Mothering the post-industrial city: Family and gender in urban re-generation

van den Berg, M.A.

Citation for published version (APA):
Acknowledgements

When I started working on this dissertation, I wanted to write of the phenomenon of parenting guidance, not necessarily a post-industrial Rotterdam. It was only after my fieldwork period that I decided I should write of Rotterdam and the way it imagines its future. But in a way, it was hardly a surprise: I have always felt affection and fascination for this dynamic place. I hope that I have succeeded in writing with empathy for my home city, its inhabitants, mothers, children, teachers and policy makers, while maintaining a critical stance. Rotterdam already suffers quite enough from Rotterdammers highlighting its faults, adding insult to injury. I will defend this dissertation in Amsterdam, but was inspired for it in Rotterdam and it was written between 010 and 020 – both metaphorically and, in fact, on the train. Although Rotterdam’s future is insecure, I would like to be part of it.

Rotterdam could become my object and research site only because of the welcoming and kind cooperation of the mothers, fathers, children, teachers, student-interns, managers and policy-makers I worked with and I thank them for it. A special word of thanks should go to the people of Bureau Frontlijn, Stichting Welzijnswerk Feijenoord, Stichting de Meeuw and Twinkeltje.

In academia, I owe much to the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research and the Sociology Department of the University of Amsterdam. I was fortunate enough to work there in a wonderfully luxurious position: four years of doing my own research. The AISSR provided an intellectual climate in which I felt very much at home and learned heaps. In particular, I thank the members of the PhD club “cultural and political sociology”, the members of the program group “dynamics of culture and citizenship”, Oskar Verkaaik for his advice in the early and later stages of research and Gerd Baumann for teaching me to think in conceptual triangles. The reader of this dissertation will discover many.

Jan Willem Duyvendak was especially important in his role as my supervisor. Besides his academic qualities, there is one quality in particular that I value and admire in him: an unrelenting curiosity. This gave me much confidence. Whenever I told him of my findings and interpretations, he made me feel like they were worth reporting.

I started my academic career as a student first and a researcher later at Erasmus University. Thinking about this dissertation started there. Godfried Engbersen’s role as my supervisor is in a way a reflection of this personal history. I thank him for introducing me to sociology years ago and for important advice in the different stages of research and writing.

During my time as a PhD student and before that, I was fortunate enough to visit two universities abroad. In 2007 and 2010, I visited the Graduate Center of the City University New York. These were both wonderful experiences in which I learned a lot and I would like to thank John Mollenkopf and Philip Kasinitz for their time and effort to welcome me there. In 2011, I
visited the Georg Simmel Zentrum at Humboldt Universität in Berlin. I thank those at the Zentrum and especially Talja Blokland for their kind hospitality.

This dissertation also benefited greatly from the feedback from Christine Bauhardt, Lilly Hoffman, Robin Rogers-Dillon, Linda McDowell, Sharon Zukin and anonymous reviewers of several journals.

Closer to home, I would like to thank Hanna Becx, Dennis Broeders, Alastair Dunning, Marcel Ham, Chris Luth, Mirko Noordegraaf, Floris Noordhoff, Khadija, Jilali, Anass and Younes Serghini, Marloes van Westrienen and Joke van der Zwaard.

A special word of thanks should go to Thomas Sciarone. His wonderfully subtle design work made this dissertation not only aesthetically attractive but also better. Eva van Gemert improved the written text greatly by correcting for my untidiness.

I thank Liesbeth Noordegraaf-Eelens for including me in the dynamics of daily life with a fulltime job and four children and for our conversations about mothering, work and many other things. Friso van Houdt is always genuinely interested and I have benefited from his questions and feedback. And I thank Anick Vollebergh for sharing many experiences from both in and outside of the university and for advice on the manuscript.

Rogier van Reekum has been my colleague, friend and important peer advisor for years. I owe much to his creativity, support and animated opinions and I hope that our conversation will continue in the years to come.

I thank my friend Claartje ter Hoeven for her companionship, loyalty, humour and empathy. It has been years since we talked tentatively of the idea to do research and write dissertations and it has been much fun to experience this journey together. Marije van der Meij has often inspired me by her curiosity and outspokenness and I am happy that she and Claartje act as paranymph for my defence.

I thank my mother and father for teaching me many things, amongst which the love for Rotterdam. I also thank them for being such loving grandparents to Daniel. I thank my sisters Adeline and Milena for being their cheerful selves and fun aunts. I am also very fortunate to have become part of the warm Schinkel-family and thank Els, Kees, Anders and Eva for much Sunday-afternoon laughter.

Most of all, I am grateful to Willem Schinkel. This dissertation has been the topic of so many conversations and Willem has read so many versions of chapters. Willem’s originality, wisdom and humour have inspired me time and again. But most importantly, to paraphrase Leonard Cohen (always a good idea if you want to keep your cool): I really like to live beside you, baby. I dedicate this dissertation to our son Daniel, who has already brought me so much joy: my very own next generation Rotterdamer.

Rotterdam, July 2013