Residential practices of middle classes in the field of parenthood

Boterman, W.R.

Citation for published version (APA):
Acknowledgements

This dissertation had started as a purely academic endeavour to understand the behaviour of urban middle-class parents but gradually became ever more inspired by personal experiences. This study of the spatial implications of transition to parenthood was enriched by the birth of my two daughters during the writing of this manuscript. Although this research has reached its conclusions through a range of scientific methods, the true implications of what it means to become a parent and how this affects one’s social and spatial practices became ever clearer to me through my personal experiences. Yet, the way in which my life and that of Marie were turned upside-down socially, spatially and temporally has helped me understanding the object of my study and therefore helped me reaching my conclusions.

However, also the support and contributions of others were indispensable for the completion of this project. In the first place, I could not even have started on this project if it weren’t for Sako and Lia who believed in this research project and have been a great support and source of inspiration during the writing of the research proposal, the present research and the writing of this dissertation. I would like to thank them for their confidence, support and inspiration, as well as for their personal interest. I would also like to thank the Dutch Research Council (NWO) for funding this project and the Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies and all administrative staff for facilitating my work at the University of Amsterdam. I would also like to thank Michiel Wagenaar and Wim Hamers for being the best teachers I have had.

Equally essential, I could not have carried out this research project without the collaboration of the 466 families that participated in this project. My special thanks goes to the 28 families that were so kind to allow me to interview them, sparing me some of their precious time (I appreciate its value!). Without their kindness and openness I could never have conducted the research, let alone finishing this thesis. The laborious task of collecting all questionnaires and transcribing interviews was considerably lightened by the hard work of my research assistants Anna van Ojik, Ilse Rooze, Marinka Vukojevic, Jennifer Kan, Waronne Sint, Kasper Zwetsloot, Marieke Kuiper and Maadey Meuleman. I also would like to express my gratitude to the participating midwives in Amsterdam that offered me the opportunity to approach pregnant women in the waiting room of their clinic. In particular I would like to thank the midwives of Johannes Verhulst 101 and Verloskundigen Oost, not just for helping me out, but also for overseeing Marie’s pregnancies.

Writing a PhD-dissertation is oftentimes a struggle and sometimes a lonely affair. A PhD-trajectory is characterised by ups and downs and there is always a phase that one considers to quit. In these phases it is particularly important that there are colleagues around that motivate one to come to work, carry on with the research, or are just there for a chat, a coffee or an after-work beer. At our institute
a large number of colleagues have made my PhD-period a very pleasant one. In the first place my roommates: Marjolein, Marlies, Edith, Sabine, Wilma, and Annalies. I have very much appreciated our discussions about academic stuff and work at the department, our cups of coffee and tea, and our chats about anything and everything. You have made my time at the UvA much more pleasant. Secondly, all the fellow researchers with whom I have spent so much time during our daily lunches and -once weekly- beers: Sebastian, Caroline, Koen, Emma, Federico, Monika, Iris, Sabine, Josje, Rick, Andrew, Guowen, Jing, Els, Bas, Michela, Marjolein, Inge, Annika, Perry, Nadav, Aslan, Richard, Manuel, Marco, Floris and many others that I unfortunately forget right now.

Furthermore, I have very much appreciated the assistance of the administrative staff Barbara, Guida, Marianne, Puikang and other, less visible, people. I have also very much felt support from the directors of the department Len, but moreover Joos, who has not just supported me professionally, but also has always given me the feeling that she appreciated me as a person.

Of my colleagues some deserve special attention. First, Fenne has been a huge source of academic and personal inspiration. Her guidance, wit, drive and collegiality have been a big example and an important reason for continuing in academia. Furthermore, as a working mother of also two daughters (a couple of years ahead in the life course) she has been an oracle for all kinds of questions about parenthood. Moreover, I appreciate our friendship and hope to continue working together with her professionally.

Mendel has been more of a friend than a colleague, really. Although we worked for the same employer, we were friends before the thesis and will be after its completion. As Mendel says in his acknowledgements our lives show many parallels: we studied political science together and both became young fathers of daughter(s). When Wouter and I visited him in London, we discussed the possibility of doing a PhD at the same institute. What started as a joke, has now been accomplished. I hope that our lives will run parallel for many years to come too.

Wouter. The quintessential friend-turned-colleague and colleague-turned-friend. We have spent a lot of time together the last four years, which has been very rewarding, entertaining, and pleasant. I appreciate your sense of humour, your encyclopaedic curiosity, your brightness and most of all your sincerity. I hope that we will be colleagues and friends for a long time.

Finally, I turn to the people that have made me who I am and those that continue to so every day. To start with my friends who I will not all name in person here (you know who I mean). Thank you for everything. In particular I would like to thank Moniek, who has agreed to be my paranymph and has been one of my best friends since our studies. Our bond will not be cut (and the same goes for your bond with geography).

Furthermore, my family. I would probably never have considered doing a PhD
without the example presented by my father. Although his dissertation research and writing had much more the character of a labour of Hercules than mine, he has provided me with the inspiration and the habitus that has helped me navigating academia. Moreover, his never waning support and love have been indispensable.

My mother has been a fantastic support during my whole life, but especially the last two years. Without her love, efforts, and self-sacrificing nature the completion of this project would have been much more difficult. Moreover, she has moved mountains as grandmother of my children, who adore her.

My sister Anna, who has not just designed the cover of this book, but also the birth cards of my two daughters. She and Ilsbrand have always been there for me, and they and their daughter are of infinite value to me.

Birthe and Otto and all my other in-laws. You have been the best extra family one could wish for. Thank you for your continuing love and support.

The greatest inspiration and support I have received from the love of my life. Marie, I will not even make an attempt to say how much you mean to me and how much I owe you. You have given me Vesper and Ronja. That’s already more than I could have wished for.

Amsterdam, May 2012