated that their family had no influence on their journey. Only one was possibly direct, where the mother of one participant had, from the age of seven, shown him violent videos of babies being blown up, executions and tortures, in order to show him the pain of the world and to bring him up as a 'soldier' to defend injustice. Yet this was unusual. In the case of Muslim participants, their external, non-familial factors appear to have been more likely to have triggered stages of radicalisation: shocking or transition incidents such as violence, or questioning others'

lifestyles (drug use, crime, materialism) that reawakened or underscored political-religious awakenings and inclinations. Bosnia provoked a 'calling' in two of the Muslim participants, and the events in Palestine and Gaza as well as Chechnya were also a trigger. For one person, protecting other Muslims generated a feeling of justified hatred towards non-Muslims:

> …you should be able to show your hatred and your enmity towards the non-Muslims. If you cannot do that then you are not showing your Islam.

More locally, in the same cities, we see cases where extremist acts appear to have exacerbated others, for example far-right attacks increasing a sense of otherness and reactive violence amongst Muslim participants, while far-right participants describe their concern with immigration and 'the Other' more generally, particularly as scapegoats for the economic deprivation around them. Parental influence is in fact now seen as worse, because of generations of unemployment in the white working class:

> They're born into a benefit system. They don't want to work, but the excuses, drill it into their kids, reason why your grandparents never got a job and so on, is because all these foreigners have come and taken our jobs.

This may relate to specific communities, especially when perceived as – or literally – 'under attack', contributing to a sense of duty to protect and defend communal interests. Far right participants wanted to protect their community – from excessive immigration and from those who they were told were violent rapists from Pakistan. It was interesting how two of the far right men were involved in initiatives to establish white enclaves - with parallels to the caliphate in the sense of preserving sets of values and perceived traditions. Their international network and efforts to build a new state became part of their lives.

Joining a (violent) gang was common across many participants:

> Then I got involved with street gangs, which is a natural progression because now, I'm not going to school, what's the next step?

The period of violence appears accompanied by a sense of purpose, group belonging, adventure, and in most cases the thrill of danger. The intense bonds forged by tight knit groups - brotherhood – and shared sense of destiny may have replicated the 'family' but in most cases not 'replaced' it. A female Islamist who had suffered childhood trauma said she had used the Islamist groups that she had previously joined as a way of cutting off her ties with family and mainstream community,

> We were actually cutting ties off with our families, we were actually breaking our tie with the mainstream Muslim community because we were like creating problems everywhere.

This cutting off of family ties is perhaps more easily done within a context where the young person is questioning the value systems of their family members. The quotation above is from a female who

had experienced abuse within her own family, and so it is unsurprising that she would seek to break contact with her family and indeed from the wider community that her family belonged to, and to create problems for them.

Gang life for the males was often associated with drug use, and leaving extremism was equally sometimes associated with leaving drugs (in one case helped by a family member). Gangs and fighting support the normalisation of violence, a complexity shutdown which sees no alternative to violence as a solution to a problem. Violence was also exciting: one Muslim travelled to India and Pakistan, where he met the Taliban:

> I saw them sitting on the wall, armed: weapons, turbans, beards. I'm Immediately enamoured by them… So the one guy says yes [the true way for justice] is Jihad, and he held up his AK47. And I just thought 'Man, this guy is the coolest guy I've ever seen in my life'.

Low self-esteem from a fragmented childhood could be compensated for by the gang:

> I met these other people, Muslims, and for some reason they saw something in me that I couldn't see. They basically believed in me and they said that, 'You can do more with yourself.

The perception of feeling 'different' appears within a number of the narratives, whether as minorities, or personally, and the subsequent desire to 'man up' and 'step up' against challenges. The experience of seeing racist violence was recounted: 'Am I just going to allow this to carry on, or am I going to fight back?' A sense of mission was apparent, that someone has to take the lead and provide security for others: 'if I don't stand up, nobody else is going to'. There was frustration at the status quo and perceived stagnated democratic political process, with a desire to act more swiftly and with more impact. Studying was not enough: 'I wanted a bit more political activism'.

Of the far right and Muslim participants a common thread in radicalisation but also deradicalisation was reading: they mentioned influential nationalist or religiously extreme books and tracts, and then how they switched to other authors or philosophers, building up or replacing collections of books and papers. While being members of the far right groups they had discussed leaders and writers, and these habits of self-education and exploration continued. One ex far right participant mentioned how his wife was 'on the periphery' of his studying, that 'she made me feel intelligent, things I was reading, reinforced my feeling of power'. The subsequent impact of wide reading underscores the importance of value complexity signalled in the theoretical section.

Of the 'families' we interviewed, these were not always parents, but wives or those who were part of the close brotherhood. For the far right, wives in this study did not support the radicalisation and would have preferred their husbands not to be involved. One thought it was just a phase he was going through, like buying a

piano. Another told her husband it was either the extreme Combat 18 movement or her, and he chose Combat 18, leading to their subsequent divorce. The church as a 'family' played an ambivalent role. One far right participant was attracted into extreme Catholicism and took religious instruction, linking with networks in Northern Ireland and anti-abortion tactics. Later, seeing black people in the pews made him question his racism and he became a more liberal Catholic before abandoning religion altogether. The one far right extremist was involved with Final Solution skinheads, who were members of Aryan Nations or the Church of Jesus Christ Christian, a white supremacist church founded by a member of the Klu Klux Klan. For the far right, religion did not seem to play a protective role. One member's wife talked of going to a church meeting where the talk was all of supporting one's husband, that he should be in charge and should have the final word; she was the only person who put her hand up to say no.

For the Islamist participants, any influence of the mosque, still less a particular mosque, was not easy to pin down. Three were converts to Islam, and while one participant had a father who was an imam, only four out of the seven had parents who were both Muslim, and one of those said he was in fact 'nominally Muslim'. Rather than talking of childhood experiences of the mosque, there was far more mention of joining different groups for discussion in later years or after conversion. For each participant, there seemed to be exposure to a range of Islamic and Islamist groups, in UK and overseas, with participants mentioning study circles and street groups. Only one specifically mentioned listening to a radical preacher; for another it was HuT that was identified as significant. Coming out of extremism, as mentioned later, was far more to do with self-study and an intellectual journey supported by religious teachers than the influence of the mosque specifically. For some, the negative experiences of racism or Islamophobia, locally or internationally, seemed to trigger a search (perhaps even for some form of identity) where answers could be found in some of those Muslim groupings who talked about these issues in public forums - rather than the mosque itself initiating indoctrination, as is sometimes portrayed.

Of significance also was the absent or negative mention of formal schooling as part of the former's upbringing. One far right member told of the racism in his school, which he joined in, but that the teachers were equally racist: so to us that wasn't a bad thing; it was just run of the mill, this happens, and you get on with it'. Racism became normalised. At college or University level, the influence was even more direct: one Islamist participant mentioned how on campus, invited speakers would inform the young Muslims on the Bosnian conflict alongside showing powerful front line videos of the atrocities committed, creating powerful emotions. He asked, "how could we go back to our studies?" as he felt this was a turning point.

3.3 Influence of parents/family/very important persons on the deradicalisation

While some Muslim participants described key figures in supporting and facilitating their journeys away from de-radicalisation, they were not 'triggers'. Rather, they were available to support the change that came from the individuals themselves. All specified that family members were not influential (or were powerless) in their decision making either prior, during and after the journey into and out of violence. Wives or partners might have been a source of support, but they did not actively try to direct, as one Islamist former recounted:

> she had her views but she said, 'Look, if that's what you want to do, that's up to you. I'm not going to say, 'Don't do this; don't do that' because you'll do it anyway no matter what, because you make your own decisions'.

For the female Islamist, her husband was not influential in her joining particular groups, nor in her leaving them. The father of one 'jihadist' who had been to Syria stated that,

> I could only support him [yeah], I could love him, I would respect his views but the main thing that I could do is ask God, saying that, 'Oh God, help him' ...., because it's only God who can guide the people...

One far right participant found that his divorce after his wife had left him because of his politics made him think and question his beliefs. But this was after the event, and she was not a supporting figure during his involvement in the far right movement. All the far right participants said they initially had to do it on their own, even if they then got support from neighbour's or friends. For one far right extremist, the birth of his son was a catalyst. It generated a flashback of his mother being beaten and raped by her partner. He started to feel scared of himself, for example when he punched his wife's boss when holding his own daughter in his arms when she was 18 months old. Exposing his own children to violence and hatred was a sort of 'epiphany'. One ex Islamist found a different route:

> 'Okay, I can be active; I can do things in another way. And that allows me to be a good father to my kids as well. It allows me to do all these other things and have a life...

There was a difference in terms of whether there had been political discussion in the home; it is possible that although the family were not directly involved in the deradicalisation process, the history of such argument and debate would have made an imprint, and surfaced at later times of questioning. Participants did not necessarily have a coherent set of causes, and realised the inconsistencies. One far right former returned to his second family of indigenous peoples, and started attending their cultural healing, and remembering their culture so from that point of view, a family may have a latent effect.

3.4 Other factors that may have impacted on the de-radicalisation.

For all participants, the journey away from violence appears complex and individualised. Muslim participants describe a range of factors including disillusionment in simplistic ideologies or the behaviour's and actions of figures around them who did not live up to the ideals. They also describe internal processes of aging and 'growing up', and noticing the complexities and realities around them that did not match the group ideas they had aligned with, breaking down the previous sense of 'us and them'. A far right fundamentalist racist Christian registered black people in the pews when he went to church; an Islamist worked with Jews who were good to him and trusted him, and he had difficulty reconciling this with his anti-Semitism. Extreme violence itself was often a trigger, for example the realities of terrorist attacks on civilian populations in which they did not wish to participate or support. A mixture of long term unease and moments of clarity were described, as part of a process of disengagement. All stated that external pressure or persuasion would not have changed them – the change came from within. Thinking about their faith was key for some: one recounted the brutality and racism of the police during a demonstration:

> I was struggling and he goes to me, the copper, 'You f***ing part-time Muslim', you know, he goes, 'We'll soon sort you out when we shove a pork sandwich down your throat'.

Yet while this insult added to his aggression at the time, it was also eventually part of a transition to Islamic awareness, wondering why he had been called a 'part-time Muslim', and needing to move towards Islam.

Far right participants also spoke of disillusionment: one got sick of being a martyr, and having no money; he felt that his organisation, while having very wealthy, key personnel, did not look after him. They were hypocrites. For another, there was also a sense of betrayal that the group involved was not as solid as he thought, and they were not willing to back up what their belief was. He felt more alone.
As mentioned above, the power of reading permeated most accounts. This included researching the 'facts' peddled by far right movements and realising their lies.

> If I hadn't researched, I'd have been a hardened nationalist member, if I hadn't the intelligence to think, this is wrong'.

Another did have a role model of a skinhead for 18 months, but she was imprisoned for murder; he then 'started reading the literature, looking up to martyrs like Robert Owen and others who were willing to die for a principle'. The idealism is still there, but the reading helped turn it to different directions. The notion of 'former' was also questioned – all remain politically conscious, but in different and more constructive ways, and are keen to retell their stories and learning. This feature is returned to in the analysis section below.

Box 2: Sam

Sam was involved in recruitment and fighting in a number of war zones and insurgencies under the banner of jihad. He has served time in prison abroad for alleged terrorist activities against the state, which he denied and for which he was released after 5 years. Born and brought up in a large, diverse city in the UK, Sam had a cohesive family life with several siblings. His father worked long hours out of the home, while his mother focused on her children's upbringing. Family is very important to him, and while both parents have now passed away, his own wife, children, siblings and their children live near to one another – he is an active parent, husband and brother. Sam has a very clear and detailed narrative of his journey. Describing himself as innocent as a child, he recalls several 'rude awakenings' to the world and its violence: at the age of eleven, having never been in a fight or hit in the face, he was beaten unconscious by skinheads on the way to school. He describes high levels of violent racism experienced by his community, including regular verbal abuse to and from school, and racist gangs regularly attacking people and places within his locality. He recalls a sense of 'them and us', and an understanding that white people were hostile. His response to being personally attacked was initially shock and then strategy, deciding to learn self-defense and martial arts, which he loved and built his confidence. However, his parents became increasingly concerned as he began to get involved in fights and his focus on school decreased sharply.

They banned him from attending formal classes at the dojo (karate) in an attempt to refocus him on education. However, he carried on training himself, and felt empowered doing so, continuing to defend himself and friends from attacks. Sam later rejoined formal training and became well-known and successful at competition level. Sam describes this early shock and transition as the beginning of his involvement in street gangs, founding one with friends as a way of organised response to racism, and guarding the locality. However, his own gang along with others quickly became notorious, involved with wider crime and violence, and the dynamics of gang wars within the city. His lifestyle included recreational drug use and other activities he describes as hedonistic. His formal education was by this point over, and his worried parents had no influence over his street lifestyle, although he remained within his family unit and tight knit community. He believes his parents had little idea about his lifestyle, other than they knew he was 'getting into trouble'. More widely he was well respected and in some cases feared. He describes himself at this time as nominally Muslim, in that he identified with the faith and his community, but knew very little about Islam and did not practice its tenets.

It is in this context that Sam identifies a second turning point in his life, in which he joined a protest regarding a Muslim issue, travelling with fellow Muslim gang members. He was arrested during the demonstration, and treated roughly by police officers. During the period of this arrest, a police officer referred to him as a 'part-time Muslim' and threatened to force him to eat pork. The racism was not a new experience, but the comment regarding his faith and relationship to it provoked a great deal of reflection and he decided to learn more about his religion. Not long afterwards, he volunteered to help with repairs at a mosque – a building accident occurred in which he narrowly escaped death – and this reaffirmed his sense of faith, sparking a spiritual search in which he encountered many differently orientated groups, looking for one in which he felt he fitted. He grew distant to his former gang and friends, and found a new expression of his lifestyle – groups who debated and promoted faith in the street.

Sam began to educate himself, immersing in classical Islamic texts and learning rhetoric from television preachers. His engagement in street debates with people of different faiths grew stronger and more confident – despite feeling a 'ruffian' he realised he could talk to other young men on the streets, in pool halls, in cafes, and raise their religious consciousness. The sense of being the Other also remained with him, and conflicts abroad in which Muslims were being attacked in some ways echoed his life experiences. At this time, he happened to buy a video documenting the ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia and deeply moved by the horrific images shown on video, especially the violence against women and children, he decided to join an aid convoy. Sam defines a third turning point on passing a silent queue of women and children traumatised and destitute by the war, which left him in tears.

> That's when I made that decision in my heart: that I haven't got any food to
> give you; I've got no money, but I can fight and I'll stay and I'll fight. I'll fight
> for you and I'll help you.

Despite his convoys' attempt to discourage him, Sam decided to set out on his own, with little preparation or knowledge of the area. He soon chanced upon several large four wheel vehicles which he flagged down, and once more felt his destiny was fulfilled: they were mujahideen. Training, fighting and returning regularly to the UK to visit his family, raise funds and recruit, Sam entered a long and active period of participation in the theatre war, attending more sophisticated training camps in areas including Afghanistan. His active jihad ended after a period in jail under alleged terrorism charges in the Middle East, but was eventually released. He returned to the UK and settled back down with his family. Sam still views his actions as righteous and necessary, and praised his comrades as pious heroes. He is, however, scathing of current atrocities in Syria carried out in the name of jihad, especially the targeting of civilians. He believes violence is sometimes necessary but must be carried out within clear ethical boundaries. His family are proud of his history, and state that they understand his actions and motivation to 'help people'. They also highlight his gentle nature and commitment to family, and especially his devotion to the children in his family. He sees no connection between family and his journey, highlighting his independent nature and determination. Similarly his family over the years have been both accepting and broadly unaware of the specifics of his activities, despite their closeness. He has withdrawn from active participation in his community, and now leads 'a quiet life'.

4 Analysis

4.1 What do the findings tell us?

Within this study, the family appears less important in radicalisation than other triggers or influences. We have only one family that directly tried to radicalise their children; the others were not influential or indeed had opposite views to those espoused by their children.

> *I would just do my own thing and that's how I was in Islam, when I first became a Muslim. I didn't tell my family at all; not until a couple of years later… They cut all ties with me...*

Parents were again rarely actively influential in deradicalisation, although for some participants, their upbringing remained a latent force in terms of a questioning approach to politics and social issues, and/or in experience of loving care. Narratives revealed acknowledgement of the childhood family as a resource in this way. The later families of the formers (spouses/partners) again had varied roles, whether in radicalisation, in continuing involvement or in deradicalisation. There could be active support for the racism or group membership, or simply an acknowledgement of powerlessness, accepting that their spouse would make their own decisions. On the other hand, partners would be sometimes persuasive in deradicalisation, by being uneasy about the violence or racism or the narratives of the movement.

The experience of having children of one's own, and not wanting them to experience the violence or racism that they had was also influential for formers. However, the notion that women, especially wives and mothers are 'powerful preventers' of violence and extremism (Hedayah 2013) is not fully upheld by this research. It is difficult to establish whether the choice of a partner was part of deradicalisation and of new perspectives, or whether the new partners then acted to influence world views, as in the example of the far right former who married a woman with mixed-heritage and is bringing his children up as Muslims. Again, there is no common linear path in and out, and individuals make unique choices about whether to be influenced by a family member.

While a significant majority of respondents do not mention family as an important factor in their radicalisation or deradicalisation, we do see the occurrence of particular events in the family related to loss, illness, divorce etc. Witnessing or experiencing violence may be influential, with Bob being a case in point: Bob recounts that

there had been some domestic violence between his father and mother, with Bob saying that although his father was quite abusive to his mother, particularly when he had been drinking, his father was alright with him and his siblings. In the above case, Bob is likely to have been a witness to domestic violence as a child and this may have provoked deep anxiety and fear in him as he was growing up. However, to acknowledge and to explore this would take more than one interview.

There is a possibility that the role of such family factors was slightly downplayed in some of the interviews. Drawing upon the Transtheoretical Model of psychosocial change, potential reasons why respondents are downplaying events that have occurred within the family may be that many respondents are at 'pre-contemplation stage' regarding their family dynamics, meaning that they are not consciously aware of some of these dynamics (Prochaska & Norcross, 2010). This may be because they have never considered the impacts of their family life upon their journeys into and out from extremism, particularly when research in this field tends to focus upon the social and political, with family often only tangentially mentioned when referring to generational and cultural differences within families. Participants may also downplay the role of their families because of the significant emotions family memories may trigger. Psychoanalytical frameworks of understanding might be used here to explore participants as 'defended subjects' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2009). Participants may subconsciously be protecting themselves from uncomfortable emotions like anger or fear by underplaying the role of family members in their journeys. Participants may also be fearful of deconstructing any stories that they have constructed for themselves regarding their journeys as this may be anxiety-provoking for them. If we as researchers were to probe further into family histories and dynamics, therefore, we would need to spend a lot of time building a strong relationships with our participants in order to be able to do this, something not possible within the time limit of this project.

4.2 Relevant insights that have come up during the research

a) Self-initiation. Many participants talked of directing their own journey into extremism: there were influences, and trigger points, but their narratives insist on a personal, and at that time, rational choice. Similarly, leaving extremism is portrayed as self-initiated:

In 2009, I....came back to England. By that time, I feel a lot of my ideology had changed. I've not spoken to anybody. Just through self-discovery, it changed.

b) Complexity shutdown. The idea that there is a lowering of integrative complexity in the process of radicalisation is upheld by this study. The extremist rejects any competing views:

when I was with the brothers and stuff, I was a bit hardcore and I wouldn't listen to anybody... What I thought – what I studied and what I was being taught – I thought that was 100% correct. I didn't want to listen to anybody else because I thought, 'No, everybody else is wrong'.

he does get angry... politically and Islamically he was very divisive at that stage. And very two tone; black and white, right and wrong, and Islam, tawhid and shirk. And there's nothing in the grey. There's no middle ground there.

There is selectivity even in searching for 'facts':

I decided to seek knowledge in order to soothe my conscience [about the bombing in Kenya] and the justification for it. My heart still wasn't convinced and I still wasn't certain with it. In the end, I managed to convince myself it was a good thing. They're killing Muslims around the world as well by the central spy agency.

In contrast, the reality and complexity of a war zone was influential in broadening out:

'so I stopped buying into the black and white narratives....it took me Bosnia to recognise this. It wouldn't have happened otherwise. We were in group think. Read and thought the same..speak the same'.

c) Romanticism, idealism and emotions. While the mission seemed sometimes romanticised or basically unachievable, emotions were deeply held: most participants we spoke to are deeply caring about people, and the causes they joined appear reflective of that – even though the expression of care for one group was usually at the expense of others in society. Where many had happy stable families which love and respect them and (in some cases) their choices, the ones that did not have such families are obviously pained by that, and perhaps that made them more vulnerable to violence, while the ones with loving families had still been through difficult periods of their lives or transitions. It is important not to see extremists as cold, hard or unfeeling. Self-study is no guarantee of enlightenment:

Everything that came to him from the scholars, from what he would hear ...... unlike many of the other individuals who took it carte blanche, he went and studied it further himself. So when he became rooted in that particular belief he then felt strong enough and equipped enough - able enough... to start preaching that violent Jihadi or I'd rather say violent extremist or takfiri rhetoric.

d) Gangs and gang violence. Once entering the more radical phases participants witnessed further violence and suffering confirming their ideas - this is certainly the case for those who were involved in street gangs and/or jihad and have seen death and brutality close up. The gang is important in terms of providing security against other gangs and in being a substitute family to give support when vulnerable. Leadership of a gang, squad or cell was also important for some, giving self-esteem and a feeling of power. Gangs, with their names, rituals and symbols also gave a strong identity to members.

e) Interconnections: it was revealed how far right and Islamist extremist attacks are feeding off each other. Both sides have experience of being attacked by gangs, or feelings and actual experiences of persecution and racism. Muslim participants talked of being brutally attacked by skinhead gangs, before and during their radical phases, and the converse was also recounted. This then moves from local to national levels, with intersecting motivations for conflict and revenge because of publicized attacks. How escalation and amplification of conflict occurs is important to understand in attempting to break cycles of retribution and hatred.

f) Perspective taking: the process of coming out of extremism or violence includes a sudden insight into oneself as actor in relation to others:

I met one Sheikh in Ireland and he said, 'There's certain things that you shouldn't do in Islam, like cause harm to Muslims by doing certain things and certain actions'. I thought, 'Hang on, this is what we do. It's not right'. I had my last violent incident and I kind of felt guilt in a new way, it was a different experience at that point which I attribute to being connected to a realisation I had which was that I was hating a bunch of people who were like me.

g) Catharsis. Having come out of the extremist phases, perhaps the willingness to retell stories for some is cathartic, and allows a sense that people can learn from the journeys, and is perhaps a form of atonement. For some, this honest retelling is manifested in active participation in educational work in schools or youth contexts, to ensure that others do not go down these routes. It is important to emphasise that although there is self-identification as a 'former', these are unfinished journeys. It is by no means clear that their goals have changed, even though they may have left certain movements or renounced violence. All are still political.

Box 3: Gemma

Gemma is 38 years old, married, with three daughters. She describes herself as of mixed Asian race. Gemma describes the ideology that she followed as, "something that was like political activism in Islam". Her main reason for this is

"it was to create something like a structure and then establish an Islamic state which would then eventually establish all the systems according to Islam and that could be the judicial, the financial, the social, the political, so this was one of the aims that I was planning to do".

Gemma began attending various study circles where issues of social injustice werediscussed, and ways in which Islam could provide protection from harm and an equal distribution of wealth. Within the study circles that Gemma took part in, a Golden Era of Islam was discussed, when Jews, Muslims and Christians lived together, and when science was established as a significant discipline. For Gemma, having left school with few qualifications, the focus on acquiring knowledge was important, and gaining new knowledge was an important motivation for Gemma. Gemma was particularly attracted to a group within Islamist thought that stressed the need for acquiring knowledge, with there being many university students belonging to this group. After a while, however, Gemma left this group and joined another Islamist group, this new group being more concerned with direct activism, "I wanted a bit more political activism". Gemma talks about having low self-esteem as a result of being brought up by a foster family where she experienced mental, sexual, physical and emotional abuse. This is partly why Gemma left school and did not retake her exams. Gemma did not know who her real parents were until the age of 10 because until that age she thought that her foster family was her biological family. Gemma describes her family life as,

"Awful, I prefer the outside world .. I hated my inside world so I'd always want to be out...I had a very, very bad childhood experience".

At the age of 15 Gemma began to become interested in religion, although not Islam itself, "I think it was the concept of God, I wanted to be spiritual because it was like my coping mechanism". Gemma went to live with her biological father at age 15 and got in touch with her biological mother at the age of 17. Gemma got married at the age of 16. At the age of 18 she went on holiday abroad (to her husband's place of birth) and that is where she began to study Islam. After having her first child at 18, this is when Gemma began meeting with other women who were part of an Islamist study circle at college where she was retaking her GCSEs. What Gemma valued was the social status of a Muslim woman in Islam, the centrality of the wife in relation to the household. This gave Gemma an important insight into women's empowerment, and ways of dealing with her in-laws. The case against Gemma's childhood abuser was dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service and so Gemma reasoned that she could work towards creating an Islamic state and that through this she would be able to gain justice. Gemma was also aware of wider injustices taking place in Palestine and Gaza. Gemma's husband also had a difficult childhood, coming from a broken home, with his parents having divorced and him having been brought up by his grandmother. Gemma's husband was also actively involved in Islamist groups. Gemma's husband did not influence her decision in joining the groups that she joined, and he did not influence her decision to leave those groups. Gemma argues that the reason why she left her last group was,

they never emphasised on about creating, strengthening your relationship with God like improving your prayers or learning you know like just literally your relationship with the creator is always political, the Islamic faith, so we felt spiritually empty.

At the same time, there were power struggles within the group that Gemma disliked.
Gemma created her own, spiritually focussed, group for Muslim women, and this journey helped Gemma to become more warm and emotional. She feels that her childhood traumas had impacted on her substantially, and that she had used the Islamist groups that she had previously joined as a way of cutting off her ties with family and mainstream community, "we were actually cutting ties off with our families, we were actually our tie with the mainstream Muslim community because we were like creating problems everywhere". On leaving the Islamist groups Gemma spent many years re-connecting with her biological father and mother. Gemma argues that it took her about ten years to develop the understanding she now has of Islam, based on actual evidence.

4.3 Recommendations from respondents on how to deal with radicalisation

In this section we relate the various recommendations that formers have made regarding a strategy for the future. Some are already starting to happen, and in this sense the research becomes longitudinal in scope. Others are more aspirational.

- It was recommended that there should be more work with young people to tell them what it is like to be in a movement: how you are manipulated, told lies, how you will be used and incited to violence; also what the effect will be on family, future and work. Participants were often bitter about 'lost years' they had given to movements, with little reward or negative impact. Rather than moralising to the young, they felt it was better to show them the harsh realities of what is essentially cult involvement. Videos, school packs and personal visits by formers could explain the journeys, and the consequences of imprisonment or being killed.

- Participants recognised that joining a political party is too slow for many in terms of creating the change they want to see. A recommendation from this is that the idealism should be tapped into, but young people should be given skills to organise politically in a 'good' local cause – for example, saving your library or swimming pool. This matches the recommendations by Davies (2014), particularly around critical or constructive idealism. Interventions with young (or even older) people would be more than just mentoring and attempts at disengagement and be more about diversions of passion. The desire to preserve and protect community, which was part of the radicalisation, can be channeled into a positive community activity.

- In terms of families, there were a range of views. Families were seen as influential when someone is thinking of leaving a group, but one far right former felt the families would need a good education themselves around what movements stand for, to have some answers to questions straight away, before an uncertain extremist reverts to his or her original views. Others felt there should be direct family intervention, in that some of the wives and girlfriends of extremists were just as extreme or racist if not more so; or that their children would learn from them.

- Hence in terms of school-based work, if students were expressing extremist views, there should be intervention with their families, not to warn of expulsion, or highly negative implications, but to point out that such views were not acceptable in the school. The key was to say that the school wanted to work with the children, so that the family did not feel picked on for their views but could be part of a dialogue. It was important for schools not to involve authorities too soon, and not to criminalise behavior. Anti-racist work in general was also supported, as were relevant projects in citizenship education. Anti-extremist work should be knit into the curriculum. Participants regretted not having such issues introduced when they were at school.

- There should be much more official support for extremists wanting to leave groups, and for their families where relevant (see also Guru 2012 on the neglected needs of families of suspected extremists). Participants felt let down by different authorities, such as the police. There could be a perception that they had brought difficulties on themselves and did not deserve sympathy or protection. There were not so many official avenues for support as could be found in other parts of Europe.

- The recommendation for families whose children, spouses or partners had been drawn into extremism against their wishes was to try to remain a source of help. They should give the message that they are always there when needed, and should not distance themselves, however unsavoury or inexplicable they saw the activities.

- From far right participants, there was a clear recommendation that government and others needed to understand the power and reach of far right organisations. It was felt that with concentration on Islamic terrorism, the far right groups and what they were planning were receiving less attention. The former far right extremists had considerable experience of the sophisticated functioning of the various movements (command structures, military knowledge from ex-soldiers and from manuals, strategising, recruitment and grooming, training camps etc). Increasing and more horrific IS activities were giving them legitimacy and helping recruitment, particularly from those liking violence and liking the idea of revenge.

- There was a recommendation about the use of the internet as a tool of radicalisation or deradicalisation: while this may or may not have been central to the formers in this study, they now acknowledge this as increasingly important in radicalisation. 'Live' chats with real extremists could be more powerful than just reading about them. It was felt there should be more control on content readily available, but more so, a need to support people to develop tools of resilience, so as not to be taken in or radicalise negatively in response to internet content.

5 Discussion

5.1 Strengths and pitfalls of this research

- One potential pitfall of the research is the assumption in the whole research rationale that families are relevant and important in radicalisation and deradicalisation. This meant a potential predisposition in questions asked: both interviewers and respondents were searching for elements, which may have both given extra salience to such features as well as ignoring or downplaying other influences.
- Linked to this is the issue of interpreting the narratives and connections. Some participants had narratives, which had been told and rehearsed before, whether to others or just to themselves; others were searching for meanings as they spoke. In either case, there are limitations and selectivity in hindsight. Given the complexity of identities and different environments over years, it is very difficult to make causal connections.
- For Islamist extremists, there was a difficult backdrop of the current was in Syria. This meant it was sometimes hard to get people to talk, or to identify family members who would be willing to be interviewed.
- The relatively small scale of the research makes it difficult to draw positive conclusions.

5.2 Recommendations for further research

- More in-depth case studies could be conducted to broaden the research and draw more concrete conclusions.
- Focus groups between formers could generate more practice orientated analyses, and help draw out parallels between individual experiences.
- Greater policy and practice orientated research could be undertaken, to include community input and interaction with formers, developing grassroots-led responses to radicalisation.
- Evaluation and action research on the impact of the work of former extremists in schools or communities- online and offline- in mentoring and prevention.
- Research on initiatives with individuals and in schools or prison settings to increase value complexity and restore or embed a broad worldview.

5.3 Country Conclusions

As pointed out in the Analysis section, a key conclusion is that it is not possible to derive strong conclusions about family influence from this sample of former extremists and their families. There are almost as many types of influence (or apparent lack of it) as there are participants: the pathway into and out of extremism remains sui generis and that the influences remain as unique as the individuals themselves. It is certainly not possible to derive firm policy implications with regard to interventions in families and family life.

While the original thrust of the research revolved around childhood family, our sample reveals the importance also of later family – whether spouses, partners or the experience of having one's own children. Hence radicalisation cannot be traced directly back to a single trigger event in childhood family. Normalisation of violence in the home may predispose an individual to use violence later but it does not determine an extremist route, as opposed to a gang or criminal venture, or simply to engage in more domestic violence. While it would be better if families were not violent, violence is not a single cause of extremism. Upbringing – how a child is 'brought up' - interacts in complex ways with other aspects of childhood – schooling, peers, community or religious learning. Later comes the influence of other significant adults. A key conclusion – and stress – is therefore that families cannot be held responsible. This research is not about apportioning blame, or even situating childhood family as absolutely central.

Nonetheless a mass of interesting and significant insights for work in other arenas have emerged, as detailed in section 4.2. Comparing the Islamist and far right formers reveals some similarities and differences. Both groups had a sense of mission together with an identifiable 'enemy' or 'enemies' which had to be (violently) opposed to achieve this mission. Both would have liked the establishment of some sort of purer state – whether a caliphate or a white enclave. For both, neither religion nor schooling acted to protect them against their embracing of extremist ideals. And for both, self-initiation and self-study was often claimed as a prime mover in and out of extremism. Contrasts appeared in the underpinning to extremism, which for Islamists was obviously religion and, for some, the influence of radical preachers. The shocking sudden events where Muslims were targeted (in Bosnia or Chechnya) did act as a catalyst for Islamist extremists compared to the more gradual perception of erosion of national values and

lifestyles for the far right. Overall, for political extremism (as opposed to cults) any family influences cannot be seen in isolation from the political and social context in which individuals come to situate themselves.

The key lesson for policy is to learn from formers and use their expertise to inform practice and policy, including greater levels of engagement with formers, who may be viewed as 'risky' individuals to politicians and/or policy makers. That so-called formers may still be politically active should be seen as a strength, and not as a threat. Their involvement and continuing journeys provide valuable understandings of either psychological or ideological persuasions, but also of current networks and the strategies of existing movements. There is no evidence that formers are now using conventional party political processes to try to create social change: the implication is that new (non-violent) ways of working towards social or ideological goals need to be built upon.

We are grateful to all our participants for the learning that has been possible from their frank and important narratives. Their recommendations for future work to challenge extremism have the greatest credibility in the mass of official proposals. It has been a privilege listening to their journeys.

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PART V: FINDINGS & ANALYSIS: INDIRECT FAMILY INFLUENCES AND TRANSITIONAL JOURNEYS

(Dr. Stijn Sieckelinck & Prof.dr. Micha de Winter)

This section presents the main findings of the study, based on the three country reports from the different European countries. The main figures are presented, the main research questions are answered, and a theoretical effort is made to improve our understanding of the radicalisation process starting from the idea that different pathways and routes are at play. Finally some important limitations of this study are noted.

Overall results

Numbers

The study draws on nearly 70 interviews, forming 30 case studies; each conducted with a former radical activist and, in most cases, one or more family members. Of these 30 cases, ten respondents used to have extreme-right ideals, fourteen adhered to Islamist ideals, four adhered to radical animal activist ideals, and two respondents used to have radical left-wing ideals. Most of these people have since disengaged from their 'extreme' ideals and/or behaviour[28] and most have, arguably, been de-radicalised completely (see p.18 for a more detailed discussion of this), however, it was hard to assess the level of radical thinking in some respondents. The age of those interviewed range from 21 to 42 and the estimated time that had passed since de-radicalisation (estimated by the interviewee) was from 1 to 9 years. The age that the formers became involved in these extreme ideologies ranged from 12 to 25 years old, with a mean of 16 years old.

Ideology	Number of interviewees
Extreme Islam	14
Extreme right-wing	10
Animal rights	4
Extreme left-wing	2
Total	**30**

Mean age into radical ideology	Mean age out of radical ideology
16	24

The age that people deradicalised ranges between 15 and 33 years old, with a mean of 24. Based on this study, we have reason to believe that once a youth is involved in a radical movement, an involvement of more than five and less than ten years can be expected. These numbers are significantly different from the much

shorter time of involvement, two years, observed in sects and cults (Dawson, 2010). Obviously, these low-key statistics are in no way representative in a general sense, due to the snowballed sampling nature of the data material, but it does give a picture of the nature of the study in its own right. In addition to thirty formers, we interviewed fourteen parents, eleven siblings, one grandparent, and six partners to complete the case studies.

Family member	Number of interviewees
Parent	14
Sibling	11
Partner	6
Grandparent	1
Total	**32**

Three countries, three conclusions

The different country reports yielded different results with regard to the impact of the family climate on the process of radicalisation: The Dutch study focused on the intimate interactions of the youth ideals within the household. It was found that parents, unless they were unaware of their child's development in a radical direction, tended to initially discuss or reject the radical ideals, but later started to ignore their child's choices, due to increasing uncertainty and unfamiliarity. Parents found it hard to talk with their children about ideals, due to a perceived lack of knowledge, other problems in the family or to distancing by the youth or attained adulthood. No role whatsoever was taken in the de-radicalisation; and generally no assistance or support was called for. The report advised that solely banning ideals is ineffective unless an alternative is presented.

In the Danish study, existential uncertainty and personal agency were the key reasons people find themselves attracted to radical narratives, practices and strong identities offered by the cultic milieu. It seems quite clear from the sample that when summarising the enablers and barriers that impact both the radicalisation and de-radicalisation of Danish youngsters, families overall cannot be said to constitute a major factor. At the same time, most Danish respondents were from broken families with major social problems and/or psychiatric illness. In about half the cases, generally those where direct neglect was not a familiar scene at home, the parents did have some sort of insight into what was going on, but did not do much to avert their children's thinking. The passionate intensity that most interviewees describe from the beginning of their period of radicalisation began to cease with time. For the majority of these respondents, the same personal agency that took them on the radical path, guided them back into society.

In the British study, the context that fuelled the motivation for people to join extremist groups was discerned at international, national and local levels. With regard to the role of the family in this complex context it was noted that while there may be inter-generational conflict and disconnection over values within households, the processes into radicalisation are so diverse and complex that they cannot be reduced to one or two single factors. When looking at the causes overall, the British research shows that family is as

significant and insignificant as every other factor involved at some level. The most determinant feature of the former, in this part of the project, is self-initiation, or the self-produced agency that drives people in the direction of radical narratives. Notwithstanding these clearly different emphases in the outcomes, there are some shared findings about the main questions.

The role of family in radicalisation

With regard to the importance of family in the radicalisation, the interviewees in the three countries gave little weight to the influence of parents or the educational environment. Sam, a British interviewee, saw no connection between family and his journey, highlighting his independent nature and determination. Similarly his family over the years has been both accepting and broadly unaware of the specifics of his activities, despite their closeness. A Dutch mother suggests that it is difficult for a parent to prevent radicalisation from taking place:

> "Because that's the thing with teenagers: you have nothing to say, because teenagers think they know it all. "Yes mum!" or "Yes dad!". It's the same when you would tell them that smoking, or drinking, or drugs is bad for them. The more you tell them, the more they do it in secret."

In the Danish cases it appears that parents were often not around to notice or to prevent radicalisation. Leslie's mother, for example, worked long hours and went out a lot. The same was true of Nicko's parents: Nicko and his brother were sometimes looked after by their grandparents, but mostly, they just spent time by themselves, playing computer games and watching TV.
The data revealed that in this sample there is, at most, an indirect influence of family on radicalisation. In the great majority of interviews the mere suggestion that family members may have played a role in subsequent radicalisation is countered and dismissed. In cases where the family climate prior to radicalisation is mentioned, it is always in combination with non-familial factors, such as bullying at school, harassment on the street, or personal fascination. When asked about the role of possible preventive actions by family members, an almost unanimous negation was recorded in the three countries of study. Either parents were not aware of the child's activities, or they were effectively incapable of doing something, due to other troubles, or because the parents were simply not around.

In a few notably deviant cases, respondents referred to their parents as fully aware and even fuelling the process into more radical narratives. In three families this was through inculcating clear-cut ideals in the child from a very young age. In three families the interviewees recalled a climate of extreme discussion at home in which the children were driven to the limits in political discussions with their parents. In the other families, no form of indoctrination or instigation was found. Instead of acting according to their parent's ideals or expectations, the radicalisation of most formers was directed against their parental values, or taken much more to the extreme than desired by the parents.

Whilst the childhood family is considered largely insignificant our respondent's journeys to and from violent extremism, there are some family-related dimensions that deserve more attention in terms of their indirect influence on the process. Whereas the childhood family climate was generally downplayed as a factor of significance, more importance was attributed to family in the context of the newly-established family or the future family. It seems that some youth and young adults in the radicalisation and de-radicalisation process are aware of, and do reflect on, their future as a family member, in terms of spouse, partner, father or mother to their own child(ren). Where partners were mentioned, they were rarely considered influential. The greatest impact was recalled as from the prospect of becoming a parent, or being a young parent. As shown in the country reports, this awareness could work both ways, radicalising or de- radicalising.
For example, a few stories, for example, led Jimmie to join the British National Party, such as a story that the school he and his wife went to, and where his son would go, was being turned into an all-girls Muslim school. After listening to the charismatic national leader at a meeting, Jimmie became a member, with a sense of mission:

> But you don't see the extremism then. You think you've become a defender and you think 'Oh, I'm a married man and I'd hate that to happen to my kids' and then all of a sudden you've got that defensive role and you think yes, I'm going to stand up for what's right.

But becoming a parent also often led to de-radicalisation. Bill, for example, was a member of a Muslim extremist group, but he began to have doubts about their approach. Bill did not have any problems with their beliefs but rather the way in which they went about their activities. He had too many scuffles with the police and he was fearful of losing his children. He therefore looked for another approach that didn't compromise his fundamental beliefs. Spouses appear to have had little effect on the de-radicalisation process: Kevin, for example, who was a Combat18 member, got married. His wife knew his political views, but after two years she gave him an ultimatum - either Combat 18 or her. Kevin said "This is life or death. If I don't stand up, nobody else is going to," and so they divorced.

Having one's own children could affect the issue either way, it seems: for one far-right participant the desire to protect his own children against Muslims was instrumental in his joining a group. For other young fathers, it was the experience of becoming a father that led them to question violence, not wanting it for their own children.

The interviews make very clear that there is no common linear path from a certain type of family into extremism. Individuals make unique choices that determine the amount of influence held by specific family members. On the other hand we do see the occurrence of particular events in the family, related to loss, illness, divorce and similar, that do not explain later radicalisation, but may have an indirect and much more complex connection with the

eventual outcome. Taking a little distance from what's literally said in the interviews, and reading with an interpretational lens, the respondent's biographies show that in some cases, childhood hardships have created a great deal of uncertainty. Especially when these personal and often existential uncertainties were linked with societal tensions around identity, they may have translated into a troubled transition in a more radical direction. We found no fitting explanation of why our respondents took a radical turn and other youth with similar family backgrounds turned to drugs, pornography or organised crime. Depending on the country, an imaginably complex relationship between childhood circumstances and radicalisation is found in roughly half of the cases studied. On one end of the spectrum is the Danish report with a clear majority of cases in which a series of unfortunate family events took place, and on the other end the British report found very little evidence for any link – even an indirect one - between family background and the radicalisation process. The Dutch report was between these two poles.

It should be made clear that from what is literally said in most of the interviews in all three countries, no direct connection between family life and the radicalisation can be deduced. We see many cases in which neither socio-economic conditions nor early socialisation variables seem to have been particularly determinate in relation to which strategy was chosen by which interviewee, and local conditions, friendships and coincidences seem to have played a much bigger role in relation to which kind of outlet or group/ideological affiliation the interviewee identified with. At the same time, almost half the individual trajectories reveal shocking events or circumstances with which the family had great difficulty coping, and as such may have made a radical alternative more attractive. In line with Wiktorowicz (2005), the role of family becomes relevant not only when there is a direct link between parental behaviour and radicalisation, but when individuals become radicalised out of 'cognitive openings' triggered by psychological crises that have, among other origins, an origin in the family. As explained in the British country report, such 'cognitive openings' lead people to search for new ways of understanding and relating to the world, which may involve them adopting radical ideologies. One recurring trigger listed by Wiktorowicz is, for example, death in the family, which can instigate a cognitive opening through emotional distress. Apart from singular agonising events, it is suggested that some violent actors also experienced unstable home structures, prompting a quest for stability, which may also be precipitated by a cognitive opening. The Danish data, for example, shows a high amount of structural dysfunctionality in families. Only one respondent describes her relationship with her parents as genuinely warm and loving. The other formers grew up with an overriding feeling that, at the end of the day, they had to take care of themselves. What's more, most explicitly reflect on this lack of trust and emotional security in the interviews, suggesting at least an indirect connection between this background and their radicalisation. Even when respondents did not generally highlight the role of the family members in their verbal accounts, it is worth looking at internal and external factors that put strong pressure on some families, and as such may indirectly have impacted on a youth's

move towards radicalisation. Factors outside the family can involve political conflicts on global scale that are seen as a threat to identity, but also parochial upheaval about a stop and search policy by the local police in a polarised neighbourhood. Issues such as these may feed an adolescent's unrest and anger, and again some families find it hard to cope with these intense feelings due to a lack of parental authority or support. Another theme that appeared more than once in every country is abusive involvement, either by relatives or the youth prior to their radicalisation, in activities that relate to hedonism such as heavy drinking and the use of narcotics. In some cases, this was clearly related to family in the sense that youth tends to interpret the inability of their family member or themselves to make safe and wise use of these products as proof that Western society is to be loathed. The human misery perceived as caused by this 'free society', and witnessed by the youth from nearby can create a cognitive opening for stricter law and order.

A final factor in which the relationship between external factors and the family becomes visible is that some formers have envisioned a career in the army, often inspired by a (family) legacy of struggle or combat. In every country we found cases in which the interviewee referred to the glorious role of a family member in an important conflict in history. Some of these parents had been in the service of a political movement or a side that fought for a very different ideology. Other parents had taken part in a military mission, serving one of the three nations of the study. This may point to various things. These families seem to be familiar with particular mental and/or physical frames of struggle, battle and heroism. Consequently and unsurprisingly, this view of conflict may have been echoed in their children's upbringing and indirectly have triggered an interest in radical groups that provoke conflict as well as defend against it.

Principal factors within the family that may have an indirect link with radicalisation are all kinds of experiences of painful loss, in combination with a difficulty offering emotional support or clear boundaries. In every country we found instances of child abuse. As one of our respondents said: 'for me, life was already radical before I got into the radical scene'. Experiences of loss include profound negative events in the close environment, such as illness, psychopathology, or death. Remarkable findings in this context are that almost two third of the interviewed families were at one time during the former's childhood confronted with an absent or unknown parent, and that barely one third of the interviewed formers succeeded in establishing a stable relationship with their father. In some accounts, when the parents divorced, the latent frustration of the child about their relationship with their father was exacerbated when they were kept away from a newly established family of the father, by either of the parents. In our view, this experience can be interpreted as a particular type of loss in which the stability of the childhood family is at stake.

Although it should be stressed at this point that only an indirect relationship was found between absent parenthood and radicalisation, the findings warrant more studies of troubled relationships with a father and their potential role in both recruitment and prevention. As remarked by Veenkamp & Zeigler (2014), "This is

especially true in the context of father-son relationship, and the strong role the father figure plays in many cultures. Experts described cases in which an absent father figure led to feelings of resentment and isolation, which sometimes contribute to a person's vulnerability to recruitment into violent extremism." The outcome of this study supports the recommendation that this topic be explored further, however, based on this study, any suggestion of a causal relationship between absent fatherhood and radicalisation is premature, and we should be careful of generalising too easily. An absent father does not necessarily increase the chance of radicalisation. This factor probably only comes into play in a specific polarised societal context in which radical groups start to prey on the uncertain youth who has no alternative safety net. Again, no simple causality scheme should be applied, because in another case, although brought up in the same family and recalling the same fragmented childhood, two brothers developed in completely opposite ways.

Moreover, and this should be stressed given the complexity of the trajectories encountered, even outstanding parental qualities are no guarantee against radicalisation. Some functioning families in the sample, who offered their children a warm emotional climate in combination with clear rules, were confronted with the very powerful emerging political conscience and/or uncompromising personality of their offspring.

Although this interpretation puts family factors closer to the front line than in our first analysis in which we looked for direct connections, these examples also show unambiguously that the general climate of upbringing is one among other important factors that may have contributed to radicalisation. In our sample, the moment fundamental questions were evoked by internal or external events, and the family had difficulties addressing these uncertainties, the first place to look for credible answers was in the traditional institutions. For many far-right formers this was the parental tradition of their parent's protest groups, more particularly the latter's activism in the unions for a socialist cause. For many non-convert Islamists, the first place to look for answers is the religion of their parents: an Islamic perspective on the world. In the cases of converted Islamists, it is not uncommon to have been looking for guidance in alternative religious traditions and practices, such as those offered by Catholicism or trough individual bible study. In all these instances, a very similar dissatisfaction can be observed when it turns out that the traditional answers from their parents, or the established institutions fall short of satisfactorily explaining the questions raised.

The radicalisation of many respondents seems to have been nourished by their disappointment in society's institutions. In all three countries we found that things leading to radicalisation included a frustration with the status quo and perceived stagnated democratic political process, and a desire to act more swiftly and with more impact.

Despite the scarce importance attributed by the interviewees to their childhood family conditions, we do believe that in some cases families play a role, in a different, more unexpected and indirect

sense. Apart from the difficulties in offering a coping environment that were found in several biographies, we were left with the impression that households, in their transmission of moral frameworks, may unwittingly have levelled the playing field for extremist influences to take root. Parents of former radicals who managed to offer an environment for a stable upbringing often also succeeded in inculcating moral standards and principles such as:
- be a good child
- be a good Muslim
- defend yourself
- protect the weak
- justice and honour can be more important than life
- defy hypocrisy

These are themselves apparently innocuous moral imperatives, and they are certainly preferable over the immoral imperatives characteristic of the few families that formed so-called hotbeds of extremism that sowed hateful ideas and practices in children's minds. These moderate moral lessons may still find a place somewhere deep in the idealistic make-up of a youth once they reach adolescence. We have the impression that these kinds of embodied worldviews become so entangled with an individual that breaking loose from them comes with a high cost of uncertainty or isolation.

Whilst the literature demonstrates that extremists are very keen to transform these ideals and abuse trust by placing it into the extremist narrative and agenda, these schemes can be upheld without any radicalisation or (support for) violence. In fact, we learned that many of our respondents still cherished the frameworks of their radical thinking without the element of violent action. We also know from the cult literature that children tend to over-achieve when it comes to their defence of the values and norms that were taught around the kitchen table. Apparently, one of the most commonly mentioned motivations in the entire study related in a sense to the issue of 'fighting injustice'. This concurs with the findings of earlier research into the motives of these youth (Devji, 2008; San, Sieckelinck & De Winter, 2013; Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks & De Winter, 2015). An important implication of this final finding is that not only do these families on their own seem incapable of directing this ideal for a more just environment or world, in a constructive direction, but these families also hold defendable moral ideas that in the hands of the young, and all the uncertainties they face, may be corrupted into highly problematic viewpoints about our society of which the parents often are unaware.

The role of family in de-radicalisation
Regarding the move away from radical groups or ideas, most people who join extremist groups eventually leave them (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2013, p.86), however, according to Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013), in 2013 there were less than 20 empirically-based publications on disengagement in a Western democratic context; a precariously thin evidence base for understanding this phenomenon (see also Barelle, 2015).

We noted that all respondents in this study had to be de-radicalised or disengaged, but in what state were the interviewees exactly? Almost all respondents in this study – with some exceptions – had denounced the use of violence, and had turned their back on simple enemy constructs, but many are still actively involved in defending their ideals, and have a worldview in which the struggle for ideals and identity take a central place. Once the role model of a skinhead, one respondent started reading other things, looking up to other martyrs who were willing to die for a principle. The idealism was still there, but reading helped turn it in different directions. Others have turned the page and have distanced themselves from actions and ideas alike, by trying to live a 'moderate' life.

Sieckelinck & De Ruyter (2009) distinguish the way we deal with ideals from the content of the ideals. Adopting this scheme, the following picture emerged from our data: most formers maintain their ideals, but their passion is transformed. Others transform their ideals, but retain their passionate intensity (for other causes). A minority give up both their ideals and their passion.

The interviewees placed very little weight on the influence of parents or the educational environment in their decision to turn away from the radical narrative. In all three countries, over all three strands of extremism, almost all informants describe their parent's role in the de-radicalisation process as non-existent.

Any importance of a family member in this process was hesitantly mentioned and most of the time in combination with more influential factors outside the family. When asked about the role of decisive actions by family members, an almost unanimous negation was recorded in the three countries of study. In cases where some participants described key figures as supporting and facilitating their journeys away from radicalisation, they were not seen as 'triggers', rather they were available to support the change that came from the individuals themselves.

Based on this study, the main three exit-strategies taken by radical youth who disengage are:

• Agency (self-initiation):
Leaving extremism is portrayed as self-initiated. It was unanimously stated throughout the study that external pressure or persuasion would not have changed people – the change came from within. The primus motor should be located in one's own intellectual reasoning. Change took place because people entered a new phase of life (for example by starting a family or through new education). This process may be accelerated by disillusionment with simplistic ideologies or the behaviours and actions of figures around them who did not live up to the ideals. Some reported a mixture of long-term unease and moments of clarity as part of process of disengagement. Others mention extreme violence as a direct trigger to leave. The bottom line, however, is the apparently overriding impact of internal processes of aging and growing up, enabling the transition from childhood to adulthood through adolescence. It is remarkable to see how, throughout the entire study, formers defined themselves clearly as self-organising, pro-active and self-reflecting agents, not as mere products of their environments.

As Daniel, a former converted Muslim says about his de-radicalisation process:

It really has been an autonomous process, it's really something that I did all by myself.

• Detention (isolation)
Some stress that they only started de-radicalising once they were caught by the police and/or incarcerated. Solitary confinement may function as the only safe way to create a distance from the extreme milieu and offer an environment in which reflection is possible and studying less clear-cut worldviews prompted. Malcolm, Danish, remembers how solitary confinement eventually caused him to de-radicalise:

Solitary confinement: that was the only thing that eventually gave me pause in a way, so that I started to think about my life in a different way. I can't recommend it as an exit-strategy, though! [laughs]

• Study (education)
Some formers did manage to absorb influences that deviated from their ideologies, without having to be locked up, by reading books that deviated from the ideals. Another key to change for some was starting a new study at university, as it made the existence of black and white issues seem less likely, and brought students into contact with other people outside their often close-knit radical circle. This was, for example, the case for a former Hizb ut-Tahrir member from Denmark who started university. He was confronted there with the incommensurabilities of his conviction in a whole new way, indirectly by his growing knowledge of philosophy, theology and critical theory, as well as directly by other Muslims in his class. A slow, but steady, process of doubt and intellectual detachment had begun.

As we said, the radicalisation of many respondents seems to have been nourished by their disappointment in society's institutions. We might expect to find a similar disillusionment as the motor of the process away from radicalism, for we do know that a perceived lack of effectiveness can result in breaking away from radical movements. We also know that disillusion with a group's ideals, and their strategies for reaching these can be decisive. Although this may be true in some cases of our study, the reasons people join involve the dynamics in the process itself, and are usually not easily mirrored in the reasons someone decides to leave. While, for example, many respondents were attracted by the camaraderie characteristic of many radical groups, few were convinced to leave for other friends or reasons of empathy. Where some had joined to find certainty in their lives, they eventually benefited from internal discussion within the group, bringing the acquired certainties back in question.

De-radicalisation is, as to be expected, a matter of mixed origins. Some do mention the role of peers and life partners, but few report a single (formative) person. Some notable and possibly inspiring exceptions were also found, however. In a few unusual cases, respondents referred to the significance of moral lessons earlier in the process. They seemed to have played a quietly supportive role in

the gradual process away from extremism. In other cases, the availability of parents or other close family members upon the decision to quit, or upon release from prison was deemed highly significant. It should be noted, however, that this availability did not force disengagement. It was only upon disengagement that they were allowed this role.

Finally, the notion of former was repeatedly questioned. Many respondents do not consider themselves 'former' idealists. Few are ashamed, rather the opposite: their identity is built around this idealism which evokes a sense of pride in that journey. Almost all remain politically conscious, but in different and more constructive ways. Because this idealism is still alive and kicking, the notion of 'former' had to be carefully explained as most, despite their change, experienced their own unique story as an unfinished journey.

Analysis: an interpretation of the results

Relationship to the literature

Consistent with the work of Christmann (2012) and Silke (2008), this study reveals no direct link between family and radicalisation. The influence of the childhood family climate in radicalisation and in de-radicalisation is considered relatively small by former radicals, compared to the influence of other factors such as the polarised climate outside, or exclusion and estrangement caused elsewhere. It seems clear that when considering the enablers and barriers that impact both radicalisation and de-radicalisation, families overall cannot be said to constitute a major factor.

In spite of anecdotal evidence from journalism that highlights the role of family members in preventing radicalisation, only an indirect role for family member actions is reported. These findings seem inconsistent with the outcomes of a similar research project conducted by Dutch colleagues among former Jihadis of the so-called Hofstad group (De Graaf & Weggemans, 2015). This study concluded that the individuals who had 'gone straight' again, were often back on track thanks to their families. Although we deem this a credible idea, our data does not allow for a similar interpretation. We do, however, consistent with Lützinger (2012) and Bjorgo & Carlsson (2005), believe that some family climates may indirectly offer, at most, a fertile ground, either for radicalisation or de-radicalisation. To explain this, we introduce the (theoretical) concept of the journey. This concept does not emerge directly from the empirical data in this study, but is designed to help to understand and connect certain elements in the investigated life stories without violating the data. The next section shows why speaking in terms of journey is helpful, and is followed by a section in which five ideal-typical journeys are presented.

Journeys

Every story is unique and there is not one decision or action of which the motives are completely retrievable. There is, however, one commonality in the pathway of the families we interviewed,

namely that the different routes they took all led to a shared destination – distancing themselves from extremism. While on a certain level, the biographies are indisputably all highly singular and incomparable, we do believe that more conclusions can be drawn if we look closely enough at what happened in the interaction of the young adolescent and their family environment on the road towards this often-reached common destination that we value so highly in a constitutional democratic society: active and peaceful citizenship. As the data shows, factors interact and mesh together in a complex manner that can often be very difficult to disentangle or differentiate in the case of any one person. Ultimately, it is the combined impact of a number of dynamic factors inside and outside the family that pushes and pulls someone into becoming a member of a radical organisation (see also Silke, 2008) Change is non-linear, it is the result of complex, intersecting junctures. These critical junctures may act as a 'tipping point' for predispositions. The critical life events approach suggests that different individuals experience one and the same event differently and cope with it in different ways (see Lützinger, 2012).

The complex varying mechanisms underlying every radicalisation process impede understanding the radicalisation process in terms of backgrounds, causes and profiles. Instead of set roots, we see different 'routes' that will only lead to extremism and terrorism in a small minority of cases. Instead of profiles we see pathways. Apart from the (shakiness of) root factors, there is much variety in the nature and the pace of the radicalisation process. Horgan (2009), for example, argued that the reasons for becoming a terrorist, staying a terrorist and then disengaging from terrorism were often different and context-specific. The non-linear nature of the radicalisation process demands a different, more dynamic analysis.

Radicalisation as a journey entails a (series of) transitional passage(s) into and away from extremism. As explained on p.21 of this report, Bronfenbrenner provided us with a theory of different systems levels that impact people's life courses. One system we have not yet explained is what he calls the 'chronosystem': the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course, as well as socio-historical circumstances. For example, divorce may trigger a transitional response. Researchers have found that the negative effects of divorce on children often peak in the first year after the divorce. By two years after the divorce, families navigate towards less chaotic and more stable environments. An example of socio-historical circumstances is the increase in revolutionary uprisings in those parts of the world with which many immigrant youth sympathize or the increasing normalisation of national values (whether Dutch, Danish or British values)narrative. In order to avoid the trap of a simple causality scheme, the journey-metaphor assists us in transcending singular factors. It turns out that the biographical approach evokes certain insights and impressions rather than fixed variables, let alone causes. The process is thus reframed as a journey or sequence of transitions from childhood to adulthood, transitions that require a certain level of navigation.

More than only routes and pathways can refer to almost anything anytime, but this study additionally shows that the radicalisation process can be characterised as a journey marked by a sequence of

transitions that require precarious navigation. Drawing on Kralik, Visentin & van Loon (2006) we introduce the language of transition in the following sense:

> "Most agree that transition involves people's responses during a passage of change. Transition occurs over time and entails change and adaptation, for example developmental, personal, relational, situational, societal or environmental change, but not all change engages transition… Transition is the way people respond to change over time. People undergo transition when they need to adapt to new situations or circumstances in order to incorporate the change event into their lives."

The concept of transition seems helpful in making sense of the radicalisation process and fits well with the biographical approach chosen in this study. As Kralik et al. (2006) note: "to further develop understandings, research must extend beyond single events or single responses." Speaking of transitions through the life course seems to offer distinct opportunities for enhancing our knowledge of the radicalisation process. The journeys that our respondents took cannot be understood merely as a collection of typicalities, but show a succession of certain transitional challenges. This shift from typicalities to transitions involves a different interest. The main questions are not what characterises the individual or what particular event did happen to somebody, but how was the individual's reaction to a complex situational setting and a sequence of events or critical life events dealt with? For example: how was the divorce of parents dealt with? What sense was made of illness or psychopathology in the family? How was the 'multiculturalisation' of the neighbourhood reacted to? How was the national ban on the burka discussed between peers? What was the reaction to the argument in the classroom that Abu Graib and Guantanamo are places where democracy has failed? The interviews indicate that, unless these matters and their interactions are properly dealt with, the questions are intensified and raised to an existential level: what does it all mean? What is my place in this society? Who is there not only to console me, but also to offer me an outlook on the world that makes sense?

In our sample, the moment these kind of fundamental questions were evoked, the first place to look for credible answers was in the traditional institutions. For the far-right formers this was the tradition of their parent's protest groups or their activism with the unions. For the Islamists the first place to look for answers is in the religion of their parents, an Islamic perspective of the world. In both groups, a very similar dissatisfaction can be seen when it turns out that the traditional answers from their parents or the established institutions fall short of explaining the questions raised. Examining radicalisation as a journey that is often triggered by this quest for more existential certainty enables us to see various things, and that it is not the destinations, but the transition from one phase to another that is key.

- Not merely the divorce, but the subsequent decision to prohibit a child from seeing their father seems to have a real impact, and triggers a sense of injustice or estrangement.
- Not merely the loss of a job, but the assertion that this decision has nothing to do with one's background, seems to set in motion a quest for stronger identity. This may either cause feelings of uselessness and depression if powerlessness prevails, or transform into anger, resentment and action if agency is tapped into.
- Not only the ban on burka, but the silent Muslim majority accepting increasing restrictions on religious practices, such as ritual slaughter, is seen as treason.
- Not only the rapid multiculturalisation of a neighbourhood, but the bullying by coloured classmates and not being taken seriously in one's fears and anger at home seems crucial.
- Not only the battle against cosmetic animal testing, but being mocked by 'superficial' peers who wear such 'immoral' products to impress others without reflecting on their actions determines one's path.

In these examples it becomes clear that isolated background variables are not always sufficient for understanding the radicalisation process. This may explain why radicalisation studies that look for a combination of statistical variables from population databases rarely reveal patterns. It looks like there are particular events, but also that the reactions to the events and the interactions between different events and wider circumstances are equally important. These interactions and reactions may require detailed biographic accounts from in-depth phenomenological field work. To respect these complex processes and at the same time enable an overview, the next section offers five ideal-typical journeys as points of reference.

Five ideal-typical journeys towards and away from radicalism

Based on the material in this study, we discern five main non-linear routes or journeys in and out of violent extremism. As two are only found once or twice, they are mentioned later, but not described extensively. Three pathways are more extensively dealt with. We will reflect on some of the defining elements in each of these transitional journeys. It should be noted that these journeys are ideal-types, empirically funded abstractions[29] (Weber, 1922) that help us to establish a relationship between data or events that could be left unrelated. It should be stressed that these five journeys have been carved out of a much more detailed and diversified reality. They are in every sense of the word 'ideal-typical' routes, of which a variety of configurations and combinations is to be expected.

[29] An ideal type is formed from characteristics and elements of the given phenomena, but it is not meant to correspond to all the characteristics of any one particular case. It is not meant to refer to perfect things, moral ideals nor to statistical averages but rather to stress certain elements common to most cases of the given phenomena. It is also important to note that in using the word "ideal" Max Weber refers to the world of ideas (German: Gedankenbilder «thoughtful pictures») and not to perfection; these "ideal types" are idea-constructs that help put the seeming chaos of social reality in order (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideal_type).

The routes of our respondents seem to be characterised by influences on the three levels in Bronfenbrenner's theory: from the micro scale family context and personality features, the meso scale neighbourhood and the radical milieu, to the macro social and political context. The challenge of navigating assorted transitions is seen in sequences throughout the process, starting from the pre-radicalisation phase, radicalisation, de-radicalisation, and finally the post-radicalisation phase.

JOURNEY 1 - Being pushed away

Although a very small minority of the respondents directly related the family context to their subsequent radicalisation, half the respondents situated their upbringing in a family context characterised by turbulence and instability. Some families were too busy making ends meet to monitor their children's activities, others did not succeed in offering the youth the necessary emotional support and boundaries, others lost dear family members to illness or divorce; others experienced difficulties coping with value complexity. Typically these families experienced problems with their functioning, often exacerbated by their location in a challenging neighbourhood or highly polarised context of everyday living, however, many families in the study were characterised by benevolence, and succeeded in creating advantageous internal dynamics. For some, an unfortunate chain of events was set in motion by contacts or exposure to influences from the surrounding environment; formative milieus, school or after-school networks. The youth, often triggered by events of loss or turmoil, may have found it hard to cope with reality, some experienced a lack of authority and/or emotional support, and consequently turned their back on the family before resorting to a surrogate family, where - at first glance - strong rules and care appeared to be much more available. Understanding this process requires insight into the different levels and layers of the ecological model and its complex interaction. Whichever levels are specifically at play, and for whatever reason, the first journey starts in a family context that is confronted with transitory or structural turmoil that impacts on the climate of upbringing. Once participating in radical activities, most of these individuals are very loyal to their surrogate family and generally show no interest in contacting the original family again. Cutting family ties is perhaps more easily done within a context where the young person is questioning the value systems of family members or the functioning of their family, nevertheless, where the intense bonds forged by tight knit groups – brotherhood- and a shared sense of destiny may have replicated the 'family', in most cases they do not 'replace' it.

De-radicalisation is usually triggered by a realisation that one's persona is full of hate and negativity. The everyday violence characteristic of many radical movements becomes unbearable and unliveable. After usually slowly moving away from this, the past-radical phase of this journey can be characterised as a time for licking wounds, and working on a stable, new family life (this is often a great problem unless the personal damage is repaired). In Journey 1 the bottom line is: to navigate the transition from child- to adulthood, these youth distance themselves from the structural or momentary problems encountered in the 'old' life of the original family. The main force for this move is a push away from the family environment, and in this process the political direction seems somewhat secondary.

JOURNEY 2 - Being pulled towards

While many of the respondents grew up in a challenging family context, one third of the respondents situated their upbringing in a fully functioning family context, characterised by stability, emotional support and clear boundaries. These families had somehow found a way to deal with threatening value complexity and succeeded in establishing a positive climate for upbringing, however, their child was also one day lured into a radical narrative. Most of these families are law-abiding, 'model' families, who manage to be closely engaged with the school career of their child. The child is often smart and ambitious.

Once confronted with an injustice, many of these youth develop resistance but cannot address these strong emotions in the institutions in which they are raised, and adopt a radical framework as an alternative framework or spiritual outcome. The main motivation seems to be a desperate need for justice, depth, and purpose in life. The youth, often triggered by events of local, national or transnational political significance, may find it hard to cope with dominant mainstream ideologies or geo-political transitions, and consequently turn their back on their family and the institutions incapable of answering this particular need. No matter which levels are specifically at play, and for whatever reason, the second journey starts in a family context that is more stable and nourishing than that of Journey 1, but somehow does not manage to address on their own the youth's particular feelings of discontent around political topics that often relate to identity issues.

During their participation in radical activities, most of these individuals want to develop themselves in their activism and may be given the status of 'the brains' in the organisation, an avant-garde title which makes it attractive to stay for a while. Nevertheless, de-radicalisation is to be expected one day, and is mostly triggered by a sudden awareness of hypocrisy and/or boredom. The everyday violence characteristic of many radical movements becomes unbearable and unliveable. Following desistance, the past-radical phase of this journey is often characterised by an unchanged militancy and passion for similar ideals, but in a more peaceful fashion.

The bottom line of Journey 2 is that in the need to navigate the transition from ambitious pupil to critical citizen, these youth are attracted by alternative narratives to make sense of the world's insensibilities. The main force for this move is a pull towards a conflict area or issue in which the identity-political pronunciation is key.

JOURNEY 3 - Passionate personalities

In almost a third of the cases, the former's biography appears to be linked to a personality that is attracted by extremes. While the majority of respondents seem to be either pushed away from their family or pulled towards the radical path, some interviewees reveal a personality attracted to extremes that interacts with the radical narrative and leads to a very serious, ambitious political or religious path. In many instances, as we learn mainly from their relatives,

these youth attracted attention during childhood. They may grow up in all types of familial contexts, as we had no indication that such a personality is triggered by a certain upbringing. Some are from fairly well off, middle-class nuclear families with resources and a situated place in their respective local communities, although the parent-child relations may not be unproblematic. Most have had, since they were children, an enormous need to be at the centre stage, obtaining attention, dominating and showing off, intellectually as well as physically. Coming of age, these children express a need for challenge, excitement or focus. Whichever levels are specifically at play, and for whatever reason, the third journey starts in a family and societal context that somehow does not manage to cater for the youth's particular make up and need for focus around complex topics that require a decent amount of study. Going to lengths for their beliefs, some of these youth prove capable of learning by heart almost entire religious or ideological books but there comes a point when these books don't work any longer, so that they become deeply bored and unsatisfied with the content. For these youth, what probably sets them apart from others is that their acquaintance with different intriguing ideals may work as a way to create distance from the radical milieu. The past-radical phase of this journey is often characterised by a passionate commitment to a very different ideal. In this third journey the bottom line is as follows: to navigate the transition from child to adult the individual is inclined to push boundaries and go at lengths for everything they encounter in an all-or-nothing lifestyle. The main force is personal character and agency.

The distinctions between the three ideal-typical main routes call for more explanation. Distinguishing between a route in which the push away from the family is key on the one hand, and a route in which the push towards adventure and purpose is key on the other hand, is in most instances easy to do, however, if someone in the interviews was called an odd personality, or constantly looking for extremes, this may interfere with one of the two routes. It should therefore be stressed that indications of a personality of extremes do not always overshadow political reasons for joining a group. It means that the reasons someone joins a particular group are not always transparent and should be combined in every equation. For example: how politically or ideologically pronounced is someone in their all-or-nothing lifestyle? Another predicament within the categorisation into different types of routes is that someone who is mainly pushed by their family may be increasingly pulled towards a more politically pronounced identity. We should therefore not see the three routes as mutually exclusionary. Although in our sample, we did not find a case that combines all three main pathways, we should not rule out its possibility.

Rare journeys
Furthermore, An unusual case analysis revealed two remaining journeys in the data to a much smaller extent. In two cases, the youth entered radical milieu through a love relationship with a charismatic member or leader. In this particular journey, there seems to be a distinct need for answers, recognition and love that is fulfilled by close presence to a person who provides clear answers

and recognition, and sometimes love as well. De-radicalisation is caused by breaking off the love relationship, and the post-radicalisation features a challenge to engage in a more constructive relationship.

Finally, in two residual cases, the youth were indoctrinated by a family into an undemocratic ideology.

This journey starts with highly ideologically driven parents, whether aimed at building a soldier's mentality against the rulers, or a system-critical orientation in support of the underdogs of an unjust society. The child will not know better than bonding within its familiar environment and de-radicalisation can only take place by creating distance from the family. Post-radicalisation life will require serious trauma counselling.

Note that the two latter pathways are so rare in this study that their significance cannot be easily assessed: the love relationships that draw people into radical groups on the one hand, and the household hotbeds or fanatical families who inculcate hate in their children at a very young age, are so seldom found in this study that they will require more corroborating research. The expectation however is that every case can be understood more or less as one of the three journeys. Each case can thus be enriched by attaching 'weights' to it: For example: Person X was mainly pushed away from their family and subsequently developed a political project based on strong ideals, or Person Y was pulled towards radical ideology, offering them a challenging environment in which to test their own limits.

The central role of developing identities
Many giants in the field of psychology, such as Abraham Maslow and Lawrence Kohlberg, have recognised that physical adulthood does not automatically mean full psychological maturity. Simply put, there are stages of spiritual development that we all must realise. As became clear throughout this study, identity issues are at the centre of radicalisation. All in all, the interviews uncover stories about, and a number of strategies for, dealing with troublesome transitions from childhood to adulthood. Although the stories are very different, they nevertheless have common traits in that most of them revolve around common themes like 'identity/being somebody', 'loneliness/emptiness', 'the individual vs. the group', 'a sense of belonging', 'recognition and understanding', 'meaning', 'alienation' and the like. What binds the different scenarios is an urgent demand for answers to their uncertainties - who am I? Where do I, or we, belong? What is my place in the world? What actions are good? - followed by a supply of frameworks offering flawless answers and spotless solutions to these questions. A common element in all these accounts is a troubled search for one's place in society and for the meaning of life. For these youth, identity and certainty are the two 'products' that radical groups seem to supply better than mainstream society institutions do: purpose and belonging. These concepts entail more than meaning and more than aims alone. They involve the aims that give life direction and meaning, and trigger what has been called the quest for 'significance' (Kruglanski et al., 2014): a reason to live and excel: being something, a respected member of a group or feeling noticed and

recognised by society. In all five routes, the youth is navigating the transitions marking the passage from childhood to adulthood; in all five it becomes clear that the journey towards or in favour of a certain ideal or utopia has more developmental impact than the goal itself. In all five, individuals experience difficulties and hardship in their childhood when trying to incorporate all changes on various levels of their existence. Finally in all five defined routes, the motivations for embarking on the trip appear to be very diverse, but without any exception, and all journeys show a real determination to a better life. It is telling how their ideals impact their identities long after the radical phase. This lifelong impact of ideals on identities is reminiscent of the Spanish sociologist Castells' book on identities. Castells (1997,2010) differentiates three sorts of identity:

1. Legitimising identity: A set of logic and meaning introduced and propagated by the ruling powers, in order to rationalise, reproduce, and expand existing rule.
2. Resistance identity: Constructed in response to devaluation and stigmatisation; where social actors build "trenches of resistance" in opposition to the ruling norm. This formation leads to communes or communities of resistance.
3. Project identity: the construction of a "new identity that redefines their position in society and, by doing so, seek the transformation of overall social structure".

The first is the identity of the status quo. The second is the opposite: the identity of attack on the status quo. The third is the identity of the active and peaceful citizens. A pattern that can be found in many cases in this study is that initially children grow up in a society ordered by a legitimising identity (1), but when they grow older, as a youth they become involved in activities that reveal a resistance identity (2). It should be noted here that Castells, already in the 1990s' (long before the attacks on 9/11) understood international jihadism as the most striking modern example of this category. A final pattern emerging from our data is that the majority of cases shows that a step from Identity 2 to 3 is also taken. From this, it seems that one of the main challenges is to motivate people in stepping from resistance to project identity. A complication, however, is that in this study this particular step is largely self-initiated, and seems to be taken by themselves and only by themselves, with no support at all. On the one hand, if this response reflects the reality of desistance, it may limit possibilities impacting this transformation. On the other hand, the fact that these respondent's biographies show a transformation from Castell's categories 1 to 3 is highly insightful and hopeful.

Limitations

All research suffers from limitations. Ours is –alas- not an exception to that rule. This section describes the limitations that have the greatest potential impact on the quality of our findings and our ability to effectively answer the research questions.

The main limitation concerns generalisation of the findings. It should be clear that this study still is in a preliminary phase and our results cannot be generalised over other populations. We conducted only a limited number of interviews and were not be able to speak with every respondent's parents, siblings, peers, or other significant persons. The content of this report is not statistically representative and cannot be generalised in any 1:1 kind of way. It is important to stress that since the material is not generalisable and thus not statistically representative, it is at best very difficult to hypothesise which courses of development are prevalent and which are especially unusual in relation to the majority of youngsters 'out there'.

When researching a field as sensitive as 'radicalisation', the really valuable insights are necessarily tied up in personal, empirical accounts and experience – and to lure this information out and give it form and coherence, narrative analysis is perhaps the only real option. When researching a topic such as radicalisation and working with a population of interviewees who are more than unusually wary and cautious about opening up and giving away personal information, trust between the parties is imperative. The informal format of intimate, personal encounters between interviewer and interviewee has most certainly been the main reason that the large number of unique insights and deeply personal accounts has come out of the study and been made available.

As Rudestam (2015) has it:

> "The qualitative study emphasizes the "thick description" of a relatively small number of participants within the context of a specific setting. The descriptions of the participants or setting under study are sufficiently detailed to allow for transferability to other settings. Samples can change as the study proceeds, but generalizations to other participants and situations are always modest and mindful of the context of individual lives. Moreover, generalization is the task of the reader rather than the author of qualitative studies."

Lifting more general patterns, couplings and tendencies from qualitative material of this kind is quite possible anyway, however, but demands a truly qualitative approach and hermeneutical sensitivity. The insights that follow from such effort, however, when made conscientiously, are nevertheless distinguished by a deeper quality than mere statistical representativeness – it has the capacity to say something truer and more important about the human condition and what it means to be alive in a concrete world at a concrete time.

Apart from the limits of generalisation, qualitative research is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher and more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies. The researcher's presence during data gathering, which is often unavoidable in qualitative research, can affect the subject responses. A potential pitfall of this research is the assumption in the overall research rationale that families are relevant and important in radicalisation and de-radicalisation. This meant a potential predisposition in questions asked: both interviewers and respondents were searching for elements, which may have both

given extra salience to such features, as well as ignoring or downplaying other influences.

Another pitfall involves all the people we did not talk with, for whatever reason. In a population such as 'formers', where it has been somewhat difficult and not always straightforward to locate and obtain consent from potential interviewees to talk with them and their families, there is reason to believe that those who agreed to participate may after all represent a less conflicted, more socially well-functioning subgroup than the hypothetical, largely undefined whole of 'formers' 'out there', who we naturally still do not know much about. This pre-selection, due to the recruitment strategy of the study, may be part of the reason the number of cases of indoctrination by family members is so low. More generally, families averse to the goals of this research will be less inclined to participate. The backdrop of current wars in Syria and Iraq was also difficult with regard to people with links to Islamist extremist circles. This meant it was sometimes hard to get people to talk, or to identify family members who would be willing to be interviewed.

Once contacted and recruited, not all interviewees responded positively to the research design. This may be due to the phenomenon of 'master narratives' (Maftei, 2013) where a personal experience has been communicated so many times that immediate recall and emotional involvement has been transformed to a more or less structured standard account, which the narrator can then deliver without entering the deeper layers of memory and reflexivity. For some interviewees in this study, this was certainly the case. Since 'extremism' is quite a contested domain and since it can therefore be hard to localise interviewees willing to participate, tell their story and expose their inner world to a stranger (the researcher), there has been a tendency to end up with what can be described as 'the famous cases' in the given country researched. These 'cases' are people who, after their exit from a radical organisation or group, have dedicated a significant part of their lives to exit work and 'telling their story' in order to enlighten and inspire others, who may find themselves in similar circumstances. These accounts bear the impression of such 'master narratives', which is not unproblematic when used in empirical research. In this study, the issue of 'master narratives' has essentially been dealt with by modifying the style of interviewing and adapting to the interviewee's needs whenever necessary.

It is clear to see that the participants did not necessarily have a coherent set of causes that led to their radicalisation. It is important to realise the inconsistencies in their stories, but biographical research shows that lives are not consistent, and constructed life narratives represent no single truth. As one member of the research team said about the findings, we should be more sceptical of a story that is entirely coherent than of a story that shows inconsistencies. The data collected is very heterogeneous. In many ways, the real value of the case studies lies in reading them as unique narratives contextualised on their own terms.

Given the fact that grounded theory study is inductive and theory evolves as the data is collected and explored, establishing a precise

sample size beforehand is not always possible or recommended. While it is unlikely that each separate country was convinced of saturation after 20 interviews, the combination of all the material obtained by the three research teams did show some redundancy. Of course, in this sort of field work, real saturation doesn't occur because each new respondent has something unique to contribute to the study. As Josselson and Lieblich (2003) argue, it is usually the researchers who become saturated.

Although there are some ideology-specific traits, we mainly drew out underlying similarities. Researching the different strands of extremism in the various countries did not enable us to make an intricate comparative analysis between the far-right, violent jihadist and animal activist movements.

It may be advisory to spend more time with the participants than we were able to do within the temporal and financial limits of this project may be advisable. A more sustainable relationship with the interviewees may allow for checking biases or distortions, exploring the participant's experience in sufficient detail, and ultimately revising working hypotheses, as more data may become available on a particular case. An alternative test of this validity could be designed by asking other investigators to check our original sources of data.

A logical follow-up project, taking its point of departure from this study, would be to continue the qualitative format, but expand the group of interviewees to also include experts and social/street workers, such as after-school teachers and volunteers at recreation/ sports centres, who spend a lot of time with youngsters and often have a thorough knowledge of their strategies and long-term developments. It would of course also be extremely interesting to – somehow – gain access to more troubled groups, that is, the 'black box' of people who refused to participate in this study.

Finally, if this study was to be replicated, and we hope it will be, it is likely to produce similar results under the same circumstances. Its reliability depends largely on the systematic way in which the data was recorded, transcribed and analysed so that other people can understand the themes and arrive at similar conclusions, however, given the historicity of the subject, the same circumstances are not expected and will be difficult to reproduce in the future. As this sample contributes to our knowledge of the radical careers of people some ten or even twenty years ago, this knowledge serves our understanding of the past, and cannot easily be extrapolated to the present or future. In this day and age we see that youth take –literally - different journeys to those taken before, and therefore partly different outcomes from different journeys should be expected from follow-up research into the role of families in more recent forms and shapes of radicalism.

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PART VI: DIRECTIONS FOR ACTIONS

(Dr. Stijn Sieckelinck & Prof.dr. Micha de Winter)

Recently, a great variety of family interventions have seen light in the countries of this research and beyond, ranging from individual counselling to family hotlines to family talk groups. During the Copenhagen workshop Intervention Methods in May 2011 (part of the EU funded project on de-radicalisation), Dutch, Danish, and British participants discussed the importance of family members in de-radicalisation processes (supporting, or, conversely, enabling radicalisation). A few known cases were discussed where family elements were involved in the counter-radicalisation work (i.e. mentoring in Denmark, family support in London-Hounslow). These show how difficult though vital it is to engage with family members. To fill the perceived lack of knowledge and practical perspective, the persons present at this discussion (and backing this proposal) decided to investigate opportunities in this area in the future. The idea evolved in Dublin during the Google SAVE conference with former extremists later that year. Some stories revealed touching examples of the importance of family (apparently, according to these testimonies, one of the first steps that extremists take on their path of de-radicalisation is to call their mother). This gave rise to the idea of focussing on former extremists, to make use of the wealth of knowledge and experience that they and their families have on radicalisation. A troubling example of the enabling role that family can play emerged in a Der Spiegel item on German neo-Nazi families giving their children a nationalist upbringing, with holiday camps and private schooling on Nazi principles. Since 2014, similar indoctrinating environments have been established by Islamic State militants.

The question we would like to ask is whether these interventions are sufficient from the perspective introduced in the previous chapter. In other words: do they help youth in navigating often troubled transitions? We answer this question with some recommendations that follow more or less directly from our findings, and are expected to make a difference in future interventions.

Although current arguments for family and school interventions may sound solid and convincing, it is not always entirely clear how they relate to empirical evidence on this matter. From this study it appears that parents are seldom the direct cause of, and even more seldom the solution to, radicalisation. Consequently, policy and practice should always be informed by a multitude of outlooks, and look for combinations and cooperation with actors other than the parents. There are almost as many types of influence as there are participants, the pathway into and out of extremism remains *sui generis* and the influences remain almost as unique as the individuals themselves. It is thus not easy to derive firm policy implications with regard to interventions in families and family life. In designing policies, the leading thought should be that one size does not fit all. Some 'model' families are confronted with radicalisation, in other cases the relationship with parents is troubled for years if not the entire upbringing. If the latter is the case, one should not expect too much of programmes that set out to enhance technical parenting skills against radicalisation, however, the often-reported sense of exclusion or rejection can be alleviated by the right parental response or, should we say, 'presence'. It seems that basically 'being there' as a parent - particularly as the father - may play a role that is

to this day underestimated in radicalisation research. If the parents succeed in being sensitive to large existential questions, they may be of significant value in their child's journey. An important implication of the marked transitional sequences in the radicalisation process is that each journey probably implies a different type of support or policy. If the family is largely absent and the push away is stronger than the pull towards, one may be best served by mainly practical support with the aim of helping repair the strength of the household. If the family is present and the pull towards is stronger than the push away, the focus of support may better shift away from family to the youth themselves, and aim to create alternative channels to direct the emerging political agency. Both strategies may also be helpful for a passionate personality, yet whether the practical or the spiritual route is taken, this person may on top of that benefit from tailor-made psychological counselling. Based on this study, which recommendations would be in place to enrich the (ideas behind) already existing interventional initiatives?

Recommendations
- Authoritative coalitions: peer support and moral guidance
- Identity and belonging
- School education: information and awareness
- Professional help and exit
- Support alternative agency

1. Make parents and schools partners in authoritative coalitions

The phenomenon of radicalisation shows that democracy in European societies cannot be taken for granted. Whilst diminishing the role of parents in radicalisation and de-radicalisation, this study also demonstrates how parents often feel incapable when confronted with radicalisation. In cases where the family still has social and emotional resources, a general recommendation is to repair or enhance the centripetal power of families, by encouraging an emotionally warm climate for upbringing, and clear boundaries. A similar problem of unfamiliarity and ineffectiveness is experienced by many school boards and teachers. Many practitioners feel threatened and do not know how to react against the conspiracy theories that abound in some classrooms and may incite radical ideas or actions. This unfamiliarity and perceived powerlessness, urges us to concentrate our efforts on innovative joint interventions.

In a survey conducted by ConnectJustice in the UK, citizens were asked about their opinion of the foreign Jihad fighters and their families. The results show a high endorsement of the idea of the "criminalization of their family members in the UK" as if they are somehow responsible for their relative's choices and actions. In the extended families, anyone who supports Islamic radical activists should be stripped of their citizenship and thrown out of the country. It appears that the violent reality of foreign fighters has an effect on the way their families are looked upon, but families of radical youth should not be criminalised, as this study shows that

parents have only a minor influence on the radicalisation and de-radicalisation process. The stories of these families may help us to see that everyone can be confronted with radicalisation, and that it is not distrust and victimisation, but support and empowerment that should be in place for those who are. Instead of criminalisation, parents should be informed about radicalisation, and should be involved and made partners in countering the radicalisation process (see also Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2015). If students are expressing violent extremist views, there should be intervention with their families, not to warn of expulsion, or highly negative implications, but to point out that such views are not acceptable in the school. The key is to say that the school wants to work with the children, so that the family does not feel picked on for their views but can be part of what we would like to call an authoritative coalition.

While schools may have a role in flagging individuals who are most eager or vulnerable, this study shows that a more encompassing educational approach is in place. It is up to pedagogical and educational actors to find ways of understanding youth who feel attracted to radical narratives, to help them develop alternative means of resistance, and as such work on their bonding with democratic society. Schools play a key role, but teachers and school boards should not be expected to deal with this by themselves. Fostering democratic citizenship requires cooperation between various actors as attention to youth ideals – even if they do not incite violence – is part and parcel of democratic education (Sieckelinck et al., 2015). To guide this process, we believe that in some contexts authoritative coalitions may make a difference. Authoritative usually means a large amount of rules, monitoring, and control by adults, combined with a large amount of support, warmth, and affection displayed by the adult (Schaffer, 2009). Teachers, parents, spiritual or religious leaders, volunteers and police officers need to form a coalition that can push this authoritativeness forward when, coming from very different backgrounds with very different aims, they work together on the same agenda: preventing youthful idealism from turning into extremism by promoting active and peaceful citizenship.

If the various partners in a coalition subscribe to this agenda, they have two important roles: peer support and moral or spiritual authority. The coalition not only supports educators by mutually addressing their uncertainties and suggestions, it is also a visible collective of people whose concern is the youth's democratic development. This coalition then is (no longer) a collection of individuals who – without any obligations – enter dialogue with radicalising voices, but as responsible citizens represent a moral or spiritual benchmark within democracy that enables the youth to test and sharpen their viewpoints and ideals in an intergenerational relationship.

Of course, these coalitions will not see light without effort. It requires well-focused initiatives by credible parties at local community and policy level, and in a later stage an international overview of good and less good practices. What these practices all share is their socialisation approach, aimed at building trust in communities. While strategic military coalitions are assembled to fight against extremist forces all over the globe, authoritative

coalitions may contribute to helping youth who grow up in this polarised world, not turn their back against the democratic project under construction.

2. Engage with identity quest

Identity is one of the key concepts for grasping radicalisation. In line with other biographical studies on the topic, this research project presents the move to a radical environment as a refuge to work on identity issues. Erik Erikson (1968, 1987) regarded identity formation as the central psychosocial task of adolescence. He identified four aspects of optimal identity: (a) becoming and feeling most like oneself and experiencing a subjective sense of comfort with the self; (b) having a sense of direction in life; (c) perceiving sameness and continuity of the self from the past, in the present, and in the anticipated future; and (d) expressing an identity that is affirmed by a community of important others.

Identity is at the very core of radicalisation, in the sense that all formers were looking for a strong identity, but this does not imply that radicalism itself is an identity. *Identity is better understood as a set of performances.* Youth who feel attracted to radical ideas make use of scripts (Goffman, 1959). Drawing on dramaturgical theory, it pays not to focus on identity as such, but on the performances of young people with regard to their search for identity. Judith Butler, in speaking about gender, says that identity is "performative in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express. The same counts for radical identity.

While these youth performances may seem 100% certain, the identity itself is far from that. One father recounted how his daughter listened to Quran verses while watching the MTV-soap 'Jersey Shore' known for its picturing promiscuity and half-naked (at best) bodies.

Coming of age in an era of identity politics, the search for identity may be troubled and result in bolstered identities. As we know, youth with radical sympathies often build armour around themselves by adopting certain idioms, clothing and other symbols. Extremist ideology armours their followers against other influences by offering an identity that is outwardly hermetically closed, however, no matter how strongly these youth present themselves, the individual is not an impermeable entity whose ideals are set in stone; they are still in development (though much effort is made to make them look static and firmly anchored in the person). They are developing, which means that they can still be formed/countered. A useful notion to defuse this situation may be the view of identities as essentially hybrid in nature. More than in full-grown identities, hybrid identities may have ways in for family members, teachers or other significant persons - they can make use of the small holes in the armour.

Although calling someone with interest in radical idea(l)s a radical or extremist may sound obvious and logical, it may in fact add to the bolstering of their single identity. None of our formers turned out to be only far-right patriots or violent Jihadi. This argument is not

about political correctness. It is a consequence of our premise that radicalism is often mistaken for an identity. Moreover we have the impression that during the process of radicalisation, the so-called ideological identity is used to their advantage: we *are* such or so, which means you cannot touch us. For all these reasons it would be better to speak of youth who perform a radical or extremist act.

Adolescence is the transitional phase in which a person has to navigate the transformation from a childhood identity to an adulthood identity. As we know from development psychological theory, this is a major task because every teenager needs love, guidance and purpose. In a societal context that is characterised by continuous fierce political debate about identities, so-called identity politics, this developmental task seems even more precarious. Judging adolescents by their subversive views or activities is thus understandable, but not altogether wise, as young persons, to successfully negotiate the transition from childhood to the adult world, have to perform an array of developmental tasks in which the status quo is never sacred (Erikson, 1968, 1987; Sieckelinck & De Ruyter, 2009). In their 'impressionable years', the 'world' begins to make an impression on the young person's mind. A particular event, confrontation, video or call for help or arms can make such an impression on young adolescents that they develop a passion for an ideal. This new-found idealism differs from the more common puberty problems to such a degree that all other behaviour becomes subordinate to it. Many young people explore modes of engaging with radical and alternative perspectives when grappling with identity issues. While adolescents already face many transitions in various domains of life (friendships, identity and in their families), a crucial time of flux follows when they begin to form views on international events and on their own socio-political identity' (Bhui, Hicks, Lashley, & Jones, 2012).

Due to this developmental dimension, and the need to discuss identity issues, educators, teachers and social workers cannot inscribe their educational efforts into the security and intelligence agenda without difficulties. While intelligence investigators look primarily for suspects, teachers aim to educate and transform their students. Although there may be an overlap somewhere, these goals are clearly distinctive. The difference is best illustrated by the way the domains approach radical youth. Intelligence and security services cannot but approach them as suspect and dangerous, whereas educational institutions approach their students as at least worthy of education.

Because radicalisation is an ideal-related phenomenon, we need to deal with it educationally. What's more: because ideals play a central role in this process, we may have more teaching options available to help youths who may turn to extremism than there are for those who may turn tot non-ideological addictions, aggression or non-specific criminality.

3. Start education on radicalism at school to raise awareness among students

Formers from all three countries recommended that schools should start programmes to warn their students about radical groups. These school programmes should warn about the manipulative character of some of the group members, how (ideological) communities that make you feel welcome and a part of 'something bigger' are not necessarily your real friends, as you can be lied to, used and incited to violence. The school programmes could also warn about the potential consequences of membership, and what the effects may be on family, future and work. Participants were often bitter about the 'lost years' they had given to movements, with little reward and often negative impact, and claim that they would not have gone down this road, if only they had known about the consequences. Some formers suggested that it would be best to show young people the harsh realities of what is essentially cult involvement. Videos, school packs and personal visits by formers could explain the journeys, and the consequences of imprisonment or being killed. According to some formers, a direct confrontation with possible consequences would be more effective than morali-sing to the young. It was important for schools not to involve authorities too soon, and not to criminalise behaviour. Anti-racist work in general was also supported, as were relevant projects in citizenship education. Anti-extremist work should be woven into the curriculum. Participants regretted not having such issues introduced when they were at school.

Although this advice makes sense from the former's perspective, their suggestions deserve scrutiny. Research into drugs and alcohol prevention and grooming programmes has shown that the effectiveness of awareness programmes in schools is not easily to determine, and therefore we should not blindly implement a call for more awareness programmes. The translation from a program-me goal (preventing youth from radicalising) to programme content deserves ample attention. In the British report inviting formers to raise awareness in the classroom was recommended, as was an urgent need for more evaluation research of these methods. Another promising line of intervention, albeit not evaluated properly either, may be the national Dealing with Ideals' [Omgaan met Idealen]-programme (assessed in Sieckelinck, Wegman & De Winter, forthcoming) in the Netherlands, which translates concerns about radicalisation into sessions about idealism and active citizenship. An important condition is the favourable context in which these programmes are implemented. Illustrative of this is the completely different way schools reacted to recent events of extremism on the European continent.

Education can go further than instruction about the dangers of radical narratives alone. Looking at radicalisation from a less anxious point of view, it would be an interesting challenge to include youngster's daily experiences, conflicts and emotions in the programmes. Of course, one can speak with them in idealistic terms

about what is evil about war or the violation of human rights, but if there is no room to discuss their own feelings or the hate or fear of certain others, education loses its credibility. Teaching resilience against extremism can go hand in hand with teaching peaceful resistance. Issues such as the rapid multiculturalisation of neighbourhoods, the bio-industrial footprint on the planet or lethal drone attacks without trial will need to be discussed, and classroom disagreement on these matters should not be considered failure. Neglect of this dimension may result in a highly undesirable situation in which adolescents either fall into a kind of nihilism, cynicism or stupefaction, or else they embrace radicalism. It is much more sensible, just as Davies (2008) argues, to provide room for youth's own narratives, perspectives, emotions and ideals. Naturally, this will sometimes lead to conflict, but the important difference from emotions and hostilities that are released on the streets - or worse, that fester away under the surface – is that they can be used in an educational context as a basis for constructive (i.e. controlled) expression of peaceful combat in an atmosphere of 'positive' conflict. (De Winter, 2012).

Some respondents made suggestions about the use of the internet as a tool of radicalisation or de-radicalisation: while this may or may not have been central to the formers in this study, they now acknowledge this as increasingly important in radicalisation. 'Live' chats with real extremists could be more powerful than just reading about them. It was felt there should be more control over the content readily available, but more so, a need to support people to develop tools of resilience against conspiracy theories, so as not to be taken in or radicalised negatively in response to internet content. Educational institutions in an open democracy will profit from considering radicalisation as a manifestation of democratic socialisation deficit. In these contexts, building resilience will be most effective through teaching resistance as well. It is therefore recommended that programmes of peaceful combat are developed and assessed. Awareness programmes should go hand in hand with exercises and activities that help students acquire peaceful protesting skills, as this is the only way to respect what we found was so vitally present in most of the interviews: the former radical activists sense of agency.

4. Offer radical youth and their families professional support to cope and to exit

In the current study, there is a general feeling among parents that it would have been easier to help, had there been more knowledge of available networks, institutions and programmes where advice and support could have been found. There should be much more official support for extremists wanting to leave groups, and for their families where relevant (see also Guru (2012) on the neglected needs of families of suspected extremists). In general, there seemed to be a lack of knowledge about existing networks where young people can receive social, emotional and psychological support in times of crisis. Participants felt let down by different authorities, such as the

police or youth care. More official avenues for support should thus be developed, as can be found in some parts of Europe.

The good news is that, according to an inventory made by Gielen (2015), we have recently seen a multitude of parent support initiatives that are diverse in form, key stages, and offered content. Among the initiatives in the category 'hotlines', Gielen identifies national telephone hotlines such as in pioneering country Germany with referral to specialised federal family support organisations, community based telephone hotlines such as in the Netherlands and Belgium, and municipal forms of family support, either for individuals or group-based such as in Denmark. The national hotlines that follow the 'German model' consist of a partnership between the government and civil society actors. All NGOs are funded by the government, but do not work as an extended arm of the government, police or security services. If additional help is necessary, families are referred to existing social work organisations. This German model has now been exported across Europe to France, Austria, and two London boroughs. In many other countries (e.g. the Netherlands and Belgium), examples of key figures within the community that provide family support can be found, working along the lines of the community-based support model. The municipal support programmes, in which local city councils have arranged a form of family support, are diverse (individually tailor made or group-based) and present in cities from Antwerp to Aarhus (DK).

The literature on what works in the field of counter-radicalisation is very limited. As such, there is no evidence-based family support model for individuals at risk, foreign fighters or returnees, however, drawing on realist evaluation and practitioner experience – mainly from the European RAN-network, Gielen –and we agree so far- considers family support a valuable form of help to relatives of radical activist youths. In these initiatives formers may have a significant role to play in understanding journeys, as they understand mindsets and have the authenticity to challenge ideology, motivations and extremist narratives in a more credible manner. Their testimonials can have a big impact on the students and create a good opportunity to open the dialogue (see also Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2015). Academically, we can learn from their reflections and actions and inform practical considerations.

5. Support alternative agency

This study shows that it is important that young people can express their ideas, even if these ideas are extreme. Interviewees feel that adolescents will otherwise search for answers by themselves, in case where there is no one to discuss their ideas, questions and concerns. They recommend that family members and/or teachers actively listen to these children and discuss their ideas. Debating their ideas would be a good means of calming extreme ideals, as through debate the youngsters would possibly find that their ideals do not match reality (see also Bartlett & Birdwell, 2010).

It was recommended that parents stay on speaking terms with their children. Many of the formers felt that they could not talk about

their ideals outside the radical groups, and therefore recommended that family should remain a source of help. Family should send the message that they are always there when needed, and should not distance themselves, however unsavoury or inexplicable they see the activities.

Our research also shows that youth may develop radical ideals even if the family context is conducive to wellbeing and flourishing, and therefore, we should support actors and collectives who have the potential to take over the centrifugal function of radical groups and practices.

A final recommendation would then be to offer young radicals an alternative way to express (different) ideals. Instead of simply banning the ideals, the pedagogical community could provide the youngsters with different means to pursue their ideological engagement, energy, and willpower to change the world and/or help others. Idealism should be tapped into, and young people should be given skills to organise politically in a 'good' local cause – for example, saving their library or swimming pool. This matches the recommendations by Davies (2014), particularly around critical or constructive idealism. Interventions with young (or even older) people would be more than just mentoring and attempts at disengagement, and be more about diversions of passion. The desire to preserve and protect community, which was part of the radicalisation, can be channelled into a positive community activity. An example of such an alternative is a non-profit organisation or a movement of young people who want to see the community leading the fight against global poverty and injustice. Young participants can, for instance, join in campaigns to live in a more environmental friendly manner, or visit and participate in a fair trade initiative that sells farm products from conflicted areas to consumers in the West. Initiatives like this not only work on a positive identity for youth but also provide them with rites of passage that help to navigate from childhood to adulthood.

In modern, multi-cultural society, identity is not given, it is something that needs to be constructed, but in our western societies it is not always clear which practices are available for constructing identity. What is clear though is that many of the practices in a radical group take the form of a rite of passage. Throughout this study, it appears that the spiritual development of youth is somewhat taken for granted in their environment. Through a renewal of the search for credible and contemporary rites of passage in modern western society (see, for example, Mahdi, Christopher & Meade, 1998; Grimes, 2000) we may become more capable of dealing with the troubled transitions of the adolescent that can feed into radicalisation.

Conclusions

How do we prevent youth's idealism from turning into hateful extremism? This report looks into the most intimate sphere of the radicalisation process: the household. The question about the role of family and upbringing in radicalisation and de-radicalisation has inspired a qualitative research study resulting in 60 in-depth interviews with former radicals and their families from three countries. Although extremism attracts great public interest and is extensively covered by the media, relevant empirical research work is still demonstrably sketchy. One reason for this may be that it is exceptionally difficult to gain access to these individuals and their families. Most studies are therefore based on media analyses or, at best, on second-hand data (e.g. filed documents) supplied by security services. This project set out to challenge this pattern and yielded the following results.

In contrast to often-heard journalistic stories on the importance of families, the respondents in this study rarely emphasised the role of their family in the radicalisation or the de-radicalisation process. Nevertheless, many cases did contain elements that, viewed through a biographical lens, one cannot help but interpret as influenced by events or habits in the family or during childhood. In our analysis, these elements combine to five distinctive ideal-typical journeys that can help order our thoughts about the complex process of moving from radicalisation to de-radicalisation. The most prevalent are the push away from a challenging family context; the pull towards a conflict area or topic; and a personality attracted by extremes. Two smaller, almost marginal pathways found in this study are initiation through a love relationship; and families as hotbeds of extremism.

These outcomes show that the family background is best not seen as a cause of radicalisation – let alone the cause – but it also demonstrates that a challenging family context can function as a fertile ground for radicalisation unless existential uncertainty or youthful idealism is addressed effectively. With regard to de-radicalisation, in all three countries, over all strands of extremism, almost all informants describe their parent's role as non-existent. The main desistance strategies mentioned were one's own aging and agency, solitary confinement, and reading and starting a new study.

The patterns that emerge in terms of family features and critical life events don't easily fit in the official government population databases that generally contain variables such as age, ethnicity, number of family members, profession etc. By using in-depth interviews, information was gained about aspects of the household that remain invisible in these big data statistics. The study demonstrates how small story research in this domain may be equally important as big data research. Moreover, the findings of this study allow to go beyond the often defended academic position that family background is insignificant as variable for radicalisation due to its diversity. Of course, even when childhood was utterly fragmented, many siblings did walk a different path and managed to stay away from extreme milieus for whatever reason. Meanwhile, the uncertainty in terms of identity and belonging that radical groups prey on, can be influenced by critical life events in the family, which intensify the youth's quest for clear-cut answers.

While extremism studies will always be connected to public safety issues, these interviews show the problems with approaching radicalisation from a security perspective only. Underneath the apparently impenetrable coat of the radical identity are universal needs that involve navigating the transition of childhood to adulthood. In our data, radicalisation emerges as a coping mechanism, as a way to explore the world, as means of resistance, as a

manner to ban existential uncertainties, as a way to be guided, as a mode to acquire answers, as a stronghold in difficult times, and as a context in which a firm self can be established. While the socio-economical position of people does not appear to be a strong determinant of radicalisation, a recurring theme in the motivations of radical youth is a struggle with the question: "What is my/our place in society?" Few radical youngsters deny being in any way motivated by social or religious tensions between groups in society. Plus many young radicals seem to be drawn to extremist groups to work on identity issues. By focussing too closely on the material conditions, Western science risks turning a blind eye to the spiritual and moral questions underlying the motives for joining radical environments.

The recommendations of this study have sprung from the realisation that interventions against extremism will have little effect unless these struggles underneath the shell are addressed sufficiently.

The main recommendation is to start building authoritative coalitions. This advice is inspired by the frequently heard complaint that no parent or teacher is up to the task of countering extremism. If individuals seem to fail too easily in this respect, would it not be vital to organise cooperative networks of all adults who feel they stand alone in this? Teachers, parents, spiritual or religious leaders, volunteers and police officers form an authoritative coalition when, coming from very different backgrounds with very different aims, they work together on the same agenda: preventing youthful idealism from turning into extremism by promoting active and peaceful citizenship. If the various partners in a coalition subscribe this agenda, they have two important roles: peer support and moral or spiritual authority. Along with this innovation, it is recommended that programs of peaceful combat are developed and assessed. The coalition not only supports educators by mutually addressing their uncertainties and suggestions, it is also a visible collective of people whose concern is the youth's democratic development. This coalition is then (no longer) a collection of individuals who –without any obligations- enter a dialogue with radicalizing voices, but represent as responsible citizens a moral or spiritual benchmark within democracy that enables the youth to test and sharpen their viewpoints and ideals in an intergenerational setting. In this environment teaching resilience against extremism can go hand in hand with teaching resistance against injustice.

Rather than placing the family at the centre of a focus in policy or viewing low parental quality as a cause for radicalisation, the empirical material shows that the interventions of parents and other significant others may rather be considered a safety net or a broad backdrop of emotional assurance 'to fall back on'. Rather than a main cause or influence in itself, it is clear that parents who can play one of the many important roles by maintaining a good communication with their offspring all the way through their radicalization process have a much better chance of stepping in and making an impact in helping a youngster change their course later on, if an opening occurs.

Finally, radicalisation ought not only to be considered a problem in itself, but is better regarded as a phenomenon which shows that we do not completely succeed in offering every youth in our societies that which they need. Extremism has roots in a context of identity politics and polarisation over issues such as religion and multiculturalism; in some families, children will lack the safety net that helps them overcome critical life events. Both conditions may interfere with the adolescent's development into active citizenship. Families, we believe, can play a role here, but do not deserve the burden of tackling extremism.

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Attachment

Topiclist Formers and Family - FORMERS

Age
Occupation
married/single
with/without children

Ideals
Which ideals / ideology?
When was the first time you came into contact with these ideals?
How? Any role model?
What was so appealing about these ideals?
How did these ideals develop?
How come you became so involved?
How far were you willing to go, to fulfill your ideals?

Household
In what kind of household did you grow up?
• facts: one/two parents; siblings; living standard; neighbourhood
• feelings: comfort; happy?; religious/spiritual?
Before you got radical, would you say your family life was on the right track?

Parent(s)
Did your parent(s) know about your passion for these ideals?
Their (his/her) opinion? Their (his/her) reaction?
Did you discuss your ideals with your parents?
Where did your parent(s) draw the line?
Did you keep in contact with them?
How was your relationship with them (him/her) during your 'radicalized' period?
Ideals parent(s)?
With what ideals were you raised by your parent(s)? How did they expect you to become?
If you were a parent, how would you react upon your child's ideals or radicalization? / Now you are a parent, how do you react …

Upbringing
Attachment → How was the relationship with your parents? Did you spend a lot of time together?
Support → Could you talk to your parents about problems, worries, uncertainties?
Control → Did you normally tell your parents about your where-abouts? Did friends visit you at your house? Did your parents know, who your friends were? Were your parents at home a lot?
Rules and regulations → Did you find your parents strict? Or easy? Were there many rules at your house? What kind of rules?

Deradicalization
When did you start changing your mind?
How did you become less radical / less engaged?
How did you experience this process? How long did it take?
Who was the most important person, influencing your route back to 'our' world?

Family
How did your parents, and other family members, react upon you becoming less radical / engaged?
Did this process change your relationship with your parents? In what way?
What kind of support did they offer you during this process? (emotional, practical etc.)
What role did this support play in your deradicalization?

Safety net
Did you or your parents seek professional help?
Were you offered any professional help during your process of radicalization- and/or deradicalization?
How did you experience this (lack of) support?
Were there any others who have supported you during your deradicalization or disengagement?
What role did this support play in your decision to disengage?

Topiclist Formers and Family - FAMILY (parents)

Family composition
Father/mother?
Married/divorced?
Brothers/sisters?

Ideals
How would you describe x?
What kind of ideals did x have?
What did you think of these ideals?
When was the first time, according to you, that x got involved in these ideals?
- How did you notice?
- How did you respond?

Why do you think that x was pulled so strongly towards these ideals?
Did x have an example / a charismatic person he looked up to?

Household
In what kind of household did X grow up?
- facts: one/two parents; siblings; living standard; neighbourhood
- feelings: comfort; happy? spiritual needs?

Was there any support from outside? (family / government / community)
Before x got radical, was your family life on the right track?

Relationships
What was x like as a child?
How would you describe your relationship with x when he/she was younger?
How would you describe your relationship during his/her radical period? Did you keep contact?
How would you describe your relationship with x at the moment?
Did you talk to x about his/her ideas?

Setting boundaries
Would you describe yourself to be a strict or a permissive parent back then?
Did you feel that x could possibly go too far in fulfilling his/her ideals?
Did you ever try to divert x from his/her ideas? How?

Where did you draw a line? What was x not allowed to do? Did you share this with x? How did he/she respond to your objections?

Support and advice
Did you ever ask anyone for help during the radicalization process of your child? (family, professionals)
Did you receive help? What kind of help?
Did this support help you?
What kind of support would you have liked to receive?

Control
Did x spend a lot of time on the internet?
Did you know what occupied him/her on the internet?
Did you talk about what he/she did on the internet? Did you talk about the content of his/her search?
Were there house rules on internet use?

Did you know with whom x was befriended/ interacted with? Did they ever come to your house?
Did you ever join x to an 'ideal related gathering'?

Deradicalization
How did x's deradicalization / disengagement take place?
How did you experience this process?
Did this process change your relationship with x? In what way?
Could you offer any kind of support during the deradicalization / disengagement? What kind of help? (emotional, practical etc.)
What role did this support play in the deradicalization / disengagement?

Finally, what would you advise parents who have a child that pursues extreme ideals?

Topiclist Formers and Family - FAMILY (siblings)

Family composition
Father/mother?
Married/divorced?
Brothers/sisters?

Ideals
How would you describe … ?
What kind of ideals did … have?
What did you think of these ideals?
When was the first time, according to you, that … got involved in these ideals?
- How did you notice?
- How did you respond? How did your parents respond?

Why do you think that … was pulled so strongly towards these ideals?
Did … have an example? Someone he/she knew?

Relationships
What was … like as a child?
How would you describe your relationship with … when he/she was younger?
How would you describe your relationship during his/her radical period? Did you keep contact?
How would you describe your relationship with … at the moment?
Did you talk to … about his/her ideas?

Setting boundaries
Would you describe your parents to be strict or permissive?
Did you feel that … could possibly go too far in fulfilling his/her ideals?
Did you ever try to divert … from his/her ideas? How?

Where did your parents draw a line? How did he/she responded to their objections?

Support and advice
Did your parents ever ask anyone for help during the radicalization process of your brother/sister? (family, professionals)
Did they receive help? What kind of help?
Did this support help?
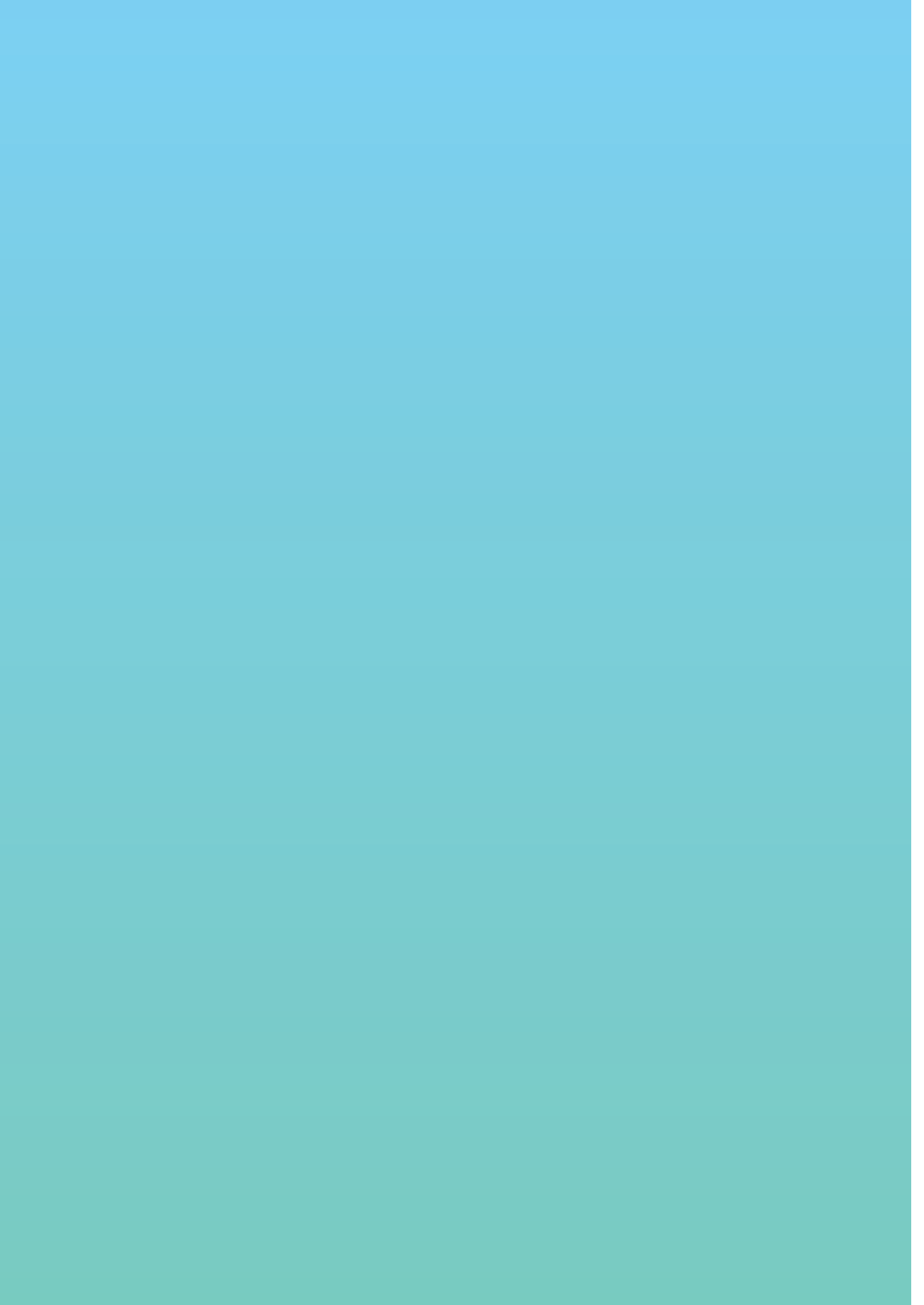What kind of support would you have liked to receive?

Control
Did … spend a lot of time on the internet?
Did you know what occupied him/her on the internet?
Did you talk about what he/she did on the internet? Did you talk about the content of his/her search?
Were there house rules on internet use?

Did you know with whom … was befriended/ interacted with? Did they ever come to your house?
Did you ever join … to an 'ideal related gathering'?

Deradicalization
How did … deradicalization take place?
How did you experience the deradicalization process?
Did the deradicalization process change your relationship with …? In what way?
Could you offer any kind of support during the deradicalization?
What kind of help? (emotional, practical etc.)
What role did this support play in the deradicalization?

Finally, what would be your advice to people who have a family members that pursues extreme ideals?