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To cite this article: Willem R. Boterman & Gary Bridge (2022): The transition to parenthood in urban space: continuity and disruption of embodied experience and spatial practice, *Social & Cultural Geography*, DOI: [10.1080/14649365.2022.2028181](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2022.2028181)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2022.2028181>



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Published online: 24 Jan 2022.



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The transition to parenthood in urban space: continuity and disruption of embodied experience and spatial practice

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the impacts of the transition to parenthood on the relationship between (from a Bourdieusian perspective) habitus and field in social reproduction. The paper is based on a longitudinal study of white middle-class gentrifier households in Amsterdam before and after childbirth. The study reveals the disruptive (as well as re-configurative) impact of parenthood as transition, even for this relatively privileged group (in terms of legitimated habitus and spatial discretion and mobility). Our findings strongly suggest the highly gendered nature of this transition, and also reveal the significance of spatial dimensions of this gendered experience – from embodiment all the way through to changing relationships in urban space. These impacts suggest parenthood as a distinct ‘field’ of social struggle and emphasise the significance of gender and spatial experience in understanding habitus-field relations, alongside the more acknowledged temporalities of social reproduction.

La transición a la paternidad en el espacio urbano Continuidad e interrupción de la experiencia incorporada y la práctica espacial

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora los impactos de la transición a la paternidad en las relaciones entre (desde una perspectiva bourdieusiana) habitus y campo en la reproducción social. El artículo se basa en un estudio longitudinal con hogares gentrificadores de clase media blancos en Ámsterdam antes y después del parto. El estudio revela el impacto disruptivo (así como reconfigurativo) de la paternidad como transición, incluso para este grupo relativamente privilegiado (en términos de habitus legitimado y discreción espacial y movilidad). Nuestros hallazgos sugieren fuertemente la naturaleza altamente genérica de esta transición, y también revelan la importancia de las dimensiones espaciales de esta experiencia de género, desde la incorporación hasta las relaciones cambiantes con el espacio urbano. Estos impactos sugieren la paternidad como un ‘campo’ distinto de lucha social y enfatizan la importancia del género y la

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 11 July 2020

Accepted 22 September 2021

KEYWORDS

Parenthood; urban space; life course; habitus; field; transition

PALABRAS CLAVE

Palabras clave; paternidad; espacio urbano; curso de vida; habitus; campo

MOTS CLÉS

Mots-clés; Parentalité; espace urbain; cours de la vie; habitus1; champ

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experiencia espacial en la comprensión de las relaciones habitus-campo, junto con las temporalidades más reconocidas de la reproducción social.

Devenir parent dans l'espace urbain La continuité et la perturbation des expériences concrètes et des pratiques spatiales

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article étudie les effets de la transition à la parentalité sur les relations entre (d'une perspective bourdieusienne) l'habitus et le champ dans la reproduction sociale. Il repose sur une enquête longitudinale sur des foyers gentrifiés blancs de classe moyenne à Amsterdam, avant et après la naissance de leurs enfants. Cette enquête révèle l'effet perturbateur (et aussi re-configuratif) de la parentalité en tant que transition, même pour ce groupe relativement privilégié (pour ce qui est de la légitimité de l'habitus, de la discrétion spatiale et de la mobilité). Nos résultats montrent nettement la nature très sexospécifique de cette transition et exposent l'importance des dimensions spatiales de cette expérience sexospécifique, commençant par la concrétisation jusqu'à l'évolution des rapports avec l'espace urbain. Ces effets suggèrent que devenir un parent est un « champ » distinct de lutte sociale et soulignent l'importance du genre et de l'expérience spatiale pour la compréhension des rapports habitus-champ, parallèlement aux temporalités de reproduction sociale plus reconnues.

Introduction

Demographers and population geographers consider the transition to parenthood as one of the key events in the life course (Katz & Monk, 2014; Umberson et al., 2010) and have studied the conditions for (Frejka & Sobotka, 2008), and the effects of, becoming a parent on a range of topics such as working careers, divisions of labour, and housing decisions (Duncan & Smith, 2002). Classic scholarship on the life cycle reveals that transition to parenthood is often associated with spatial transitions in the form of residential mobility (P. H. Rossi, 1955). There is a substantial literature that has investigated the relationship between life course transitions, including to parenthood, and residential mobility (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). In more recent studies residential mobility and life course events are approached through the concept of linked-lives (Bailey, 2009). This perspective argues that residential mobility should be re-conceptualized as relational practices, linking individual life courses together and connecting them to more structural conditions in time and space (Coulter et al., 2016). While a life course perspective on transitions has been very influential in understanding residential mobility, it typically focuses on the timing and effects of life course transitions and whether and how they are linked to spatial relocations. Much less focus lies on how the transition to parenthood is experienced and how this is related to changing relationship with the spatial environment.

Studies from various disciplines have researched how transitions to parenthood are experienced by biological mothers (Cowan et al., 1985; Laslett & Brenner, 1989) but also an expanding literature has studied fatherhood (S. C. Aitken, 2000; Doucet, 2009; Miller, 2011) and transitions to non-biological and non-heteronormative parenthood (Goldberg, 2006). It is suggested that parenthood is an irreversible transition, it is abrupt and all encompassing; it is only partly open to anticipation and prior training; and it is largely learned through practice (A. S. Rossi, 1968). As Doucet (2009, p. 93) puts it: 'Indeed the metaphor of birth with all of its symbolic and real implications of entry, rupture, explosion, newness, and transformation are also present in the birthing, not only of infant but also of mothers and fathers.' Parenthood is thus understood as a fluid and unsettling stage in the life of most mothers, fathers and carers. Notwithstanding this wealth of studies on the experiences of mothers, fathers, and carers, or the impact of transition to parenthood for parents and carers in various contexts (Goldberg, 2006; Miller, 2005, 2011; Thomson et al., 2011) fewer studies have tried to theorise how transition to parenthood is experienced as a spatial transition.

In cultural and feminist geography a growing literature has focused on the different spatial registers of parenthood. This covers a range of aspects of the spatiality of parenting/parenthood from a focus on the family as a place of care (Hall, 2016; Luzia, 2010), to a whole range of studies on everyday mobilities of families (Dowling, 2000; Waitt & Harada, 2016) and maternal bodies moving through urban space (Boyer, 2018; Boyer & Spinney, 2016). Also, more place-based studies reveal specific geographies of care and family (Hall, 2016, 2019; Karsten, 2003), in which place-based cultures of parenting are associated with specific normativities around being a good mother (parent) (Boterman, 2020; Holloway, 1998; C. Vincent et al., 2004). Also a range of studies into non-heterosexual and single-mother parenting have revealed important interconnections between the normativities of everyday life and moral geographies (Luzia, 2010).

This paper seeks to build on these studies on parenthood and space and bring them together with demographic and sociological perspectives on the transition to parenthood. To understand how transition to parenthood triggers new spatial practices and experiences this paper proposes to see parenthood as a field in the Bourdieusian sense (Boterman & Bridge, 2015). We suggest how the spatial aspects of transition, from the effects on embodiment through to changing experiences of the city, exemplify the profundity of the nature of this life transition. A spatial angle on transition to parenthood also captures the disruptive dilemmas of transition that cross the fields of housing, education, as well as family as a field of social struggle.

We draw on two waves of in-depth interviews with middle-class men and women living in the central parts of Amsterdam who are in the transition to parenthood. This first wave is carried out in the final stages of pregnancy and the second two years after the first. These middle-class respondents are in a relatively privileged position in the class structure and we might also expect to have a set of habitus dispositions characterised by prior experiences of control, competence and legitimation when entering the transition to parenthood. They are also urban households, which suggests both relative ease of residential mobility and, at the same time, a commitment to inner urban living. This latter aspect is one that residential mobility models of the transition to parenthood would suggest would be challenged in favour of the more traditional move to the suburbs in these circumstances.

Parenthood as life course transition

Transitions through the life course are central to demographic scholarship (Umberson et al., 2010). Childbirth, the transition to parenthood, is one of the key events in the lives of people, of which the timing and effect have been extensively studied (P. H. Rossi, 1955; Schwiter, 2011). With the rise of life-course perspectives, key events and transitions have become increasingly studied from an individual or household perspective (Mayer, 2009). Recent studies of 'linked lives' have made pleas for studying life courses as relational practices, as intertwined with life courses of others, and how they are connected to both wider social and spatial contexts, notably housing markets and labour markets (Bailey, 2009; Coulter et al., 2016).

Despite these innovations, traditional life course and demographic approaches are criticised for being undertheorized (Graham & Boyle, 2001) and adopted as a universal framework. Life courses, however, unfold as pathways through institutional contexts, which are spatially and historically contingent (Ecclestone et al., 2009), but also highly gendered, racialized, and classed (Katz & Monk, 2014). Critical scholars have demonstrated how the very idea of life courses naturalizes the idea of 'family', which is an ideological construct of the capitalist, racial and patriarchal order, facilitating social reproduction (Curran, 2017; Manning, 2019). Despite his neglect of gender as a central category (Adkins & Skeggs, 2005) Bourdieu (1996) also contends that family as subjective social category serves as a legitimation and a naturalisation of the family as an objective social category. He argues (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 23) that 'the family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of social order, through social as well as biological reproduction, i.e. reproduction of the structure of the social space and social relations'. This is reinforced and sustained by the state, which via legislation, classification and all kinds of social arrangements favours (specific configurations of) the family as a natural unit. Bourdieu argues that the naturalness and normality of the social construct of family is a major symbolic privilege that serves as one of the core conditions for the accumulation and transmission of economic, cultural and symbolic capital.

Feminist scholars have theorised and demonstrated how the family is a gendered institution where dominant norms around motherhood and fatherhood are reproduced (Gatrell, 2004; Porter et al., 2005). Gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work are at the centre of this argument (Crompton, 2006), but the family is also revealed as a site in which gendered norms are passed on intergenerationally, normalising how to be a good mother/wife father/husband (Thomson et al., 2011). A rich body of literature demonstrates how challenging it is to perform motherhood (and fatherhood) beyond hegemonial parenting (heteronormative; middle class and White; S. C. Aitken, 2000; Doucet, 2009; Goldberg, 2006; Lareau, 2011; Manning, 2019; Smart, 1996). Moreover, the highly gendered (and classed, racialised, and heteronormative) order of family and parenthood is also influenced by and written into space. Transitions to parenthood are thoroughly spatial, not only because they are impacted by specific spatial configurations of, for instance, housing and labour markets but also because they are experienced differently across spatial (and temporal) settings. Furthermore, the practical use of space as well as experiences of space are transformed throughout the life course.

Parenthood as spatial transition

Life course events are closely linked to spatial transitions (P. H. Rossi, 1955; Mulder, 2013). Parenthood is a critical 'turning point' having significant ramifications for the rest of the life course (Gotlib & Wheaton, 1997). This transition often causes housing 'stress', changing the demand for housing (in its broadest sense), triggering residential mobility (Geist & McManus, 2008; Kulu, 2008). Residential mobility is however not a discrete move between dwellings, but rather should be understood as relational practice affected by structural connections and interrelated 'linked' lives (Bailey 2009). Becoming a parent is a transition where 'the interwovenness of life courses comes to the fore most prominently' (Schwiter, 2011, p. 399). Rethinking residential mobility as linked lives helps to 'comprehensively integrate time and space into life-course theory and analysis' (Coulter et al., 2016, p. 367).

Transitions to parenthood take place, they are 'spatio-temporal events' (Massey 2005, p. 2), embedded in spatial geometries of power associated with social class, race and—as stressed above—gender (Bailey, 2009). The spatiality of this life course transition is, however, not just about moving between places, parenthood is—to paraphrase Massey (1994, p. 2)—a set of social relations 'stretched out'. Social relations of class, race and gender are reproduced in the spatial organization of these relations. Feminist geography has yielded a rich tradition for understanding how gendered divisions of labour and caring work, particularly in family households, are intrinsically interwoven with spatial orderings of home and community as well as wider patterns of residential segregation between 'female suburbs' and 'masculine cities' (England, 1991; Hanson & Pratt, 2003; Karsten, 2003; McDowell et al., 2006). These gendered patterns of segregation also crucially intersect with geographies of class and race. The spatiality of transition to parenthood is evidently associated with practices of residential mobility, in which gendered and racial ideologies of good parenting are reflected in residential 'choice'. Moreover, the spatial is also about the new spatial everyday practices associated with parenthood and the changing meaning and experiences of place and space.

An emerging literature within cultural geography focuses on place and space in parenthood. The work of Boyer (2012, 2018) for instance, shows how the transition to motherhood changes the ways of engaging with the material world. Boyer and Spinney (2016, p. 1117) stress that 'mobility is a key area in which family is enacted' and moving through space is a way for mothers to learn their parenting body. She discusses the micro-spaces of embodiment and care and how these are treated in public space, such as mothers' experience of breastfeeding in public (Boyer, 2012, 2018) or in the difficulty of moving with a baby buggy through the urban environment (Boyer & Spinney, 2016). She discusses the deep bodily sensation of slowness and heaviness of moving through urban space. Holdsworth (2013, p. 143) documents how family mobility and intimacy are interconnected, not just through collective movement such as residential mobility but also in 'how individual mobilities sustain and reconfigure family practices'. Waitt and Harada (2016) show the family car is essential in the synchronizing of spatially fragmented lives of the family in a practical

sense, while also providing an intimate space for family togetherness (Dowling, 2000). Others have stressed how parenthood leads to *immobility* due to interlocking of lives, especially for mothers (Boterman & Bridge, 2015; High et al., 2020). This is especially profound for suburban and rural homegoing mothers, for whom the contrast with their urban working lives is often stark (Boterman & Bridge, 2015). Also, Luzia (2010) discusses the ramifications of transition to parenthood on the everyday spatialities: ‘familiar spaces are experienced in unfamiliar ways; your daily mobilities must be regularly re-negotiated and reworked, and your relationships with everyday places outside the home will be (sometimes permanently) altered.’ A central aspect of the renegotiation of everyday spaces is concerned with the well-being and comfort of the child, sometimes uncomfortable or unexciting for the parent (Luzia, 2010). Risk and safety are also key elements of this newly emerging relationship between parenting and space (Pain, 2006; Talbot, 2013), but also more broadly appropriate parenting, being a ‘good’ mother is connected to moral geographies of parenting, entailing distinct place-based cultures of care and doing motherhood (Holloway, 1998; C. Vincent et al., 2004).

Places are in their turn also produced and reconfigured as the result of how the transition to parenthood unfolds at different spatial scales: for instance, the production of the modern 20th century suburbs is intrinsically linked to the ideologies of the male-headed nuclear family formation in the context of economic growth and growing middle classes (S. Aitken, 1998; Bondi, 1998; Domosh & Seager, 2001). Also processes of (family) gentrification are inseparable from changing life courses of highly educated dual-earner—often White—families with children (Bondi, 1999; Karsten, 2003). Family gentrification both reflects and affects the relationship between parenthood and urban space (Lilius, 2019). Gentrifier families deliberately seek out places to fit with their identities and organization of everyday life rooted in their habitus, in which gendered, classed and racialized dispositions are embodied (Boterman & Bridge, 2015; E. Vincent et al., 2017). Concurrently these places also become transformed through residential and spatial practices of these middle-class parents and their children, affecting the consumption, schooling and housing landscapes of their neighbourhoods (Butler & Robson, 2003; Karsten, 2014).

Conceptualizing parenthood as field

Research on residential mobility through the perspective of linked lives argues for the integration of time and space into life course analysis. Transitions are not only relational to other social and spatial contexts but are also differently experienced by individuals, contingent on the specific positionality of those individuals, notably gender (Katz & Monk, 2014). The experiences and the practices in relation to specific temporal and spatial contexts are in our view well captured through the idea of habitus and field, stemming from the work of Bourdieu (1984, 1990, 1996). The idea of field of family is a highly useful perspective for capturing both the embodied experiences rooted in habitus and the naturalization of family and parenthood

(Atkinson, 2014). It also provides important clues for how to theorize the family as an arena in which power relations are played out and the everyday and the familiar are interconnected with the wider fields of power, such as the labour market, the housing market and the welfare state.

Nonetheless, drawing on the rich literatures of feminist and critical geography and sociology, as well as more theoretically sensitive life course research, we find 'field of family' less apt for explaining the meaning of transition inherent in parenthood. As A. S. Rossi (1968), Doucet (2009), and Boyer (2018) and others have made clear, the transition to parenthood is associated with irrevocability, abruptness, and *inexperience*, making it, especially motherhood, highly unsettling. Furthermore, the field of family, and more generally Bourdieu's work, is conceptualised in a rather a-spatial manner. Transitions to parenthood are, however, inherently spatial. As the different literatures above have indicated, the spatial registers of the transition to parenthood cover a wide range from residential mobility to changing everyday mobilities in terms of commuting and the daily round. Parenthood disrupts spatial relations in various ways, in terms of time-space practices but also the meaning and experiences of places in the home and outside the home may also become altered (Boterman & Bridge, 2015; Luzia, 2010). Even for those that do not move residentially, the very *immobility*, connected to interlocking of lives of children and carers may alter experiences of everyday spatiality (Boyer & Spinney, 2016). The meaning of (being at) home changes, and parents also may come to see their neighbourhood, and the city with different eyes (Boterman, 2012; Karsten, 2003). Also physically and materially engaging with space with a parental body (pregnant, lactating, moving with child) changes the experience of space, feeding back into the emerging parental habitus. The transition to parenthood captures the relationalities of space in the changing experience of embodiment, movement, spatial horizons and the rhythms of time and space. Following Massey (2005) space is conceived here in relational terms as being composed through and constitutive of inter-relations. Allied with her earlier work (in understanding globalisation) on power-geometries of time-space (Massey, 1999) we suggest that this conception of relational space is a productive way of analysing the Bourdieusian idea of social fields in which power (capital) emerges from, and is constitutive of, social relationships and that these relationships comprise shifting spatialities and temporalities.

Finally, it is evident that gender is absolutely central for understanding the meaning of the transition to parenthood. While we agree that the family is clearly a site of social reproduction in which accumulation and transmission of economic, cultural and symbolic capital take place, it would be a mistake to treat gender only as secondary to class here. The transition to parenthood is fraught with gender ideologies, the family is both a naturalized category and a key site for the reproduction of gendered and heterosexual norms, which are passed on intergenerationally. Bourdieu (1984, p. 107) claimed that 'sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon from its acidity'. In his work, however, he clearly stressed the importance of acidity rather than yellowness. Feminist scholars have started to adopt and modify Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital, producing the theoretical innovation that allows for a more comprehensive perspective on class and gender (Adkins & Skeggs, 2005). Parenthood is the key field in which inequalities of gender are emphasised and reproduced and these

highly gendered differences become (re)embodied in the habitus. We therefore conceptualise parenthood as a field that is related to, but distinct from, family as a field, allowing us to capture more effectively the transitional, gender and spatial dimensions.

Studying the Transition to parenthood: Methods

Over the last thirty years Amsterdam has experienced significant urban restructuring, of which gentrification is a key element. Investigating the experience and motivations of middle-class gentrifiers, especially whether they choose to stay in the city or suburbanise if they become parents, continues to be a significant in understanding the dynamics of gentrification and its impacts in terms of social mix or segregation (Booi et al., 2020). To present a case for how the field of parenthood is a transition that affects the relationship between habitus and social fields we draw on a longitudinal study with middle-class gentrifier couples in the inner-city of Amsterdam (2008–2010).¹ All the respondents had at least a college degree and had professional working careers (see Table 1). The first wave of interviews was with 28 couples of which the woman was pregnant with their first child or had just given birth. The interviews were with both partners simultaneously, lasted about one to two hours, and were held at the respondents' homes. The second wave was two years later with 26 of the same couples, reflecting early experiences of parenthood. The interviews were analysed through a combination of inductive and selective coding in Atlas TI.

The two waves of interviews focussed on different stages of the transition to parenthood. The first interview with pregnant women and their partners were primarily concerned with the anticipation of parenthood and what expectations to-be-parents held for their near future. Also, the first interviews inquired extensively about the future parents' own childhood experiences. The second wave of interviews was both retrospective and concerned with the current practices and experiences of young parents. The key questions asked in the second interview were 'how did you experience becoming a parent' and 'how did it affect your life'. The second interviews were also explicitly used to reflect on earlier expectations and experiences and were often brought back into the conversation both by the interviewer and the parents themselves. From the first and second interviews a number of themes emerged that very much reflect the importance of transition, disruption and change. However, there were also parents that experienced more continuity. What also featured very prominently were the physical experiences of parenthood connected to affect, fatigue, and respondents' (expert-influenced) interpretations of their mental and physical state. As the item lists of interviews were principally designed to capture the spatial aspects of transition to parenthood much of the conversation was about experiences with the city as a residential environment and where parents wanted their children to grow up. The empirical section of this paper is organised in two parts: first we will discuss how parenthood is described as a transition more generally. Second, we will focus on the spatial dimensions of this transition. The quotes from the respondents are categorised by the stage of parenthood (first or second interview) and by the spatial transition between the two waves (gentrifying or gentrified stable, or from gentrifying or gentrified to other gentrifying, gentrified or suburban areas).

Table 1. Respondents cited in the text.

Primary respondent	Partner	Age primary respondent	Age Partner	number of children	Occupation 1st	Occupation partner	Ethnicity primary respondent	Ethnicity partner	Spatial transition (neighbourhood types)
Jade	Lisandro*	28	31	1	Language teacher	Youth worker	White-Dutch	White-Spanish	Gentrifying → gentrifying
Fiona	Mike*	32	34	1	HR manager recruitment	Account manager fossil fuels	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying → suburban
Esther	Ralph	32	37	1	Teacher at medical school	Music journalist	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying stable
Kadima	Steve	33	32	2	Project manager NGO	Attorney at law firm	Moroccan-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying → gentrified
Elin	Seth	30	31	2	Communication Manager NGO	Medical doctor	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrified → gentrified
Dave	Dory	29	34	2	ICT entrepreneur	Psychologist public sector	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying stable
Natalie	Robert	34	39	2	Senior Policy Advisor ministry	ICT entrepreneur	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying stable
Bert	Emily*	31	32	2	Development manager real estate	Consultant	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying → suburban
Ted	Isene*	35	35	1	ICT programmer	Officer manager banking	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrified stable
Molly	Roberto	34	30	1	Owner retail	ICT programmer	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying stable
Nancy	Max*	36	34	1	Content director television	policy employee NGO	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying stable
Daisy	John*	35	36	1	Policy advisor psychiatry	Manager safety company	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrified stable
Evelien	Egbert*	34	33	1	Product manager pharmaceuticals	Real estate entrepreneur	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrified stable
Carry	Sjoerd	33	33	2	Senior Policy Advisor academy sciences	Attorney at law firm	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrified → suburban
Tania	Mart	25	28	2	PhD researcher	PhD researcher	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying → gentrifying
Richard	Helly*	34	35	2	Marketing manager television	consultant mergers and acquisition	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrifying → suburban
Anna	Sean*	33	33	1	Attorney at law firm	Attorney at law firm	White-Dutch	White-Dutch	Gentrified stable

Experiences of transition

One common theme emerging from the interviews is just how much, however well it is prepared for, the experience of entering parenthood still has all-encompassing and unexpected qualities that make the transition emphatic (Boyer & Spinney, 2016; A. S. Rossi, 1968). In response to the question what has changed in your life various parents answered straightforwardly 'everything' or 'what hasn't changed?' A recurring argument is that the experience of becoming a parent is different from the rationalised social construction of parenthood that had influenced anticipations beforehand. While entering a new social and material world may always be different from what one had expected, many new parents refer to the physicality and affect of their new experiences that could never have been imagined nor be compared to anything else.

Before I had a child I thought I had some idea of what it would be like to have a child, but once you have a kid you realise- no matter how great your imagination may be- that I could never have predicted how it is now. (Jade, first interview)

That if you are tired you just have to keep going with him. So at every moment of the day there is something that you need to do. So well, you just keep going and as soon as he's gone you feel how tired you are. (Robert, first interview)

It is kind of heavy . . . Especially if you work and care. Then you are really happy to go back to work on Tuesday. Being away for a while. Relieved of that responsibility (Esther, first interview).

Much of the experience and interpretation is centred on the body, on the experience of tiredness and fatigue but there is also a more pervasive sense of heaviness, slowness, or slowing down, even immobility. This experience of slowness and heaviness (and indeed dread) echoes the findings of Boyer and Spinney on mother's journeys through the city (Boyer & Spinney, 2016). In the findings of present paper feelings of slowness and heaviness are all-pervasive, relating not just to movement and mobility, but rather to the overall experience of being a parent. It is also expressed in feelings of falling behind, and of not quite being in control.

Kadima: I expect it will change in the coming months. That we will get to things and to maintain the housework a bit too. And not having the idea to be lagging behind with everything you know.

Steve: Regaining control! Haha! I am expecting that for a long time now.

(Kadima & Steve, second interview)

This feeling of lack of control was very challenging for the professional middle-class couples in the study whose previous everyday experiences were anchored in the control of time and organisation of tasks. The described slowness and heaviness are paradoxically tied to an experience of time speeding up and of falling behind schedule. This adds to the experience of a loss of control which is further compounded by being fully occupied. Slowness and heaviness are also experienced spatially through increasing immobility or the difficulties of mobility (Boyer & Spinney, 2016; Holdsworth, 2013). Again, this is tied to a wider experience of a loss of freedom (of movement) in space and in time (spontaneity).

Dave: You can do a lot less things spontaneously. You have to plan everything. That's what it boils down to.

Dory: *Always taking someone else into account*

Dave: *You can't just go someplace a-la-minute. You sleep less. You get another rhythm. You get up early in the morning weekend or no weekend. I even forgot what did we actually do before!?* [all laugh].

Dory: *Yeah that it quite bizarre, I completely forgot what I spent my time on!*

(Dory & Dave, first interview)

The feelings reported here of lack of control on the one hand but also excessively structured lives with little space for spontaneity speak to Lareau's (2011) findings with older children that the schedule-filled days middle-class parents instilled in their children (and thus for themselves) led to feelings of exhaustion. These feelings of being out of control, exhaustion and lack of freedom are highly gendered however (Boyer, 2018; Holdsworth, 2013). Mothers and fathers are not practicing and experiencing these things in the same way, here revealed in tensions about a sense of freedom between a father and a mother.

Robert: *I experience the difference with how it just started to get with our oldest. It was getting better and we were regaining some freedom but now we start all over again.*

Natalie: *Yeah and look how much freedom you still have left.*

Robert: *I just give my opinion here.*

Natalie: *Yes, I know.*

(Natalie & Robert, second Interview)

These kinds of conversations in which fathers and mothers argue about who sacrificed most were quite frequent among the respondents. They also strongly connect to another key issue identified by Doucet (2009) which is the responsibilities that come with parenthood. While this may pertain to a practical sense (who gets up at night; who changes the nappy) it is also about who *feels* responsible and how this is experienced. This sense of responsibility is highly gendered, which is reflected in the answers of Ralph and Esther in answer to the question 'what is the biggest change in your life?':

For me the biggest change is that there is extra joy in this house. (Ralph, first interview)

She's always there, that's the biggest change. I really had to get used to that. I mean you like it, for sure, but sometimes I have the feeling 'just for two days, just not now' I really had to get used to that (Esther, first interview)

The more pervasive sense of slowness, heaviness, immobility is compounded by an existential sense of the burden of responsibility that comes with having a child. This sense of responsibility is also linked to a heightened sense of exposure and vulnerability to the wider urban environment (as source of risk and potential threat to the child – Pain, 2006; Talbot, 2013).

Apart from the basic things like caring and worrying for a little one, it's the sense of responsibility.

(Bert, first interview)

I think that's odd to see. It just happened and that maybe it's because I am pregnant and the hormones are playing in here. And that gets worse every day now: if I see news items of children gone missing or that experienced something bad that I start thinking automatically oh I hope this never happens to us! That you want to block that out and don't even dare to think about that.
(Fiona, first Interview)

Overall, in terms of experiences of transition, we can see some deep dislocations of experience – heaviness/slowness alongside speedup of time; burdens of responsibility alongside feelings of loss of control; immobility and lack of spontaneity alongside exposure and uncertainty (Boyer, 2018). All these aspects of transition to parenthood may be especially challenging for these professional middle-class households. Their established habitus involved expectations of ease of mobility; sense of freedom; professional control and poise and parenthood has undermined and disrupted their sense of what Bourdieu calls 'the feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1984). This disruption of the feel for the game potentially affects the ability to define and accumulate capital and to operate effectively and adjust to changing social relations and material relations. For Bourdieu the body (including bearing, gait, gesture) was the central site that registered the divisive effects of class habitus. Here the disruption is to middle-class habitus registered in the body and experienced as a loss of freedom and control. In terms of field relations it is a disruption to established patterns of reproduction and accumulation of social and cultural capital. At the same time, it is a loss of access to some of the cultural and social resources that city life previously afforded. Even more so, it opens the body up to an experience of vulnerability to the city (the fear for children's safety, even in prospect) in a realm that previously afforded much more of a sense of control. These dislocations are compounded by dilemmas about the suitability and fit of the immediate and more extended environment in a more conventional sense of the experience of the city.

Parenthood, field and space

The changing relationalities of space that come with parenthood were expressed by respondents in terms of a series of trade-offs that had to be made. Rather than choice as an expression of freedom and control the evaluation of neighbourhoods became freighted with feelings of responsibility and risk. A range of normative attributions were given to different neighbourhoods as suitable environments in which to bring up children, especially in terms of feelings of exposure and assessments of risk (Dowling, 2000). In several cases these new parents framed the decision of where to live with children as a choice between the city and outside the city. This dichotomous representation however does not imply a lack of complexity and sometimes even inconsistencies (Karsten, 2003). Despite the relatively privileged position of the middle-class households, with many opportunities in the housing market, their residential future is often framed as highly contingent and surrounded with doubts and dilemmas. We can see these evaluations in terms of the kinds of moral geographies that inform conceptions of familiar (conductive) and unfamiliar spaces (Holloway, 1998; Luzia, 2010).

I am not so sure if I like the idea of bringing him up in the city. I have always been a bit against. I think there is a lot of fights at school and people treat each other harder than at schools outside of the city. So that's why I still have some doubts. (Ted, second interview)

I think that there is something to it to bringing up children in the city. They will be wiser in a way, they are exposed to many things, there are a lot of facilities and many nice things for them. And they will not be shocked by big cities. I think there are advantages, but I am concerned about air quality in Amsterdam. I think to myself: that's really not healthy for a child. (Anna, first interview)

I see it very positively, because as a child I didn't lack anything. I think it's a fine environment to bring up kids. (...) if I compare my own youth with that of others, is that I was exposed to many different cultures, which makes you grow much more open-minded. (Molly, first interview)

These quotations show a range of interpretations including uncertainty as well as conformity to past experience. This is particularly germane in the case of these gentrifier households whose previous positive attributions to urban neighbourhood now become more ambiguous in their feelings of exposure (in both a positive and negative way to the wider environment). These ambiguities of space are also registered in that the transition to parenthood also triggers a growing awareness of the need to balance one's own interests and those of the child. While parents obviously indicate that they want the best for their children, they are not sure what this may or should entail. This balancing of one's own interest and that of the children can also be a source of insecurity and doubt (Lareau et al., 2016). In many statements from the interviews the assessments of suitability of the environment were as much to do with the needs of the respondents as their children.

I don't have to live elsewhere. (...) A friend of mine moved to Arnhem and she was going to live just like I used to live in Hilversum. She did this for her child. A small town, behind your home a park and via the park into the woods. For my part it shouldn't have been that way. I mean, for her child it might be nice, and she may enjoy it herself, but I don't have the idea that it makes a child happier. (Nancy, first interview)

We talked about this when I just had given birth. We went outside and we said, ah we're happy not to live in some modern suburb. You just go outside and there you are: in Beethovenstraat [lively street]. And then you have the feeling: yes your life may have changed but you still feel part of it all, the whole urban buzz. To make a stroll in a modern suburb, that doesn't make us happy. (Evelien, first interview)

Many parents express a desire to hang on to their previous lives. While they are aware that compromises are needed, they don't want to give up on their careers, social life and consumption patterns entirely. Living in a central urban location allows them this feeling of being connected. The city is a lifeline, a symbolic but also physical manifestation of continuity with the life before children (Lilius, 2019; Karsten, 2003). Especially for mothers, moving out of the city is representative of an unwanted disruption to their lives. This resonates with previous work that discussed the isolating and sometimes depressing effect of moving into suburban locations. Gender is very pertinent here: as mothers still tend to do most of the housework and are also much less mobile in the early stages of parenthood this sense of entrapment is particularly heavy for women (Baqueé et al., 2015). This lifeline or continuity of the city is also inflected through a middle-class professional identity and the disruption of that identity that is particularly abrupt for women in the gendered division of (formal and domestic) labour. This is further compounded for middle-class professional

couples by less extended family support as a result of their prior geographical mobility. Yet even for parents who value the city, the relationship to the city is significantly changed in the transition to parenthood:

We do other things: less going out for dinner and bars. Well we do this with friends and separate from each other. Together we know the petting zoo and the parks very well. . . . We are getting to know this city in a different way."

(Evelien, First Interview)

Sjoerd: well, with two children it is fundamentally different. Because with one child you may still feel that you can be part of . . .

Carry: That your life continues, yeah.

Sjoerd: That the city, that it makes sense that you still live there, as adults. That you can go to the cinema and that there is so much cultural life. That's added value. While with young kids, I mean, maybe I think differently about this in a couple of months, but I feel that it will take some time before we will re-appreciate it.

(Carry & Sjoerd, second interview)

As this quote illustrates the new realities of parenthood are typically dawning on parents when the children grow older and – perhaps even more importantly – when more children are born into the family. Psychologically, the sense of transition may be experienced most strongly in the early stages but changing practices become more significant as one charts deeper into parenthood. Several parents make a distinction between one or two children, referring to the fact that one child can easily be fitted into previous everyday routines but two children spark a new dynamic. Becoming more acquainted with the rules of parenthood as one becomes more deeply entangled, provokes new habitus-field relationships. Whether this leads to a residential move out of the city as for Sjoerd and Carry, also depends on the dynamics within the household:

Mart: Well I consider leaving the city, theoretically I consider it. Just because I want to live outdoors. But at the moment I don't see how that should work out. We are very connected to Amsterdam through work. We don't even have a driver's license. If you live out of the city you need a car and distances to all amenities are much greater. You will live an entirely different life there.

Tania: For me it isn't an option. I was born in Amsterdam and that plays a role. I think. I could think about it theoretically but I don't have any concrete idea of what it is like. I also have the feeling I don't want to be found dead in many smaller towns in the country actually. Haha.

(Tania & Mart), Second Interview)

As Mart and Tania's quotes illustrate, experiences and horizons are not necessarily consistent between partners. Parents' own historically embodied experiences matter for how the spatialized trade-offs are represented. Having experiences of different places allows for a projection of how life may be in another context.

These changing and conflicting evaluations are especially critical when it comes to school choice. Although the oldest children were still quite young at the time of the second interviews (about 2.5 years old) a number of parents had already started discussing some of the changes and continuities in terms of schooling and the choice of

school.² Here the imaginative spatial horizons and divisions become considered more strategically. Even if continuities can be maintained in terms of the environment parents would prefer to live in, these desires are often sorely tested when the children are approaching school age (Bridge, 2006; Butler & van Zanten, 2007)

I have two colleagues at work, two lawyers, who both work very hard and earn a lot of money and live in South [most affluent area in Amsterdam]. Yeah these kids grow up in a specific environment. That is not the way I want to bring up my kids, although I realise that we live in a nice house in a white street. Yet, I still want to do it differently. What I dislike about Amsterdam, what I find difficult, and what I'm curious about how it will go, is school choice. Colleagues of mine are already feverishly telling me about how I should enrol my kids early at [name school] or what do I know kind of snob schools." (Nigel, second interview)

This quote is revealing in what Najak (2010) has called a 'silent cartography of whiteness' (living in a nice house on a 'white street'). Gentrifiers often claim social mix and multiculturalism as part of their cosmopolitan ethic that their pro-urbanism embraces, but as numerous studies of gentrification have found (Butler & Hamnett, 2011; Jackson & Benson, 2014) these values often also implicitly associate middle-classness with whiteness. This also applies to gentrifier parents (often living in inner urban neighbourhoods with socially mixed schools) as they adopt strategies to avoid what they perceive as high levels of social mix (particularly in terms of race and ethnicity) in the classroom (Baque, 2015; Boterman, 2013; E. Vincent et al., 2017). These dynamics are described by one of the respondents themselves:

You hear from others, like the downstairs neighbours: my kid is absolutely not going there, yeah, I think that is just not ok. I would really like to do something about that. To enrol with several parents to keep the kids [in the neighbourhood]. I would really find it awful if you would get a school flight out of the neighbourhood. All these white parents bringing their kids elsewhere. This really bothers me. But well, you know what it is . . . Before she was born I just thought: my child will just go to that school and now that we are faced with this choice I think: hmm I want this but . . .

(Esther, second interview)

Conclusion: parenthood as a Field

This paper points to parenthood as a complex terrain of spatialised experience embodied and extensive that brings together different fields of social struggle, competition for resources and fragmenting circuits in the accumulation of capital. As well as its characteristics in combining various fields in this way the temporalities of parenthood: its abruptness, its irrevocability as well as continued impacts on parental practices throughout its duration, has major impacts on the implicit accumulation of capitals that habitus represents (Doucet, 2009; Lareau, 2011; A. S. Rossi, 1968). In addition to these characteristics we would add the relational qualities of space, from embodied experience, to neighbourhood trajectories through to imaginative and moral geographies of the city and the abruptness and gestalt like switches in relational space that the transition to parenthood initiates (Hall, 2016; Luzia, 2010). It problematizes the body, the close environment (home) and the immediate environment (neighbourhood). The experience of transition prompts a range of adjustments and resettlements. While some of the resettlements are habitus-conforming, others are not. We suggest that parenthood is therefore a liminal phase in

which continuities and disruptions are practiced and experienced. The combined force of these characteristics suggests that parenthood is best understood as a distinct field of social struggle in itself.

A Bourdieusian perspective on parenthood, however, does not immediately capture these spatial dimensions of parenthood nor the evident gender dimensions of habitus-field relations. This paper clearly found the transition to parenthood to bear down very differently between mothers and fathers. The experiences of transition can be similar for parents: parenthood invokes feelings of heaviness, burden and responsibility for women and men alike, but generally mothers carry the heaviest loads. Lack of sleep, contracting space, feeling of isolation for instance, are much more pertinent for new mothers than for fathers in our sample. The unsettling effect of parenthood is therefore generally greater for women. The readjustments, the re-aligning of habitus and field when entering parenthood may entail a greater discontinuity with life before children. Various aspects of these (dis)continuities, from changing experiences of the city to the effects on embodiment, are inherently spatial. The spatial register captures particularly well the disruptive dilemmas of transition that cross the fields of housing, education, as well as family as field. The wish to stay in the city for many women could be directly connected to compensating for the unsettling effect of motherhood. The city provides a lifeline to their previous lives. Moving away would only compound the disruption already experienced. These complexities and trade-offs suggest that an understanding of habitus-field relations could be applied to the more narrowly conceived, dichotomous, ideas of transition in the demographic literature on geographies of residential mobility and change in the city. It would, for example, help inform the ever-more complex social and spatial trajectories of emerging fractions of the middle classes in the urban system (and its social consequences – Bacqué et al., 2015; Butler & Hamnett, 2011), highlighting parenthood in particular as the key transition mechanism in diversifying these trajectories (Boterman, 2012b). Also, while not the key focus of this study, the impact of the transition to parenthood is also highly racialised. The ease of movement and the agency in terms of residential mobility and adjustment is not just contingent on a classed habitus but also constrained by the racial spatial order (Manning, 2019). Gentrification for instance, as a time-space trajectory of the middle classes, is also closely tied to silent cartographies of Whiteness (Najak, 2010), and specific white perspectives on racial/ethnic diversity (E. Vincent et al., 2017).

Finally, viewing parenthood as a field also has the potential to capture the overarching reach of this field into a range of other significant fields, such as housing, employment and education. How habitus may become unsettled by parenthood (and hence also holds the promise of social change) is highly contingent on how it is connected to other fields, notably the field of political power. We suggest that parenthood could be considered a field that connects strongly to other fields of social struggle and that it has elements of disruption of those fields that relate to its qualities of transition. This might enable us to have a fuller account of the intersectionalities of gender, race, and class and how they are reproduced through parenting and to map more thoroughly the consolidation or dispersion of social and spatial practices that result. We have started to suggest some of the ways that space is implicated fundamentally in habitus and the changing modalities of practice. Parenthood as transition disrupts spatial practices and experience from the embodied,

through to the interpersonal, through to wider strategic practices over social mix and spatial location in the urban system. Equally these spatialised experiences are implicated in ongoing practices that consolidate, modify or more deeply disrupt the momentum of habitus and the accumulation of capital (economic, social, cultural). Tracking the embodied and transitional aspects of these practices enables us to better map the changing relational geographies in fields of social struggle and social reproduction.

Notes

1. This is a re-appraisal of one of the author's study data on the effects of parenthood on residential trajectories and subsequent schooling strategies of gentrifiers. The results of the study, combined with other research findings by the authors (References withheld), revealed the powerful effects of the transition to parenthood not just on residential trajectories, but moreover a profound – highly gendered- unsettling of habitus-field relations with different spatial registers.
2. In the Amsterdam school context parents are supposed to apply for schools for their children at age 3.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek [400-07-058].

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