

MAFIA-JIHAD: AN INTERSECTIONAL STUDY ON YOUTH TRAJECTORIES AND INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR SECURITY POLICIES AIMED AT PREVENTING RADICALIZATION AND TERRORISM

This project is realized with the support of the Unit for Analysis, Policy Planning, Statistics and Historical Documentation - Directorate General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in accordance with Article 23 – bis of the Decree of the President of the Italian Republic 18/1967.

MAFIA-JIHAD: AN INTERSECTIONAL STUDY ON YOUTH TRAJECTORIES AND INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR SECURITY POLICIES AIMED AT PREVENTING RADICALIZATION AND TERRORISM



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

Next Wave



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

Next Wave

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Cecilia Polizzi

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Sergio Nazzaro

Nicoló Scremin

Acknowledging the contribution of
Tommaso Ricciardelli

DATE

June 2025

This project is realized with the support of the Unit for Analysis, Policy Planning, Statistics and Historical Documentation - Directorate General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in accordance with Article 23 – bis of the Decree of the President of the Italian Republic 18/1967.

The views expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

7

Rationale of the Study	8
The Role of the Family in Radicalization: A Literature Review	8
1. Family Transmission of Extremism	8
2. Family as a Vector of Radicalization	9
Objectives and Expected Outcomes	10
Research Questions	10
Methodology	11

CHAPTER 1.

UNDERSTANDING FAMILIAL ORGANIZED CRIME

13

1. Historical Context and Contemporary Trends	13
2. The Family as a Pillar of the Mafia: Structures, Hierarchies, and Organizational Frameworks	14
3. Parental Roles and Gender Dynamics in Mafia Family Units	15
4. The Intergenerational Transmission of Criminal Culture	16
4.1. Mafia Ideology	16
4.2. The Family as a Matrix of Mafia Socialization and Indoctrination	17
5. The Involvement of Minors in Criminal Networks	19
6. The Recruitment of Minors in the Mafia: A Genealogy of Practices and Processes	20
6.1 Initiation Ceremonies: The Role of Symbolism, Rituality, and Status Agreements	21
7. Case Studies	23

CHAPTER 2.

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY TERROR NETWORKS

24

1. Historical Context and Contemporary Trends	24
2. The Family as a Pillar of Terrorism: Structures, Hierarchies, and Organizational Frameworks	25
3. Parental Roles and Gender Dynamics in Family Terror Networks	26
4. The Intergenerational Transmission of Extremist Ideology	28
4.1. The Salafi-Jihadist Doctrine	28
4.2. The Family as a Matrix of Socialization and Radicalization into Violent Extremism	30
5. The Involvement of Minors in Terrorism and Violent Extremism	32
6. The Recruitment of Minors in Terrorism and Violent Extremism: A Genealogy of Practices and Processes	32
7. Case Studies	34

CHAPTER 3.

MINORS BETWEEN MAFIA AND TERRORISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

35

1. The Family Unit as a Vector of Ideological Transmission and Deviant Pedagogy	35
2. The Instrumentalization of Minors within Criminal and Terrorist Agendas	35
3. The Role of Women in Education, Ideological Transmission, and Militancy	36

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 4. **PATHWAYS FOR THE** **PROTECTION OF MINORS IN** **MAFIA CONTEXTS: JUDICIAL** **APPROACHES AND** **INTERVENTION MODELS 37**

1. Mafia Indoctrination, “Abusive” Families,
and Parental Responsibility 38
 2. Limitation, Suspension, or Termination of
Parental Responsibility: The Juvenile Court
of Reggio Calabria 39
 3. Outcomes and Prospects of Child
Protection Measures for At-Risk Minors 41
-

CHAPTER 5. **TERRORISM AND** **RADICALIZATION IN ITALY:** **A STATE-OF-THE-ART** **ANALYSIS 43**

1. Italian Terrorism: Historical Context and
Institutional Responses 43
 2. Radicalization: Context, Challenges, and
Intervention Strategies 44
-

CHAPTER 6. **DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC** **APPROACH TO PREVENTING** **CHILD RADICALIZATION 46**

CHAPTER 7. **THE ITALIAN MODEL AND** **POLICY PROPOSALS 49**

1. Lessons Learned from the Italian Model of
Child Protection in Families Affiliated with
Organized Crime: Insights for Preventing
Child Radicalization within the Family
Context 49
 - 1.1 Preventive Approach to the Protection
of At-Risk Children 49
 - 1.2 The Best Interests of the Child 49
 - 1.3 Non-Arbitrariness and Assessment
Criteria in Child Protection Measures 49
 - 1.4 Engagement of the Family Unit 50
 - 1.5 Holistic, Multidisciplinary, and Multi-
Sectoral Approach 50
 2. Policy Recommendations for the Prevention
of Child Radicalization, Violent Extremism,
and Terrorism 50
 - 2.1 Adoption of a National Strategy to
Counter Violent Extremism 50
 - 2.1.1 Rule of Law and a Specialized
Legal Framework 51
 - 2.1.2 Evidence-Based Responses 51
 - 2.1.3 Government Leadership and
National Ownership 51
 - 2.1.4 Multisystemic, Multi-Agency, and
Multi-Stakeholder Approach 51
 - 2.1.5 Specialized Training 51
 - 2.1.6 Ideologically Agnostic Approach
to Child Radicalization 51
 - 2.1.7 Monitoring and Evaluation 51
 - 2.2 Establishment of a Permanent
Specialized Task Force on Child
Radicalization 52
-

CONCLUSION 53

BIBLIOGRAPHY 56

Introduction

Despite the significant progress in containing terrorist threats, a wide array of actors spanning the ideological spectrum, foreign terrorist organizations, state sponsors, and lone wolves, continue to shape the nature of the contemporary international security landscape. Within this global context of terrorism-related risk, the recruitment and radicalization of minors have emerged as a phenomenon of critical importance in the tactical and strategic modus operandi of the Islamic State (ISIS), al-Qaeda, and their affiliates. At any given time, children and young people comprise between one-fifth and one-third of these groups' forces and receive training in intelligence gathering, the planning and execution of terrorist attacks, and terrorism-related activities.

In recent years, the threat landscape has further expanded through a digital ecosystem that provides terrorists and violent extremist actors with a fertile environment for the dissemination of violent narratives. The sharp increase in incidents of homegrown terrorism involving youth, particularly related to the dissemination of terrorist propaganda and the planning and execution of attacks, underscores the evolving nature of extremism and the heightened risks associated with the engagement of young demographic cohorts.

In light of the evolving nature of the terrorist threat, the ability to prevent and effectively mitigate the spread of violent ideology and radicalization has become central to security. Terrorist and violent extremist organizations systematically target children and young people, aware that their developmental stage, psychologically, cognitively, and emotionally, renders them particularly vulnerable to ideological indoctrination and manipulation. In many legal systems, the limited criminal liability of underage individuals further incentivizes their recruitment or exploitation for terrorism purposes. As a result, the targeting of minors has become a strategic priority for terrorist and violent extremist groups. Conversely, efforts aimed at prevention, disengagement, and deradicalization for children exposed to terrorism and violent extremism remain fragmented and under-resourced. This imbalance risks reinforcing cycles of instability, fostering intergenerational transmission of extremist ideologies, and fueling the emergence of new waves of terrorism.

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis, thousands of minors from the European Union, either traveling alone or with family members, have reached conflict zones in Syria and Iraq with the intention of joining the so-called caliphate (ISIS/Daesh) and other insurgent terrorist groups. The phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) has renewed attention on the radicalization of minors within the context of jihadist extremism, a concern that remains high on the agenda of the European Union and has led, in Italy, to the endorsement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178, adopted in September 2014.

The phenomena of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and homegrown terrorism have exposed family ties and parental radicalization as a dimension of the neo-contemporary threat landscape. Familial structures, albeit not exclusively, emerge as a vector in the transmission of violent extremist ideologies and as conduits for the ideological socialization and recruitment of minors through the instrumentalization of emotional ties and relational dynamics. Parental radicalization and family terror networks are increasingly employed as adaptive strategies by terrorist and violent extremist organizations seeking to navigate restricted operational environments. Recruitment and radicalization through family ties are less observable and significantly complicate monitoring, and prevention efforts. In this regard, a parallel emerges between organized crime and terrorism, with points of comparison including cultural and familial affiliations, the criminal

involvement of the offspring of mafia members, and the radicalization of underage individuals who join jihadist terrorist networks.

Family environments shaped by mafia ideology, characterized by socialization into the transgression of social norms and the intergenerational transmission of criminal behaviors and attitudes, exhibit dynamics that also underpin radicalization to violent extremism, including ideological indoctrination and the establishment of support structures and networks.

Rationale of the Study

Over the past two decades, the convergence between terrorism and organized crime has become increasingly evident. Although terrorism may be interpreted as a form of organized crime, it fundamentally differs in its purpose. A terrorist act is inherently directed toward achieving a political objective, whereas organized crime is exclusively focused on acquiring financial gain or other forms of material benefit. Despite these essential distinctions, polycriminality reveals a high degree of interconnectedness between organized crime, terrorism, illicit trafficking, unlawful financial flows, and human trafficking. In this context, the shared objectives of terrorist and criminal organizations become markedly clear, and terrorist actors increasingly operate as full-fledged criminal enterprises. The synergistic space and tactical-strategic cross-pollination among these actors are widely recognized, revealing clear operational interlinkages and significant potential for both direct and indirect forms of cooperation. The parameters of convergence between organized crime and terrorism have been the subject of extensive scientific analysis. However, the role of family units in transmitting criminal behaviors or extremist ideologies remains only marginally explored. Within the context of organized crime, particularly in studies on the Italian mafia, research has highlighted the role of the family in sustaining and perpetuating criminal enterprises and offered valuable insights into the mechanisms of recruitment and socialization of minors within criminal ecosystems. In contrast, family networks within the context of terrorism constitute a relatively recent phenomenon which, despite its increasing relevance, has yet to receive comparable scholarly attention.

In consideration of polycriminality and its relevance to both mafia indoctrination and the radicalization of minors toward violent extremism within family structures, this study offers new perspectives for the development of effective intervention strategies. This includes leveraging Italy's extensive expertise in combating organized crime to confront emerging challenges related to terrorism. The nexus between organized crime and terrorism, which this study seeks to examine, remains insufficiently explored in the academic literature. Consequently, the findings aim not only to fill existing knowledge gaps but also to inform pioneering and innovative strategies grounded in a consolidated, multidimensional, cross-sectoral, and rule-of-law-based framework.

The Role of the Family in Radicalization: A Literature Review

Despite increasing attention to the family's role in radicalization, the existing literature remains fragmented across disciplines, resulting in a disjointed and inconsistent empirical landscape. This review seeks to synthesize current findings, evaluate the state of knowledge on key themes, and identify gaps to guide future research.

1. Family Transmission of Extremism

Research in psychology, sociology, and political science indicates that the family functions as a

primary agent of socialization, shaping core values, beliefs, and orientations. Ideological transmission within families occurs through both explicit mechanisms, such as direct engagement, and implicit processes, in which children internalize parental attitudes through imitation. The degree of ideological congruence among family members varies depending on factors such as parental attitudes, family communication patterns, social class, and household structure. For instance, studies have shown that stable parents with congruent political beliefs have a higher likelihood of successfully transmitting their views, particularly concrete ideas such as religious adherence or political affiliation. However, while some empirical studies support the notion that extremist ideologies are transmitted through the family, the evidence remains inconclusive.

Research on political socialization, primarily conducted in mainstream settings, may not be uniformly applicable to extremist family environments. While some studies on radicalization indicate ideological influence transmitted through family members, many lack robust evidence of direct intergenerational transmission. Qualitative analyses document cases of radical beliefs shaped by parental ideology, yet other research indicates that family influence on extremist beliefs is often moderated by external factors, particularly peer networks during adolescence. Empirical evidence remains limited regarding the consistency of familial influence on political and ideological beliefs across diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. This research gap is exacerbated by data limitations that hinder comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms and conditions facilitating the intergenerational transmission of extremist ideologies. Furthermore, existing studies tend to disproportionately focus on parent-child dynamics, with comparatively little investigation into the roles of siblings, grandparents, and extended family members in shaping radical beliefs.

2. Family as a Vector of Radicalization

Empirical research in terrorism studies increasingly recognizes the family as a critical conduit for recruitment and radicalization. The literature underscores that familial ties often serve as primary pathways into extremist groups. Specifically, in contexts involving militant movements, ethno-nationalist organizations, and jihadist networks, kinship bonds frequently facilitate entry into violent extremism. Family connections provide the social framework through which individuals are introduced to, and at times actively encouraged to join, extremist or terrorist entities, and the presence and involvement of family members also enhances loyalty, ideological conformity, and group cohesion, with research on jihadist networks in Southeast Asia and Europe indicating that kinship fosters trust and secrecy and reduces the risk of external infiltration.

Marriage and familial bonds within extremist groups play a particularly significant role in fostering and solidifying organizational connections. Studies from Indonesia, Bangladesh, and the Middle East illustrate how in-group marriages create tight-knit communities within extremist groups, reducing external interference and enhancing commitment to the organization's cause. Furthermore, research on foreign fighters highlights that family ties can facilitate transnational connections, enabling individuals to join global terrorist networks with the support and encouragement of close relatives. Several large-N studies on foreign fighters who joined the conflict in Syria and Iraq indicate that a substantial proportion had familial connections within jihadist networks, which facilitated recruitment and engagement in extremist activities.

Nonetheless, much of this research is constrained by the absence of control groups, which complicates the establishment of causality and limits the generalizability of findings. Many studies rely on open-source data, such as government and media reports, that often lack nuanced

contextual detail, warranting cautious interpretation. Scholars contend that while familial ties may facilitate entry into extremist organizations, they do not necessarily predict participation in violence. Furthermore, existing studies rarely examine the moderating effects of family structure or internal dynamics on recruitment pathways, thereby limiting the applicability of findings across varying cultural and ideological contexts.

In conclusion, this literature review underscores that, while the family plays a significant role in radicalization processes, the existing body of research remains fragmented and lacks a coherent empirical framework. Studies on familial ideological transmission often focus on socialization and communication mechanisms within the household but tend to overlook the interaction with external influences. Meanwhile, literature examining the family as an entry point into violent extremism offers more consistent findings regarding recruitment dynamics, yet remains constrained by methodological limitations and a lack of systematic comparative analysis.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The nature of contemporary terrorism is increasingly characterized by the involvement of minors and by the role of families in radicalization processes. Through an analysis of familial relationships and the parallels between organized crime and terrorism, this study seeks to lay the groundwork for the development of a holistic strategy to effectively prevent youth radicalization. Additionally, the study aims to foster international cooperation by strengthening security and the safeguarding of minors within an increasingly complex risk environment.

Specifically:

1. An improved understanding of the current landscape and emerging trends in terrorism and violent extremism, including underlying causes, internal and external risk factors, and the conditions that render minors vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization within and beyond the family, is generated. This understanding informs the development of tailored and effective responses and interventions.
2. A new space for dialogue on the nexus between organized crime and terrorism is created.
3. A framework for increased multilateral engagement, information sharing, coordination, and synergies among relevant stakeholders, as well as a platform for further deliberation on the issue of recruitment and radicalization of minors, is established.
4. The capacity to prevent the radicalization of minors, violent extremism, and terrorism is enhanced through multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder proposals, supporting the development of a holistic strategy aligned with national priorities and consistent with international standards.

Research Questions

This study investigates the role of familial dynamics in sustaining organized crime and terrorism, with a particular focus on the involvement of minors. It examines how family structures may facilitate the intergenerational transmission of criminal and extremist affiliations and considers how the lived experiences of minors raised in mafia-type environments can enhance our

understanding of parental radicalization and youth engagement in violent extremism and terrorism. Additionally, the research analyzes the Italian legal and policy frameworks aimed at addressing organized crime and protecting children in these contexts, assessing their effectiveness and exploring how these mechanisms might be strategically adapted to address youth radicalization and terrorism. The study also highlights priority areas for policy improvement to strengthen the prevention of youth radicalization and support efficient responses to evolving security threats.

Based on these premises, the study is structured around the following three main research questions:

1. Given the fundamental role of the family in perpetuating both organized crime and terrorism, alongside the frequent involvement of minors in related offenses, what insights can be derived from these dynamics? To what extent does intergenerational continuity in criminal and terrorist affiliations persist within family structures, and through which social, cultural, and psychological mechanisms is this continuity sustained?
2. Whereas mafia groups and other forms of organized crime have been the subject of decades of investigation, family terror networks, radicalization, and the involvement of minors in terrorist acts and related activities are emerging phenomena in their current manifestations. In light of this, what new understandings can be derived from the experiences of minors within organized crime to enhance our awareness of radicalization trajectories and terrorism within family units? What parallel trends and points of divergence exist between these phenomena?
3. How does the current legal and policy framework address organized crime and terrorism and what gaps emerge in relation to the radicalization of minors? How might these frameworks be strengthened to support the development of a comprehensive strategy for preventing the radicalization of minors, violent extremism, and terrorism?

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative methodological approach, employing in-depth document analysis to investigate the parallels between organized crime and terrorism within family contexts, as well as the intergenerational transmission of criminal behavior and ideological indoctrination. The primary objective is to explore both phenomena, identify effective strategies applied in combating mafia structures and criminal indoctrination, and assess their applicability to preventing youth radicalization within terrorist family networks. Based on this analysis, the study formulates evidence-based recommendations to inform the development of coherent youth radicalization prevention strategies.

Data collection is grounded in a comprehensive review of existing literature, case studies, government reports, and legal documents, utilizing an interdisciplinary framework. This approach provides a robust theoretical and empirical foundation while enabling the acquisition of direct and context-specific insights. Data analysis follows a thematic methodology, guided by a predetermined set of variables, aimed at identifying key themes and recurring patterns emerging from the document review. The findings are triangulated and validated through consultations with external experts to ensure reliability and validity.

Finally, the results are synthesized into a report and disseminated to relevant stakeholders, with the intent to inform and guide public policies focused on the prevention and management of the phenomena under investigation.

CHAPTER 1. Understanding Familial Organized Crime

1. Historical Context and Contemporary Trends

Across theoretical perspectives, the family unit has consistently been recognized in psychological research as a core structure in the perpetuation of family-based organized crime syndicates. The principal ally of the mafia lies in an uncritical mindset shaped by enduring prejudices, customs, and traditions that, despite superficial alterations, remain fundamentally immutable and deeply embedded within the social fabric.¹ A key component of this mentality is the concept of 'amoral familism',² in which the family is not merely a developmental context for early individual maturation but rather an exclusive horizon encompassing the entirety of an individual's life trajectory. From this perspective, the family is an absolute value, and its members subordinate themselves to it unconditionally.³ Individual identity is therefore primarily constructed through familial belonging.

Mafia-type organizations are entities that seek to preserve the social order they themselves establish and exhibit a rigid intolerance toward any form of deviance.⁴ Blood ties serve not only as the foundation of internal cohesion and integrity but also as a guarantee of security, protection, continuity, and stability. The family, structured through a relational logic saturated by mafia ideology, therefore constitutes the primary root of the mafia.⁵ However, its function extends beyond serving as a referential paradigm for the mafia ethos to become one of the structural pillars of the mafia's organizational apparatus.

Families represent the core units of Italian organized crime, whether configured as polycentric systems without a hierarchical apex or as unified structures capable of regulating fluid alliances and conflicts, and devise coordinated strategies⁶ to manage illicit activities by exercising social, economic, and territorial control.

The familial dimension of the Italian mafia embodies a synthesis between tradition and innovation. In his volume 'Mafias on the Move: How Organized Crime Conquers New Territories',⁷ Federico Varese emphasizes how the preservation of identity parameters, cultural codes, and values is simultaneously coupled with the need to adapt to socioeconomic shifts in order to expand influence and consolidate power. The Calabrian 'Ndrangheta' represents the most emblematic example of this adaptive capacity, and in fact, while its organizational model remains firmly rooted in blood ties and strategic marriages, it has nevertheless expanded its criminal network well beyond national borders and established itself as one of the most influential actors in the global narcotics trade.

¹ Anna Maria Vultaggio, *The Psychological Roots of the Mafia* (Palermo: Liceo Classico Internazionale 'Umberto I', September 20, 2023), <https://www.umbertoprime.edu.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/LE-RADICI-PSICOLOGICHE-DELLA-MAFIA.pdf>.

² Antonio Clemente, "Amoral Familism," *Noi contro la corruzione*, July 31, 2017, <http://anticorruzione.eu/2017/07/il-familismo-amorale/>; Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), 101ff.

³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Leonardo Sciascia, *Opere*, 3 vols. (Milan: Bompiani, 1956–1991), cited in AA.VV., *Op. cit.*, 52.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷ Federico Varese, *Mafias on the Move: How Organized Crime Conquers New Territories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

Similarly, the Camorra, distinguished by its extreme structural heterogeneity, continuously reorganizes in response to contextual opportunities. In recent decades, the structure of the Camorra has undergone significant changes, transitioning, as Lamberti argues, “from families to holding companies that include financial firms, real estate enterprises, land-moving cooperatives, construction companies, and [...] forming entrepreneurial groups capable of significantly influencing the market and attracting even non-Camorra businesses.”⁸ The evolution of mafia structures has therefore not entailed an abandonment of traditional logics, but rather a strategic renewal in which core family principles are reframed into increasingly sophisticated and effective forms of criminal activity.

2. The Family as a Pillar of the Mafia: Structures, Hierarchies, and Organizational Frameworks

The centrality of the family unit in Italian mafia organizations constitutes a common structural element, although the internal configuration vary significantly across different criminal groups. Cosa Nostra remains the organization with the most defined structure. Beginning in 1975, Cosa Nostra underwent a consolidation process that heightened the organization’s threat level by expanding its membership base, implementing coordinated strategies, and establishing a replicable organizational model.⁹

The clan structure established by Cosa Nostra resembles a “pyramidal, hierarchical system.”¹⁰ At the top is the *rappresentante* (representative), who exercises leadership and manages relations with the broader organization. Subordinate to him are the *capicapina* (leaders of groups of ten), who oversee small groups of affiliates. At the base of the pyramid are the *uomini d’onore* (men of honor), whose numbers range between 50 and 300 per family unit.

The governance structure of Cosa Nostra extends beyond the individual family unit through a hierarchical electoral mechanism. Each family representative participates in the selection of the provincial head, who then becomes a member of the regional commission, Cosa Nostra’s highest decision-making body, tasked with formulating overarching strategic directives. This model is standardized across all affiliated families, with the exception of those operating in the province of Palermo.¹¹

Cosa Nostra’s organizational complexity has historically facilitated both its international expansion and its ability to manage diverse illicit enterprises.

However, its structural rigidity has increasingly emerged as a strategic disadvantage when compared to more adaptable, decentralized, and network-based criminal networks such as the Camorra or the ‘Ndrangheta.

Irrespective of the specific organizational models, mafia leadership consistently coalesces around the figure of the family patriarch. This individual exercises absolute authority over

⁸ Alfonso Lamberti, “Structure, Dimensions, and Characteristics of Organized Crime Phenomena in Campania in the 1990s,” in *The Mafia and the Mafias*, ed. Giovanni Fiandaca and Stefano Costantino (Bari: Laterza, 1994).

⁹ Anton Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860–1960* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974). Italian edition: *La mafia di un villaggio siciliano, 1860–1960* (Turin: Einaudi, 1986).

¹⁰ Maurizio Catino, “La mafia come fenomeno organizzativo,” *Quaderni di Sociologia*, 83–98. <https://doi.org/10.4000/qds.1533>.

¹¹ In this case, some contiguous families are controlled by a ‘capo mandamento’ who is also a member of the ‘commission’ or ‘provincial cupola.’

criminal operations while simultaneously serving as the ultimate custodian of tradition, consolidating power through a value system emphasizing obedience, respect, fear, and cultural legitimacy. Leadership is exercised by assigning key responsibilities to trusted individuals, often close relatives, in order to minimize the risk of defection and prevent external infiltration. Federico Varese observes that these dynamics are particularly evident in the 'Ndrangheta, where the family head oversees criminal operations and arranges marital alliances to consolidate power. This model proves effective for managing criminal activities such as drug trafficking and money laundering, while ensuring security and continuity to the organization.

3. Parental Roles and Gender Dynamics in Mafia Family Units

Within mafia family structures parental figures hold significant symbolic importance. The father is positioned as the supreme holder of power and authority within the clan. Consequently, family members aspiring to emancipate themselves from his authority must inevitably assimilate his characteristics.¹²

Mafia affiliates often display a tendency to identify with a “primitive and authoritarian father” and an attachment to the mother, or rather to her imago, the fantasized maternal figure. In other words, the mother represents what one desires to have, while the father symbolizes what one aspires to become. This identification with the father is partial and emerges from feelings of hostility, hatred, and envy toward a persecutory, authoritarian, and powerful paternal figure.¹³

A cult of the maternal figure is also present within mafia organizations. The mother is regarded as the bearer of emotional and cultural heritage, so essential that the supreme leader is referred to as the “mammasantissima” (the Saint Mother).¹⁴ Mothers act as custodians of family honor and are responsible for transmitting the mafia’s cultural code to their children, effectively forming a “hinge between children and the criminal network.”¹⁵ Their identity is often narrowly defined through motherhood, which fosters a profound sense of pride in women, especially when they bear male children.¹⁶ Mothers play a crucial pedagogical role in perpetuating the patriarchy by presenting to their sons a mythologized image of the father.¹⁷ Daughters, in contrast, view the mother as a role model and seek to emulate her traits to secure a position within the patriarchal system.¹⁸

Women are also often responsible for managing family finances and mediating disputes,¹⁹ and in critical circumstances such as the arrest, exile, or death of their spouses or male members of the clan, they temporarily undertake leadership roles.

Children, or “children of the mafia,” are crucial to strategic endogamy²⁰ as primary heirs of mafia culture and serve as the linchpin in the perpetuation of mafia clans.²¹ A system of anti-social values is transmitted to children.²² Boys are regarded as legitimate heirs to criminal hegemony

¹² Ibid., 1.

¹³ F. Di Forti, *Immaginario della coppola storta* (Chieti: Solfanelli, 2014).

¹⁴ Ibid., 1.

¹⁵ F. Vacca, *La devianza criminale minorile*.

¹⁶ O. Ingrassi, *Donne d'onore* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2007); R. Siebert, *Le donne, la mafia* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1994).

¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Anna Sergi, *Chasing the Mafia: 'Ndrangheta, Memories and Journeys* (2022).

²⁰ Anna Sergi, *La mafia come comportamento sociale...* accessed May 11, 2025, <https://www.dsps.unict.it/sites/default/files/Slides%20prof.ssa%20Sergi.pdf>.

²¹ Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura, *La tutela dei minori*, Resolution, October 31, 2017.

²² Francesco Cascini and Roberto Di Bella, *Tavolo 10, Minori e Mafie*, summary report of analyses and proposals, November 23, 2017.

and are exposed to mafia practices from an early age. In many cases, crime becomes the only reality known to them.

The family nucleus, mother, father, and children, also serves to preserve an appearance of normalcy to external observers. The projection of a conventional family image is part of a deliberate strategy aimed at concealing the criminal nature of the household and ensuring social camouflage.

4. The Intergenerational Transmission of Criminal Culture

4.1. Mafia Ideology

Giovanni Falcone remarked, “If we truly want to fight the mafia, we must not transform it into a monster, nor think of it as an octopus or a cancer. We must recognize that it resembles us.”²³ With this assertion, Falcone intended to highlight that the term ‘mafia’ does not solely refer to a criminal organization, but rather to a particular way of being that is deeply embedded within the cultural substratum of the social group from which it emerges.²⁴ The ideological framework of the mafia reflects “norms and values, lifestyles, social behaviors [...] and conceptions of existence that are intrinsic to the social and civil fabric; that is, to the way reality is experienced and understood.”²⁵

This cultural environment prescribes specific behavioral models,²⁶ and underlying the term mafia is what has been described as a form of “unconscious, automatic, and dogmatic thinking” that perpetuates a rigid worldview based on absolute value dichotomies that allow no room for ambiguity or nuance.²⁷ Mafia ideology is a way of thinking that becomes a philosophy of life, a moral code, and a sociocultural outlook centered on a dichotomous conception of identity, where “Us” establishes belonging and “non-Us” implies exclusion.²⁸

Mafia ideology is deeply rooted in familial structures and simultaneously elevates the family to the status of an absolute and foundational value. Virtue, morality, omertà (code of silence),²⁹ loyalty, obedience, and honor exist exclusively within the boundaries of one’s family or clan.³⁰ Consequently, individuals are conditioned to uphold these values exclusively within these spheres of social interaction, with transgressions threatening expulsion, physical harm or even death.³¹

²³ Giovanni Falcone e Marcelle Padovani, *Cose di Cosa Nostra* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1991).

²⁴ Innocenzo Fiore, “Psicologia e psicopatologia del ‘pensare mafioso,’” *Aggiornamenti Sociali* 4 (1997); Franco Di Maria, S. Di Nuovo, A. M. Di Vita, C. G. Dolce, e A. M. Pepi, *Il sentire mafioso* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1989).

²⁵ Franco Di Maria, “Il sentimento mafioso è nella gente comune,” *La Repubblica*, 31 luglio 2003; Tiziana Marinaci e Maria Rita Infurna, eds., “Una lettura antropologico-culturale sul tema della mafia: Intervista al Professore Emerito Franco Di Maria,” *ScrittidiGruppo*, accesso 11 maggio 2025, <https://scrittidigruppo.it/una-lettura-antropologico-culturale-sul-tema-della-mafia/>; Innocenzo Fiore, *Le radici inconscie dello psichismo mafioso* (Milano: Angeli, 1997).

²⁶ Giuseppe Pitrè, *Usi e costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano* (Catania: Clio, 1993; ed. orig. 1889).

²⁷ Gaetano Lo Verso, *La mafia dentro: Psicologia e psicopatologia di un fondamentalismo* (Milano: Angeli, 1998).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁹ The mafia’s core code of conduct establishes an absolute ban on using state law to resolve disputes, with violations punishable not only by death but also by dishonor; *ibid.*, 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

³¹ Antonio Nicaso e Nicola Gratteri, *La malapianta* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2014); Isaia Sales, *Le strade della violenza* (Napoli: L’Ancora del Mediterraneo, 2008).

Mafia ideology shapes both individual and collective behavioral codes, and the value system exists solely as a form of service to the family or clan. In this respect, the mafia exhibits totalitarian characteristics,³² with the mafioso asserting moral superiority over the ordinary citizen and compelling adherents to conform to a predetermined ideological tradition as a condition for acceptance within the criminal organization.³³

4.2. The Family as a Matrix of Mafia Socialization and Indoctrination

Within the family, individuals fulfil basic psychological needs for the acquisition of identity³⁴ while simultaneously undergoing the initial processes of conditioning toward mafia ideology.³⁵ The family serves as a shaping environment that imposes and enforces saturated behavioral models that must be replicated by its members.³⁶

In this light, the family can be understood as a matrix that codifies the rules, norms, and values governing each member's attitude and behavior, known as the "code of honor."³⁷ As Fiore asserts, "these rules are unwritten because they are ingrained in the mind of each individual through the extended process of instruction that the future man of honor undergoes within the family."³⁸

The transmission of the mafia cultural code and its faithful reproduction are crucial for the construction of a shared identity, minimizing internal conflict, regulating deviance,³⁹ and ultimately sustaining the equilibrium of the criminal system.⁴⁰

The mechanisms underpinning ideological transmission align with the concept of socialization described by Luciano Gallino: "Any process of social interaction intended to transmit, either across generations or among specific groups within the same generation, norms of behavior, orientations [...] as well as customs and practices, spanning all spheres of life."⁴¹

Children, as previously established, are regarded as strategic human capital intended to perpetuate mafia dominance across generations,⁴² and therefore are systematically indoctrinated from an early age within the family structure.

³² For example, initiation, secrecy.

³³ Francesco Armao, *Il sistema mafia* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2000), 75–79; Arianna Bianchi, *Strategie educative e lotta alla mafia: La sottrazione della patria potestà. L'esperienza di Reggio Calabria* (tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi di Milano, Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, Economiche e Sociali, a.a. 2014/2015).

³⁴ Henri Tajfel, *Gruppi umani e categorie sociali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985).

³⁵ Antonella Pomilla e Giasimo K. Glyka, "Dinamiche di manipolazione mentale ed organizzazioni di stampo mafioso," *Rivista di Criminologia, Vittimologia e Sicurezza* 4, no. 3 (settembre–dicembre 2010).

³⁶ Antonella Pomilla e Giasimo K. Glyka, "Dinamiche di manipolazione mentale ed organizzazioni di stampo mafioso," *Rivista di Criminologia, Vittimologia e Sicurezza* 4, no. 3 (settembre–dicembre 2010).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ The rules within mafia organizations can be divided into two main categories. The first includes so-called "absolute" rules, such as loyalty, obedience, silence (*omertà*), and private justice, which are binding for all members of the group without exception, with severe penalties for any violations. The second category comprises "relative" rules, such as respect for one's wife, abstaining from infidelity, and, more generally, maintaining a regulated sex life in line with certain expectations, the breach of which may be tolerated within defined limits.

³⁹ Innocenzo Fiore, *Le radici inconscie dello psichismo mafioso* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1997).

⁴⁰ Roberto Escobar, *La libertà negli occhi* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴² Luciano Gallino, *Dizionario di sociologia* (Novara: De Agostini, 2014).

The formation of a mafia identity begins with early exposure to a value system that opposes conventional society,⁴³ reinforced through the normalization of violence, weapons, and criminal behavior intended to equip the child with the core skills required to become part of the criminal organization.

Mafia behaviors do not emerge as a contingent manifestation of criminality but rather as the result of an intentional and structured pedagogical process.⁴⁴ It is possible to refer to a mafia pedagogy⁴⁵ as a fundamental feature of juvenile criminal development. According to Cavadi, mafia pedagogy is characterized by: Authoritarianism, imposing a rigid vertical power hierarchy centered on reverence for the dominant figure; Amoral familism, which subordinates all forms of loyalty and solidarity to the family unit; Paternalistic machismo, establishing a strict patriarchal division of roles and the subordination of women; The principle of omertà, as an inviolable norm of silence; Honor, which binds the individual to a regime of obligations; Devaluation of honest labor, replaced by predatory practices; Violence, as the sole instrument for conflict resolution; Instrumentalization of religious symbols, used to legitimize mafia authority; and distorted ideals, including profit, opportunism, hyper-competitive individualism, and exploitation of the vulnerable.⁴⁶

A striking example of mafia pedagogy can be found in the testimony of the mafia defector Emilio Di Giovine, who recalled:

“Silence was normal. It was one of the first things they taught me. One day, my mother’s brother, knowing I had seen two cousins argue, asked who started it: ‘Tell me, I won’t do anything.’ I stayed quiet. But he kept pushing: ‘Tell me, I won’t do anything.’ I stayed quiet. Finally, I gave in. It was a trap. As soon as I told him, he slapped me so hard my head spun for half an hour. I still remember it well. These things don’t go away. After the violence came the explanation: ‘Look, Emiliuzzeddinu, it’s not that I slapped you because I’m mad at you, but so that you’ll always remember [...], before saying anything to anyone, especially the police, think twice.’”⁴⁷

This episode encapsulates the essence of mafia pedagogy, which sculpts behavior from early childhood, embedding the individual into a normative system distinct from that of the state. Isaia Sales, in “Le Strade della Violenza”, emphasizes that mafia socialization occurs not only through explicit teachings but also through observation. Young people learn not only what is said, but what is done.

Key to this process is the constant reinforcement of family values through a system of rewards and punishments. Youth who demonstrate loyalty and competence are granted increased responsibility and prestige, while those who deviate from expectations face harsh consequences, and this fosters an environment where conformity is incentivized and deviance severely discouraged.

⁴³ Mario Filip Esposito, *Il potere del sangue: Ascesa della 'Ndrangheta e polverizzazione della Camorra* (tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi di Padova, Dipartimento di Filosofia, Sociologia, Pedagogia e Psicologia Applicata, a.a. 2021–2022).

⁴⁴ Ercole Giap Parini, *Mafia, politica e società civile: Due casi in Calabria* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2017).

⁴⁵ Mario Schermi, “L’educazione criminale: crescere in contesti mafiosi,” *Rassegna Italiana di Criminologia* 7, no. 4 (2013), © Pensa MultiMedia Editore, ISSN 1121-1717 (print), ISSN 2240-8053 (online).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Antonio Cavadi, *Strappare una generazione alla mafia* (Trapani: Di Girolamo Editore, 2005), 15.

The child is socialized through a complex web of meanings that reshape their understanding of right and wrong, honor and shame, obedience and rebellion. The acquisition of the mafia code is not incidental but results from a gradual internalization of cognitive patterns and social practices that firmly embed the child within the criminal milieu.

In this respect, mafia pedagogy is not merely a vehicle of cultural reproduction but an instrument of identity formation. The criminal trajectory of the child, therefore, is not an aberration or deviation from family education, but its most coherent outcome. The child born into such a context becomes a product of it and, entrapped by the “cognitive shell” of the family unity, is unable to form a distinct identity.⁴⁸

Ultimately, criminal obedience, defined by Lavanco and Di Maria as the “willingness to commit or condone violent acts not out of personal motivation but from adherence to a superior authority accepted without critical evaluation”,⁴⁹ reflects the coercive dimension of mafia pedagogy. It conceals a latent compulsion toward violence as well as a fear of being cast out of the family’s protective sphere.

The child subjected to mafia indoctrination therefore becomes “deviant.” According to Sutherland’s theory of differential association,⁵⁰ deviance is the product of alternative socialization patterns within their community. In reality, their behavior is norm within that system and a direct outcome of deliberate pedagogical investment.

Mafia pedagogy, in conclusion, redefines the parameters of legitimacy and illegitimacy. A child considered deviant by law may not be regarded as deviant according to the family’s social standards, and if the dominant cultural values of the family endorse such conduct, it may persist despite any incongruity with the external environment.⁵¹

5. The Involvement of Minors in Criminal Networks

The involvement of minors in the mafia is gradual. Drawing from the analysis of Antonio Nicaso and Nicola Gratteri,⁵² this process may be understood as a slow progression in which the minor, initially assigned seemingly marginal tasks such as passive observation, lookout duties, or message delivery, becomes engaged in a preliminary phase of training. These responsibilities, which may appear peripheral at first, constitute the initial stages of a deeper assimilation into the logics of the criminal organization.

As time progresses, the child, who has spent years internalizing “day after day, the elements of a pervasive mafia culture,”⁵³ assumes increasingly significant roles in drug trafficking, extortion,

⁴⁸ Ombretta Ingrassi, *Confessioni di un padre* (Milano: Melampo Editore, 2013), 60–61.

⁴⁹ Gaetano Lo Verso, *Per uno studio dello psichismo mafioso*, in *La mafia dentro. Psicologia e psicopatologia di un fondamentalismo*, a cura di G. Lo Verso (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2002), 29; Francesca Del Gaudio, “Decadenza dalla responsabilità genitoriale per membri di organizzazioni mafiose,” *Rivista Italiana dell’Antiriciclaggio*; Franco Di Maria e Gioacchino Lavanco, *A un passo dall’inferno. Sentire mafioso e obbedienza criminale* (Firenze: Giunti Editore, 1995).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵¹ Emanuela Cimmino, “Teoria dell’associazione differenziale e comportamento deviante,” *Centro di Ricerca Interuniversitaria su carcere, devianza, marginalità e governo delle migrazioni*, ADIR – L’Altro Diritto, 2006, accesso 12 maggio 2025, <https://www.adir.unifi.it/rivista/2006/cimmino/cap1.htm>; Arianna Bianchi, *Strategie educative e lotta alla mafia: La sottrazione della patria potestà. L’esperienza di Reggio Calabria* (elaborato finale, Università degli Studi di Milano, 2014/2015).

⁵² Nicola Gratteri and Antonio Nicaso, *La malapianta: la mia lotta contro la ’ndrangheta* (Milan: Mondadori, 2010).

⁵³ Michele Filippelli, ed., *Indottrinamento mafioso e responsabilità genitoriale*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Diritto Avanzato, 2017).

and the management of the clan's financial resources. Criminal training then unfolds under the constant supervision of senior members who provide mentoring and guidance. At this stage, the child is an "apprentice" who absorbs and learns criminal practices, ultimately becoming a component of the mafia system. In this formative process, family meetings are important, as they expose the child to the clan's internal dynamics and offer a detailed view of the criminal apparatus.⁵⁴

The progressive involvement of children in the mafia ecosystem unfolds through a series of tests assessing loyalty and courage. Participation in violent or more significant criminal activities represents a critical phase of this process. Each such act serves as a form of oath, a tangible affirmation of the unbreakable bond between the youth and the organization. Over time, the adoption of this criminal culture becomes complete, transforming the minor into a committed actor.

6. The Recruitment of Minors in the Mafia: A Genealogy of Practices and Processes

The primary agent of socialization, the family, is characterized, in mafia contexts, by value conformity to the criminal domain.⁵⁵ In this regard, Armao argues that between these two spheres, the family and the mafia, there exists:

"Relations that may be defined as interdependent, rather than simply causal, wherein behavior within the family is oriented toward supporting or even reinforcing the clan's rules; and, conversely, any actions that may subvert the code of conduct are avoided. [...] The mafia must maintain this type of family, which is not only the most suited to supplying a first reservoir of manpower for recruitment but also, more importantly, a fully consolidated ideological apparatus capable of cultivating in its members a sense of belonging that ensures cohesion."⁵⁶

Given the risks under which the mafia operates, the recruitment process of members is particularly delicate. Catino, highlighting the potentially existential risks posed by the poor selection of personnel, observes that mafia clans require "more reliable information about their prospective candidates than legitimate organizations."⁵⁷ According to Catino, recruitment takes place along four principal axes:

1. Restriction of the recruitment pool to individuals from the local territory, neighborhood, family, or prison.
2. Collection and verification of biographical information and assessment of the candidate's commitment to the criminal cause through prolonged observation.
3. Selection via an arduous initiation process requiring tests of criminal skills and strong disincentives for entry.
4. Sponsorship by guarantors.

⁵⁴ Federico Varese, *Mafias on the Move: How Organized Crime Conquers New Territories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁶ Francesco Armao, *Il sistema mafia* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2000), 42–43.

⁵⁷ Maurizio Catino, *Le organizzazioni mafiose: La mano visibile dell'impresa criminale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2020).

Recruitment based on family ties ensures a high degree of reliability and discretion and positively impacts the efficacy of the criminal organization.⁵⁸ Kin recruitment also mitigates defection risks,⁵⁹ since stronger familial bonds reduce opportunities for exit and create serious constraints for those considering cooperation with the authorities, since it would entail implicating one's own relatives.⁶⁰ In a context marked by vulnerability, where trust is critical and the risk of external infiltration persistent, the involvement of already-known individuals significantly reduces the potential complications of adverse selection⁶¹ allowing for greater control and discipline.⁶²

Although kinship ties may sometimes engender centrifugal dynamics, such as the formation of internal factions and escalating rivalries, mafia clans that rely predominantly on family-based recruitment mitigate such risks through the establishment of higher-order coordinating bodies tasked with resolving disputes and preventing the escalation of internal conflicts.⁶³ Male children within the 'Ndrangheta, an organization that exclusively recruits on the basis of blood ties, are effectively 'Ndrangheta members in the making, and involvement in the criminal organization is perceived as a natural right derived from lineage. However, progressing through the ranks is contingent upon the child's demonstrated value and those who fail to meet expectations are gradually marginalized.⁶⁴

The testimony of Scriva:

"When a young boy is considered sharp, his inclination toward delinquency has been observed and is clear that he possesses the essential traits to enter the organization, he is initially approached by young affiliates and gradually integrated. The young man must also meet certain family criteria. It is essential that his father never served the government as a police officer, his mother and sisters must be regarded as respectable women, and his relatives must never have testified against any members of the organization. Once these conditions are confirmed, the youth may be inducted into the clan through an ancient rite that is still recognized and practiced today."⁶⁵

6.1 Initiation Ceremonies: The Role of Symbolism, Rituality, and Status Agreements

Starting in the latter half of the 19th century, criminal organizations began to evolve by adopting ritual ceremonies, internal statutes, and regulatory structures that came to characterize the mafias as opaque, quasi-fraternal orders.⁶⁶ Mafias were therefore organized in a way that resembled secret societies such as the Carbonari or Freemasonry, characterized by clandestine practices and obscure codes of conduct. In this regard, Cesare Lombroso observed in 1876:

⁵⁸ Maurizio Catino, "L'organizzazione del segreto nelle associazioni mafiose," *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 2 (April–June 2014): 259–301; *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵⁹ Rocco Sciarone, "Passaggio di frontiera: la difficile via d'uscita dalla mafia calabrese," in *Pentiti. I collaboratori di giustizia, le istituzioni, l'opinione pubblica*, ed. Alessandra Dino (Rome: Donzelli, 2006), 129–62; Rocco Sciarone, *Mafie vecchie, mafie nuove. Radicamento ed espansione* (Rome: Donzelli, 2009).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁵ Nicola Gratteri and Antonio Nicaso, *Dire e non dire. I dieci comandamenti della 'ndrangheta nelle parole degli affiliati* (Milan: Mondadori, 2012).

⁶⁶ Monica Massari, *L'universo simbolico e rituale delle mafie*, seminar held in Naples, October 13, 2017, in the series "Mafie e antimafie. Strumenti di analisi, esperienze di impegno civile," Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, <https://www.docenti.unina.it/webdocenti-be/allegati/materiale-didattico/648074>.

“These groups exhibit a distinct form of organization. Almost all are led by a chief who holds dictatorial authority, and, as in primitive tribes, is obeyed more for his personal qualities than through any democratic consensus. They all rely on external affiliates and protectors in times of need, and adhere to a kind of code or ritual which, though unwritten and impersonal, is followed to the letter by the majority.”⁶⁷

Contrary to common interpretations that associate ritual practices with anti-modernity, archaism, or folklore,⁶⁸ mafias are instead characterized as “systems of norms and rules of conduct, and rituals with references to the organization’s sagas, cultivated and upheld both by leaders and ordinary members. This constitutes a source of strength that allows mafias to succeed where many modern enterprises fail [...] and rituals are not [...] crude and anachronistic remnants of a lost world [...] rather, they play an extremely important role in the functioning of the organization and remain highly relevant today.”⁶⁹

Rituality is therefore intrinsic to the idea of mafia and the way these organizations perceive themselves.⁷⁰ Rituals provide the mafia with opportunities for self legitimation,⁷¹ for elevating group membership, and for creating a sense of shared identity.⁷² Ceremonies employ archaic language rich in symbolic references, allusions to historical or mythical figures, and a quasi-religious dimension that marks a rite of passage and the assumption of a new identity.⁷³

Examples of Mafia Oaths:

- The Oath of the Brotherhood of Girgenti (1884):

“I swear on my honor to be faithful to the brotherhood, as the brotherhood is faithful to me, and as this Saint and these few drops of my blood burn, so too shall I shed all my blood for the brotherhood, and just as this ash cannot return to its original state, nor this blood to its former condition, so I cannot renounce the brotherhood.”

- Tommaso Buscetta (1948):

“May my flesh burn like this Saint if I break my oath.”

The initiation ritual or “baptism” represents one of the most significant moments in a mafioso’s criminal life as it marks the transition from being an “ordinary man” to a “man of honor.” In the ceremony, the candidate symbolically signs what Max Weber defined as a “status contract,” that

⁶⁷ Cesare Lombroso, *L'uomo delinquente: studiato in rapporto all'antropologia, alla medicina legale e alle discipline carcerarie* (Milan: Hoepli, 1876).

⁶⁸ Enzo Ciconte, *Riti criminali. I codici di affiliazione alla 'ndrangheta* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2015).

⁶⁹ Mario Filip Esposito, *Il potere del sangue: ascesa della 'Ndrangheta e polverizzazione della Camorra*, undergraduate thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova, Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology, 2021/2022, supervisor Prof. Luca Trappolin.

⁷⁰ Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Milano: Comunità, 1963).

⁷¹ Francesco Iadaluca, ed., *Enciclopedia delle mafie. Le mafie nei loro territori di origine*, vol. 1, tome 2 (Rome: Armando Curcio Editore, 2016).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 65.

is, a contract that entails “a modification of the individual’s overall legal quality, their universal position, and social habitus,” transforming them into “something qualitatively different from before” and simultaneously binding them in a “contract of brotherhood” with the other members.⁷⁴ In essence, the initiation rite binds the neophyte to their group in a fraternal manner, creating a relationship defined by irrevocability.

Case Studies

Salvatore and Sandro Lo Piccolo (Cosa Nostra, Sicily)

Salvatore Lo Piccolo, nicknamed “the baron,” was one of the most powerful Cosa Nostra bosses in Palermo. After the arrest of Bernardo Provenzano in 2006, Lo Piccolo assumed a leading role in the mafia’s power structure. His son, Sandro, born and raised in this context, was educated from a young age in the logics of territorial control and criminal enterprise. Both were arrested together in 2007 during a police raid at a villa in Giardinello, in the Palermo province. Convicted of murder, drug trafficking, extortion, and mafia association, father and son managed a criminal empire extending from local racketeering to international narcotics trade. Their convictions were partly based on the discovery of a “ledger” listing the names of shopkeepers and entrepreneurs extorted by the clan. Following in his father’s footsteps, Sandro handled extortion schemes and inter-mafia negotiations, exemplifying how power transmission occurred directly through the bloodline.

Antonio and Giuseppe Pelle (‘Ndrangheta, Calabria)

Antonio Pelle, known as “Gambazza,” was a key leader of the powerful Pelle clan of San Luca, at the center of a bloody feud with the Nirta-Strangio clan. His son Giuseppe continued the family legacy, becoming one of the main actors in the management of the clan’s criminal activities. Arrested in separate operations, both Antonio and Giuseppe were convicted for crimes related to international drug trafficking and violent confrontation in San Luca. Giuseppe, in particular, was the younger and more dynamic face of the clan, responsible for managing international narcotics trade and serving as a bridge between the old and new generations. The Pelle family exemplifies the dynastic nature of mafia leadership, in which each generation inherits control over criminal operations as if it were a family business.

Edoardo and Massimiliano Casamonica (Casamonica Clan, Lazio)

The Casamonica clan, known for its control over parts of Rome, is notable for its highly extended family structure, where even distant relatives play active roles. Edoardo Casamonica, one of the clan’s historical leaders, and his son Massimiliano were convicted of crimes ranging from usury and drug trafficking to extortion and physical violence. In 2021, wiretaps revealed how Massimiliano, under his father’s guidance, had expanded the clan’s operations into money laundering through seemingly legitimate commercial activities. The Casamonicas’ reach extended to illegal real estate dealings and infiltrated government contracting. The Casamonicas’ case illustrates how family ties are leveraged not only to maintain internal cohesion but also to expand criminal enterprises into new sectors.

⁷⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Milano: Comunità, 1995); *Ibid.*, 69.

CHAPTER 2. Understanding Family Terror Networks

1. Historical Context and Contemporary Trends

Within the landscape of terrorist threats, family terror networks can be understood as a “subset” of individuals who, across the full spectrum of socio-economic, racial, religious, ethnic, and national or transnational backgrounds, embark on a pathway of radicalization.⁷⁵ Manifestations of this type of terrorism are not exclusive to any single ideological orientation but rather marked by a pluralism ranging from “religiously inspired movements to national liberation struggles and from hate-based ideologies to diverse forms of political extremism.”⁷⁶

The consolidation of ties between jihadist militants and local communities through marriage represents an ancient practice deeply rooted in tribal traditions.⁷⁷ Several Arab fighters in Afghanistan, for instance, gave their daughters or sisters in marriage to fellow jihadist combatants.⁷⁸ More recent examples were found within the inner circle of Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi, as well as Usama bin Ladin himself, who reportedly arranged his own marriage to Amal al-Sada, member of a powerful tribe from the mountainous town of Ibb, in order to strengthen Al-Qaeda’s recruitment efforts in Yemen.⁷⁹

In their neo-contemporary iteration, family terror networks represent an increasing concern and are observed in a multitude of contexts, including insurgent movements in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia as well as homegrown terrorist cells in Europe and the United States.

Kinship ties are a critical factor in the involvement of minors with jihadist groups affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS/Daesh) and Al-Qaeda. Families that express political frustration or promote Salafi-jihadist ideology significantly influence the recruitment process of children by groups like Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda’s affiliate in East Africa, and it has been documented that nearly two-thirds of the minors in Al-Shabaab’s ranks are initially approached by individuals within or close to their family unit.⁸⁰ In the Sahel, many young militants have at least one parent affiliated with an extremist movement.⁸¹

Parental figures act as catalysts in the radicalization process and in the co-optation of their children into terrorism and terrorism-related offenses. As noted by Shiraz Maher,⁸² families have also been key targets in ISIS propaganda campaigns, portrayed as ideal models of a utopian, collective, and transgenerational jihadist project. One of the narratives exploited in this context promoted the state-building agenda of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who, upon proclaiming the restoration of an Islamic caliphate, declared hijra (migration) to its territory as an individual obligation (wājib ‘aynī) for every Muslim.⁸³ These early waves of migration were essential to the

⁷⁵ Dean Alexander, *Family Terror Networks*, BookBaby; 1st edition (March 1, 2019).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mohammed Hafez, “The Ties That Bind,” CTC Sentinel 9, no. 2 (February 2016).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and The Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 338.

⁸⁰ Ilya Gridneff, “Al-Shabaab Strategy Shifts Towards Clans as Presidential Election Looms,” International Peace Institute (IPI), 2017, <https://www.ipinst.org/2017/07/al-shabaab-strategy-shifts-towards-clans>; Nicholas Dudek and Allison Hartmann, *PREVENT: The Lifecycle of Child Terrorism in Al-Shabaab*, Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2021, <https://www.next-wave-center.com/post/al-shabaab-prevent-pilot>.

⁸¹ Jessica Trisko Darden, “When Terror Runs in the Family,” SAED-IEA, 2019.

⁸² Shiraz Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2015).

⁸³ Aaron Y. Zelin, *Filtering Meta-Narratives: From Global to Local in Countering Daesh Propaganda: Action-Oriented Research for Practical Policy Outcomes* (Atlanta, GA: The Carter Center, 2016).

bureaucratization of the caliphate's institutional structures and helped project the image of a "pure," self-sufficient Islamic state and solidified its political legitimacy. Subsequently, tens of thousands of foreign nationals from more than 80 countries traveled to conflict zones in Syria and Iraq to join the Islamic State and other insurgent terrorist organizations.⁸⁴ Among them, at least 4,640 minors were either brought by their parents to the conflict zones or born to families of foreign fighters who had settled in the region.⁸⁵ In addition, hundreds of other foreign minors reached conflict areas independently, drawn by Islamic State propaganda and its sophisticated online recruitment strategies. The issue of Foreign Terrorist Fighters remains, even in 2025, one of the unresolved legacies of the Syrian conflict. It has underscored the central role of the family as both unit of an utopian jihadist society and a vehicle for the radicalization and exploitation of children in terrorism.

Kin terrorism is not exclusively encompassed by the parent-child dynamic but extends across the broader web of familial relationships and blood ties, including siblings, cousins, and other members of the extended family. Despite the varying roles of family members within intra-family radicalization dynamics, kinship provides both opportunities for ideological socialization and fulfillment of core psychological needs, such as reduced cognitive dissonance, the preservation of meaningful relationships, and peer validation.⁸⁶ In this context, children may also face varying levels of direct or indirect pressure to conform to the family's ideological orientation, in a process Donatella della Porta describes as "affective focus and cognitive closure."⁸⁷ Ultimately, familial bonds can serve as a powerful channel for the transmission of violent political commitments, which in turn reinforce the very ties of loyalty that facilitated their emergence.

2. The Family as a Pillar of Terrorism: Structures, Hierarchies, and Organizational Frameworks

Family terror networks encompass both hierarchically organized groups and autonomous cells that are either unaffiliated or only loosely connected to broader extremist movements.⁸⁸ In his typological analysis of jihadist family units, Farhad Khosrokhavar identifies several categories, including: the headless patriarchal family, characterized by the absence of a paternal figure; the neo-traditional family, which replicates hierarchical traditions while partially adapting to modern sociocultural norms; the secular patchwork family, often fragmented and lacking cohesive values; and the jihadi fratriarchy, where leadership is assumed through fraternal or peer relationships.⁸⁹

A family terror network emerges when one or more members of a given household demonstrate a willingness to support or engage in terrorism, albeit through varying modalities and degrees of involvement.⁹⁰ Within these units, members occupy multifaceted roles, ranging from leadership

⁸⁴ Cecilia Polizzi, *Children Affected by the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Guidelines on the Prevention of Radicalization on Social Media and the Internet in this Digital Era* (Washington, DC: Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2023); Joana Cook and Gina Vale, *From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation [ICSR], 2018).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁷ Donatella della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 243–52.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 74.

⁸⁹ Farhad Khosrokhavar, "Jihadis and the Family," in *Jihadism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197564967.003.0005>.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 74.

to execution, and from active supporters to passive enablers, participating in various phases of the planning and conduct of attacks.⁹¹

Leadership and strategic decision-making typically reside with dominant family figures, who also exert a disproportionately influential role in radicalization and internal recruitment processes.⁹² While these roles, within a patriarchal framework, are often associated with the father or a senior male figure, women may also assume active roles in political violence.⁹³

Dean Alexander identifies, for instance, the Chechen “Black Widows” as women whose spouses, engaged in jihadist militancy, were killed either by Russian military actions or during terrorist operations. The term is commonly extended to encompass women who radicalize subsequent to the loss of other close family members, reflecting a pattern of grievance-driven mobilization within conflict-affected populations.

Alexander further emphasizes that family terror networks exhibit “a high degree of self-sufficiency, autonomy, and flexibility,”⁹⁴ characteristics typical of informal and decentralized structures increasingly observed in contemporary manifestations of terrorism, which, when interacting with internal systems of “beliefs, values, power, and control,” enhance the network’s operational capacity. The abandonment of a planned attack within a family cell is, in fact, considered “exceedingly rare, as it would result in a profound loss of honor and irreparable disgrace for both the individual and the wider family unit.”⁹⁵

3. Parental Roles and Gender Dynamics in Family Terror Networks

Intra-group dynamics of kin terrorism reveal a rigid adherence to traditional gender roles, underpinned by patriarchal ideological paradigms and a deeply entrenched misogynistic substratum.⁹⁶ Within jihadist contexts and most explicitly among those aligned with the Islamic State, the family unit is often conceptualized as comprising “a mother, whose primary function is to bear and nurture the ‘lion cubs’ of the caliphate, and a father, glorified as an Islamic warrior, both united in the aspirational project of constructing a community (the neo-Ummah) under the supreme authority of a ‘super-father’ embodied in the figure of the Caliph.”⁹⁷

In this gendered structure, women are relegated to subordinate and peripheral roles affording limited agency and decision-making power.⁹⁸ The widespread perception of women in jihadist movements as apolitical, irrational, and inherently victims⁹⁹ is, however, a reductive and overly simplistic interpretation. Mia Bloom, in her analysis of women’s roles in al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, asserts that jihadist women are, in fact, subversive and transgressive actors who, through

⁹¹ U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Terrorist Organizational Models: A Military Guide to Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, August 15, 2007), <https://fas.org/irp/threat/terrorism/guide.pdf>.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 74.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Nicolás Scremin, PhD Dissertation (University of St Andrews, 2025), Unpublished.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁹ Karina Jougla, “The Ideology of the Veil: Fundamentally Misogynistic or Fundamentally Misunderstood?” *The Morningside Review* 10 (May 2014): 40–46, <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/TMR/article/view/5431>.

insurrection, seek to challenge the foundational constructs of masculinity and virility within patriarchal settings.¹⁰⁰ This view is echoed by Kathleen Rice, former District Attorney of Nassau County: “There’s no doubt that many women were victimized by ISIS. But there are women who actually join the fight, not on the front lines, but as operatives, as wives, as mothers.”¹⁰¹

The involvement of women in jihadist organizations is therefore complex and non-uniform ranging from severe forms of exploitation to active recruitment, intelligence gathering, terrorist financing, indoctrination of offsprings, and the provision of logistical and operational support. Women are, therefore, critical, albeit often underestimated, elements of the jihadist ecosystem. One particularly salient phenomenon is their recurrent deployment in suicide bombing operations.

Females, including women and girls, are often prioritized for such missions,¹⁰² as sociocultural constructs attributing a character of nonviolence to the female gender have been strategically weaponized by numerous terrorist organizations. These perceptions allow women and girls to more easily bypass security protocols and surveillance measures than their male counterparts.¹⁰³ In addition, the use of female suicide bombers elicits significant psychological and emotional reactions among the public, fostering a climate of insecurity and vulnerability that enhances the visibility of terrorist organizations and furthers their strategic objectives.¹⁰⁴

Boko Haram, the Nigeria-based jihadist insurgency operating also in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, is among the most prolific in its use of women and girls in suicide attacks.¹⁰⁵ As of August 2017, approximately 106 females, including minors between the ages of 7 and 17, had been identified as suicide bombers in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region,¹⁰⁶ and by 2019, women accounted for 56% of Boko Haram’s suicide attackers.¹⁰⁷ While Boko Haram is not the only group to deploy female operatives,¹⁰⁸ its use of women and girls is significantly pronounced and associated with higher lethality rates than male operatives.¹⁰⁹

Another role assigned to women within the jihadist ecosystem is to ensure biological reproduction and the ideological indoctrination of children, with a view to safeguarding the generational continuity of the jihadist enterprise.

¹⁰⁰ Mia Bloom, *Veiled Threats: Women and Global Jihad* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501777844>.

¹⁰¹ Kate Storey, “How a Woman Joins ISIS,” *Marie Claire*, April 22, 2016, <http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/a20011/western-women-who-join-isis/>.

¹⁰² Krystel von Kumberg, Raphaëlle Beaussart, and Cecilia Polizzi, *PREVENT: The Lifecycle of Child Terrorism in Boko Haram* (Washington, DC: Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2021), <https://www.next-wave-center.com/post/boko-haram-prevent-pilot>.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*; Serwaa Allotey-Pappoe and Afua Agyeiwaa Lamptey, *Pawns, Puppets or Weapons of Choice: Examining Boko Haram’s Use of Female Suicide Bombers in Nigeria*, KAIPTC Occasional Paper No. 42 (Accra: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, 2019).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, “Exploding Stereotypes,” *Combating Terrorism Center Report*, 2017, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep05615.7.pdf>; *ibid.*, 100.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the precursor to the Islamic State in the Middle East, used women so effectively as suicide bombers that in 2007, Shiite shrines banned women from entering out of fear they might be female attackers attempting to target sectarian enemies.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 100.

Procreation and imparting an education aligned with the group's ideological tenets increase the movement's human capital and amplify its military, sociopolitical, and symbolic power.¹¹⁰ For this reason, Mia Bloom argues that "terrorism is increasingly becoming a 'family affair,' with kinship ties serving as a persistent risk factor in recidivism or re-engagement with extremist networks."¹¹¹

The recruitment and exploitation of minors in jihadist movements, a defining feature of the evolving dynamics of terrorism throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, reflects the capacity of terrorist organizations to adapt to shifting conditions.¹¹²

The Islamic State, in particular, has fundamentally transformed the nature of children's participation in terrorism.¹¹³ In territories under its control in Syria and Iraq, ISIS implemented a systematic indoctrination program, overhauling educational institutions, reformulating curricula to incorporate ideological precepts and military training and instilling "an uncompromising and totalizing adherence to Salafi-jihadist ideology."¹¹⁴ Under ISIS, the radicalization and mobilization of minors as spies, frontline fighters, suicide bombers, and executioners serve both to enhance operational capacity and to ensure long-term ideological proliferation, enabling the group to withstand territorial losses, evade counterterrorism efforts, and maintain generational continuity.¹¹⁵ Unlike other terrorist groups, the Islamic State deliberately and overtly publicized its use of children for propaganda purposes to obtain broader media exposure.¹¹⁶ In the ISIS context, childhood is no longer seen merely as a passive target of terrorism but as an active site of ideological investment, where children serve as instrumental actors in strategies designed to sustain the jihadist project. This is particularly evident in the role of children within ISIS-affiliated families as sponge-like recipients of Salafi-jihadist ideology.¹¹⁷ In this context, ISIS does not merely mandate marriage and childbearing but actively positions kinship as a conduit for ideological transmission. Jessica S

4. The Intergenerational Transmission of Extremist Ideology

4.1. The Salafi-Jihadist Doctrine

Salafi-jihadism is a binomial concept comprised of two interrelated components: Salafism and jihadism. Salafism is predicated on the strict application of Islamic law as set forth in the Qur'an and the Hadith, guided by the foundational principle of al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ (the pious predecessors).¹¹⁸ Jihadism, in contrast, refers to militant action undertaken in the name of Islam (jihad).

¹¹⁰ Daniel Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism* (Abingdon, Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315649566>.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 102; *ibid.*, 91.

¹¹² Cecilia Polizzi, "The Crime of Terrorism: An Analysis of Criminal Justice Processes and Accountability of Minors Recruited by the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham," *UC Davis Journal of International Law and Policy* 24, no. 1 (2018): 1–123, <https://jilp.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/volume-24-1/24-1-polizzi.pdf>.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Cecilia Polizzi, "Youth Radicalization: A New Frontier in Terrorism and Security," *Global Terrorism Index 2025* (Sydney: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2025), <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/youth-radicalisation-a-new-frontier-in-terrorism-and-security/>.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹¹⁷ Cecilia Polizzi, guest lecture, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland, College Park, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7H8dsUZ1lo>.

¹¹⁸ Ahmad S. Moussalli, *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009).

Jessica Stern defines Salafi-jihadism as “a branch of Salafism that considers any government deviating from the implementation of Sharia as illegitimate and infidel, and therefore subject to overthrow through the use of violence.”¹¹⁹

Aligned with Sunni Islam,¹²⁰ Salafi-jihadism is embraced by those who interpret Islamic texts through a rigidly literalist lens and actively commit themselves to armed jihad. It represents a theological-political worldview rooted in fundamentalist dogma and the normalization of violence in all its forms as a legitimate tool to achieve specific religious and political objectives. This perspective gives rise to the most radical form of religious exclusivism, broadening the conceptual scope of unbelief (kufr) and polytheism (shirk) and advancing a highly restrictive interpretation of Islam.¹²¹

Salafi-jihadism also constitutes the apex of religious politicization. It not only seeks to restore the Islamic political order in accordance with its historical archetype but also invokes jihad as a form of retaliation against perceived tyranny and ignorance, with the ultimate aim of establishing a global caliphate.¹²²

Salafi-jihadism emerged in the early twentieth century following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire,¹²³ and has since been adopted by numerous militant movements including the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine in Mali, and other factions in Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹²⁴ According to Manasir, in its modern iteration, the Islamic State pioneered a proto-concept of Salafi-jihadism characterized by three defining features: sectarianism and the widespread application of takfir (excommunication), the establishment of the caliphate, and a highly sophisticated propaganda apparatus leveraging advanced media strategies.

The Salafi-jihadist doctrine is grounded in specific tenets, including: (a) Muslims are obliged to associate exclusively with “authentic” Muslims and dissociate from all others who fall outside this narrow definition; (b) governing in defiance of divine law constitutes kufr (disbelief) and any opposition to the Islamic State is tantamount to apostasy; (c) all Shi’a Muslims are considered apostates deserving of death; (d) the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas are heretical.¹²⁵

4.2. The Family as a Matrix of Socialization and Radicalization into Violent Extremism

The family context offers unique opportunities for terrorism. By its very nature, the family unit constitutes an environment of high permeability to radicalization, since internal trust capital facilitates the rapid and deep adoption of extremist beliefs.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (New York: Ecco Press, 2015), 5.

¹²⁰ Becky L. Choma et al., “Prejudice in the Wake of Terrorism: The Role of Temporal Distance, Ideology, and Intergroup Emotions,” *Personality and Individual Differences* 123 (2018): 65–75.

¹²¹ Razan Malash, *Analysis of Propaganda Techniques in the Recruitment Process for Islamic Radical Groups: ISIS’ Magazine Dabiq as a Case Study* (2022).

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Razan Malash, *Analysis of Propaganda Techniques in the Recruitment Process for Islamic Radical Groups: ISIS’ Magazine Dabiq as a Case Study* (PhD diss., Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2022), 1, <http://hdl.handle.net/10486/703865>.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Yaron Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-‘Alawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 295, 114.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

The family unit, therefore, serves as a privileged conduit for the transmission of radical ideologies, antithetical values, and distorted worldviews, playing a dual role as both catalyst and enabler of individual radicalization processes. Familial networks have proven particularly decisive in youth radicalization trajectories, often exerting a greater influence than individual grievances, socioeconomic conditions, or other structural factors.¹²⁷

The family serves as a primary source of identity, offering belonging and reinforcing internal validation mechanisms through ties that promote collective adherence to shared views. Family members are exposed to ideologically charged informational flows which are often accepted uncritically, particularly when extremist ideology is intertwined with emotional dynamics.¹²⁸ Influenced by groupthink, family members demonstrate diminished capacity to question familial precepts, resulting in high conversion rates to radical beliefs within kin structures. Ideological transmission and internalization is, however, not a static process. Empirical research by Nicolás Scremin¹²⁹ highlights the role played by life events and transitions in reorienting internal pathways of extremism within the family either reinforcing or disrupting ideological transmission. In this regard, parenthood may become an opportunity for identity renegotiation, acting as a protective factor by fostering a return to prosocial values and promoting disengagement from extremism or intensifying militant commitment through the legitimization of a radical pedagogical mandate. In cases where parenting becomes a risk factor, as seen in individuals who conceive child-rearing as a means to “protect the white race” or perpetuate the jihadist project, ideological transmission fuses with the family’s educational function, and radicalized parents initiate indoctrination from an early age.¹³⁰

Jihadism subsumes the child into a monolithic self. Through the dreamlike heroism attributed to the father and the extraordinary maternal self-sacrifice, romanticized, exoticized, and often imbued with playful dimensions, the child internalizes a sense of contribution to a vibrant and organic jihadi collective. This imagined community extends beyond the domestic sphere to encompass the transnational ideal of a renewed global Islamic community (neo-Ummah).¹³¹

In ideologically oriented families, the child’s identity formation process is shaped by a binary and manichean worldview mirrored by the rhetoric and meta-narratives advanced by jihadist propaganda and takes concrete form in the large-scale manifestations of modern jihadism. The dreams sold by the caliphate, for instance, partially materialized between 2014 and 2016, when numerous foreign minors perceived an opportunity to elevate their social status - from anonymity to “heroism” - as participants in a “sacred” mission within a global Islamic militant community under the banner of Daesh.

Ideological indoctrination within families may occur through both coercive and non-coercive mechanisms and is observed across white supremacist movements¹³² and jihadist organizations

¹²⁷ Kevin Casey and David Pottebaum, *Youth and Violent Extremism in Mindanao, Philippines: A Mixed-Methods Design for Testing Assumptions about Drivers of Extremism* (Washington, DC: DAI, 2018), <https://www.dai.com/uploads/Youth%20and%20Violent%20Extremism%20in%20Mindanao,%20Philippines.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs*, 75.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹³² Pete Simi and Steven R. Futrell, *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement’s Hidden Spaces of Hate*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

alike¹³³ with parents either limiting exposure to mainstream content or severely restricting their children's access to alternative perspectives.¹³⁴

The radicalization of minors is also significantly shaped by geographic, cultural, and social factors. In small, politically and culturally homogeneous rural communities, where implicit bias and prejudice may flourish due to limited exposure to divergent perspectives, parents tend to express ideological views more openly and exert less direct control over their children's education and social interactions. In these contexts, the environment itself reinforces ideological alignment across generations, reducing the need for explicit parental enforcement.¹³⁵ By contrast, in more diverse and inclusive urban and suburban environments, ideologically oriented parents often adopt more stringent forms of control, including by imposing homeschooling, in order to minimize exposure to alternative worldviews and to directly manage their ideological development.¹³⁶

In these contexts, the child is deliberately immersed in extremist ideology and progressively assimilates the parents' worldview through repeated exposure to hate-laden language and routine practices. This conditioning does not necessarily lead to immediate adherence to fully developed ideological systems but fosters a gradual internalization of distorted narratives, weakening the child's critical defenses over time. In this respect, the family context operates as a semantic and value-laden preconditioning environment, priming the child for heightened receptivity to extremist doctrines, especially when such messages are reinforced through peer networks or digital spaces. An ideologically oriented family environment does not, in itself, imply radicalization but rather creates a fertile ground for the absorption of extremist narratives.

The dysfunctionality of the family environment also emerges as a variable in youth radicalization regardless of whether the dysfunction is linked to an ideological framework.¹³⁷ Drawing on Farhad Khosrokhavar's typologies of jihadist family structures, the collapse of the family unit, marked by paternal absence or inadequacy, poverty, social decay, or a deep sense of humiliation and inferiority can result in deviant, rebellious behavior and, in some cases, in jihadism.¹³⁸ Through radical Islam, the child regains a sense of dignity and substitutes the absent father figure with the Caliph, a divinely designated leader, embracing extremist violence as a means to free themselves from previously internalized stigmas.

Juvenile radicalization may also arise as a reaction against suffocating traditionalist family models, where jihadism develops in opposition to established domestic norms and in pursuit of solidarity lacking within the family unit. The newly acquired jihadist identity is especially significant because it is formed in opposition to perceived 'others' and provides an exclusive sense of belonging that reshapes and reverses the individual's fragmented sense of self.

¹³³ John Horgan, Neil Shortland, and Stefano Abbasciano, "Actions Speak Louder Than Words: A Behavioral Analysis of 183 Individuals Convicted for Terrorist Offenses in the United States from 1995 to 2012," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 61, no. 5 (2016): 1228–1237, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1556-4029.13131>.

¹³⁴ Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs*, 98.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

5. The Involvement of Minors in Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Families may play a central role in the intergenerational transmission of extremist ideology, the financing of terrorism, recruitment, and operational support. Kin-linked operatives have been identified across various manifestations of terrorism, including independent networks, state-sponsored entities, and autonomous cells and this type of terrorism encompasses a broad range of familial relationships including parents, siblings, spouses, and children, each of whom may perform distinct roles on the basis of the group's objectives.

At the family level, the selection and execution of attacks are contingent upon the group's operational capacity, the prevailing socio-political environment, and the extent of radicalization among its members, often involving the full spectrum of terrorist activities, from planning and coordination to execution and efforts to evade detection.

The involvement of offsprings into terrorist or extremist activities is a multidimensional process. Children may be precociously introduced to radical ideologies that are legitimized and normalized within the domestic sphere. However, the radicalization process of minors does not invariably culminate in full ideological adherence or engagement in acts of violence and some youth, initially attracted to terrorist causes and the sense of belonging they appear to offer, may later dissociate and renounce the ideological convictions of the family. Nonetheless, ideological principles internalized in the family context are often deeply entrenched as they are rooted in emotional bonds of trust and protection.

Parents or close relatives may exert both direct and indirect psychological pressure on children, sometimes through coercive and intimidating methods, to induce support to the cause or compel participation in violent acts. A child's compliance is typically the result of complex interpersonal dynamics informed by emotional dependency, and perceived moral obligations. At the family level, therefore, radicalization takes place through emotional ties, and the domestic setting becomes a means for ideological dissemination, radicalization, and militant activism.

6. The Recruitment of Minors in Terrorism and Violent Extremism: A Genealogy of Practices and Processes

The recruitment of minors into violent extremist or terrorist movements is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon. At the familial level, recruitment processes are primarily relational in nature. Far from being reducible to a mere process of ideological persuasion or individual mobilization, the recruitment of children in these contexts unfolds through the activation of intra-familial social capital. The family emerges as a privileged environment for co-optation, where kinship, shared values, and relational trust rooted in emotional ties lower the cognitive cost of ideological adoption and behavioral conformity. In such environments, the family serves as both an epistemic filter and a catalyst for block recruitment processes, whereby intra-family social pressure mobilizes the entire household toward forms of extremist activism.¹³⁹

Unlike mafia recruitment models, where the involvement of offspring in the criminal organization takes place through structured mechanisms, family terror networks, especially in Western

¹³⁹ Ibid, 77.

contexts, exhibit an absence of formal recruitment procedures, and a child's radicalization, as well as the auxiliary or direct involvement in terrorism or related offenses that follows, result in a de facto integration into the jihadist ecosystem.

Belonging to an ideologically oriented family does not necessarily lead to a child's engagement in violent extremism or terrorism, but it does act as a significant amplifier of either vulnerability or resilience, depending on the specific relational dynamics and the quality of the emotional bond that connects the child to the family environment. In settings where intra-familial cohesion is strong and parent-child bonds are ideologically saturated, the minor may internalize extremist values as an expression of social belonging. In such instances, violent extremism emerges as a relational continuum. Conversely, in dysfunctional family units marked by relational fragmentation, absence of parental figures, or deficits in cohesion, the child may embark on a path of individual radicalization as a compensatory response to identity vacuums, trauma, or a search for existential meaning.

In such cases, a child's adherence to extremist ideologies and potential involvement in terrorist cells or formal affiliation with more structured militant movements does not necessarily result from direct familial influence, but rather stems from the child's individual and structural vulnerabilities.

Particularly complex is the role that kinship plays in child recruitment in conflict zones or near conflict zones, where survival is often interwoven with high-risk dynamics and negotiation with non-state armed actors, insurgent groups, or violent extremists. In such contexts, a parent's decision to relinquish their child to militant groups, whether for marriage, logistical support, or direct combat, cannot be explained solely through ideological loyalty and must be instead contextualized in light of compounding variables of insecurity, implicit or explicit coercion, and the exploitation of socio-economic vulnerabilities by armed actors. For instance, documented cases show that family members have voluntarily handed over their children to Boko Haram for martyrdom in exchange for financial benefits and protection assurances.¹⁴⁰ A contextualized reading of these dynamics necessitates close attention to the intersections between kinship and the fulfillment of basic needs and security.

The model implemented by the Islamic State, by contrast, was exceptionally sophisticated and reflected a logic of youth militarization. At the height of the caliphate, families were not merely understood as a conduit for ideological transmission but as central units within a political-territorial jihadist project. In Syria and Iraq, children were systematically indoctrinated and assigned different roles on the basis of their age and gender, spanning propaganda, logistical assistance, and, eventually, direct combat, as in the case of the so-called 'Cubs of the Caliphate.'

It is essential to underscore that the ontological threshold marking the transformation of a radicalized individual into a terrorist is defined by the passage to violent action regardless of formal organizational affiliation. Participation in a violent act, considered the ultimate expression of radicalization, effectively classifies the individual as a "terrorist," and redefines familial bonds from mechanisms of ideological socialization into vectors of active engagement in violence.

¹⁴⁰ Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, "Reality Versus Perception: Toward Understanding Boko Haram in Nigeria," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 42, no. 5 (November 2017): 1–27; Ibidem, 104; United Nations Security Council, *Children and Armed Conflict in Nigeria*, S/2020/652, July 6, 2020.

7. Case Studies

Hamza bin Laden (Al-Qaeda)

Born in 1989 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and raised between Afghanistan and Sudan, Hamza bin Laden was immersed from early childhood in an environment marked by clandestinity, jihadist ideology, and the veneration of martyrdom. Receiving both military and ideological indoctrination under the direct supervision of Al-Qaeda leadership, Hamza bin Laden became the subject of propaganda materials during adolescence and was portrayed as the “prince of jihad.” Following the death of his father, Usama bin Laden, in 2011, Hamza gradually emerged as a symbolic figure for younger generations of jihadists, aided by a carefully curated media strategy that positioned him as the natural heir to the global struggle against the West. In 2015, Al-Qaeda officially endorsed his role through audio and video messages that called for renewed terrorist activity. Designated by the United States as an “emerging threat,” Hamza was ultimately killed in a counterterrorism operation in 2019. His trajectory, shaped by intergenerational radicalization exemplifies the relevance of family dynamics in contemporary manifestations of terrorism.

The Kouachi Brothers (Charlie Hebdo Attack)

The Kouachi brothers, perpetrators of the January 2015 Charlie Hebdo attack, represent a paradigmatic instance of familial radicalization. Born in Paris to Algerian immigrant parents, both brothers experienced early childhood trauma: their father died prematurely, while their mother, suffering from extreme social degradation and forced into prostitution, died of a drug overdose. Orphaned and deprived of a stable family structure the Kouachi brothers were placed in care centers for most of their youth. Despite obtaining vocational qualifications, the brothers demonstrated persistent difficulty in maintaining stable employment and exhibited a deep-seated resentment toward the authority of the white employer, perceived as a modern embodiment of colonial domination. The experiences of marginalization, poverty, social exclusion, and unresolved childhood trauma heightened their vulnerability to jihadist networks. Chérif Kouachi was first arrested in 2005 while attempting to travel to Damascus to join insurgent groups and later, in 2011, he received paramilitary training in Yemen funded by Anwar al-Awlaki. The Kouachi brothers were killed by French security forces on January 9, 2015, following the mass shooting they carried out on January 7, during which twelve individuals were murdered, including eight Charlie Hebdo journalists.

Allison Elizabeth Fluke-Ekren (ISIS)

In June 2022, Allison Elizabeth Fluke-Ekren, also known by her nom de guerre Umm Mohammed al-Amriki, pleaded guilty to providing material support to a designated terrorist organization while residing in Mosul, Iraq. Initially aligned with Ansar al-Shari’a in 2016, she later joined the Islamic State (ISIS) alongside her second husband, a sniper unit commander who was killed in an airstrike that same year. In the summer of 2016, she entered a third marriage with a Bangladeshi national responsible for building drones for ISIS. In total, Fluke-Ekren entered into five marriages, often strategically aligned with her roles in terrorist networks. Beyond the provision of material support, Fluke-Ekren committed egregious criminal acts, including human trafficking, and coerced her 13-year-old daughter into marrying a foreign ISIS fighter. Fluke-Ekren is also alleged to have commanded a female combat unit, the Khatiba Nusaybah, composed of over 100 women and girls, some as young as ten, trained in the use of AK-47 assault rifles, grenades, and explosive vests. The Fluke-Ekren case underscores the convergence of gendered agency and criminality within the landscape of jihadist terrorism.

CHAPTER 3. Minors between Mafia and Terrorism: A Comparative Analysis

1. The Family Unit as a Vector of Ideological Transmission and Deviant Pedagogy

The family is a central locus of primary socialization. It plays a crucial role in shaping a child's sense of self and constitutes the nucleus around which identity is formed, offering not only a sense of belonging but also protection from an external environment perceived as hostile, ambiguous, and potentially delegitimizing.

In both terrorist and mafia contexts, the family performs a pedagogical function grounded in deviance, wherein the transmission of norms, values, and behavioral codes, whether aligned with mafia or Salafi-jihadist ideology, relies on internal trust capital and mechanisms of emotional validation and render children particularly susceptible to distorted, yet totalizing, perceptions of reality. The high permeability of the family structure, already highlighted in jihadist milieus, finds a parallel in the normalization of mafia codes through domestic education, where criminal attitudes and behaviors are integrated into daily life and gradually internalized.

The family's function as a normative agency is reinforced in both contexts through groupthink dynamics that inhibit the critical thinking. In jihadist families, this manifests in a diminished propensity to question violent extremist dogma, whereas in mafia-proximate environments, the child develops a moral framework centered on honor, respect, and loyalty to the clan as supreme values.

A further convergence lies in the psychosocial compensatory function that both ideologies exercise over children. Jihadist radicalization and mafia affiliation offer frameworks for identity redemption and mechanisms of personal elevation - the caliph as the ideal father figure on one side, the boss as the emblematic role model on the other - through which the minor has an opportunity to react to marginalization, social exclusion, or dysfunctional family dynamics.

Lastly, it is important to note that parenthood, in both contexts, may act as either a risk factor or a potential vector for disengagement. The process of identity renegotiation triggered by the birth of a child can drive an individual toward prosocial values and even cooperation with judicial authorities or, conversely, be ideologically instrumentalized to serve the group's goals.

2. The Instrumentalization of Minors within Criminal and Terrorist Agendas

Within both jihadist and mafia contexts, the child is not merely exposed to violent ideologies or deviant behavioral codes, nor simply deprived of autonomy and individuality. Rather, the minor is actively embedded within a family system that directs their mobilization and instrumentalization for illicit or terrorist purposes. In kin recruitment, blood ties catalyze the cooptation of children into the criminal ecosystem or terrorist operations.

In such frameworks, childhood is redefined in functional terms vis-à-vis the group, and the child shaped as a strategic asset. This convergence between seemingly heterogeneous contexts underscores how the instrumentalization of children, despite differing in cultural, ideological, and operational specifics, shares a unifying foundation: the violation of their fundamental rights.¹⁴¹

3. The Role of Women in Education, Ideological Transmission, and Militancy

The role of women within mafia and jihadist family units reveals significant parallels in the intergenerational transmission of ideology and in the structuring of educational dynamics within rigidly regulated patriarchal frameworks. Although the two contexts differ in sociocultural and ideological terms, the role of women converges along at least three primary dimensions: pedagogical function, reproduction of patriarchal order and activism under conditions of structural marginalization or threat to group's cohesion and stability.

Motherhood becomes the primary medium through which the continuity of the criminal or jihadist consortium is ensured. In mafia-type organizations, the maternal figure serves as a bridge between the child and the criminal environment, as custodian of familial honor, and as an active agent in the transmission of the mafia's cultural code, reinforcing also a deviant pedagogy grounded in the mythologization of the father and the glorification of male lineage.

Similarly, in the jihadist ecosystem, the woman-mother plays a strategic role in ensuring both the biological and ideological reproduction of the neo-Ummah through the early indoctrination of her children. She therefore becomes a primary instrument in ensuring the generational continuity of the jihadist project.

Both systems are based on gendered hierarchical structures that assign women a formally subordinate but functionally decisive role. Motherhood constitutes a privileged arena for exercising an otherwise impossible frontline role and enables women to act as ideological vectors and guarantors of the group's internal cohesion. This process is evident both in the pedagogical functions of mafia mothers, who convey an idealized image of the father and criminal values, and in jihadist mothers, who transmit distorted worldviews.

A further point of convergence is the emergence of deviant forms of empowerment, wherein women assume active roles in leadership and militancy. In mafia contexts, this occurs through the temporary assumption of family leadership in the absence of the patriarch while in jihadist ones, through participation in suicide missions (also as a form of social redemption), recruitment activities, and other auxiliary roles.

It is crucial to emphasize that in both contexts, motherhood is instrumentalized as an ideological mandate aimed at shaping individuals aligned with the values of the group. The education imparted by mafia or jihadist mothers may be interpreted as a form of cognitive and emotional pre-conditioning that instills deviant narratives and normalizes structural violence.

In summary, women in mafia and jihadist settings are central figures in the processes of ideological transmission. Although formally marginalized, they sit as foundational pillars of child pedagogy, ensuring simultaneously the adaptability, effectiveness, and longevity of the group, and, in a broader perspective, of the movement or organization as a whole.

¹⁴¹ F. Occhiogrosso, "Minors and Mafia," in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Mafia and Anti-Mafia*, edited by M. Mareso and L. Pepino (Turin: Edizioni Gruppo Abele, 2013), 376. See also the report by the Italian Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, Marilina Intriari, at the conference *Mafia Indoctrination and Parental Responsibility: Jurisprudential Orientation of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria*, Italian Senate, 24 November 2015: "In the Reggio Calabria region, in 2013, a protocol was signed between the Judicial Offices of the Court of Appeal District for coordinated judicial interventions aimed at protecting disadvantaged minors, including so-called 'mafia minors,' whether as perpetrators or victims of criminal offenses."

CHAPTER 4. Pathways for the Protection of Minors in Mafia Contexts: Judicial Approaches and Intervention Models

The necessity to address organized crime, an issue that has assumed markedly unique characteristics within the Italian context, has required, over time, the development of increasingly sophisticated measures. The progressive refinement of such frameworks has been, in part, prompted by the very evolution of the strategies and methods employed by criminal organizations.¹⁴²

In 1982, the enactment of anti-mafia legislation through the so-called “Rognoni–La Torre Law”¹⁴³ introduced into the Italian legal system a new and more nuanced definition of criminal conspiracy, replacing the pre-existing provision within the Penal Code with that of mafia-type association. Article 416-bis of the Penal Code¹⁴⁴ identifies the key features of this offence, including the use of intimidatory force derived from the associative bond, which generates a condition of subjugation and omertà (code of silence), and the organization’s capacity to establish relationships with public authorities in such a way as to enable profitable infiltration into legal economic activities regulated or financed by those authorities.¹⁴⁵ Presuming a hierarchically organized structure, additional attributes include the exertion of territorial control that yields internal and external legitimization, a reputation facilitating transactional authority, and a violent internal code of conduct in pursuit of the organization’s interests.¹⁴⁶

The Rognoni–La Torre Law represents a synthesis of legal and meta-legal notions and has represented, in the words of Aldo Cimmino, “a veritable Copernican revolution in the judicial approach to confront mafia-type criminal organizations.”¹⁴⁷

It is indisputable that minors are implicated in illicit activities led by the mafia. A “diagnosis of mafiosity” concerning youth demographics was conducted in the context of the “Mafia Minors” project, funded by the European Commission’s AGIS 2004 Programme (Directorate-General for Justice and Home Affairs).¹⁴⁸

Data provided by public prosecutors in the regions of Apulia and Campania indicate that between January 1990 and October 2002, 148 minors were registered for mafia-type association under Article 416-bis. Between 2002 and 2004, prosecutors in Calabria and Sicily expanded data collection and reported a total of 61 charges against 51 minors, evidencing their repeated involvement in multiple proceedings. A data point of particular significance to this study and to the development of preventive intervention strategies targeting family members is that 40.3% of the minors examined by AGIS had one or more relatives directly involved in legal proceedings under Article 416-bis. However, it is important to note that it is not standard practice for the children of

¹⁴² Elisabetta Cesqui, “L’Italia di fronte alla mafia,” *Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata* 3, no. 4 (2017): 5–13, <https://doi.org/10.13130/cross-9742>.

¹⁴³ Italy, Legge 13 settembre 1982, n. 646: Disposizioni contro la criminalità organizzata di tipo mafioso, nonché in materia di procedimenti per il sequestro e la confisca dei beni, art. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Italy, Codice Penale, R.D. 19 ottobre 1930, n. 1398, art. 416-bis, “Associazioni di tipo mafioso anche straniere,” updated December 14, 2024.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Progetto “Mafia Minors,” Programma AGIS 2004, JAI/2004/AGIS/135 – Dossier Italia.

¹⁴⁷ Aldo Cimmino, “Minori ‘a rischio’ e delitto di associazione mafiosa: profili sostanziali e riverberi processuali,” *Diritto e Giustizia Minorile*, 2, no. 1 (2014): n.p., Mario Covelli Editore.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 86.

mafia bosses to be charged under Article 416-bis,¹⁴⁹ and “not all forms of familial association translate into legally demonstrable criminal acts, such that would allow the judiciary to detect and formally sanction mafia affiliation through this provision.”¹⁵⁰ Therefore, the reported data does not exhaustively reflect the reality of juvenile involvement in mafia-type organizations.

The pronounced negative influence of adults on minors, coupled with the acknowledgment of the “multi-problematic nature of certain family backgrounds,”¹⁵¹ has been the subject of thorough inquiry by the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria. Its President, Roberto Di Bella, reported that over the past two decades, more than 100 proceedings related to mafia association have been handled along with over 50 proceedings for homicides and attempted homicides perpetrated by minors who followed the trajectories of their parents under Article 416-bis, illustrating a “tragic logic of generational continuity.”¹⁵² In response, the Court initiated an experimental pathway for the protection of minors that, alongside changes in judicial interpretation, led to a legal orientation rooted in the overarching principle of the best interests of the child.¹⁵³

1. Mafia Indoctrination, “Abusive” Families, and Parental Responsibility

Parental responsibility, as established by Legislative Decree No. 154/2013, governs the system of rights and duties jointly vested in parents and that are to be exercised in the best interests of the child.¹⁵⁴ Key supranational sources, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was incorporated into Italian law by Act No. 176/1991, enshrine the application of children’s rights, including those relating to education, within the framework of the best interests of the child principle.¹⁵⁵ Parental responsibility is therefore not interpreted as an uncontested and arbitrary power of parents over their children, but rather as a public duty (*munus*) to be exercised in the child’s interest, in order to guarantee the constitutional and civil code rights, enshrined in Article 30 of the Constitution and Article 315 of the Civil Code, pertaining to support, education and upbringing.¹⁵⁶ Within the context of parent-child relations, parental responsibility must therefore be interpreted as a tool aimed at safeguarding and promoting the superior interest of the child, and it constitutes the guiding criterion in the exercise of all parental prerogatives.¹⁵⁷

The principles outlined imply that “the role of parents, particularly with respect to the education of children, cannot be divorced from shared social values and the social structures in which the family is embedded. Parental pedagogical action must align with those foundational principles of collective conscience that society, at any given historical moment, deems essential to civil life, and conversely, must reflect the interests of the child in being socially educated to become a citizen capable of living in a democratic society, as envisioned by the constitutional framework.”

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵² Roberto Di Bella, remarks in *Indottrinamento Mafioso e Responsabilità Genitoriale: II Edizione*, ed. Michele Filippelli, *Diritto Avanzato*; cited in Martina Russo, *Conseguenze Socio-Giuridiche della Criminalità Organizzata sulla Vita dei Minori Appartenenti a Famiglie Mafiose*, LUISS Guido Carli, 2018–2019.

¹⁵³ Gaia Vannoni, Italy, *Codice Civile*, art. 315-bis; see also Tavolo 10, “La responsabilità genitoriale appare funzionale a garantire i diritti di cui il minore è titolare, che in negativo costituiscono un limite all’esercizio dei poteri educativi in capo al genitore.”; “L’interesse del minore ad un’educazione conforme ai valori fondativi della Costituzione,” *Consulta Online*, Periodico Telematico SSN 2017, fasc. 2 (2017).

¹⁵⁴ Italy, *Codice Civile*, art. 315-bis; see also Tavolo 10, “La responsabilità genitoriale appare funzionale a garantire i diritti di cui il minore è titolare, che in negativo costituiscono un limite all’esercizio dei poteri educativi in capo al genitore.”

¹⁵⁵ Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, November 20, 1989, ratified in Italy by Law No. 176 of 1991.

¹⁵⁶ Roberto Di Bella, *Le potenzialità della giustizia minorile*; A.C. Moro and L. Fadiga, eds., *Manuale di diritto minorile* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 2008), 194; L. Ferri, *Della potestà dei genitori*. Art. 315-342 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1988).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

The mafia family unit represents an “abusive model”¹⁵⁸ with respect to the child, fostering adherence to the criminal logic by transmitting a value system that is antithetical to the rule of law and inducing violent and deviant behaviors.¹⁵⁹ Insofar as it (mis)educates the child into unlawfulness, the mafia-affiliated family can cause serious harm to the fundamental rights of children, their development and formation.¹⁶⁰

Mafia indoctrination can therefore be interpreted as a violation of the duties inherent in parental responsibility, thereby justifying state intervention where the parents are demonstrably incapable of fulfilling their educational role.¹⁶¹ Against this backdrop, the protective measures adopted by the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria are grounded in the serious harm caused to the interests of underage children, and in the incapacity of individuals affiliated with mafia-type (‘ndranghetist) organizations to fulfill the obligations of parenthood.

In order to protect minors raised in family environments closely linked to the mafia who exhibit “manifestations of social dangerousness, a high risk of deviance [...] and a lifestyle marked by association with convicted offenders,”¹⁶² and to ensure their regular psychological and social development while offering them the opportunity to experience social, cultural, psychological, and emotional contexts alternative to those of origin,¹⁶³ the Court developed a legal orientation that prioritizes the exercise of de potestate judicial interventions, based on Articles 330 and 333 of the Italian Civil Code, aiming at the suspension or revocation of parental responsibility.

2. Limitation, Suspension, or Termination of Parental Responsibility: The Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria

The protective measures employed to safeguard minors pursuant to Articles 330 and 333 of the Italian Civil Code¹⁶⁴ by the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria primarily involve the limitation, suspension, or termination of parental responsibility¹⁶⁵ and, where necessary, the removal of the child from the family environment. These interventions are applied uniquely in cases where the transmission of mafia values or the risk of violating the minor’s right to life necessitates separation from the biological family, with the aim of “shielding them from an otherwise predetermined fate due to their close proximity to a criminal and mafia-influenced environment and the transmission of deviant values.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁸ Italy, Codice Penale, R.D. 19 ottobre 1930, n. 1398, art. 572, “Sequestro di persona,” updated December 14, 2024.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁶⁰ Italy, Legge 28 marzo 2001, n. 149, art. 1, para. 1; Codice Civile, art. 315-bis, para. 2; Cassazione, May 14, 2005, No. 10126, in *Diritto e Giustizia* 2005, 23, 31; Cassazione, September 8, 2008, No. 22640, in *Famiglia e Diritto* 2008, 1164; Francesco Rinaldi, “Famiglia mafiosa e decadenza dalla responsabilità genitoriale, tra diritti di unità e di autonomia della famiglia e diritti di personalità del minore: percorsi rieducativi e non sanzionatori nella relazione familiare,” *Dirittifondamentali.it*, fasc. 2 (2019).

¹⁶¹ Roberto Di Bella and G.M.P. Surace, *op. cit.*, 35; see also Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura, Risoluzione del 31 ottobre 2017: La tutela dei minori nell’ambito del contrasto alla criminalità organizzata, 4.; Tribunale per i Minorenni di Reggio Calabria, “Provvedimenti,” http://www.tribmin.reggiocalabria.giustizia.it/articoli.php?nome=Provvedimenti&id_articolo=999.

¹⁶² Marilina Intrieri, “Relazione al convegno ‘Indottrinamento mafioso e responsabilità genitoriale: l’orientamento giurisprudenziale del Tribunale dei minorenni di Reggio Calabria,’” Senato della Repubblica, Rome, November 24, 2015.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁶⁴ Italian Civil Code, Articles 330 and 333, *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, 1942.

¹⁶⁵ Interpreted in light of Articles 2, 30, and 31 of the Italian Constitution.

¹⁶⁶ Memorandum of Understanding between the Judicial Offices of the District Court of Appeals of Reggio Calabria, 21 March 2013, 13.

These measures, which are preventive in nature, may also take the form of administrative actions in response to irregular conduct¹⁶⁷ and involve placement under social services supervision, foster care with another family, or care centers.

While acknowledging the autonomy of parents in educating their children, the Reggio Calabria bench sets a “firm threshold regarding the content of the educational model to which minors must be exposed. Falling below this threshold constitutes a failure to fulfill the duties inherent in the parental role. A pedagogical model that contradicts the minimum standards that must guide the upbringing of every child may therefore be subject to judicial review, insofar as it conflicts with the responsibilities assigned to parenthood under the Italian Constitution.”

These types of judicial interventions stem typically from criminal proceedings.¹⁶⁸ Within this framework, judicial authorities in Reggio Calabria have initiated actions culminating in the signing of a memorandum of understanding, which stipulates that whenever the Public Prosecutor, in the course of an investigation, identifies circumstances that may jeopardize the welfare of a minor, such findings must be promptly communicated to the Juvenile Court.¹⁶⁹

It is essential to stress that judicial decisions regarding the termination or limitation of parental responsibility (*de potestate*)¹⁷⁰ are not discretionary but are guided by a pragmatic evaluation model for assessing parental conduct. “Tavolo 10” (Table 10) which explored the relationship between parental responsibility and mafia indoctrination, has articulated guiding criteria based on the following dimensions:

1. Case-specific evaluation through investigative processes aimed at determining whether a *de potestate* measure truly ensures the optimal psycho-social development of the minor;
2. Interdisciplinarity between judicial assessment of the specific case and assessment of family relationships, context, and the educational systems and processes in place;
3. Development of a comprehensive recovery plan for the minor and, when compatible with the best interests of the child, the gradual restoration of family ties.

Accordingly, the Court emphasized that identifying the best interests of the child necessarily entails a balancing of the child’s fundamental rights, including the right to be raised by both parents and to remain in the family of origin, with the right to healthy and harmonious psycho-social development, as enshrined in the founding principles of the Italian Constitution.¹⁷¹

Measures involving termination of parental authority are not intended as punitive or sanctionatory toward the parent. Rather, they are to be understood as “an opportunity for the reclamation of parental roles.”¹⁷² Judicial practice has demonstrated that the effectiveness of child protection interventions depends on their integration with prescriptive support measures involving the family unit such as parental education programs or initiatives aimed at rebuilding parenting capacities.

¹⁶⁷ Royal Decree Law no. 1404 of 20 July 1934, Art. 25.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁶⁹ Memoranda dated 23 January 2019 and 11 December 2018 on the protection of minors in trial and in prejudicial circumstances; 21 March 2013 and 15 July 2014 protocols regarding minors from mafia-involved families and victims of intra-family abuse.

¹⁷⁰ Referring to limitations or revocation of parental responsibility.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁷² Report by Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, Marilina Intrieri, “Mafia Indoctrination and Parental Responsibility: Jurisprudential Trends of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria,” Senate Conference, 24 November 2015.

The juvenile judge may, for instance, order the family to participate in rule of law courses or activities that foster disengagement from educational models rooted in a culture of violence and domination.¹⁷³ As emphasized by the Italian Ombudsperson for Children, the judicial protection of minors should not be limited to physical separation from the family context but instead rely on a system of interventions capable of ensuring both the minor's right to a safe environment and the provision of comprehensive support to the family with a view of enabling it to resume its pedagogical role.¹⁷⁴

In this regard, the Framework Agreement¹⁷⁵ between the judicial offices of Reggio Calabria and Catanzaro and the Ministries of Justice and the Interior was established to “dismantle the family unit's adherence to criminal logic and implement intervention strategies aimed at offering, even to adults, an opportunity to choose a different path.”¹⁷⁶ The agreement has led to the implementation of the “Liberi di Scegliere” (Free to Choose) project, designed to provide a support network aligned with judicial measures, as well as access to cultural, educational, and employment opportunities that present the minor with tangible alternatives to a mafia lifestyle.¹⁷⁷

By adopting an integrated and cohesive approach, the Court has markedly enhanced the effectiveness of its judicial interventions and pioneered scalable methodologies nationwide, coordinating the work of state actors across criminal, civil, and administrative spheres. As noted by Judge Ramondino, the intention was clearly to institutionalize judicial practice and foster synergy among regional departments and this approach allowed for the structured implementation of judicial measures and the creation of an integrated child support system.

3. Outcomes and Prospects of Child Protection Measures for At-Risk Minors

The analysis of the impact of judicial and extra-judicial measures adopted by the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria outlines an innovative model of intervention. Removal orders mandating the removal of minors from their familial and community contexts have proven particularly effective in assisting children exposed to high criminogenic density environments. These measures provide a concrete opportunity for emancipation and serve as a preventive mechanism against the consolidation of mafia-style delinquent trajectories. Data collected since the inception of this jurisprudential orientation is encouraging.

In documented cases, including those involving only provisional removal from the family unit, a significant improvement was observed in key indicators of educational and social inclusion. Children resumed school attendance previously interrupted, participated in civic education initiatives, and were involved in social programs. These positive outcomes were achieved through a synergistic, multi-agency approach involving juvenile protection services, district judicial authorities, law enforcement agencies, and trained volunteers including psychologists, educators, and juvenile crime specialists. Wider analysis indicates the presence of a developmental potential in the minors that often remained latent due to their socio-familial environment.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 156.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 177.

¹⁷⁵ “Framework Agreement,” Reggio Calabria, 1 July 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 156.

¹⁷⁷ R. Di Bella, in *Mafia Indoctrination and Parental Responsibility: Second Edition*, ed. Michele Filippelli, *Diritto Avanzato*.

As emphasized by senior magistrates¹⁷⁸ engaged in the fight against juvenile organized crime, the effectiveness of such protective interventions is contingent upon the specific circumstances of each individual case. There is no universally applicable protocol as each situation presents unique variables, including the degree of internalization of mafia subculture, the minor's level of entrenchment within the criminal milieu, and the position of family members within the mafia syndicate. Additionally, criminological literature and field experience establish that the efficacy of interventions is inversely proportional to the minor's age. Beyond a certain threshold, the child may have already assimilated the deviant codes of the criminal organization, complicating efforts at cultural requalification and social reintegration.

A particularly salient dimension concerns the auxiliary role that this intervention protocol plays in facilitating judicial cooperation from women affiliated with mafia families. The protection of minors, achieved through their removal from the damaging environment and their subsequent reunification with their mothers in a safe location, also constitutes a tangible incentive for defection from the criminal syndicate. While cases persist of mothers attempting to perpetuate mafia indoctrination among their children, an increasing number of women, following prolonged incarceration either of themselves or their spouses, have expressed the intention to shield their offspring from a preordained criminal fate.

In this regard, the Juvenile Court acts as a pivotal actor in the emancipation of women within mafia contexts, relieving mothers of a burden that, under ordinary circumstances, would be insurmountable if undertaken autonomously. This often results in a tacit, yet substantial, acceptance of rehabilitative pathways established in the best interest of the child.¹⁷⁹ The intervention developed in this domain has further generated "unforeseen ruptures" within the internal fabric of mafia families and opened new avenues for legal, psychological, cultural, and societal rehabilitation.

¹⁷⁸ Ibidem, 33; C. Fotia, "Salviamo i figli da una vita criminale," *L'Unità*, February 8, 2016.

¹⁷⁹ Ibidem, 182.

CHAPTER 5. Terrorism and Radicalization in Italy: A State-of-the-Art Analysis

1. Italian Terrorism: Historical Context and Institutional Responses

The phenomenon of Italian political terrorism, when examined within a global and European framework, represents a paradigmatic case of trans-ideological radicalization responding to a peculiar sociopolitical climate. Between the late 1960s and early 1980s, an era conventionally designated the “Years of Lead”, acute polarization escalated into armed confrontation and large-scale terrorist activities.¹⁸⁰ The distinctive feature of Italian terrorism lies in both the multiplicity of its violent manifestations and its enduring nature, with ideological confrontations spanning multiple decades. Compared to analogous European scenarios, Italian political violence appears anomalous, rooted partly in the active involvement of elements within the intelligence services and extra-parliamentary political groups aiming to destabilize the democratic order.¹⁸¹ This period was marked by social fragmentation and the co-existence of competing terrorist actors vying for ideological dominance and generating a pervasive atmosphere of insecurity through frequent attacks.

Statistical data from the period illustrates a sustained escalation: the number of active armed groups rose from just two in 1969 to ninety-one in 1977, peaking at 269 in 1979. That same year, Italy registered 659 terrorist incidents, the highest annual total on record.¹⁸² Between 1969 and 1988, terrorism claimed approximately 415 lives and left over 4,000 injured.¹⁸³ Despite this intensity, Italian terrorism, whether Marxist-Leninist or far-right, ultimately failed. The government responded with sweeping legal reforms aimed at enhancing police powers and capacity¹⁸⁴ and created specialized counterterrorism units, such as the Carabinieri’s GIS, the Polizia’s NOCS, and later, the SVATPI-ATPI section of the Guardia di Finanza.¹⁸⁵ The scale of the threat justified Italy’s adoption of emergency legislation (such as Art. 289-bis and 270-bis c.p.)¹⁸⁶ to address what was deemed an exceptional threat to public safety.¹⁸⁷ These statutory measures formed a dynamic and complex legal framework in response to “multiform and unpredictable” threats necessitating extraordinary and rapid remedies.¹⁸⁸ However, the response was fragmented and reactive, relying primarily on case-specific repressive measures rather than a coherent framework.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁰ Lorenza Sipione, *Dal terrorismo politico alle nuove forme di terrorismo globale: strumenti di conoscenza e di contrasto in ambito nazionale ed europeo*, seduta didattica residenziale, V corso di formazione per l’accesso alla qualifica iniziale della carriera prefettizia, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2017.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ministero della Cultura, *I terrorismi politici in Italia: Stragi e attentati da piazza Fontana alle Brigate Rosse (1969–1988)* (n.d.), <https://memoria.cultura.gov.it/documents/.../142238/1%2Bterrorismi%2Bpolitici%2Bin%2BItalia.pdf>.

¹⁸⁴ Conferenza nazionale “Sicurezza e legalità,” Tavolo sul terrorismo (data e luogo non disponibili); Legge 22 maggio 1975, n. 152, Disposizioni a tutela dell’ordine pubblico (“Legge Reale”), Gazzetta Ufficiale; Legge 6 febbraio 1980, n. 15, Provvedimenti urgenti per la tutela dell’ordine democratico e della sicurezza pubblica (“Legge Cossiga”), Gazzetta Ufficiale.

¹⁸⁵ “Scorta Valori Anti-Terrorismo Pronto Impiego” (SVATPI-ATPI), unità di pronto intervento della Guardia di Finanza.

¹⁸⁶ Decreto-legge 21 marzo 1978, n. 59, conv. con mod. in legge 18 maggio 1978, n. 191, art. 289-bis, Codice Penale; Decreto-legge n. 625 del 1979, conv. nella legge 6 febbraio 1980, n. 15, che introdusse l’art. 270-bis c.p. (associazione per finalità di terrorismo); art. 270-bis modificato dall’art. 1 della legge 15 dicembre 2001, n. 438.

¹⁸⁷ Sipione, *Dal terrorismo politico*, 126.

¹⁸⁸ Carl Schmitt, *Dottrina della costituzione*, ed. A. Caracciolo (Milano: Giuffrè, 1984); Carl Schmitt, *Teologia politica* (1922); Giorgio Agamben, *Lo stato di eccezione* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003); Astrid Rescio, *Strategie di prevenzione, vigilanza e controllo del territorio: nuovi modelli di sicurezza nella lotta al terrorismo*, seduta didattica residenziale, V corso formazione prefettizia, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Following the 11 September 2001 attacks, Italy formally incorporated international terrorism into its criminal code through Law 438/2001.¹⁹⁰ Subsequent legislation, particularly Law 43/2015, enacted after the Paris attacks, specifically aimed to curb Islamic radicalization, criminalize travel abroad for terrorist support, and intensify pre-emptive penal measures. The anti-financing law of 2016 (Law 153/2016) extended this framework by criminalizing financial assistance to transnational extremist networks and these instruments further enhanced surveillance, infiltration and extended investigatory techniques beyond ordinary procedural limits.

Over the past decade, lower thresholds for punitive intervention were established, yet a comprehensive, integrated preventive strategy continued to remain absent, effectively positioning a repressive legal structure as Italy's primary anti-terrorism instrument.

2. Radicalization: Context, Challenges, and Intervention Strategies

Several endemic and circumstantial factors have contributed to radicalization in Italy being less widespread than in many Central and Northern European countries.¹⁹¹ Italy has experienced fewer Foreign Terrorist Fighters, no domestic attack, and only small-scale plots that were neutralized pre-emptively. Deputy Prefect Dr.ssa Caterina de Mutiis attributes this distinctive climate to two main factors: a shorter timeframe since migratory flows began in Italy, and the absence of a deep-rooted third generation of migrants within its national cultural fabric.¹⁹² In addition, effective counterterrorism bodies and a judicial framework shaped by experiences of domestic terrorism in the 1970s have enabled the development of a solid apparatus.¹⁹³

Nonetheless, the terrorist threat in Italy remains tangible, due in part to the country's symbolic relevance in global jihadist narratives and the presence of radicalized individuals within its borders.¹⁹⁴ Extremist ideology in Italy currently spreads through two primary avenues: digital platforms and the prison system.¹⁹⁵ Social media accelerates communication, allowing extremist actors to build networks, legitimize violence, and recruit,¹⁹⁶ and Italy is witnessing the early emergence of an Italian jihadist community within digital spaces.¹⁹⁷

On the other hand, the prison environment, marked by conditions of social isolation and in certain instances proximity to radicalized individuals, continues to constitute a high-risk setting for the development and reinforcement of extremist ideologies and radicalization.¹⁹⁸ The case of Anis

¹⁹⁰ Legge 15 dicembre 2001, n. 438, Misure urgenti per contrastare il terrorismo internazionale; Antonella Vidaschi and Kim Lane Scheppele, eds., 9/11 and the Rise of Global Anti-Terrorism Law: How the UN Security Council Rules the World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Cristina Bottici and Benoît Challand, "Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilization as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 3 (2006): xx-xx.

¹⁹¹ Commissione di studio sul fenomeno della radicalizzazione e dell'estremismo jihadista, *Verso un approccio italiano alla prevenzione della radicalizzazione*, sintesi (2016).

¹⁹² Caterina De Mutiis, *Verso una strategia italiana di prevenzione della radicalizzazione: una sfida globale che si vince a livello locale*. Caso di studio (Documento di lavoro, Ministero dell'Interno, 2017).

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, *Relazione al Parlamento sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza*, 2017; ANSA, "Terrorismo: 007, minaccia jihadista concreta in Italia," 20 February 2018.

¹⁹⁵ Trevor Gaudette, "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism: Insights from Former Right-Wing Extremists," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1784147>; Alessio Negri, "La radicalizzazione jihadista negli istituti di pena," ISPI (14 December 2018), www.ispionline.it.

¹⁹⁶ Cecilia Polizzi, *Children Affected by the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Guidelines on the Prevention of Radicalization on Social Media and the Internet in this Digital Era* (Washington, DC: Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2023), <https://www.next-wave-center.com/post/...radicalization>; Ibid, 117.; Ibid, 1.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Polizzi, "Al Hawl Shame: Another Layer of Dante's Inferno for Children," *Medium* (2023), <https://medium.com/.../al-hawl-shame-another-layer-of-dante-s-inferno-for-children-ecf68837b343>; Ibid 2.

Amri, radicalized within a Sicilian penal milieu before perpetrating the 2016 Berlin Christmas market attack, exemplifies this dynamic.¹⁹⁹

Italy's current security strategy relies on extensive investigations, monitoring based on indicators of radicalization, and administrative expulsions for non-citizens deemed security threats.²⁰⁰ Yet, this system remains predominantly repressive, with no corresponding investment in preventive frameworks.²⁰¹

Although radicalization has been recognized as a policy concern,²⁰² a legal definition was only introduced with the Dambrosio-Manciulli Bill (2017),²⁰³ which defined it as "sympathy or overt adherence to jihadist ideologies founded on violence and terrorism".²⁰⁴ The subsequent Fiano Bill (2022)²⁰⁵ built on this foundation by proposing comprehensive preventive, deradicalization, and social reintegration programs emphasizing respect for religious freedom and human rights.

Both legislative initiatives represents Italy's first steps toward the development of an integrated, preventive strategy to address radicalization.

¹⁹⁹ Case of Anis Amri, perpetrator of the December 2016 Berlin Christmas market attack, whose radicalization reportedly began in Sicilian detention.

²⁰⁰ Decreto legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n.286, art.13, comma 1; Luigi Roberti and Andrea Giannini, *Manuale dell'antiterrorismo: evoluzione normativa e nuovi strumenti investigativi* (Roma: Laurus, 2016).

²⁰¹ Lorenzo Vidino and Francesco Marone, *The Jihadist Threat in Italy: A Primer*, Analysis No. 318 (Milano: ISPI, November 2017).

²⁰² Giovanna Spanò, "De-radicalisation in Italy: Is 'Emergency' a Strategy per se?," DPCE Online 2, no. Monographic section: Democracy (2023).

²⁰³ Disegno di legge 3558, presentato il 26 gennaio 2016.

²⁰⁴ Aurora Sambati, *Radicalizzazione e strategie di prevenzione: necessità di un intervento alla radice?* (2017).

²⁰⁵ Onorevole Emanuele Fiano, *Provisions for the prevention of radicalisation and violent jihadist extremism*, Disegno di legge A.C. 243 (Camera, XVII Legislature, 2022).

CHAPTER 6. Developing a Holistic Approach to Preventing Child Radicalization

The need to design a policy framework and a comprehensive strategy aimed at preventing radicalization has been the subject of considerable reflection at both institutional and extra-institutional levels. Today, there is widespread recognition of the necessity to complement existing measures with non-repressive interventions.²⁰⁶ The absence of large-scale terrorist attacks in Italy in recent decades can be regarded, on the one hand, as a positive indicator, reflecting the robustness and, in some respects, exceptional efficacy of the Italian security apparatus. On the other hand, it framed radicalization as a limited and episodic emergency rather than a structural priority, and this perception has delayed the development of a systemic, long-term preventive strategy.

In its 2025 report to Parliament, the Italian intelligence services noted an increase in “cases of radicalization among young individuals, including minors, and small groups who remain in constant communication with foreign actors through instant messaging platforms,” highlighting that “the young age of the individuals involved, a marked fascination with violence, limited or absent religious literacy, and the presence, in several cases, of relational difficulties and psychological vulnerabilities, delineate an evolving threat profile.”²⁰⁷ The issue of youth radicalization, particularly in light of the increased presence of minors in terror-related incidents and their susceptibility to ideological influence, requires a critical reassessment and a significant increase of resources dedicated to developing a broader strategy to address the dynamic nature of terrorist threats, and the demographic and sociocultural shifts associated with violent extremism.

At present, no country has developed a fully integrated framework that effectively synchronizes child protection with preventing and countering violent extremism. In some jurisdictions,²⁰⁸ sector-centric models, partially overlapping in these areas, have been implemented. However, such frameworks are often ideologically biased, fragmented, and lacking a multi-disciplinary approach that comprehensively addresses child vulnerability. The Italian context exemplifies this fragmentation, where child protection remains primarily within the socio-legal domain, while terrorism is treated exclusively as a matter of national security, dissociated from welfare and prevention strategies.

In the absence of a structured national framework, the Italian judiciary has played a compensatory role, offering innovative and effective responses to radicalization. As such, non-standardized

²⁰⁶ Radicalizzazione Violenta: Riconoscimento del fenomeno da parte di gruppi professionali coinvolti e risposte a tale fenomeno. Manuale, accessed June 2025, https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_1_12_1.page?contentId=SPS1143166&previousPage=mg_14_7; Tavoli tematici - Ministero della Giustizia, May 2016–April 2017, https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_2_19_1.page; Relazione Tavolo 7, https://www.giustizia.it/resources/cms/documents/sgpeg_tavolo7_relazione.pdf; La radicalizzazione del terrorismo islamico. Elementi per uno studio del fenomeno di proselitismo in carcere, Quaderni ISSP, no. 9 (2012), https://www.giustizia.it/resources/cms/documents/radicalizzazione_del_terrorismo_islamico.pdf; Camera dei Deputati, XVII Legislatura, <https://www.camera.it/leg17/1265>.

²⁰⁷ Relazione al Parlamento sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza 2025, Sistema di informazione per la sicurezza della Repubblica, accessed June 2025, <https://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it/data/cms/posts/986/attachments/aae81005-6c29-487b-85cc-b0a310f8c9be/download?view=true>.

²⁰⁸ Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) 2023, UK Home Office, July 18, 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023>; Ann-Sophie Hemmingsen, The Danish Approach to Countering and Preventing Extremism and Radicalization, DIIS Report 2015:15, Danish Institute for International Studies, <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/almdel/reu/bilag/248/1617692.pdf>.

criteria have been developed that place particular emphasis on individual background, biographical information, and radicalization processes, which are considered essential to understanding the phenomenon.²⁰⁹ The judiciary has also become a main actor in developing targeted interventions to address the complexity of radicalization.²¹⁰ Particularly relevant to this study is the fact that the first Italian court intervention on radicalization involved a fourteen-year-old Algerian national.²¹¹ The minor, under investigation for incitement to commit acts of terrorism,²¹² was reportedly planning a lone-wolf attack against a school. Following preliminary inquiries, the court ordered that he be placed under the direct supervision of the juvenile justice social services and accompanied by a tailored rehabilitation and social reintegration plan. The case is significant because it marked a precedent in the adoption of a coordinated, inter-institutional and multidisciplinary approach to addressing youth radicalization.

The intervention, developed under the guidance of juvenile social services in close collaboration with psychologists, technical experts, and civil society actors, delivered a holistic response that mobilized complementary professional competencies. In addition to psychological support, a counselor was appointed to address the minor's lack of awareness regarding the implications of his planned conduct and to provide opportunities for theological reflection aimed at fostering recognition of how violent extremist groups distort Islamic teachings. Importantly, in this context, the role of intelligence and security agencies remained marginal, with these interventions representing neither the exclusive nor the dominant institutional response. The court's intervention avoided the juvenile's criminal conviction and facilitated a genuine process of re-engagement with society, initially perceived as hostile by the minor, through the cultivation of civic and social responsibility.

Equally important is the recent "Memorandum of Understanding on Juvenile Subjects Embedded in Criminal Environments Linked to Jihadist, Supremacist, Neo-Nazi, and Accelerationist Terrorist Organizations,"²¹³ signed by the General Prosecutor's Office, the Juvenile Prosecutor's Office, and the Anti-Mafia District Prosecutor's Office of Perugia. Entered into force in March 2025, the Protocol is rooted in "the necessity to enhance inter-institutional collaboration within the judicial system to ensure an effective and coordinated response to phenomena of radicalization and the involvement of minors in terrorist organizations."²¹⁴ The Memorandum applies to all cases where minors are implicated, either explicitly or latently, in conduct related to terrorism, extremism, or radicalization. It mandates the activation of early preventive measures, with particular emphasis on educational intervention and safeguarding the minor's well-being.²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ Radicalizzazione Violenta: Riconoscimento del fenomeno, 212.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ C. Caparesi and L. Tamborini, "Una metodologia innovativa per la deradicalizzazione nel processo penale minorile: L'esperienza di Trieste," *Gnosis: Rivista Italiana di Intelligence*, no. 1 (2019).

²¹² Italian Penal Code, Art. 414 – Istigazione a delinquere.

²¹³ Luca Fiorucci, "Minori e rischio terrorismo: Progetto per difenderli," *La Nazione*, March 2025, <https://www.lanazione.it/umbria/cronaca/minori-e-rischio-terrorismo-progetto-270f48d9?live>; Protocollo d'intesa in ordine a soggetti minorenni inseriti in contesti criminali riconducibili ad organizzazioni terroristiche di matrice jihadista, suprematista, neonazista ed accelerazionista, signed by the General Prosecutor's Office of Perugia, the Juvenile Prosecutor's Office, and the Anti-Mafia District Prosecutor's Office, https://pg-perugia.giustizia.it/cmsresources/cms/documents/PROTOCOLLO%20MINORI%20TERRORISMO_signed_signed_signed.pdf.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

Increasingly, parallels are being drawn between “mafia offspring” and young jihadists, where the former are shaped by familial and cultural affiliation with criminal organizations, and the latter by radicalization and association with terrorist networks.²¹⁶ The convergence between organized crime and terrorism, particularly the role of family units in transmitting mafia and extremist ideologies, which is central to this study, is also reflected in Italian judicial responses. Italian jurisprudence has adopted models from both anti-mafia and counter-terrorism frameworks. Despite differences in the nature, objectives, and sociocultural contexts of these phenomena, and acknowledging the growing nexus between organized crime and terrorism, the family unit, whether as a risk or protective factor, represents a common denominator. Accordingly, the overarching objective of the Italian judicial response is to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of violent ideological commitments and to prevent the cyclical reproduction of identity models rooted in illegality, violence, and criminal behaviors, be they extremist or mafia-adjacent in nature. Furthermore, both fields emphasize the need to safeguard the psychological, physical, and moral integrity of children in these contexts, in alignment with constitutional principles and international and regional legal standards, and stimulated important reflections on the exercise of parental authority, religious freedom, and the best interests of the child as unifying concerns.

Ultimately, judicial intervention in cases involving minors exposed to organized crime environments marked a significant advancement, grounded on a preventive, educational, and multidimensional approach designed not only to sever the minor’s ties with dysfunctional environments but also to foster autonomy, resilience, and social reintegration. Although rooted in distinct legal domains, these interventions share a holistic, systemic, and preventive paradigm, integrating psychosocial and educational dimensions, and enabled by inter-agency cooperation among the judiciary, social services, educational institutions, and local communities.

It is essential to highlight the scope of application of the Perugia Protocol, which explicitly includes “family or community contexts in which radicalized individuals may influence minors.”²¹⁷ In collaboration with the Anti-Mafia District Prosecutor’s Office, the Protocol mandates an assessment of “appropriate protective measures, prioritizing recovery pathways and the definitive removal of minors from high-risk environments.”²¹⁸ Given the recent adoption of the Protocol, it remains unclear to what extent the practices of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria have been aligned with its provisions. However, the Reggio Calabria Court’s experience, recognized for its innovative approach to assisting minors in mafia contexts, provides a valuable precedent for adapting such models to the prevention of child radicalization within family units. The inclusion of removal measures within the Perugia Protocol is a promising indicator of the potential for transferability, or at least acknowledgement of convergence, between these models.

The implementation of an integrated approach based on a synergy between social protection, legal interventions, educational and psycho-social assistance, represents a best-practice model deserving of consideration in the broader context of preventing radicalization among youth.

²¹⁶ Giuseppe Spadaro, “Minori e pericolo di radicalizzazione,” *Civile*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.magistraturaindipendente.it/minori-e-pericolo-di-radicalizzazione.htm>.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7. The Italian Model and Policy Proposals

1. Lessons Learned from the Italian Model of Child Protection in Families Affiliated with Organized Crime: Insights for Preventing Child Radicalization within the Family Context

1.1. Preventive Approach to the Protection of At-Risk Children

The Italian experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of a preventive child protection approach in contexts where children are exposed to family environments influenced by organized crime. Within this framework, child protection is not solely activated in response to harm that has already materialized but rather hinges on the institutional capacity to identify early warning signs and preempt the onset of harmful conditions that may compromise the child's psychological, physical, and social development.

This strategy seeks to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of dysfunctional and antisocial behavioral models, offering children alternative educational frameworks and nurturing environments grounded in the rule of law. The guiding principle is the best interests of the child, which necessitates the timely interpretation of risk indicators and the implementation of protective measures to prevent the normalization of criminal behavior. Importantly, child protection in this context is not conceptualized as a punitive response to the family environment but as an affirmative measure designed to ensure children have access to free and autonomous developmental trajectories.

1.2. The Best Interests of the Child

The best interests of the child represent the paramount consideration in all decisions affecting them. Any intervention, be it educational, social, or judicial, shall be aimed at safeguarding the child's psychological and physical well-being and promoting their healthy development.

In families marked by proximity to organized crime, this may necessitate temporary separation from the family unit, where such proximity risks undermining the child's safety, well-being and identity formation. In such cases, the child's best interests take precedence over the exercise of parental authority, which shall, at all times, align with shared pro-social values and in full conformity with legal principles.

The Italian system recognizes that direct or indirect indoctrination into mafia ideologies, transmitted through family pedagogy or educational practices, may constitute a form of serious harm to the child. For this reason, public intervention is not only justified but legally and ethically mandated, with the aim of interrupting the cultural transmission of criminality and offering alternative educational trajectories compatible with the rule of law and civic responsibility.

1.3. Non-Arbitrariness and Assessment Criteria in Child Protection Measures

Any decision to revoke or restrict parental responsibility shall not be arbitrary or based on generalized presumptions, even in cases where the family is embedded in a ideological subculture. All decision-making processes concerning children, shall be accompanied by a case-by-case assessment and grounded in a set of predetermined criteria, aimed at examining the actual or potential harm as well the family's ability to guarantee the child's healthy development.

The assessment shall also involve context-sensitive analysis encompassing a range of factors, including the educational environment, relational dynamics, and the potential resources available to support the progressive recovery of parental competence. A child's exposure to organized crime or indoctrination into values antithetical to constitutional norms does not, in itself, automatically trigger the revocation of parental rights, but is evaluated in light of its impact on the child's psychosocial well-being and development.

1.4. Engagement of the Family Unit

The protection of minors exposed to mafia-influenced environments is premised on the active engagement of the family unit. Judicial measures that restrict or suspend parental responsibility should, where feasible, be accompanied by targeted remedial directives addressed to the parents, with the purpose of enabling the requalification of the parental role and the restoration of educational competence.

These measures may include mandatory participation in education programs, parenting support courses, and other interventions intended to dismantle violent, oppressive, or criminogenic pedagogical practices. The dual objective is, on the one hand, to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of deviant cultural codes, and on the other, to rebuild a positive and rights-based parent-child relationship.

The intervention model, drawn from Italian jurisprudence and institutional practice, reinforces the non-punitive nature of child protection measures, which are not intended to penalize parents, but to promote educational and relational transformation within the family context. This process is at all levels pro-actively supported and facilitated with an aim to ensure that the family environment is reconstituted as a protective, rather than a risk factor to child development and within a framework of shared responsibility and respect for the child's fundamental rights.

1.5. Holistic, Multidisciplinary, and Multi-Sectoral Approach

The protection of minors raised in deviant or crime-influenced family environments necessitates a systemic and multidisciplinary approach that extends beyond the temporary removal of the child from the family of origin. It requires the implementation of an individualized approach facilitated by the coordinated engagement of multi-sector actors including but not limited to juvenile courts, child welfare services, educational institutions, schools, mental health professionals, and civil society organizations with an aim to assist children in processing prior adverse experiences, reintegrate into formal education, and progressively develop the competencies necessary to replace dysfunctional or antisocial models acquired within the family context.

2. Policy Recommendations for the Prevention of Child Radicalization, Violent Extremism, and Terrorism

2.1. Adoption of a National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism

It is recommended that a National Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism be developed and adopted. The Strategy shall place emphasis on the prevention of radicalization, with dedicated provisions addressing the specific vulnerabilities of minors affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

At a minimum, the National Strategy shall be guided by the following core principles:

2.1.1. Rule of Law and a Specialized Legal Framework

All policies and interventions concerning minors shall be grounded in the rule of law. It is further recommended that a specialized legal framework be established that delineates the rules, procedures, protocols, and intervention measures necessary to address children affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

2.1.2. Evidence-Based Responses

It is essential that all policies and interventions aimed at addressing children affected by terrorism and violent extremism are evidence-based. To this end, it is recommended that a research agenda be established and funded to increase awareness and understanding of risk and protective factors in child radicalization, map emerging trends, and assess the effectiveness of prevention, rehabilitation, de-radicalization and disengagement initiatives. This may also be accomplished through the establishment of an independent National Observatory on Radicalization responsible for data collection and analysis, and knowledge dissemination.

2.1.3. Government Leadership and National Ownership

Governmental actors are encouraged to take a leading role in addressing children affected by terrorism and violent extremism with a view to improving opportunities for long-term sustainability. National authorities should seek to establish a dedicated multi-agency body to foster a whole-of-government approach, accompanied by the establishment of a Coordination Unit and by the development and implementation of multi-level action plans.

2.1.4. Multisystemic, Multi-Agency, and Multi-Stakeholder Approach

A holistic approach to addressing children affected by terrorism and violent extremism shall be adopted, based on a participatory, inter-agency approach, and information-sharing among relevant stakeholders. A holistic approach shall also leverage local resources and systems, be tailored to the specific needs of each child, and guarantee coordinated and coherent processes nationwide to prevent institutional overlaps, avoid duplication, and ensure long-term sustainability.

2.1.5. Specialized Training

All professionals involved with children affected by terrorism and violent extremism, including but not limited to juvenile justice personnel, law enforcement, educators, psychologists, and social workers, should receive specialized training and possess the competencies necessary to appropriately and effectively assist them. This requires the development of modular training programs, integrated into broader curricula and adapted to the professional specificities of the various actors involved.

2.1.6. Ideologically Agnostic Approach to Child Radicalization

It is essential that all policies and interventions concerning children affected by terrorism and violent extremism are ideologically agnostic. Past experience has shown an almost exclusive focus on jihadism and an underestimation of other forms of violent extremism. A cross-ideological approach is therefore encouraged to objectively examine the threat landscape affecting children and young people, and to inform the development of efficient policies and interventions.

2.1.7. Monitoring and Evaluation

A structured and independent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism should accompany

all phases of planning, implementation, and assessment of programs and interventions addressing children affected by terrorism and violent extremism. Monitoring and Evaluation exercises shall be based on clear qualitative and quantitative indicators, sustained by continuous data collection, and focus on medium-and long-term impact assessments. Participatory feedback from children and key stakeholders should be integrated to ensure adaptability and long-term effectiveness.

2.2. Establishment of a Permanent Specialized Task Force on Child Radicalization

It is recommended that a Specialized Task Force on Child Radicalization be established, working in close coordination with child protection, counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) bodies. The Task Force should adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing radicalization and the impacts of terrorism and violent extremism on children, and be tasked with formulating concrete proposals, including but not limited to the development of policy guidelines and recommendations, in alignment with national legislation and international legal standards.

Conclusions

Contemporary terrorism is increasingly marked by the participation of minors in violent acts and these manifestations consistently emerge as a dimension of the current threat landscape. In 2024, nearly two-thirds of arrests related to terrorism and extremism in Western countries involved adolescents. From Austria to France, and from Germany to the United Kingdom, authorities have thwarted attacks planned by minors, uncovered networks of youth reportedly aspiring to martyrdom for ISIS, and documented a rise in the online mobilization toward extremist networks, often transcending ideological lines.

Significant political and media attention in recent years has focused on the children of ISIS-affiliated families and the impact of an ideologically-oriented family environment on their development. However, the role that parental bonds play in processes of youth radicalization cannot be understood through deterministic or linear models and instead requires an analytical approach capable of capturing the complexity of interactions between micro-relational dynamics and macro-contextual variables.

Within this framework, the analysis of intergenerational ideological transmission within families and the pedagogical and socialization mechanisms that sustain it, highlighted in this study, fills critical knowledge gaps, fosters a deeper understanding of the involvement of minors with terrorist and violent extremist actors and youth radicalization.

Family networks, whether linked to terrorism or organized crime, are of fundamental importance for several reasons. The family constitutes the primary and most influential source of identity formation. By its nature, the domestic environment facilitates not only ideological transmission, radicalization, recruitment and participation in violent acts, but also provides a context characterized by trust, confidentiality, loyalty, and a profound sense of self-legitimation.

In the context of terrorism, family units may enable the diffusion and collective validation of extremist doctrine. The radicalization of a single family member can significantly influence a child's development by exposing them to online propaganda or introducing them to extremist dogma through other means. The family may also serve as a conduit for the recruitment of minors, shaped by the quality of intra-family dynamics, emotional bonds, and the wider context, be it stable governance, conflict or near-conflict zones. Kin recruitment enables terrorist and violent extremist groups to mobilize operatives with reduced exposure to detection and external infiltration.

A child raised in an ideologically driven environment is unlikely to develop an identity that diverges from that of the family, particularly when extremist beliefs originate within the family nucleus, rendering the child's identity formation largely predetermined and constrained by limited personal agency.

Opinions incompatible with the prevailing family worldview rarely penetrate the ideological barrier of the household, and doubt, dissent, or dissonant attitudes and behaviors are often repressed or silenced. Family members who promote violence as not only legitimate but as an individual responsibility, along with psychological pressure or intimidation aimed at securing support for the extremist cause, induce the child's compliance by appealing to notions of duty, honor, and in some instances, fear.

Various degrees of social withdrawal and insularity that characterize family terror networks increase the influence that one member can exert over another and render radicalization difficult to observe and prevent. Even when a family-based terrorist cell is identified, deradicalization and disengagement programs may prove limited, ineffective, or be actively obstructed by various members of the household.

Through a comparative analysis of terror and mafia-style family networks, in terms of both the nature of these phenomena and the relevant legislative and policy frameworks, this study demonstrated how Italy's experience in protecting minors from the influence of organized crime-affiliated families may offer valuable insights for the development of holistic models aimed at addressing the challenges posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

Italy developed a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to managing minors raised in contexts proximate to the mafia, combining social protection measures, judicial avenues, and reintegration programs focused on education and psychological support. The interventions implemented by the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria have shown particular effectiveness in countering mafia influence on minors by offering opportunities for development outside criminal dynamics.

The measures intended to prevent criminal entrenchment in minors are fundamentally designed to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of mafia norms and behaviors and have direct application in the prevention of radicalization, which, while not exclusively, also spreads along family lines.

The relevance of this parallel is reflected in the recent Memorandum of Understanding on Juvenile Subjects Embedded in Criminal Contexts Attributable to Jihadist, Supremacist, Neo-Nazi, and Accelerationist Terrorist Organizations, which extends to minors involved in terrorism and violent extremism. The memorandum recognizes an equivalence between the transmission of mafia and extremist ideologies, highlighting the convergence of anti-mafia and counter-terrorism efforts in the protection of minors.

The interventions of the Reggio Calabria Court are grounded in the synergy between social and child welfare services, law enforcement, and the third sector, with the aim of establishing an integrated support system that facilitates the social reintegration of the 'children of the mafia.' Central to this model are the best interests of the minor, the application of rigorous case-by-case evaluation criteria, the design of individualized approaches, and a participatory dimension, which involves not only the minor but also, when cooperative, the family unit in the recovery process.

The increase in youth radicalization, alongside planning, support, and direct involvement in terrorist acts, underscores the vulnerability of minors in this context. Far from being isolated incidents, these dynamics also originate within ideologically oriented family ecosystems, marked by internal coherence and sustained over time through complex adaptive strategies.

In today's security environment, the uptick in youth radicalization, compels to no longer consider it a temporary phenomenon, but rather a structural threat. Like organized crime, terrorism requires a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to be effectively addressed. By aligning institutional responses with the scale and nature of radicalization and by leveraging Italy's extensive experience in combating organized crime, this study offered a compass to guide decisionmakers in addressing terrorism and extremism threats. It also identified and suggested the key elements for the development a preventive framework aimed at addressing youth involvement with violent

extremist and terrorist actors.

Security in Italy, and elsewhere, cannot be delegated exclusively to traditional counterterrorism and intelligence agencies and effective strategies require the engagement of stakeholders at all levels, public and private, and holistic and integrated approaches. Moving forward, efforts focused on prevention, deradicalization, and disengagement of minors affected by terrorism and violent extremism shall be prioritized as pillars of an institutional paradigm that both protects children at risk and confronts ideological proliferation and terrorism in all its forms.

Bibliography

Aaron Y. Zelin. *Filtering Meta-Narratives: From Global to Local in Countering Daesh Propaganda: Action-Oriented Research for Practical Policy Outcomes*. Atlanta, GA: The Carter Center, 2016.

Ahmad S. Moussalli. *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009.

Aldo Cimmino. "Minori 'a rischio' e delitto di associazione mafiosa: profili sostanziali e riverberi processuali." *Diritto e Giustizia Minorile* 2, no. 1 (2014): n.p. Mario Covelli Editore.

Alfonso Lamberti. "Structure, Dimensions, and Characteristics of Organized Crime Phenomena in Campania in the 1990s." In *The Mafia and the Mafias*, edited by Giovanni Fiandaca and Stefano Costantino. Bari: Laterza, 1994.

Anna Maria Vultaggio. *The Psychological Roots of the Mafia*. Palermo: Liceo Classico Internazionale "Umberto I," September 20, 2023. <https://www.umbertoprimo.edu.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/LE-RADICI-PSICOLOGICHE-DELLA-MAFIA.pdf>.

Anna Sergi. *Chasing the Mafia: 'Ndrangheta, Memories and Journeys*. 2022.

Anna Sergi. *La mafia come comportamento sociale...* Accessed May 11, 2025. <https://www.dsps.unict.it/sites/default/files/Slides%20prof.ssa%20Sergi.pdf>.

Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile. "Reality Versus Perception: Toward Understanding Boko Haram in Nigeria." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 42, no. 5 (November 2017): 1–27.

ANSA. "Terrorismo: 007, minaccia jihadista concreta in Italia," February 20, 2018.

Anton Blok. *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860–1960*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974. Italian edition: *La mafia di un villaggio siciliano, 1860–1960*. Turin: Einaudi, 1986.

Antonella Pomilla and Giasimo K. Glyka. "Dinamiche di manipolazione mentale ed organizzazioni di stampo mafioso." *Rivista di Criminologia, Vittimologia e Sicurezza* 4, no. 3 (September–December 2010).

Antonio Cavadi. *Strappare una generazione alla mafia*. Trapani: Di Girolamo Editore, 2005.

Antonio Clemente. "Amoral Familism." *Noi contro la corruzione*, July 31, 2017. <http://anticorruzione.eu/2017/07/il-familismo-amorale/>.

Arianna Bianchi. *Strategie educative e lotta alla mafia: La sottrazione della patria potestà. L'esperienza di Reggio Calabria. Elaborato finale*, Università degli Studi di Milano, 2014/2015.

Aurora Sambati. *Radicalizzazione e strategie di prevenzione: necessità di un intervento alla radice?* 2017.

Becky L. Choma, et al. "Prejudice in the Wake of Terrorism: The Role of Temporal Distance, Ideology, and Intergroup Emotions." *Personality and Individual Differences* 123 (2018): 65–75.

Bloom, Mia. *Veiled Threats: Women and Global Jihad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501777844>.

Bottici, Cristina, and Benoît Challand. "Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilization as a Self Fulfilling Prophecy." *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 3 (2006).

C. Caparesi and L. Tamborini. "Una metodologia innovativa per la deradicalizzazione nel processo penale minorile: L'esperienza di Trieste." *Gnosis: Rivista Italiana di Intelligence*, no. 1 (2019).

C. Fotia. "Salviamo i figli da una vita criminale." *L'Unità*, February 8, 2016.

Camera dei Deputati, XVII Legislatura. <https://www.camera.it/leg17/1265>.

Casey, Kevin, and David Pottebaum. *Youth and Violent Extremism in Mindanao, Philippines: A Mixed-Methods Design for Testing Assumptions about Drivers of Extremism*. Washington, DC: DAI, 2018. <https://www.dai.com/uploads/Youth%20and%20Violent%20Extremism%20in%20Mindanao,%20Philippines.pdf>.

Caterina De Mutiis. *Verso una strategia italiana di prevenzione della radicalizzazione: una sfida globale che si vince a livello locale. Caso di studio. Documento di lavoro, Ministero dell'Interno*, 2017.

Catino, Maurizio. *Le organizzazioni mafiose: La mano visibile dell'impresa criminale*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2020.

Catino, Maurizio. "La mafia come fenomeno organizzativo." *Quaderni di Sociologia*, 83–98. <https://doi.org/10.4000/qds.1533>.

Catino, Maurizio. "L'organizzazione del segreto nelle associazioni mafiose." *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 2 (April–June 2014): 259–301.

Cecilia Polizzi. *Children Affected by the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Guidelines on the Prevention of Radicalization on Social Media and the Internet in this Digital Era*. Washington, DC: Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2023. <https://www.next-wave-center.com/post/...radicalization>.

Cecilia Polizzi. Guest lecture, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland, College Park, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7H8dsUZ1lo>.

Cecilia Polizzi. "The Crime of Terrorism: An Analysis of Criminal Justice Processes and Accountability of Minors Recruited by the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham." *UC Davis Journal of International Law and Policy* 24, no. 1 (2018): 1–123. <https://jilp.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/volume-24-1/24-1-polizzi.pdf>.

Cecilia Polizzi. "Youth Radicalization: A New Frontier in Terrorism and Security." Global Terrorism Index 2025. Sydney: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2025. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/youth-radicalisation-a-new-frontier-in-terrorism-and-security/>.

Cesare Lombroso. L'uomo delinquente: studiato in rapporto all'antropologia, alla medicina legale e alle discipline carcerarie. Milan: Hoepli, 1876.

Collins, Randall. Interaction Ritual Chains. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Commissione di studio sul fenomeno della radicalizzazione e dell'estremismo jihadista. Verso un approccio italiano alla prevenzione della radicalizzazione, sintesi. 2016.

Conferenza nazionale "Sicurezza e legalità," Tavolo sul terrorismo (date and location unavailable). Legge 22 maggio 1975, n.152, Gazzetta Ufficiale; Legge 6 febbraio 1980, n.15, Gazzetta Ufficiale.

Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura. La tutela dei minori nell'ambito del contrasto alla criminalità organizzata. Risoluzione, October 31, 2017.

Convention on the Rights of the Child. New York, November 20, 1989. Ratified in Italy by Law No. 176 of 1991.

Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) 2023. UK Home Office, July 18, 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023>.

Daniel Koehler. Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism. Abingdon, Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315649566>.

Dean Alexander. Family Terror Networks. BookBaby; 1st edition, March 1, 2019.

Dean C. Alexander and Huseyin Cinoglu. "Family Terror Networks 2.0: January 6 Part 1." Domestic Preparedness, July 2023. <https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/commentary/family-terror-networks-2-0-january-6-part-1/>.

Decreto legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n. 286, art. 13, comma 1.

Di Bella, Roberto. Le potenzialità della giustizia minorile.

Di Bella, Roberto. Remarks in Indottrinamento Mafioso e Responsabilità Genitoriale: II Edizione, ed. Michele Filippelli, Diritto Avanzato.

Di Maria, Franco, S. Di Nuovo, A. M. Di Vita, C. G. Dolce, and A. M. Pepi. Il sentire mafioso. Milano: Giuffrè, 1989.

Disegno di legge 3558, presentato il 26 gennaio 2016.

Donatella della Porta. Clandestine Political Violence. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Milano: Comunità, 1963.

Elisabetta Cesqui. "L'Italia di fronte alla mafia." *Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla Criminalità Organizzata* 3, no. 4 (2017): 5–13. <https://doi.org/10.13130/cross-9742>.

Emanuela Cimmino. "Teoria dell'associazione differenziale e comportamento deviante." *Centro di Ricerca Interuniversitaria su carcere, devianza, marginalità e governo delle migrazioni, ADIR – L'Altro Diritto*, 2006. Accessed May 12, 2025. <https://www.adir.unifi.it/rivista/2006/cimmino/cap1.htm>.

Enzo Ciconte. *Riti criminali. I codici di affiliazione alla 'ndrangheta*. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2015.

Ercole Giap Parini. *Mafia, politica e società civile: Due casi in Calabria*. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2017.

Escobar, Roberto. *La libertà negli occhi*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006.

Esposito, Mario Filip. *Il potere del sangue: ascesa della 'Ndrangheta e polverizzazione della Camorra*. Undergraduate thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova, Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology, 2021/2022. Supervisor Prof. Luca Trappolin.

F. Di Forti. *Immaginario della coppola storta*. Chieti: Solfanelli, 2014.

F. Occhiogrosso. "Minors and Mafia." In *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Mafia and Anti-Mafia*, edited by M. Mareso and L. Pepino, 376. Turin: Edizioni Gruppo Abele, 2013.

F. Vacca. *La devianza criminale minorile*. Unpublished manuscript.

Farhad Khosrokhavar. "Jihadis and the Family." In *Jihadism in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197564967.003.0005>.

Federico Varese. *Mafias on the Move: How Organized Crime Conquers New Territories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Ferri, L. *Della potestà dei genitori*. Art. 315-342. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1988.

Filippelli, Michele, ed. *Indottrinamento mafioso e responsabilità genitoriale*. 2nd ed. Milan: Diritto Avanzato, 2017.

Fiore, Innocenzo. *Le radici inconscie dello psichismo mafioso*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1997.

Fiore, Innocenzo. "Psicologia e psicopatologia del 'pensare mafioso.'" *Aggiornamenti Sociali* 4 (1997).

Fiorucci, Luca. "Minori e rischio terrorismo: Progetto per difenderli." *La Nazione*, March 2025. <https://www.lanazione.it/umbria/cronaca/minori-e-rischio-terrorismo-progetto-270f48d9?live>.

Francesca Del Gaudio. "Decadenza dalla responsabilità genitoriale per membri di organizzazioni mafiose." *Rivista Italiana dell'Antiriciclaggio*.

Francesco Armao. *Il sistema mafia*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2000.

Francesco Cascini and Roberto Di Bella. *Tavolo 10, Minori e Mafie*, summary report of analyses and proposals, November 23, 2017.

Francesco Iadaluca, editor. *Enciclopedia delle mafie. Le mafie nei loro territori di origine*, vol. 1, tome 2. Rome: Armando Curcio Editore, 2016.

Franco Di Maria and Gioacchino Lavanco. *A un passo dall'inferno. Sentire mafioso e obbedienza criminale*. Firenze: Giunti Editore, 1995.

Franco Di Maria. "Il sentimento mafioso è nella gente comune." *La Repubblica*, July 31, 2003.

Friedman, Yaron. *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Friedman. *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs*.

Gaetano Lo Verso. *La mafia dentro: Psicologia e psicopatologia di un fondamentalismo*. Milano: Angeli, 1998.

Gaetano Lo Verso. "Per uno studio dello psichismo mafioso." In *La mafia dentro. Psicologia e psicopatologia di un fondamentalismo*, edited by G. Lo Verso, 29. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2002.

Gaia Vannoni. Italy, Codice Civile, art. 315-bis; see also Tavolo 10, "La responsabilità genitoriale appare funzionale a garantire i diritti di cui il minore è titolare, che in negativo costituiscono un limite all'esercizio dei poteri educativi in capo al genitore." "L'interesse del minore ad un'educazione conforme ai valori fondativi della Costituzione." *Consulta Online, Periodico Telematico SSN* 2017, fasc. 2 (2017).

Gallino, Luciano. *Dizionario di sociologia*. Novara: De Agostini, 2014.

Gaudette, Trevor. "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism: Insights from Former Right Wing Extremists." *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1784147>.

Giovanna Spanò. "De radicalisation in Italy: Is 'Emergency' a Strategy per se?" *DPCE Online* 2, no. Monographic section: Democracy (2023).

Giovanni Falcone and Marcelle Padovani. *Cose di Cosa Nostra*. Milano: Rizzoli, 1991.

Giuseppe Pitrè. *Usi e costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano*. Catania: Clio, 1993. Original edition 1889.

Giuseppe Spadaro. "Minori e pericolo di radicalizzazione." *Civile*, May 20, 2020. <https://www.magistraturaindipendente.it/minori-e-pericolo-di-radicalizzazione.htm>.

Gratteri, Nicola, and Antonio Nicaso. *Dire e non dire. I dieci comandamenti della 'ndrangheta nelle parole degli affiliati*. Milan: Mondadori, 2012.

Gratteri, Nicola, and Antonio Nicaso. *La malapianta: la mia lotta contro la 'ndrangheta*. Milan: Mondadori, 2010.

Hafez, Mohammed. "The Ties That Bind." *CTC Sentinel* 9, no. 2 (February 2016).

Henri Tajfel. *Gruppi umani e categorie sociali*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985.

Ilya Gridneff. "Al-Shabaab Strategy Shifts Towards Clans as Presidential Election Looms." International Peace Institute (IPI), 2017. <https://www.ipinst.org/2017/07/al-shabaab-strategy-shifts-towards-clans>.

Ingrascì, O. *Donne d'onore*. Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2007.

Ingrascì, Ombretta. *Confessioni di un padre*. Milano: Melampo Editore, 2013.

Innocenzo Fiore. *Le radici inconsce dello psichismo mafioso*. Milano: Angeli, 1997.

Intrieri, Marilina. "Relazione al convegno 'Indottrinamento mafioso e responsabilità genitoriale: l'orientamento giurisprudenziale del Tribunale dei minorenni di Reggio Calabria.'" Senato della Repubblica, Rome, November 24, 2015.

Italian Civil Code. Articles 330 and 333. *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, 1942.

Italian Constitution. Articles 2, 30, and 31.

Italian mafia core behavioral code forbids resorting to state law as a dispute resolution method, under penalty of death or dishonor.

Italian Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, Marilina Intrieri. Conference: Mafia Indoctrination and Parental Responsibility: Jurisprudential Orientation of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria, Italian Senate, November 24, 2015.

Italian Penal Code. Art. 414 – Istigazione a delinquere.

Italy. Codice Civile, art. 315-bis; see also Tavolo 10, "La responsabilità genitoriale appare funzionale a garantire i diritti di cui il minore è titolare, che in negativo costituiscono un limite all'esercizio dei poteri educativi in capo al genitore."

Italy. Codice Penale, R.D. 19 ottobre 1930, n. 1398, art. 416-bis, "Associazioni di tipo mafioso anche straniere," updated December 14, 2024.

Italy. Codice Penale, R.D. 19 ottobre 1930, n. 1398, art. 572, "Sequestro di persona," updated December 14, 2024.

Italy. Legge 13 settembre 1982, n. 646: Disposizioni contro la criminalità organizzata di tipo mafioso, nonché in materia di procedimenti per il sequestro e la confisca dei beni, art. 1.

Italy. Legge 28 marzo 2001, n. 149, art. 1, para. 1; Codice Civile, art. 315-bis, para. 2; Cassazione, May 14, 2005, No. 10126, in *Diritto e Giustizia* 2005, 23, 31; Cassazione, September 8, 2008, No. 22640, in *Famiglia e Diritto* 2008, 1164.

Joana Cook and Gina Vale. *From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State*. London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR), 2018.

Jougla, Karina. "The Ideology of the Veil: Fundamentally Misogynistic or Fundamentally Misunderstood?" *The Morningside Review* 10 (May 2014): 40–46. <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/TMR/article/view/5431>.

La radicalizzazione del terrorismo islamico. Elementi per uno studio del fenomeno di proselitismo in carcere. Quaderni ISSP, no. 9 (2012). https://www.giustizia.it/resources/cms/documents/radicalizzazione__del__terrorismo_islamico.pdf.

Legge 15 dicembre 2001, n. 438, Misure urgenti per contrastare il terrorismo internazionale.

Luigi Roberti and Andrea Giannini. *Manuale dell'antiterrorismo: evoluzione normativa e nuovi strumenti investigativi*. Roma: Laurus, 2016.

Maher, Shiraz. *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea*. London: Hurst Publishers, 2015.

Malash, Razan. *Analysis of Propaganda Techniques in the Recruitment Process for Islamic Radical Groups: ISIS' Magazine Dabiq as a Case Study*. PhD diss., Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2022. <http://hdl.handle.net/10486/703865>.

Massari, Monica. "L'universo simbolico e rituale delle mafie." Seminar, Naples, October 13, 2017, series "Mafie e antimafie. Strumenti di analisi, esperienze di impegno civile," Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II. <https://www.docenti.unina.it/webdocenti-be/allegati/materiale-didattico/648074>.

Memoranda dated January 23, 2019 and December 11, 2018 on protection of minors in trial and prejudicial circumstances; protocols dated March 21, 2013 and July 15, 2014 regarding minors from mafia-involved families and victims of intra-family abuse.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Judicial Offices of the District Court of Appeals of Reggio Calabria, March 21, 2013.

Ministero della Cultura. *I terrorismi politici in Italia: Stragi e attentati da piazza Fontana alle Brigate Rosse (1969–1988)*. Accessed at <https://memoria.cultura.gov.it/documents/.../142238/1%2Bterrorismi%2Bpolitici%2Bin%2BItalia.pdf>.

Moro, A. C., and L. Fadiga, eds. *Manuale di diritto minorile*. Bologna: Zanichelli, 2008.

Negri, Alessio. "La radicalizzazione jihadista negli istituti di pena." ISPI, December 14, 2018. www.ispionline.it.

Nicholas Dudek and Allison Hartmann. PREVENT: The Lifecycle of Child Terrorism in Al-Shabaab. Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2021. <https://www.next-wave-center.com/post/al-shabaab-prevent-pilot>.

Onorevole Emanuele Fiano. Provisions for the prevention of radicalisation and violent jihadist extremism, Disegno di legge A.C. 243 (Camera, XVII Legislature, 2022).

Polizzi, Cecilia. "Al Hawl Shame: Another Layer of Dante's Inferno for Children." Medium (2023). <https://medium.com/.../al-hawl-shame-another-layer-of-dante-s-inferno-for-children-ecf68837b343>.

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri. Relazione al Parlamento sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza, 2017.

Progetto "Mafia Minors." Programma AGIS 2004, JAI/2004/AGIS/135 – Dossier Italia.

Protocollo d'intesa in ordine a soggetti minorenni inseriti in contesti criminali riconducibili ad organizzazioni terroristiche di matrice jihadista, suprematista, neonazista ed accelerazionista, signed by the General Prosecutor's Office of Perugia, the Juvenile Prosecutor's Office, and the Anti-Mafia District Prosecutor's Office. https://pg-perugia.giustizia.it/cmsresources/cms/documents/PROTOCOLLO%20MINORI%20TERRORISMO_signed_signed_signed.pdf.

Radicalizzazione Violenta: Riconoscimento del fenomeno da parte di gruppi professionali coinvolti e risposte a tale fenomeno. Manuale. Accessed June 2025. https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_1_12_1.page?contentId=SPS1143166&previousPage=mg_14_7.

Radicalizzazione Violenta: Riconoscimento del fenomeno, 212.

Referring to limitations or revocation of parental responsibility.

Relazione al Parlamento sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza 2025, Sistema di informazione per la sicurezza della Repubblica. Accessed June 2025. <https://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it/data/cms/posts/986/attachments/aae81005-6c29-487b-85cc-b0a310f8c9be/download?view=true>.

Relazione Tavolo 7. https://www.giustizia.it/resources/cms/documents/sgep_tavolo7_relazione.pdf.

Report by Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, Marilina Intrieri, "Mafia Indoctrination and Parental Responsibility: Jurisprudential Trends of the Juvenile Court of Reggio Calabria," Senate Conference, November 24, 2015.

Rinaldi, Francesco. "Famiglia mafiosa e decadenza dalla responsabilità genitoriale, tra diritti di unità e di autonomia della famiglia e diritti di personalità del minore: percorsi rieducativi e non sanzionatori nella relazione familiare." *Dirittifondamentali.it*, fasc. 2 (2019).

Roberto Di Bella and G.M.P. Surace. See op. cit., 35; see also Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura, Risoluzione del 31 ottobre 2017; Tribunale per i Minorenni di Reggio Calabria. "Provvedimenti." http://www.tribmin.reggiocalabria.giustizia.it/articoli.php?nome=Provvedimenti&id_articolo=999.

Roberto Di Bella. In *Mafia Indoctrination and Parental Responsibility*, 2nd ed., edited by Michele Filippelli. Diritto Avanzato.

Royal Decree Law no. 1404 of July 20, 1934, Art. 25.

Russo, Martina. *Conseguenze Socio-Giuridiche della Criminalità Organizzata sulla Vita dei Minori Appartenenti a Famiglie Mafiose*. LUISS Guido Carli, 2018–2019.

Schermi, Mario. “L’educazione criminale: crescere in contesti mafiosi.” *Rassegna Italiana di Criminologia* 7, no. 4 (2013). © Pensa MultiMedia Editore.

Sciascia, Leonardo. *Opere*. 3 vols. Milan: Bompiani, 1956–1991. Cited in AA.VV., *Op. cit.*, 52.

Scremin, Nicolás. PhD Dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2025. Unpublished.

Serwaa Allotey-Pappoe and Afua Agyeiwaa Lamptey. *Pawns, Puppets or Weapons of Choice: Examining Boko Haram’s Use of Female Suicide Bombers in Nigeria*. KAIPTC Occasional Paper No. 42. Accra: Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, 2019.

Siebert, R. *Le donne, la mafia*. Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1994.

Sipione, Lorenza. **Dal terrorismo politico alle nuove forme di terrorismo globale*

Stern, Jessica, and J. M. Berger. *ISIS: The State of Terror*. New York: Ecco Press, 2015.

Storey, Kate. “How a Woman Joins ISIS.” *Marie Claire*, April 22, 2016. <http://www.marieclaire.com/politics/a20011/western-women-who-join-isis/>.

Tavoli tematici - Ministero della Giustizia, May 2016–April 2017. https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_2_19_1.page.

Tiziana Marinaci and Maria Rita Infurna, editors. “Una lettura antropologico-culturale sul tema della mafia: Intervista al Professore Emerito Franco Di Maria.” *ScrittidiGruppo*. Accessed May 11, 2025. <https://scrittidigruppo.it/una-lettura-antropologico-culturale-sul-tema-della-mafia/>.

Trisko Darden, Jessica. “When Terror Runs in the Family.” SAED-IEA, 2019.

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. *Terrorist Organizational Models: A Military Guide to Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, August 15, 2007. <https://fas.org/irp/threat/terrorism/guide.pdf>.

Vedaschi, Antonella, and Kim Lane Scheppele, eds. *9/11 and the Rise of Global Anti-Terrorism Law: How the UN Security Council Rules the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Vidino, Lorenzo, and Francesco Marone. *The Jihadist Threat in Italy: A Primer*. Analysis No. 318. Milano: ISPI, November 2017.

von Kumberg, Krystel, Raphaelle Beaussart, and Cecilia Polizzi. PREVENT: The Lifecycle of Child Terrorism in Boko Haram. Washington, DC: Next Wave, The International Center for Children and Global Security, 2021. <https://www.next-wave-center.com/post/boko-haram-prevent-pilot>.

Warner, Jason, and Hilary Matfess. "Exploding Stereotypes." Combating Terrorism Center Report, 2017. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep05615.7.pdf>.

Weber, Max. Economy and Society. Milano: Comunità, 1995.

Wright, Lawrence. The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and The Road to 9/11. New York: Knopf, 2006.

"Framework Agreement." Reggio Calabria, July 1, 2017.