Family background and residential choice

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CHAPTER 4

The impact of childhood experiences and family members outside the household on residential environment choices

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Abstract
Choices for urban, suburban or rural residential environments have often been studied from a life course perspective. In this paper we examine the influence of childhood experiences and of residential environment choices of family members outside the household. We argue that socialization, location specific capital and the wish to maintain close family ties may result in living in a similar residential environment later in life and in similar environments as siblings and parents. Results of multinominal logistic regression analyses of data from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study show that the residential environment during childhood is indeed strongly associated with the current residential environment. Moreover, individuals show a strong similarity to their parents and siblings in their residential environment, even after accounting for residential inertia and return migration.

Keywords
Residential environment, family, life course
4.1 Introduction

Urban, suburban and rural residential environments in western societies offer different opportunities, facilities and social networks (Michelson, 1977; Feijten et al., 2008), show differences in housing market characteristics (Deurloo et al., 1990) and are associated with different lifestyles (Brun and Fagnani, 1994). Living or having lived in different residential environments can lead to different opportunities and socio-economic (dis)advantages later in life. Both onward migration and (temporarily) living in the city have a positive effect on one’s occupational achievement (Mulder and Van Ham, 2005). The type of residential environment one chooses thus has an important influence on the quality of people’s lives and is therefore an important topic to examine.

From previous research in various countries we know that different residential environments attract different households (e.g. Michelson, 1977). Because of the availability of education, services and good labour market opportunities, cities are often associated with young, single persons. Couples with young children often live in the suburbs because of the availability of family related facilities (Courgeau, 1989; Kulu, 2008). Rural areas are associated with a more traditional life style and mainly attract elderly people (Van Dam et al., 2002). The choice for a certain residential location is thus closely related to the life course: people in different stages of their life course make different residential environment choices (Brun and Fagnani, 1994).

From these previous findings it seems that people mainly choose their residential environment based on their current preferences and needs, influenced by the phase of the life course careers they are in. However, there is reason to expect that these findings only tell part of the story and that other influences may also be of great importance. In this article we argue that both childhood experiences and residential choices of family members outside the household are likely to play an important role in the residential environment choices of households.

A small body of literature has shown an influence of previous residential experiences, for instance during childhood, on current residential environment choices (Van Dam et al., 2002; Aero, 2006; Feijten et al., 2008). Previous residential experiences in cities and suburbs increase the probability of return migration (Feijten et al., 2008) and having lived in a rural area has been found to increase the probability of living in another rural area (Van Dam et al., 2002). Moreover, childhood experiences lead to the development of preferences which influence (housing) choices later in life. Parents transmit their resources and lifestyles to their children (Blau and Duncan, 1967), resulting in making similar residential choices, for instance with respect to homeownership (Helderman and Mulder, 2007; Smits and Mulder, 2008) and housing quality (Smits and Michelin, forthcoming).

In addition to childhood experiences, we may also expect an influence of the wider family context on residential environment choices of households. Research has shown that even in
the contemporary individualistic western societies, family members outside the household to a large extent influence life chances and choices of individuals (Michielin et al., 2008; Mulder and Cooke, 2009). Through socialization, siblings growing up in the same household may develop similar preferences which may lead to making similar residential environment choices later in life. The residential location of family members outside the household can also influence one’s location choices because of family ties. Because of feelings of family solidarity or family support, people might want to live in close proximity to their parents and siblings (Bengtson, 2001; Michielin et al., 2008).

Previous studies on residential environment choices have thus examined the influence of life course characteristics and previous residential experiences. Other studies show the influence of socialization on housing choices. And yet another body of literature shows that individuals take their parents’ location into account when choosing theirs. However, to our knowledge, there have been no studies yet that combine these factors and questions their relative importance. In this article we attempt to fill this gap by addressing the question to what extent (residential) childhood experiences and the residential choices of parents and siblings outside the household play a role in residential environment choices of individuals, in addition to the known effect of life course characteristics. Moreover, we investigate the relative importance of childhood experiences and the location of parents and siblings with that of life course characteristics. The data we use come from the first wave of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra et al., 2005) and are analyzed using multinomial logistic regression analyses.

4.2 Theoretical framework

4.2.1 Urban, suburban and rural residential environments in the Netherlands

In the decennia after World War 2, welfare and economic prosperity grew. This enabled many households to move from the cities to larger dwellings in the surrounding suburbs. After this suburbanization trend, urban renewal programmes in the 1980’s lead to a revival of cities in which the population started to grow again (Feijten et al., 2008). Nowadays, cities, suburban and rural areas all offer specific characteristics that attract people with different lifestyles and preferences. Despite the high population density and high degree of urbanization in the Netherlands, there is a clear distinction between the characteristics of the different environments.

Urban environments are in general characterized by a broad availability of (tertiary) educational institutions, leisure facilities and a large concentration of both low and high skilled jobs. The Dutch suburbs are characterized by well maintained public spaces, green facilities and a good availability of parking space (Feijten et al., 2008). Rural areas offer more space, green and a quiet environment compared to more urban areas and living in the rural areas means living further away from facilities, education and jobs (Van Dam et al., 2002). The housing
stock in Dutch cities consists for a large part of affordable social rental housing, mostly multi-family dwellings. In the suburbs, the quality of housing is higher on average, the housing market is dominated by single-family dwellings and the share of owner-occupied dwellings is greater compared with urban areas. In rural areas the share of social housing is relatively low and the share of high-quality owner-occupied dwellings high (Deurloo et al., 1990).

The different types of environments are also associated with different lifestyles. An urban lifestyle can be described as an extroverted lifestyle: people value the cultural activities they conduct and the lively atmosphere in the city (compare Brun and Fagnani, 1994, for France). The suburban lifestyle has often been described as a familistic lifestyle, in which raising children in a safe environment is valued highly (Bootsma, 1995). The rural lifestyle is often regarded as more traditional, where religion is valued more than in urban and suburban lifestyles (Van Dam et al., 2002). However, there are signs that urban and suburban lifestyles are becoming more similar, as can be seen for instance from a rise in the number of couples who raise their children in the city (Karsten, 2003; 2007). There is also a trend of highly educated people moving from the cities or suburbs to more rural areas after retirement, thereby changing the population composition and causing a mental urbanization of the rural population (SCP, 2006).

4.2.2 Life course characteristics

Different phases in the life course careers are associated with different needs and preferences for specific facilities of residential environments. Events in these careers that change needs or preferences therefore trigger moves between residential environments (Michielin and Mulder, 2008). The relative importance attached to the life course careers (attitudes towards family, education and work) leads to preferences for a certain type of residential environment (Bootsma, 1995).

The educational career affects the residential environment choice because universities and higher vocational schools are almost always located in cities. A high level of education is also often associated with a preference for urban living (Bootsma, 1995; Karsten, 2003). We thus expect both enrolment in higher education and an obtained higher level of education to be positively associated with living in cities. Regarding the occupational career we can argue that the great availability of both high skilled and low skilled jobs in urban areas makes the city a good place to live for those in employment. A work oriented life style is also found to be associated with a preference for urban living (Bell, 1958; Brun and Fagnani, 1994). We thus expect being employed to be positively associated with living in urban areas. Suburbs are often within commuting distance from cities (Karsten, 2003). Working people may therefore also be more likely to live in the suburbs than in rural areas.
The phase of the family career also affects preferences regarding the residential environment. Young single persons are not only attracted by the availability of tertiary education in cities, but also by the greater availability of (small) social rental housing and the accessibility of social and cultural facilities (Michelson, 1977; Faessen, 2002). Divorced and separated singles are also known to be more likely to live in cities because divorce and separation are likely to trigger moves to the city and because people in cities are more likely to divorce or separate (Faessen, 2002; Hall and Ogden, 2003). Couples without children, often young couples who have not started their family career yet, also tend to be over represented in urban areas (Karsten, 2003; Courgeau, 1989; Kruythoff, 1993), while the availability of child-friendly housing and facilities such as childcare in the suburbs is likely to attract couples with children (Kruythoff, 1993; Karsten, 2003). Single parents may also have a preference for living in suburban areas, but may be constrained in realising this because of a lack of resources. We therefore expect them to be more likely to live in urban areas rather than in suburban or rural areas.

4.2.3 Childhood experiences
Growing up in different areas is likely to lead to the development of different preferences. People may develop a particular attachment to the residential environment type in which they grew up. However, it should also be acknowledged that people who grew up in the same type of environment may have had different experiences with it. Young people growing up in a certain environment may stereotype or idealize areas with which they are not familiar (Vanderbeck and Morse Dunkley, 2003). The images that young people have of different environment types are often influenced by their feeling of belonging or attachment to the place where they live (Elder et al., 1996). Adolescents adjust their view of their residential location to the opportunities and constraints they see for moving away. When adolescents have strong feelings of belonging, for instance because of strong family ties, and face constraints on moving away, they tend to adjust their view of their residential environment in a positive way (Elder et al., 1996). More generally, their view is influenced by location specific capital. Location specific capital includes not only social capital such as the presence of social networks, but also cultural capital (familiarity with the local values, knowledge of the local labour market) and economic capital (owning a dwelling).

Location specific capital can lead to residential inertia or return migration (DaVanzo, 1981; Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). People generally do not move over long distances unless there is a persuasive reason to do so, for example when they expect to gain from it, either in economic or in social respect (Mulder and Van Ham, 2005). People might thus live in a certain residential environment because they grew up there and never moved away. Individuals might also live in the same residential environment as in which they grew up because the return to this area later in life. Return migration often involves people who have left their childhood residence for educational reasons and who move back when they have finished
their educational career. The location specific capital in that specific area serves as a pull factor: they might still have social networks there and their friends and/or family may still live there (Morrison and DaVanzo, 1986; Van Dam et al., 2002). In addition to location specific capital, socialization within the family of origin during childhood can also lead to residential inertia or return migration. People might chose to stay close to their childhood residence or return to it because they have positive experiences growing up there and have developed a preferences for living in that area, with its specific characteristics, facilities and atmosphere (Bourdieu, 1984; Aero, 2006).

Location specific capital and socialization can thus lead to residential inertia and return migration, resulting in living in the same residential environment later in life. In addition, socialization can lead to developing preferences for a certain type of residential environment, resulting in living in a similar, but not necessarily the same, residential environment later in life. Aero (2006) refers to this socialization process as an innate disposition of place: where to live is a matter of convention and embodied preferences. A person feels at home in a certain type of environment. By studying newcomers to a certain area (thus ruling out return migration), Aero (2006) provided clear evidence of the fact that people are indeed more likely to choose the same type of residential environment as in which they grew up. Images and preferences that people have for a certain type of residential environment are closely linked to actual residential behaviour. For instance, people who have lived in rural areas before have more positive attitudes towards this environment than those who have not lived there (Van Dam et al., 2002) and have an increased probability of moving to another rural area (Feijten et al., 2008). We thus expect that people who have lived in a certain type of residential environment during their childhood, are more likely to live in that type of residential environment in their adult lives than people who grew up in a different type of residential environment.

How people have experienced their childhood and whether people feel at home in a certain type of residential environment can also depend on other family background characteristics. Highly educated parents often attach great value to education and work, and have often lived in the city (at least temporarily). They can stimulate their children to pursue their educational careers and transmit their positive attitudes towards education to their children (Blau and Duncan, 1967), thus enhancing the possibility that their children will live in the city. We therefore expect that having higher educated parents increase the likelihood of living in cities rather than in suburbs or rural areas.

Having experienced a parental divorce during childhood may influence residential environment choices in different ways. Divorced or single parents are more likely to live in cities (Faessen, 2002) and their adult children therefore could be more likely to live in a city themselves. Having experienced a parental divorce might also change attitudes towards family, such as opinions about marriage (Amato, 1988). The family career might therefore be valued less. This
could lead to a preference for cities rather than suburbs and rural areas (Bootsma, 1995).

4.2.4 Family members outside the household

Besides the effects of life course characteristics and previous residential experiences, we are interested in the additional effect that family members outside the household have on residential environment choices. This association between the current residential environment of parents and their children may take place through continued socialization or because of the wish to maintain close family ties.

Through socialization, parents transmit values and resources to their children which might result in having similar preferences and making similar choices regarding their residential environment (Bourdieu, 1984). For other housing characteristics, namely housing quality (Smits and Michielin, forthcoming) and tenure (Helderman, 2007; Smits and Mulder, 2008), this similarity between parents and children has already been shown. Socialization not only takes place during childhood. Choices that parents and siblings make later in life, can also serve as an example. We can refer to this as continued socialization. For example, a sibling moving over a long distance for job reasons might stimulate other siblings to also take the step to move away. Since siblings share their socialization and to a large extent have the same residential experiences, they might develop similar preferences and make comparable residential environment choices. We expect an association between the residential environment of an individual and that of his or her parents and siblings, even after accounting for the fact that many people never leave the residential environment of their childhood.

Even in contemporary individualistic societies as the Netherlands, family members such as parents and siblings are still important in the lives of adults (Michielin et al., 2008). People have feelings of obligation towards family members and there is exchange of actual support within families, mostly from parents to their adult children (Bengtson, 2001). Moreover, nowadays, in many couples with small children, both partners face the challenge of having to cope with bringing up the children and building their occupational careers at the same time. This peak in the life course careers of both partners may increase the need for help from family members.

Because of close family ties, family care and because of the need for support, people can have a preference for living close to their parents and/or siblings outside the household. This may result in individuals living in the same residential environment as their parents and siblings do. Parents are likely to help their children by providing informal childcare or support after events such as a divorce or separation (Lawton et al., 1994). Obligations towards family members living outside the household compete with other obligations, such as those towards the own nuclear family and work (Rossi and Rossi, 1990). In relation to residential environment choices this could mean that adult children take their parents’ and siblings’ residential location into account when choosing theirs. Especially families with children might
find it important to have a family member close by. Close family ties, in terms of both family support and contact, might be associated with living in close proximity with family members outside the household (Malmberg and Pettersson, 2007; Michielin et al., 2008).

Because family members share certain preferences as a result of a shared socialization or because they choose a residential location close to that of parents and/or siblings in order to maintain their family ties, we expect that even after accounting for the residential environment during childhood, there will be an additional effect of the current residential environment of parents and siblings living outside the household.

4.2.5 Other individual characteristics

During the 20th century, secularization in the Netherlands developed at a faster pace in the urban and industrial areas than in the rural areas. Moreover, the individualistic mentality in the generally more prosperous suburbs also resulted in strong secularization (Knippenberg, 1992). Pinkster and Van Kempen (2002) showed that church attendance is strongly associated with living in smaller, rural municipalities. We therefore expect that being religious is more strongly associated with living in rural areas rather than suburban or urban areas. We also control for gender in our analyses. Age is also expected to influence residential environment choices. With an increasing age, people gain more resources and preferences and needs for certain facilities might change. Rural areas seem to attract middle-aged and elderly people, for instance after retirement (Van Dam et al., 2002). In addition, Bootsma (1995) found that couples in the suburbs are on average older than couples in urban areas. We therefore expect that with an increasing age, the likelihood of living in rural areas increases. We also account for the number of siblings since having more siblings increases the likelihood of showing similarities with them regarding the residential environment. Because of the in general lower socio-economic status of non-Western immigrants and the availability of more affordable and social (rental) housing in the cities, they are overrepresented in the four largest cities in the Netherlands (Zorlu and Mulder, 2008). Recently, there has been a suburbanization trend among second-generation non-Western immigrants, specifically those with a Caribbean background. They tend to move from deprived neighbourhoods in the larger cities to surrounding suburbs (Zorlu and Latten, 2009). We therefore expect that non-Western immigrants are more likely to live in cities than native Dutch, and much less likely to live in rural areas.

4.3 Data and methods

We use data from the first wave of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS; Dykstra et al., 2005). This representative sample of the Dutch population was collected in 2002-2004 and contains information on 8161 inhabitants of the Netherlands who are aged between 18 and 79 and not living in institutions. The database can be used for examining contemporary family and kinship relationships in the Netherlands from a multi-actor perspective. The main sample we use in this study was derived from a random sample of addresses of private residences
in the Netherlands. The data were collected using Computer Assisted Personal Interviews. In addition, respondents filled out a self completion questionnaire. The dataset includes information about a broad range of socio-economic, housing and family characteristics. Moreover, information on the parents, siblings, children, partner and parents-in-law of the main respondent is available. See the Codebook of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra et al., 2005) for more detailed information.

We selected respondents living outside the parental home, without missing values on the main variables. There were 275 respondents still living in the parental home. Information about the place of residence during childhood was missing for 431 respondents, of which 299 were born outside the Netherlands. The level of education of the parents was unknown in 230 cases. The final sample consists of 7233 respondents.

We distinguish between urban, suburban and rural residential environments. For the operationalization of these areas in the Netherlands we followed Feijten, Hooimeijer and Mulder (2008). Using the municipality boundaries, they defined 17 large cities (all with more than 100,000 inhabitants in 2005 and with a central function to the surrounding area) as urban areas. The municipalities directly adjacent to the selected cities were categorized as suburbs, while the remaining and largest part of the Netherlands was defined as rural.

Regarding the family career we distinguished between four household types: couples (either married or cohabiting) without children, single persons without children, couples with children and single parents. Level of education was measured in four categories: up to lower vocational; middle or higher secondary or middle vocational; higher vocational; and university. We included a measurement of the labour market participation, distinguishing between those who are working fulltime (32 hours or more per week), those who work part-time (less than 32 hours per week), people enrolled in fulltime education and people who are not employed.

For the measurement of the residential environment during childhood and the residential environments of parents and siblings outside the household, we used the same categorization of municipalities as we used for the current residential environment. Information about the residential environment during childhood was obtained through a retrospective question asking in which municipality the respondent lived when he or she was aged 15. To control for residential inertia, we included a dummy variable that indicates whether the respondent still lives in the same municipality as where he or she lived at age 15. For the residential environment of the parents, an extra category was created for those who did not have any parents alive anymore or whose parents did not live in the Netherlands. When the parents did not live together, the residential environment of the mother was taken into account since (adult) children tend to have closer relationships with their mothers than with their fathers (Rossi and Rossi, 1990). For the siblings, we created three dummy variables that are coded 1
when at least one sibling is living in respectively an urban, suburban or rural area.

For the level of education of the parents, we took the parent with the highest level of education into account. The variable parental divorce designates whether the parents divorced before the respondent had left the parental home. We control for religiosity, sex, age, number of siblings and for being a non-western immigrant or second generation non-western immigrant. Information about religiosity was obtained from the self completion questionnaire, which was not filled out by all respondents. Therefore we added an extra category ‘unknown’ to this variable. The variable for age squared was divided by ten to obtain better readable parameters.

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of all variables for all respondents and for only those who moved away from the municipality in which they lived when they were aged 15. The percentages are to a large extent similar for the whole group of respondents and the selection of those who moved away, except for the level of education and the level of education of the parents. For these variables, the proportion of higher educated is significantly greater for those who moved way than for the whole group (test statistics not shown).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of all variables for all respondents (N=7233) and for those who moved away (N=4391)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to lower vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle or higher secondary or middle vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic position</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working fulltime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working parttime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labour force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple without children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One person. no children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential environment at age 15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Living in same municipality as at age 15  39.29

Level of education of the parents
Up to lower vocational  48.18  41.97
Middle or higher secondary or middle vocational  33.08  34.62
Higher vocational or university  18.73  23.41

Parents divorced  8.24  8.02

Residential environment parents
Rural  32.63  33.64
Suburban  19.26  19.59
Urban  11.02  9.34
No parents alive or living in the Netherlands  37.09  37.44

Residential environment siblings
At least one sibling living in a rural area  58.81  58.78
At least one sibling living in a suburban area  43.99  45.52
At least one sibling living in an urban area  27.90  29.79

Religiosity
Not religious  40.43  43.16
Religious  49.44  46.89
Unknown  10.13  9.95

Sex
Male  41.38  40.56
Female  58.62  59.44

Non Western immigrant  2.06  1.48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. dev.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>47.85</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>48.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of siblings</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NKPS

The method we used is multinomial logistic regression analysis. The residential environment of the respondent is the dependent variable, with the category rural area serving as the reference category. Since we are interested in examining to what extent childhood experiences and residential environment choices of family members outside the household play a role in addition to the life course characteristics, we also performed log-likelihood ratio tests of five different models to compare the goodness of fit.

We performed two analyses. The first analysis includes all respondents. The second analysis only includes those respondents who do not live in the same municipality anymore as in which they grew up. In the second model we thus rule out residential inertia and return migration. This enables us to test our hypotheses on developing preferences for a certain type of residential environment and on making similar residential choices as parents and siblings outside the household.
In the two final models, both the residential environment during childhood and the current residential environment of parents and siblings are included. Because these variables are strongly related to each other, they share variance and might thus take over each other’s effects. Since we are interested in the additional effect of the residential environment of the parents and siblings after accounting for the residential environment at age 15, we chose to prioritize the effect of the residential environment during childhood. To achieve this we first estimated a model including the residential environment at age 15, but without the current residential environment of parents and siblings. In the final models we included the residential environment of the parents and siblings, but we constrained the coefficients for the residential environment during childhood to be as they are without the residential environment of the parents and siblings in the model. By prioritizing the effect of the residential environment during childhood, we can be certain that the effects of the residential environment of the parents and siblings are estimated conservatively and are not affected by the correlation with the residential environment during childhood.

4.4 Results
To examine the separate contribution of sets of explanatory variables, we have estimated five models, adding the sets of variables stepwise and comparing the goodness of fit of these models (see Table 4.2). In the first model we only included the life course characteristics. In the following models we added the residential environment during childhood and the indicator for residential inertia; other family background characteristics; the residential environment of the family members outside the household; and the control variables. Each step improved the model significantly. More importantly, adding the residential environment at age 15 and whether the respondent was living in the same municipality contributes improved our model enormously. This means that studying the residential environment choice of individuals without accounting for residential inertia, return migration or residential childhood experiences, gives an incomplete and possibly distorted picture of residential environment choice. The improvement after including the residential environment of parents and siblings is also highly significant, indicating that the location of family members outside the household indeed also adds to the explanation of residential environment choices of individuals.

Table 4.2: Comparisons of goodness of fit between different models (log-likelihoodratio test)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-2 LL</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Chi2</th>
<th>Prob &gt; Chi2</th>
<th>AIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of education, socio-economic position, household type</td>
<td>14820.73</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14860.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Residential environment at age 15, living in the same municipality</td>
<td>12209.70</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2611.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>12261.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Parental level of education, parental divorce</td>
<td>12091.95</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>117.75</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>12155.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Residential environment parents and siblings</td>
<td>11602.68</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>489.26</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11690.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Religiosity, sex, age, number of siblings, non-Western immigrant</td>
<td>11521.99</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80.69</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11633.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NKPS
Notes: Significance of Chi2: comparison to previous model
Table 4.3 shows the odds ratios of the final models: one including all respondents; the other only including those who moved away from their childhood place of residence. The effect of the level of education is as expected. People with a university degree are almost four times more likely to live in the city than people who have a lower vocational degree. Being higher educated also increases the likelihood of living in suburban areas, compared to being less well educated. Similar effects are found for those who moved away. Surprisingly, no significant effect working part time (compared to working fulltime) or not being in labour force is found. We did find a significant effect of being enrolled in education: as expected it has a positive effect on living in the city. However, this effect disappears in the second model, where we only included those who moved away. It is thus mainly the educational, and not so much the occupational career that influences the residential environment choice of individuals. A higher level of education is likely to trigger moves to the city for many. The residential environment does not seem to be associated with various characteristics of the occupational career such as working part-time or full time or not being employed.

Table 4.3: Multinomial odds ratios for the effects on residential environment (ref: rural)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Suburban</th>
<th>All Urban</th>
<th>Only those who moved away Suburban</th>
<th>Only those who moved away Urban</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of education (ref: up to lower vocational)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle or higher secondary or middle vocational</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher vocational</td>
<td>1.22 **</td>
<td>1.51 ***</td>
<td>1.26 **</td>
<td>1.59 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2.13 ***</td>
<td>3.95 ***</td>
<td>2.16 ***</td>
<td>3.81 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic position (ref: working fulltime)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part time</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in education</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.35 *</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labour force</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household type (ref: couple without children)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One person. no children</td>
<td>1.26 ***</td>
<td>2.45 ***</td>
<td>1.37 ***</td>
<td>2.49 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple with children</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.50 ***</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.48 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential environment at age 15 (ref: rural)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>13.90 ***</td>
<td>4.21 ***</td>
<td>2.43 ***</td>
<td>1.84 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>7.28 ***</td>
<td>16.86 ***</td>
<td>3.15 ***</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living in same municipality as at age 15</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.72 ***</td>
<td>1.32 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of education of the parents (ref: up to lower vocational)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle or higher secondary or middle vocational</td>
<td>1.35 ***</td>
<td>1.20 *</td>
<td>1.35 ***</td>
<td>1.38 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher vocational or university</td>
<td>1.31 **</td>
<td>1.90 ***</td>
<td>1.24 *</td>
<td>2.08 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents divorced</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results for the household type are mostly in line with previous research findings, although the differences between household types are not large as expected. It seems suburban and urban areas attract similar household types. Compared to couples without children, single people without children are far more likely to live in both suburban and urban areas, while couples with children are less likely to live in urban areas. The effect of being a single parent on living in the city is not significant. This is probably due to the fact that there are few single parents in our sample. Regarding our indicators of life-course careers, we can conclude that the educational career seems the most important, followed by the family career.

Because of location specific capital and socialization, we expected the residential environment during childhood to have a strong influence on the current residential environment. We indeed find a very strong association here. For the first model we see that compared to people who grew up in a rural area, people who grew up in a suburban area are almost 14 times more likely to live in a suburban area later in life. The positive effect of having lived in an urban
area during childhood on currently living in an urban area is even stronger. Having lived in the suburbs during childhood also increases the likelihood of living in urban areas and vice versa. Compared to people who moved away, those still living in the same municipality as where they grew up, are most likely to live in cities, while they are less likely to live in suburban areas. This might indicate that residential inertia is stronger for those who grew up in the city than for those who grew up in suburban environments or that people who grew up in the city develop an attachment with this specific city, while the attachment to a specific suburban municipality is less strong. It might also indicate that the necessity to leave is less strong in cities than in suburban areas. When we rule out residential inertia and return migration (in the second model), we still find a strong and significant effect: even if people have moved away from the municipality in which they grew up, they are more likely to live in a similar type of environment later in life. The only exception is found for having lived in an urban area at age 15. Apparently once a person has left the city in which he or she grew up, that person is not more likely to live in a city later in life. Residential experience in a suburb does however strongly increase the likelihood of living in a suburban area again rather than in a rural area.

As expected, having highly educated parents significantly increases the likelihood of living in the suburbs and even more of living in a city, compared to having less well educated parents. This possibly indicates that highly educated parents stimulate their children to move to the city for their educational career. Whether parents were divorced or not does not have a significant effect on the residential environments although the parameters are in the expected direction.

The results for the residential environment of parents and siblings to a large extent confirm our hypotheses. There is indeed an additional effect of the residential environment of the parents and siblings on the current residential environment of individuals on top of the association between the current place of residence and the residential environment during childhood. Regarding the environment in which the parents live, we find a significant association for the suburban areas: people whose parents live in the suburbs are 45% more likely to live in the suburbs themselves. The parameters for parents living in urban areas are not significant. Children whose parents live in urban areas are thus not more or less likely to live in urban areas themselves.

For the siblings we see a much stronger association between their residential environment and that of the respondent. Having at least one sibling living in a rural area is associated with a lower likelihood of living in suburban and urban areas, while having siblings who live in the suburbs or in a city increases the likelihood of living there by 56% or 123%. Siblings thus show a strong similarity in their residential environment choices, indicating that the mechanisms of socialization or the wish to maintain close family ties are likely to play a role in the residential environment choices of individuals. Moreover, the results for the residential environments of parents and siblings remain the almost exactly the same when we only take
those who moved away into account. This indicates that the similarities we found are not just a byproduct of residential inertia, but that parents and their children indeed make similar residential choices, for example because they have developed similar preferences.

As expected, being religious is negatively associated with living in a city and for those who moved away also with living in suburban areas. No effect of gender is found on residential environment choices. We find a negative age effect, indicating that with an increasing age, people are less likely to live in urban areas. The number of siblings does not have a significant effect. For the first model, the effect of being a non-western immigrant is not significant, although in the expected direction. For the second model however, it is significant: if immigrants have moved away from the municipality in which they grew up, they are more likely to live in suburban areas. This is in line with the pattern of suburbanisation that has recently started among second generation immigrants in the Netherlands.

4.5 Conclusion and discussion

Previous research has paid attention to the influence of life course characteristics and of previous residential experiences, on the choice for rural, suburban or urban residential environments. In this paper we aimed to show that not only life course characteristics are associated with residential environment choices, but that also (residential) childhood experiences and the residential environment choices of family members outside the household play an important role. Moreover, we investigated the relative importance of these sets of factors.

We argued that (residential) childhood experiences influence current residential environment choices through location specific capital and socialization. Location specific capital can cause residential inertia or lead to return migration, which can result in living in the same residential environment in which one grew up. Through socialization, people may develop preferences for a certain type of residential environment, resulting in living in a similar residential environment later in life. Moreover, we argued that the residential location of family members outside the household, such as parents and siblings, influence the choice for a residential environment through continued socialization and the wish to maintain close family ties. Because of continued socialization, individuals are likely to share preferences with their parents and siblings outside the household. As a result, they may show strong similarities regarding their residential environment choices. The wish to maintain close family ties is likely related to a preference for living in close proximity to family members, possibly resulting in living in the same residential environment.

In line with previous studies, our results show that life course characteristics (mainly different household types and differences in level of education) are associated with living in different residential environments. However, it should be noted that our results indicate that suburban
and urban areas seem to attract similar household types, and that it is the distinction between rural areas on the one hand and suburban and urban areas on the other hand to which life course characteristics make the difference.

In addition to the effects of the life course characteristics, we indeed also found strong effects for the residential environment during childhood and other family background characteristics. These effects are highly significant, even when ruling out residential inertia and return migration. We showed that having lived in a certain residential environment strongly increases the likelihood of living in a similar environment later in life. A family background characteristic that turned out to have a strong effect on the residential environment is the level of education of the parents: children of highly educated parents are more likely to live in the city than children of less well educated parents.

We also found clear evidence that the residential environment choices of individuals are associated with those of parents and even more with those of their siblings. Persons who have siblings living in a certain residential environment are much more likely to live in a similar residential environment. These results were found for all three types of residential environments, and even for those people who moved away from their childhood place of residence.

Our results confirm that life course characteristics indeed are strongly associated with residential environment choices. However, a major contribution of this paper lies in the fact that we showed that residential experiences during childhood might be even more important in determining one’s residential environment than life course characteristics. Moreover, the residential location of parents and siblings outside the household also seems to be an essential factor. The fact that the influence of where one grew up, residential inertia and the location choices of family members proved to be very important for residential environment choices means that a focus on life course characteristics of households only tells part of the story. Using a broader life course perspective, taking into account the interdependency between family members, their linked lives and shared life course experiences, seems to offer a more fruitful approach.

Our data had a few limitations. Migrants were underrepresented in the dataset, which made it unable to analyse residential environment choices among minority groups in the Netherlands. Information on religiosity was only available for respondents who filled out an additional self-completion survey and therefore missing for a relatively large part of our sample. Reliable class indicators other than those we used, namely level of education of the respondent and parents, were also not available. We also did not have direct information on motives for moving to a residential environment, for instance related to high concentration of ethnic minorities in cities. A white flight out of neighbourhoods does not occur on a large scale in the Netherlands.
at the moment, but it has been shown that parents take the concentration of ethnic minorities into account when choosing a primary school for their children (Karsten, 1994).

The data we used were gathered at one point in time and lacked complete residential histories. Because of this we were not able to study changes in preferences or decision-making processes over time or over the life course. Moreover, because we could not take into account all previous residential environments, we were not able to disentangle residential inertia from return migration. Future research could show what the relative importance is of return migration compared to residential inertia. Moreover, examining to what extent people indeed develop preferences, either during childhood or later in life, for a certain type of residential environment could give more insight into residential environment choices and the influence the family background and family members outside the household have in this.

References


