Chapter 5

Gentrifying firms? Cultural production districts for creative entrepreneurs with children

Abstract

Numerous Western cities expend considerable effort to attract creative entrepreneurs and urban-oriented households to mixed-use neighborhoods, in part as a redevelopment strategy for run-down or neglected districts. Many studies suggest that creative entrepreneurs and workers favor an urban way of life (loft living, working on laptops in cappuccino bars etc.). Several studies have shown that dual-earner couples with children face strong time-space constraints in their daily activity patterns. They combine paid work, household chores, and childcare on a daily basis. These parents, combining ambitious career tracks with having children, have been termed “family gentrifiers,” and many of them work in creative professions (Karsten, 2003, 2007). Consequently, middle class families that deliberately choose for an urban residential location have become an emerging subgroup of interest in creative city development.

Few studies, however, have explored whether creative entrepreneurs with families do actually take into account their time-space constraints as members of busy households in their choice of place to

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work. Further, because of different definitions of their research subjects, a connection between location theory of creative entrepreneurs and of family gentrifiers is hard to demonstrate. Therefore, this paper addresses the unexplored question of whether family-related time-space constraints influence location decisions for their firm by creative entrepreneurs with children.

This article examines the influence of district features pertaining to work-life balance, as perceived by creative entrepreneurs with children, on their location decisions for their firm. It then suggests how this knowledge could be used in the development of urban mixed-use districts.

I conducted twenty-three interviews with creative entrepreneurs with children in three districts in the Netherlands: the Eastern Docklands in Amsterdam, the Lloyd Quarter in Rotterdam, and the Hortus Quarter in Groningen. These districts accommodate relatively more creative firms than other districts within the same cities.

I found that creative entrepreneurs with children make carefully weighed decisions on places to work within cities. Their choices for places to work are partly based on proximity to their homes and facilities for children. This finding particularly applies to creative entrepreneurs with children up to 12 years of age, both for those working from home and those with separate business premises. The latter had mostly deliberately chosen to locate their office close to their home in order to simplify their daily schedules of combining work with caring and household tasks. Thus, it seems that creative entrepreneurs do not only act as individuals, as creative class theory would suggest (see, for example, Florida, 2002). The data suggest that creative entrepreneurs also take their household dynamics into account in their location decisions of where to work. Therefore, urban live-work districts that have creative entrepreneurs among their intended users should offer features for both daily work and for private lives.

These findings add specific insights to a broader body of studies on the location behavior of knowledge-intensive and innovative firms. Soft location factors are increasingly recognized in academic research as influencing firm location behavior in post-Fordist, knowledge-based urban economies. Furthermore, my findings illustrate how creative entrepreneurship originates in part from the entrepreneur’s household context and place-based features; aspects which are understudied contexts in explaining where firms locate, and how they function
and survive.

5.1 Introduction

Loft living, working on laptops in cappuccino bars, running on newly developed urban greenways and cycle paths, and evening networking in informal venues are all relatively new phenomena observed in post-industrial urban economies. These post-Fordist economies in many Western cities are increasingly dominated, in the sense of being the main economic sector, by services; with highly skilled human capital as the key resource for economic progress; and ever more specialized professionals working in small firms or in temporary and freelance labor modes (Bell, 1973; Bontje & Musterd, 2009; Scott, 2007). In the Netherlands, it is estimated that 4% of the working population are highly educated freelancers (Born, 2009, p. 153). The number of these so-called ZZP’ers or highly educated independent professionals has grown from 278,000 in 2010 to 293,000 in 2011 (CBS Statline, 2012).

The rise of the knowledge economy could have important consequences for the use of urban space, and thus for urban policy. Particularly self-employed professionals or those working in small firms in advanced producer services, such as finance, consultancy, the law, and creative industries, are assumed to increasingly use their homes and so-called “third places,” such as cafés, parks, and restaurants, as places to work and to meet up with colleagues and clients (Florida, 2002).

These professionals and firms could therefore benefit from overlapping spheres of consumption and production in new forms of urban live-work environments. The creative industries are one of the sectors in post-industrial urban economies that seem to be at the forefront of this new mode of production. Their basic production factors are creativity, knowledge, and cultural capital (Florida, 2002; Scott, 2004, 2007). The creative sector is dominated by small firms and self-employed workers and freelancers. Furthermore, creative industries are generally not restricted in their locations, and thus not obliged to locate on industrial estates by zoning regulations. Accordingly, because of the nature of their pro-

1 In the Netherlands, the owner-manager is the sole worker in about two-thirds of all creative firms, and 95% of all creative firms have fewer than 10 employees (Stam, De Jong, & Marlet, 2008, p. 123). In 2009, creative firms in the Netherlands had on average three workers including the entrepreneurs (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2010)
duction factors, firm size, and limited zoning restrictions, creative entrepreneurs may be relatively footloose in terms of places to work, especially within cities. Consequently, the creative industries form one of the economic sectors that has good opportunities to locate, and firms do indeed locate, in urban mixed-use districts (Markusen, 2006; Currid & Williams, 2010). Here, they can benefit from a range of professional and residential amenities, including live-work dwellings, small-scale business premises, cafés, restaurants, stores, schools, and parks. Such a mix of professional and residential amenities is not only useful for their work; it could also be beneficial in the daily coordination of their everyday life. Everyday life, after all, includes tasks such as shopping and sports activities, and in certain life stages caring for children, as well as work.

Despite this, location theory applied to creative industries has not yet demonstrated clearly whether creative entrepreneurs indeed favor urban mixed-use districts as locations for their firms. Key to understanding this lack in knowledge is that the literature has disregarded aspects of urban quality of place for creative firms on the spatial scale of within-city districts. Rather, location decisions by creative entrepreneurs are mostly explained by features of the urban region such as the presence of local creative clusters (for reviews, see Musterd, Bontje, Chapain, Kovacs, & Murie, 2007; Smit, 2010; Trip & Romein, 2009).

Second, location theory applied to creative industries has explored their location decisions as individuals in their role as entrepreneur or artist, not as members of households. As members of households, creative entrepreneurs may be constrained in their actual choices of places to work and live. Studies in gentrification using a time-space perspective have shown that people are bounded by time-space constraints in their daily activity patterns and therefore have maximum radiuses of action (Hägerstrand, 1970). Such time-space constraints apply in particular to people who have demanding jobs and dependent children (Butler & Robson, 2003; Jarvis, 2005). These dual-earner couples, combining ambitious career tracks with having children, have been termed “family gentrifiers” (Karsten, 2003, 2007). Family gentrifiers, who combine paid work, household chores, and childcare on a daily basis, are viewed as an expanding group of middle-class families in central neighborhoods within cities. Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd (2010) suggest that, although many families still prefer suburban areas, urban family households increasingly prefer centrally located middle-class areas such as gentrification areas.

Interestingly in terms of urban economic development, both creative entrepreneurs and dual-earner career-minded families are target groups for urban industrial
and housing policies aiming to enhance urban competitiveness by attracting and retaining knowledge-intensive firms and highly skilled workers. Knowledge is needed about the types of urban districts that creative entrepreneurs find attractive, in their roles as both entrepreneur and as a member of a household. Such knowledge would be very useful both for the regeneration and development of urban districts, as well as for strategies to nurture knowledge-based urban economies.

Based on the current literature, it is hard to demonstrate a connection between location theory as applied to creative entrepreneurs and to family gentrifiers. One cannot assume that findings related to creative entrepreneurs also apply to family gentrifiers and vice-versa. The two lines of literature define their research subjects by different characteristics.

This chapter aims to link both lines of research for the case of creative industries. Its purpose is to respond to an unexplored question in the location theory of creative industries: what is the influence of spatial and social features of districts pertaining to the work-life balance as perceived by creative entrepreneurs with children on their firm location decisions? In answering this question, empirical evidence was obtained through 23 interviews with filmmakers, architects, designers, visual artists, and photographers. All of them having their firm located in one of three cultural production districts in the Netherlands.

5.2 Literature review: Creative entrepreneurs and family gentrifiers

How does a city’s quality of place relate to urban economic development? A current debate in the academic literature and in planning practice concerns the thesis that creative, highly skilled professionals prefer living in attractive cities. According to this line of research, creative professionals first choose a place to live as a starting point in choosing a place to work (e.g., Florida, 2002). Thus, the presence of creative professionals may enhance urban competitiveness because firms will follow people, and people in turn follow their preferences for urban quality of place.

However, several authors criticize this thesis, that urban competitiveness is enhanced by firms following creative class professionals who choose attractive places to live (e.g., Donegan, Drucker, Goldstein, Lowe, & Malizia, 2008; Storper &
Scott, 2009), for its applicability to the American context. Nevertheless, for Dutch cities, Marlet and Van Woerkens found that the presence of professionals belonging to Florida’s creative class was indeed a better predictor of urban employment growth than the presence of highly educated individuals (2007, p. 2620). Stam, De Jong, and Marlet (2008, p. 129) further call for a focus on improving the living conditions of the creative class as an urban economic policy tool for employment growth. Hence, detailed empirical analysis is needed to investigate the relationship between urban quality of place and attractiveness to the creative class.

However, different professional sectors of the creative class are thought to vary in their residential preferences. The concept of the creative class has been criticized as this group is composed of disparate individuals in terms of occupation, life chances, and in terms of their typical residences and workplaces at the sub-metropolitan level (Markusen, 2006, p. 1923; see also Scott, 2007, p. 1473).

For the Dutch city of Amsterdam, different spatial distribution patterns were found for creative professionals depending on their specific profession. Knowledge workers belonging to Florida’s super-creative core, such as artists, musicians, media workers, architects, and advertising professionals, were found to live in the densest urban milieus in or near the city center. In comparison, knowledge workers belonging to Florida’s creative professionals (higher-echelon managers in business, financial and legal services, healthcare, technology, and sales) lived to a lesser degree in and around the city center, and to a greater degree in urban well-to-do districts, and small towns and villages close to the city (Musterd & Deurloo, 2006; pp. 90-92). As such, specific knowledge on such different residential preferences within the creative class is needed. As Ann Markusen argues: “If certain occupational groups are both footloose and important catalysts to development, policy makers need to know the specifics - which groups, where do they live, what are the criteria by which they make their locational choices” (Markusen, 2006, p. 1923, 1938).

Hence, this chapter focuses on one such subgroup of the creative class: creative entrepreneurs. Creative entrepreneurs are defined in this dissertation as entrepreneurs in creative industries; that is involved in economic activities dedicated to producing goods and services with mainly aesthetic and symbolic value. Examples include arts, architecture, design, and media (for a more detailed definition, please see Section 3.2.2 in Chapter 3). These professions fit within Florida’s “super-creative core” of the creative class (Florida, 2002, pp. 68-71). Exploring their orientation on urban living and working addresses a current need
in planning practice for knowledge since creative entrepreneurs are a target group in creative city development policies. To date, detailed empirical analysis of their urban living and working preferences is in short supply. The urban orientation of creative entrepreneurs is addressed in two strands of literature. Economic-geographic studies focus on creative entrepreneurs and their professional considerations regarding their places to work. In contrast, their preferences for places to live can only be inferred from urban geographic studies on gentrification, whose research subjects partly are creative professionals. The following sections successively reflect on both lines of research.

5.2 Literature review: Creative entrepreneurs and family gentrifiers

5.2.1 Location theory of creative entrepreneurs

Location theory on creative industries generally explains regional clusters of creative firms by path-dependent urban production systems (e.g., Kloosterman, 2004, 2008; Scott, 2000, 2010). Scott first explains cultural production districts as Marshallian clusters of creative firms, characterized by transaction-intensive production and flexible specialization (2010, pp.116-118; see also Section 4.3.3. Social interaction between workers within these clusters is seen as a key mechanism in encouraging creativity. Concentrations of creative firms within cities are explained by a need for frequent face-to-face contacts in flexible inter-firm networks (see also Bassett, Griffiths, & Smith, 2002; Brown, O’Connor, & Cohen, 2000; Pratt, 1997).

While most studies concerning locational patterns of creative industries examine this phenomenon on a regional scale, real estate studies concerning creative firms find that certain features of workspace such as price, image, and accessibility, explain the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs (e.g., Heebels & Van Aalst, 2010; Montgomery, 2007; Smit, 2008).

On the spatial scale of the district, the literature has shown that creative firms tend to concentrate within certain districts within cities, often central city and former industrial areas (Evans, 2009; Ley, 2003; Lloyd, 2004; Markusen, 2006). However, the dominant perspective in location theory of creative industries views locational patterns as following on from the location decisions of creative individuals with professional purposes. In such studies, location decisions are rarely related to their personal lives, and the work-life balance is not commonly addressed in surveys and interviews with creative entrepreneurs.

Consequently, few studies have explored the quality of place of cultural produc-
tion districts from the perspective of creative entrepreneurs as individuals and as members of a household, with various duties before and after office hours on a daily basis. There is only a small body of work that indicates that particularly the more-established creative entrepreneurs appreciate district amenities such as parks, playgrounds, and grocery shops for family-related reasons (Heebels & Van Aalst, 2010; see also Lubbers, 2006).

As part of the wider urban milieu of creative cities, Scott points to residential milieus offering housing for creative workers (Scott, 2010, p. 125). Scott conjectures that the careers of those creative workers who inhabit gentrified inner city residential areas may profit from the social contacts, services, and overall ambiance (Scott, 2010, p. 128). However, it remains to be seen whether cultural production districts and housing, social networks, and services are best intermingled in mixed-use districts, or kept apart in business and residential districts, but in close proximity to each other, in order to facilitate the coordination of daily work and life practices of creative entrepreneurs with children.

5.2.2 Location theory of family gentrifiers

In the urban geographic literature, time-space constraints are a classic variable used to explain the motivations of middle-class working families in choosing an urban residential location. Middle-class families are commonly defined by two variables: income above average level, and at least one adult in the household having at least a college degree (Boterman, Karsten & Musterd, 2010).

Recent studies focusing on middle-class families living in a city have shown that their numbers are rising. Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd (2010) have shown that, in Amsterdam, the proportions of middle-class families have increased the most rapidly in the centrally located gentrified areas. Middle-class groups, including middle-class families, increasingly settle in such districts, but also in new-build areas such as the Eastern Docklands, and in immigrant neighborhoods (Boterman, Karsten, & Musterd, 2010).

The choice for urban living and working by middle-class families is explained in the gentrification literature with a consumption-side argument involving both constraints and opportunities. First, urban living is understood as a way of coping with the time-space constraints in the daily practices of balancing work, childcare, leisure, and household duties (Jarvis, 2005; Karsten, 2003, 2007). Second, urban living is explained as an opportunity-driven choice stemming from a taste for the urban life, cultural capital, and identity constructions (Butler &
Robson, 2003; Karsten, 2007). Karsten (2003) termed dual-earner couples combining ambitious career tracks with having children “family gentrifiers.” Recent gentrification research, applying the concepts of time-space constraints (as defined by Hägerstr conduit, 1970) to the work-life balance, has identified several assets of the material and social contexts as important to the daily practices of middle-class working families. At the spatial scale of the city or neighborhood, several fixed material assets of a district are important in the daily combination of paid work and other activities: affordable housing for families; daily stores; children’s facilities including schools, day care, play spaces, and leisure clubs; and infrastructure to reach all these places within acceptable travel times (Jarvis, 2005; Karsten, 2003, 2007).

Moreover, the choice of an urban residential location is strongly determined by the desire to live close to the workplaces of the adults in these working families. Short travel times are perceived as necessary to keep up with career, social, and cultural pursuits (Karsten, 2003, 2007).

As to the social assets of districts, urban middle-class families were found to appreciate living in neighborhoods that are socially diverse, but also offer like-minded families, both for rewarding social relationships between parents, and for playmates for their children. Second, such informal local networks are useful for assistance in child-minding in exchanges between families (Graaff & Karsten, 2007, Karsten, 2003). Moreover, the neighborhood and its routes and play spaces should be safe for children, both in terms of traffic and social interactions. Neighborhood opportunities for independent play by children are an important time-saving asset for parents (Karsten, 2003, 2007).

5.2.3 Creative entrepreneurs as family gentrifiers?

The two strands of literature reviewed above - location theory of creative industries and of family gentrifiers - are not connected. Both lines of research define their subjects in different ways: location theory, when applied to creative industries, defines firms and entrepreneurs by, for instance, address, firm size, and creative subsector (see e.g. Kloosterman, 2004; Pratt, 1997; Scott, 2010) or by type of creative profession (see e.g. Markusen, 2008). The gentrification literature on family gentrifiers defines research subjects by educational level, income, household composition, and age of children (see, for example, Boterman et al., 2010). However, quite a few studies on gentrifying families involve interviewees working in creative professions (e.g. Karsten, 2003, 2007; Reijndorp, 2004). Thus,
although both strands of literature do seem to describe partly overlapping groups of people, this cannot be rigorously demonstrated as both groups of people, as research subjects, are defined differently.

Nevertheless, by piecing together these different strands of literature, I premise that creative entrepreneurs may well take their daily organization of work and life into account in making location decisions. This chapter therefore explores the influence of the district features, as perceived by creative entrepreneurs with children, on their location decisions. The results section will focus on several questions: Are district features pertaining to the work-life balance perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs with children (Section 5.7.1)? Which specific district features, related to combining work and care, are perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs with children in their firm location decisions, and why (Section 5.7.2)? What specific spatial and social district assets do they find important in balancing their work and daily family duties, and why (Section 5.7.3)? To what extent do they perceive such features of their work environment as important in their location decision, vis-à-vis proximity to clients and other creative firms, features of their firm’s premises, and district features of largely professional value (Section 5.7.4)?

5.3 Research sites and selection criteria

In 2008, 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted with creative entrepreneurs with children in three large cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Groningen. All three cities have economic development policies targeted at both attracting and retaining creative firms and professionals (Bontje & Musterd, 2009; Trip & Romein, 2009; Municipality of Groningen, 2007) as middle-class residents, including affluent households and families (Van Gent, 2011; Doucet, 2011, p. 1445; Municipality of Rotterdam, 2007, p. 70; Municipality of Groningen, 2011). The policy objective of attracting creative firms and their workers as residents is regarded by these cities, and by many other cities around the globe,
5.3 Research sites and selection criteria

as a means to enhance their city’s post-industrial economy and its national and international competitiveness.

Three research districts were selected based on three criteria. First, the primary determinant for selecting districts was to find districts that fitted what I had defined as cultural production districts: a relative concentration of creative firms in creative subsectors that produce mainly mobile outputs such as visual arts, architecture, design, and digital media. To detect this concentration of firms, I used the GIS maps in Figures 3.2-3.6 in Chapter 3.

Next, in each identified city, one research area was selected. These were areas which I assumed (and which was confirmed by local planners) would be recognized by interviewees as “their” district because they were city areas with some shared internal characteristics (Lynch, 1960).

Third, since my study was exploratory, the selected districts should differ in terms of a few features that I assumed from the literature review would facilitate the combination of working and caring tasks. These features include the dominant type of premises (ranging from firms mostly based at home or mostly in creative business incubators), and the amount and variety of neighborhood-serving retail outlets, schools, and playgrounds. Further, the locations of the three research districts within their respective cities differ from a ten-minute bike ride to the inner city in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and a five-minute walk in Groningen. Thus, as a set, these districts are “diverse cases” (for types of cases, see Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

The three districts researched are the Eastern Docklands in Amsterdam, the Lloyd Quarter in Rotterdam, and the Hortus Quarter in Groningen. The Eastern Docklands in Amsterdam is a former port district. This district consists of several peninsulas that were recently redeveloped with amenities and housing, including 8,000 new dwellings. As such, the Eastern Docklands contained one thousand small firms in advanced producer services, mainly located in dwellings or in studios and business accommodation on the ground floor of residential buildings (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). The district has received much international attention for its modern architecture and high-density neighborhoods. It is an example of a new-build gentrification area (as defined by Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008).

The Lloyd Quarter in Rotterdam is also a former port district, presently being redeveloped into a mixed-use district. Only a few new apartment blocks, re-used harbor buildings with studios and small-scale office spaces, and a Maritime College were realized at the time of the fieldwork. It is for this lack of a broad
neighborhood consumer base that the Lloyd Quarter offered only a few everyday amenities in 2008, namely four cafés/restaurants and one supermarket, one day-care center, and one school. In contrast to the other two districts studied, the Lloyd Quarter contains a large business incubator center, in which office space is exclusively rented to artists and creative entrepreneurs.

The Hortus Quarter is a nineteenth century, predominantly residential, inner-urban neighborhood adjacent to Groningen’s vibrant inner city. The edges of the Hortus Quarter adjoin a popular urban park at the former town ramparts, and an old, small harbor, currently used for houseboats.

Table 5.1 summarizes the divergent characteristics of the three districts regarding their supply of live-work premises and those daily amenities that were important in the selection procedure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research site</th>
<th>District features</th>
<th>Features of business spaces</th>
<th>Daily stores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Eastern Docklands in Amsterdam</td>
<td>District daily stores are limited to only one supermarket, located on the ground floor of the Schiecentrale, a business incubator for creative firms.</td>
<td>Most creative firms are located in the entrepreneurs’ dwellings, and in a few re-used harbor buildings.</td>
<td>District daily stores are located in one shopping center, and in a few streets offering street-front retail with specialty stores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lloyd Quarter in Rotterdam</td>
<td>Most creative firms are located in the Schiecentrale, in re-used harbor buildings, and a few in entrepreneurs’ dwellings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>District daily stores are limited to only one supermarket, located on the ground floor of the Schiecentrale, a business incubator for creative firms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hortus Quarter in Groningen</td>
<td>Most creative firms are accommodated in dwellings, or in ateliers and offices in refurbished schools and 18th century harbor ware houses.</td>
<td></td>
<td>District daily stores are located in one main shopping street offering street-front retail with both shabby and specialty stores. More nearby shopping options are in the adjacent inner city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chapter 5. District spatial quality for entrepreneurs with children

Note: The photographs represent a few typical, objective elements of the three districts that were regarded as potential location factors for creative firms before conducting the interviews. These photographs were used in the sixth interview question concerning picture selection. Photographs by Vipphoto, Groningen, the Netherlands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Schools and daycare facilities</strong></th>
<th>A few district primary schools and daycare centers provide such facilities for children up to 12 years old at walking distance within the neighborhood.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and playgrounds</strong></td>
<td>Very few small parks throughout the neighborhood, most open space is provided through the views on the waterfront.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Schools and daycare facilities</strong></th>
<th>One district primary school and daycare center (in temporary building) provides such facilities for children up to 12 years old at walking distance within the neighborhood.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and playgrounds</strong></td>
<td>Only one small park and one playground in the neighborhood, most open space is provided through the views on the waterfront.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Schools and daycare facilities</strong></th>
<th>One district primary school and a few daycare centers provide such facilities for children up to 12 years old at walking distance within the neighborhood.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks and playgrounds</strong></td>
<td>Small parks and playgrounds throughout the neighborhood, and one large urban park offering a few different play grounds, grass and sports fields.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Respondent selection

To investigate to what extent, how, and why the spatial and social features of a district, related to family life with children, are perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs in their location decisions and daily work-life practices, this chapter draws upon 23 interviews. As noted before, this respondent selection is a subset of the 63 interviews conducted for a broader study. We found almost all the interviewees for the larger dataset through telephone directories and municipal databases, followed up by cold-calling. We introduced our research as a study exploring location choices by creative entrepreneurs. The interviewees were evenly distributed across the three research districts. Reflecting the objective of the study, the respondent selection consists of research subjects whose characteristics adhere to common academic definitions of creative entrepreneurs: they were filmmakers, architects, graphic designers, visual artists, and photographers (for a more detailed definition, please see Section 3.2.2).

The subset of 23 entrepreneurs was selected by using criteria pertaining to the definition of middle-class working families. These are defined here by four variables: two working adults (or one, in case of a single parent), at least one cohabiting child, household income above modal, and at least one adult in the household holding a degree from a professional educational institution (termed HBO in the Netherlands) or higher. The 23 interviewees were thus all creative entrepreneurs whose *firms* were located in one of these three districts and who, *at home*, cared for children. The majority, 17 of the 23 interviewees, lived within walking or cycling distance of their firm. Seven in fact had a home-based firm.

Thus, reflecting the objective of the study, the respondent selection consists of creative entrepreneurs who are members of middle-class working families (see Table 5.2 for a breakdown by firm characteristics).

In fact, 27 of the 63 entrepreneurs lived in households with children, but only 23 of these 27 are included in this analysis. Two were excluded because they failed to satisfy the criteria of having a working partner. A further two were excluded because they had only just become parents and therefore their location decisions had been taken prior to them meeting our “family” research criterion. Further, in these latter cases, both entrepreneurs had wives who were still on pregnancy leave and thus not working, such that they were not yet involved in the daily practice of sharing work and care with a partner.

Table 5.3 lists a few characteristics of the firms and the households of the 23 interviewees. In terms of family income, 14 of the 23 interviewees’ firms had
Table 5.2: The number of interviewees by creative industry subsector, firm size, and research district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsector in Creative Industries</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N/ Research District</th>
<th>N/ Firm size in number of workers</th>
<th>N/ Research District</th>
<th>N/ Firm size in number of workers</th>
<th>N/ Research District</th>
<th>N/ Firm size in number of workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Docklands, Amsterdam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 1 1 1 1 1 0</td>
<td>0 0 1 3 0 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd Quarter, Rotterdam</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1 0 0 2 2 0 1 0 0</td>
<td>1 1 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hortus Quarter, Groningen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 0 0 2 2 0 0 3 3</td>
<td>3 3 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects and interior-architects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 0 2 2 0 2 0 3 3</td>
<td>1 1 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmmakers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The firm size is the number of workers including the entrepreneur.

annual turnovers above 50,000 Euros per worker. A few of the interviewees also had a part-time job alongside running their firm, for example as lecturers in art schools. From these facts, I deduced that the family income would be at least modal for all the interviewees, especially since the individual earnings will be further augmented by their partner’s income. In terms of educational level, all the interviewees except one had a college degree or higher, and from their occupation one can assume that they had acquired large amounts of cultural capital. Nineteen of the 23 interviewees had children under the age of 12 in their household. Five interviewees cared for their children as a single parent. The families of the interviewees were generally small, the maximum was three children, but most had only one or two children. The average age of the interviewees was 44.
5.5 The interview question list

The interviews took place in 2008, and lasted on average one hour. All six interviewers used the same list of nine open-ended, scripted questions, and the same protocol with prompts for follow-up questions. Before the nine open questions, we asked the respondents to complete a questionnaire to obtain data on their firm size and products, and on personal and household characteristics.

The semi-structured interviews started with two open questions on firm location decisions at the time of settlement: “How come your firm is located here?” and “If you had a choice, why did you choose this location rather than another one?” In the third question, we asked how they regarded their district as a location for their firm. Next, in the three subsequent questions, we asked about the district features that they regarded as important for their firm. To gauge the importance of their firm’s district in terms of combining work and care, we had the option of follow-up questions from the fourth question onwards. These related to district features relevant for private use and were only posed if the interviewees had not addressed the topic. For the fourth question, the follow-up asked: “Do you also use the district for combining work and personal activities?”

The fifth question was accompanied by a map of the district on which retail facilities, schools, parks, cafés, and restaurants were indicated. Interviewees were asked to show on the map how their firm used the district. Again, we asked in a follow-up question as to whether the district and its facilities were used in private life if this had not yet been mentioned. (These maps are included in this thesis as Figures 3.2-3.7 in Chapter 3).

The sixth question involved picture selection (some of the photographs used are included in Table 5.1). A set of fifteen photographs displayed a broad range of district features, among which were shopping centers and street-front retail outlets, schools, parks, cafés, and restaurants. These photographs represented district features that, based on the literature review before the fieldwork, I premised would be attractive to creative entrepreneurs with families. As such, this question was also a means to ask about specific district features without repeating the fourth and fifth questions, which had used words and a district map. Thus, with these three questions, I aimed to measure at least three times, and in different ways, my main variable of interest: perceived spatial and social features of cultural production districts pertaining to the work-life balance.

The seventh question was a ranking question to gauge how the entrepreneurs perceived the relative importance of district qualities vis-à-vis features of their
Table 5.3: Firm and household characteristics of the 23 interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firm and household characteristics of respondents (1)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N / Research District</th>
<th>N / Research District</th>
<th>N / Research District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with firm based at home</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with firm based at commercial premises</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents being in charge of firm location choice</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents being self-employed or co-owner of 2-person firm</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents being manager of 1 or more employees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with annual turnover above 50 kE / worker</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with a part-time job next to running their firm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with firm based at home</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents living within walking/biking distance of their firm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents living beyond biking distance of their firm (2)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of female respondents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of male respondents</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of respondents</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with youngest child aged 0-12 (3)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents with youngest child aged 13 and older (3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: All the interviewees were asked to self-report a few facts on their firm and household in a short questionnaire before the open-ended questions. Not all completed the details on their annual turnover.

Note 2: The criterion for “beyond cycling distance of their firm” is defined here as a respondent living in another municipality. I used this measure because many interviewees remarked that, within their city, they mostly cycled around, Dutch cities are relatively small, bicycle-friendly, and within-city distances are often easy by bike.

Note 3: I distinguish two age brackets for children: Depending on whether the youngest child is up to and including 12 years old, or 13 years and above. I chose this division as reflecting the age when children need less care (e.g., Van der Lippe et al., 2011). Similarly, De Meester, Mulder, and Droogleever Fortuijn (2007, p. 596) and Noback (2011, p. 92) showed that women start increasing their working hours when the youngest child is older than 12 and transfers to secondary school. As a decrease in the time needed for child-minding could reflect a change in the work-life balance, I used the age of the youngest child in dividing interviewees into two categories.
office building and proximity to clients and collaborators within the city. The final interview questions then concerned current drawbacks of the district. During the fieldwork, it seemed that our follow-up questions were too general to obtain the detailed answers we sought about the interviewees’ use of their work district for private or family-related tasks. Hence, I asked my interview team to use a few extra, more explicit, follow-up questions. For example, from then on, we also asked for the age of the entrepreneur’s children where applicable. We also asked a follow-up to the first question if the firm was not based at home: “Do you live close by?” If the answer was yes, we asked: “Is this important in combining work and other activities?” If a respondent’s firm was home-based, we asked: “Was this a deliberate choice? Why? Did it work out as expected?” From the fourth question onwards, we asked follow-up questions on district features of professional importance that an interviewee had mentioned such as stores to buy their daily lunch and a district’s cafés: “Are these district features also of personal importance for you, or for example for combining work with household and caring tasks, leisure, or sports?” After the eighth question, we asked whether district features that an interviewee had mentioned, be they of professional or personal value, would be very important, or even decisive, in future location decisions for their firm.

5.6 Method of data analysis

After the interviews were completed, I analyzed the transcripts and coded each response about district spatial quality related to the respondent’s household situation with children. The interviewees mentioned several types of spatial and social district features that were related to their location decisions and to their daily work practices. Notably, here, I opted to only label responses in which one of these district qualities was explicitly connected by the respondent to having children. For instance, while many interviewees stated having deliberately chosen to work at home, I only labeled such a quote if it was related to, for instance, being able to work in the evening hours after having put the children to bed. I did not label such a response if an interviewee reported that working at home was related to, for instance, minimizing firm expenses. Furthermore, I coded all the responses in the transcripts about a district’s spatial quality and distinguished importance for initial and future location decisions from relevance for the daily practices involved in combining work and caring tasks. I also analyzed the responses for the degree of importance attached to
the district’s qualities in location decisions and/or daily practices. From this, I could count how many interviewees perceived an aspect as “important, but a welcome bonus” or as “very important or even decisive.” I closely followed the words used by the interviewees in coding responses, a prerequisite for counting quotes with the same labels and quantitatively comparing prevalent topics among respondents (Bryman, 2004).

This analysis enables one to both count and qualify the research results: How many interviewees found which features of their district important, how important, and for what purposes related to combining work and care? The following section uses typical quotes from the 23 interviews to illustrate how and why district features pertaining to work-life balance, as perceived by creative entrepreneurs with children, influence their location decisions for their firm.

5.7 Results

The following section describes how the family-related time-space constraints of creative entrepreneurs with children influence their location decisions for their firm, and how they facilitate or hinder their practices in combining work and care on a daily basis. In terms of these two topics, several types of district feature were perceived as important: a district’s type of workspaces (in dwellings, offices, or studio spaces); schools, parks, social networks of families, and daily stores. Furthermore, being within a short distance of their homes was an important location factor.

Section 5.7.1 highlights that such facilities were important to 60% of the 23 interviewees, and that most of them brought up this point spontaneously. Section 5.7.2 provides insight into which types of district features were most often related to location decisions by the interviewees: namely the types of premises and the distance to their homes. Section 5.7.3 specifies which district features they found important for combining work and caring tasks, and why. Section 5.7.4 indicates to what extent district assets, for combining work and caring, were perceived as important relative to other location factors applying to their business.

5.7.1 The importance of district spatial quality related to family life

Are district features related to family life important for creative entrepreneurs with a working partner and children when choosing a place for their firm within
5.7 Results

a city? For 14 of the 23 interviewed entrepreneurs, I found that they were in fact more important than might be inferred from location theory applied to creative industries (e.g., Scott, 2010). Further, 9 of these 14 interviewees mentioned them spontaneously, without prompting, in response to the first three open questions. Nevertheless, for the other nine entrepreneurs, family life considerations did not seem to play a part in their locational decision-making, which will be discussed in Section 5.7.3.

Five of the 14 interviewees did spontaneously mention that district features, such as the availability of dwellings that allow for home-based firms, small office premises, schools, daycare, parks, and safe play spaces, had influenced their initial location decisions. They indicated this in their answers to the first two, open-ended questions: “How come your firm is located here?” and “If you had a choice, why did you choose this location rather than another one?”

The third question brought up the district itself for the first time: “How do you currently perceive your district as a location for your firm?” While this question did not specifically mention facilities of their district related to family life, Figure 5.1 shows that at this point in the interview, another four interviewees also mentioned district features such as its proximity to their homes, and the presence of like-minded families. By the fourth and fifth questions, which asked about district features perceived as important for their firm and work, family-related features of their firm’s district had been mentioned by 13 of the 14 interviewees who perceived these as important. The sixth question, which included a photograph selection, did not prompt other interviewees to talk about their district’s facilities related to family life. However, some of the interviewees who had previously discussed its importance did mention it again.

5.7.2 District spatial quality for location decisions

As noted above, the interviews started with two open-ended questions about location decisions. Where interviewees did mention here any family-related considerations that had influenced their initial location decisions, they tended to stress the importance of working at home or close-by. Of all 23 interviewees, seven had home-based firm. Ten of the interviewees who had their firms based in business premises, lived within walking or cycling distance. Only six interviewees lived in another city and commuted to their office. Of the seven interviewees who worked from home, five had children of primary school age. Of these seven
Figure 5.1: Number of respondents acknowledging the importance of district features related to family life in their location decisions and daily work-life practices throughout the interview.

Note 1: Q1, Q2 etc. stands for the first, second, etc. question in the interview.
Note 2: The colors indicate that throughout the interview, questions became more focused on the topic of district features related to their family life. Question 1, 2 and 3 did not ask about district features related to their family life: Question 1 and 2 were two open questions on location decisions at the time of settlement. Question 3 asked interviewees how they regarded their district as a location. Question 4 and 5 asked about the district features of professional importance, with follow-up questions on district features related to their family life, if respondents had not yet mentioned them in the preceding questions.

home-based entrepreneurs, five were women. Two of the interviewees had made a deliberate choice for working from home in order to combine paid work with the demands of caring for young children. One architect, the mother of two young children, stated spontaneously:

I deliberately wanted to work at home. Childcare facilities are scarce, and therefore I work at home. In the evenings, I usually go on working so, if I was working in an office, I would be continuously dragging things backwards and forwards.

Other home-based entrepreneurs had other residential motives for choosing their current premises in which to combine living and working. Often, their own residential motives and those of their partners, such as the price and size of the dwelling and the availability of a garden, prevailed in their choice of live-work premises. Firm-related motives included providing the opportunity to work at home, such as by there being a work room, a double entrance, or a flexible
floor plan. Such features were considered important for making a distinction between work and private life. A female graphic designer with two young children explained how such practical considerations had influenced her choice for her current dwelling, where she also had her firm:

I do not find this a beautiful apartment building, but I like this dwelling with two front doors. I have the feeling that I can to some extent separate work and private life. At least, that’s what I thought when I came here, and it would again be absolutely important were I to look for another place to live and work.

As this quote implies, separating work and private life within the same dwelling is not always easy. Some interviewees said that, for this reason, they had deliberately chosen not to work at home. For them, making a clear distinction between work and private life within one building was too complicated, or their house was too small to allow them to concentrate on their work while children were around. A filmmaker, and father of two children, explained why he relocated his firm out of his house to the Schiecentrale, a business incubator for creative firms:

I had worked from home for a very long time. Yet, eight years ago, I had young kids, and they knocked on my door all the time. At a certain point, it became hard to handle. So that’s why I started looking around, I signed up for the Schiecentrale and I found a place to work here.

While three interviewees with firms based in business premises deliberately stated that short distances to home and family were important for saving time and avoiding stress, ten interviewees were working in a studio or office within (often short) cycling distances from home. Of the 23 interviewees, seven worked at home, and ten lived a short distance from their firm in the same city. As such 17 interviewees, or three-quarters of the sample, had their firm at or near home. A female graphic designer explicitly and spontaneously explained her firm location close by her home as a deliberate choice. She valued saving commuting time and being able to drop off and pick up her children in a relaxed way before and after work:
When we had to leave our previous premises, we deliberately chose a place near home. I have children, that’s why. My husband works at the hospital [nearby], so everything is around here. If something happens, you can organize things quickly. It is very easy. And you can go everywhere on foot or by bike, which I really find an advantage in a city. If you would have to drive out of the city every day, I cannot bear to think about it. Being in traffic jams on the ring-road all the time, no - I find it quite comfortable like this.

To summarize, the findings indicate that spatial and social features of districts are perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs, in particular those with young children, in their location decisions. District features of specific importance are dwellings that provide enough space for home-based firms, and properties offering studios or small office spaces such that entrepreneurs can set up shop at short walking or cycling distances from home. Working at home, or close by, was perceived as important for creative entrepreneurs with children, both in terms of actual time constraints and for personal or professional preferences such as cutting commuting time or chauffeuring children in a relaxed way before and after work.

### 5.7.3 District spatial quality for daily work-life practices

Which material and social assets of cultural production districts do creative entrepreneurs with children find important for their daily combination of work and caring tasks, and why? The analysis shows that creative entrepreneurs perceive the following district features of cultural production districts to be important in their daily combination of work and care: schools and child care facilities, safe play spaces, a social network of families with children, and supermarkets.

**Schools and child care facilities**

Of the nineteen interviewees with children of primary school age, the presence of schools and daycare facilities close to their firm was mentioned by ten interviewees as useful. It allowed them to work more hours because they reduced traveling time, and it gave them a more relaxed time schedule in picking up children after work. An architect with young children, who had her office on the ground floor of her house, spontaneously brought this up. In answering the third question, on
how she regarded her district as a location for her firm, she said:

Of course, I am a mother as well. And my kids are going to school here, that’s also a very important thing - combining work with motherhood. I can pick up the children just on foot. I don’t need to get into the car, and that really saves me hours of stress per week.... Schools in the neighborhood, within walking distance of the firm [are important] because then, you can indeed work the most hours.

In addition, those entrepreneurs who worked in commercial premises also stated that working close to their home was in part very important for the consequent proximity to their children’s school. A male filmmaker with young children explained:

For me, the winning combination is the walking distance [from my studio] to the inner city and to my home.... I do not feel like biking or walking very far to my work. Commuting also seems horrible to me. [Q: How about walking distance in relation to having children?] Yes, bringing them to school in the morning, and picking them up in the afternoon - that’s all convenient. Walking distance to my home was a deliberate consideration when I chose this studio, to the inner city was less important for me.

*Play spaces and sports facilities*
Safe streets and play spaces, parks, and sports fields were mentioned by four entrepreneurs who worked from home. Preferably, such places should be close to their home and, thus, to the office. An architect with three children between 1 and 7 years old explained:

[The Hortus Quarter] is excellent for combining living and working. Because I live here just in front of a small playground, in a green neighborhood, even next to the park.... I have been sitting here [in the playground] with the kids who were playing, and I sat there with my laptop. These sorts of combinations you can make very easily. Plus, your phone also still functions.
A filmmaker, who worked part-time from home explained how he regarded safe outdoor spaces as important for the development of his son:

You want your child to grow up in a district where he can play and go outside. Where he can go on ahead. Where he has the feeling of growing up safely. And that is the feeling I have here. . . . If the quality of life wouldn’t be that good here, then I wouldn’t live here. Yes, then I would soon be gone.

As these quotes illustrate, play spaces were often mentioned as residential motives that guided the location decisions for home-based firms.

*Social network and like-minded families*

Finally, three home-based entrepreneurs in Amsterdam mentioned the importance of a social network of families in their neighborhood. They stated this was useful for occasionally supervising each other’s children, and talked of the symbolic value of living with like-minded families. They often used the phrase “community feeling” to explain such perceptions. A male filmmaker stated how neighbors would help each other out if someone was stuck in traffic:

You have a lot of community spirit here. There is a lot of contact between neighbors, and you know the people in your street. I like that. In this way, you do have a sort of feeling of living in a little village, but within the city. . . . We look after each other’s children when they play outside, we pick them up from the daycare center if someone is stuck in traffic. You have a network around yourselves.

Living with like-minded families was often mentioned somewhat hesitantly, as if they were afraid of making a politically incorrect statement. However, a few entrepreneurs spontaneously brought the topic up early in the interview. A young mother, a graphic designer working from home, responded when asked how she experienced the Eastern Docklands as a location for her firm:

Excellent. I experience it as a very convenient place to live, with. . . how can I explain it. . . the same type of people as myself. People with children and a firm of their own. I think that there is a lot of creativity
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here... I hear about such firms by talking to parents at my daughter’s school, or from what I hear here and there.

Stores

Some interviewees stated that other facilities in their districts were important for combining paid work and child care. A supermarket was mentioned by all 23 interviewees as useful for business as well as private use. During work, stores are handy for picking up lunch. After office hours, as an interviewee mentioned, a supermarket close to work allowed her to combine the journey from work to home with a visit to the supermarket and collecting her children from school.

To summarize, while fourteen interviewees stated that features of their district were important for their daily combination of work and care, the other nine did not mention any material or social assets of their district as being useful in combining work and care. In the interviews, we asked as a follow-up question: “Do you also use the district for combining work and personal activities?” However, we only rarely specifically asked interviewees to think about their district in relation to their children. This may explain why some entrepreneurs did not talk about their work-life balance practices related to working time.

In addition, I premise that a few background variables may help explain why some people did not talk about district features in relation to combining work and child care: namely, type of office premises, gender, ages of children, firm size, and residential preferences. All the nine interviewees who did not mention any district features as assets in combining work and care were located in commercial premises, and not at home. Of these nine interviewees, seven were men. Two of these nine interviewees only had children above the age of 12\(^3\). Two of them were manager of a firm with six up to nine employees. Six of them lived in another municipality, and two of these explained this as a deliberate choice for a more spacious garden and quieter residential environment for their family than they could achieve in an urban setting. It may be that these circumstances and preferences lead them to prioritize other qualities of their work environment over, for example, a short distance to their home or to a primary school for their children.

To summarize, the data suggest that material and social assets of cultural production districts related to family life, such as schools, parks, stores, and like-minded families, are important in firm location decisions and daily combinations of work.

\(^3\) Schwanen (2007, p. 450) remarks that, within the Netherlands, children over age 8 increase their independence in walking or cycling to school and other extra-curricular activities, and they participate less in after-school care.
and care for creative entrepreneurs, in particular for those with very small firms and with children of primary school age.

5.7.4 The relative importance of district spatial quality for family life

How important are district facilities related to having children, as compared to other factors involved in location decisions? Facilities pertaining to the work-life balance should be understood as one set of location factors in a complex variety of considerations on daily quality of work and life. Most of the literature on creative industries and occupations emphasizes the significance of proximity to other creative firms. To relate my study to this important body of work, I used one ranking question concerning district features of current importance for the interviewees: “Could you please rank the following district qualities in order of current importance for your work and your firm? Can you explain your ranking?” A district’s household facilities and quality of life was one of the five items, and proximity to clients and collaborators and a district network of creative firms were two of the other items. Given that the ranking question was the seventh interview question, and that all five items to be ranked here had already been discussed in the previous six questions, no further explanation was required. Further, we emphasized that the response should reflect the relative importance of the five items for their work and their firm, and not as an assessment of the current quality of these items. The interviewees marked what they perceived as the most important item with a “1”, the second with a “2”, etcetera. Then, we asked them to explain their considerations leading to this ranking order.

Table 5.4 shows the combined ranking order of the 23 interviewees. Analysis of the rankings of the five items showed that, overall, the interviewees considered features of their firm’s premises such as price, size, and image as most important. The second most important item was the facilities and visual quality of their district such as cafés and stores for professional use. As such, professional factors prevailed in the interviewees’ ranking of the district’s features currently important for their firm.

Third in the ranking came their district’s residential facilities and quality of life. From the explanations of their rankings, it seemed that the interviewees understood this item to refer to safety of the entrepreneurs themselves in terms of traffic and crime in their district, schools and safe play spaces for their children, supermarkets and stores.
Table 5.4: Relative importance of five features of cultural production districts for creative entrepreneurs with children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of cultural production district that were items to be ranked in the ranking question</th>
<th>Priority according to aggregate ranking of 23 respondents</th>
<th>Total score in aggregate ranking of 23 respondents</th>
<th># of all respondents ranking this item at the first or second rank in the ranking question</th>
<th># of all respondents ranking this item as irrelevant in the ranking question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Features of firm's premises</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District facilities and visual quality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District household facilities and quality of life</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity within city to clients, collaborators and suppliers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District network of creative firms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Interviewees were asked to rank these five items in order of importance for their work and firm, with the most important item ranked 1. Their rankings were recalibrated into scores: the item ranked as most important, receiving a score of 5 etc. Features judged irrelevant were given a score of zero. Features judged to be of equal importance, obtained a shared score, such that two items ranked as equally the most important each received a score of 4.5.

It is notable that facilities related to private activities were seen as more important than proximity to clients within the city, and also ranked above the presence of a network of creative firms in their district. The explanations given by the interviewees for their ordering suggest that opportunities to mix daily life activities with work routines were more important than proximity to clients and collaborators simply because work meetings with the latter happen less often. For many of them, time-space constraints related to combining work and care on a daily basis were more decisive in their location decisions than contacts with clients and other creative firms. The data suggest that the increasing digitalization of their work and client contact allowed domestic considerations to prevail over more traditional location factors. Quite a few interviewees talked about handling many of their business contacts by telephone and email. One home-based filmmaker explained the reasoning behind his answer to the ranking question:
For me [it is important] that I find the Hortus Quarter a nice place to live, of course. In any case, it is very clear that proximity to clients is the least important. Look, I do have clients in Groningen. But I have even more clients outside of Groningen, so proximity is rather unimportant. Communication and delivery of products, that all goes via internet, in fact. So proximity to clients does not add anything. And that also goes for a network of creative firms, I really don’t do anything with that. So I think that’s very clear.... Yes, from the nature of my firm it does not matter at all where I am located. I could, so to speak, just as well be on Schiermonnikoog [a remote island].

Interviewees attaching much importance to the facilities and quality of life at their work location did so for issues of work-life balance, and for having a general feeling of wellbeing in their neighborhood, which they perceived as necessary for delivering creative work.

The district quality of the place is for my firm more about my private life. The school is around the corner. The park is nearby. It is a nice residential neighborhood with many kids. You can play on the streets; you can just walk into town, or to the library. Thus, I built my work around my private life.... In fact, I am quite independent of place. Clients almost never come over here. Generally, I go over to their place. I work a lot through the internet with a bunch of freelancers, a lot of them I have never met. It all goes through the internet, so I am here, but just as well I could have located elsewhere. It doesn’t matter to me. If I like the place, and it’s near home, then it’s alright with me.

5.8 Discussion

The data suggest that the perceived spatial and social features of a district pertaining to the work-life balance should be understood as one set of location factors in a complex variety of considerations on the daily quality of work and life. In particular, creative entrepreneurs with a home-based firm and children younger than 12 years old should be seen as both entrepreneurs and as members of families struggling to combine professional and private activity patterns on a daily
basis.
The finding that, for home-based firms, residential settling motives were very important has also been shown for other advanced producer service sectors (e.g. Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005, p. 980-981). The majority of the 23 interviewees, whether based at home or in commercial premises, lived close to their place of work for reasons of time-saving, avoiding traffic, and convenience. Ensuring a short walk or cycle journey from home to work was for many interviewees a deliberate choice, partly to be able to combine shopping and picking up children on the way home from work within short time spans and without the risk or stress of being stuck in traffic.

As such, the data suggest that some creative entrepreneurs experience home and work as a single package. The interviewees working from home show that places to live can be places to work. Similarly, many of the interviewees working from commercial premises explained that while the physical places of living and working were separated, proximity was key in the daily organization of their lives.

To summarize, creative entrepreneurs with families may well reflect the theory of Florida that: “Jobs and people evolve together, they co-determine each other. The element that brings them together is the central unit of analysis of the fields we work in: place.” (Florida, 2005, p. 219).

However, the findings should be interpreted with some caution. First, while twenty-three interviews is sufficient to show mechanisms underlying location decisions by creative entrepreneurs with working partners and dependent children, to demonstrate whether a majority of creative entrepreneurs with families would take material and social district assets into account in their firm location decisions needs further research. It would be particularly useful to conduct a survey among a larger number of creative entrepreneurs.

Second, it should be noted that the results presented here apply to micro- and small creative firms, with eighteen having only one or two workers. The twenty-three owners of the creative firms interviewed had all chosen their firm’s location themselves. These background variables should be taken into account in the discussion of location theory of creative firms, as they may be sector-specific.

Third, the measurement of the data presented in this chapter has posed some challenges. Firstly, the scripted questions in the question list were focused on the importance of district features for the interviewees’ firm and for daily work practices. It was only in follow-up questions that we asked whether an interviewee also used the district and its facilities for private activities, if this had not already been mentioned. I chose this two-stage approach to avoid confusing the inter-
viewees - I was worried that they may become puzzled about what exactly the questions were about: their firm or their private activities in their work environment. While this two-stage approach worked well in terms of comprehensibility to the interviewees, it appeared to be complex for the interviewers. They had to keep track, during each interview, of which topics, covered in the follow-up questions, had not yet been spontaneously addressed by the interviewees, and to ensure that, if needed, the follow-up questions were posed. I was aided in the interviews by a team of five research assistants. These five research assistants had all followed qualitative research courses and obtained interview experience in their university programs. Further, they were trained in using the question list before the fieldwork. Moreover, as on-the-job training, I would accompany them to the first and second interviews. Despite this preparation, and prompts for the follow-up questions being included on the question list, the analysis of the transcripts showed that the follow-up questions were not always posed and so some topics not always covered.

The question is what this means for the value of the data. Naturally, it would be better if all the follow-up questions had been consistently posed. However, Section 5.7.1 and Figure 5.1 do show that 9 of the 14 interviewees who perceived schools, parks and neighborhood stores as important or very important for their location decisions mentioned these features spontaneously in responding to one or more of the first three open questions. Nevertheless, it could also be that the importance of the proximity of firms to family-related facilities was underreported in the interviews.

One reason for not spontaneously mentioning the importance of being close to schools and child care providers could be that the interviewees were mostly (18 out of 23) self-employed or a partner in a very small firm with only one other worker. As such, they probably have considerable autonomy in their choices about when to start and finish working. This could lead to reduced stress about being on time to drop off and pick up children from school and child care, with a consequence that this ability might be underreported in the interviews. The same line of reasoning could apply to the proximity of supermarkets and other convenience stores, especially because getting groceries is less fixed in time and space than accompanying children to and from school and child care.

As such, the data seem to point at a bifurcation in the perceptions of the importance of a district’s spatial quality related to caring tasks: this was mostly perceived as important by entrepreneurs working from home, or close-by, with children below the age of 12 that needed to be accompanied to schools and play
areas. Nearby children’s facilities appear to be less important for entrepreneurs who have children aged over 12, or who employ several workers in their office. This finding is in line with other studies that have demonstrated that the time spent on caring for children decreases when the youngest child reaches the age of 12 (Van der Lippe et al., 2011). Similarly, Noback (2011) found that mothers increase their working hours when the youngest child is 12 years or older.

One consequent suggestion for further research in this area is to carefully design and execute interview question lists with a double focus on the spatial qualities for both the economic activities of the firm and for the combination of work and caring tasks. Second, interviewees should also be asked about where their partner is working, and how many hours per week are spent on paid work as against family tasks. Such knowledge would enhance the possibility of precisely measuring the extent to which family-related time-space constraints influence the location decisions of entrepreneurs.

5.9 Policy implications

The results presented in this chapter suggest that cultural production districts should offer business spaces in or near to dwellings because creative entrepreneurs with families value the opportunity to mix daily life activities with work routines. Nevertheless, small-scale offices and workspaces, plus other districts assets, including schools, childcare centers, parks, stores and the presence of like-minded families, need not be decisive in the firm location decisions of creative entrepreneurs. However, such district spatial qualities may incite opportunity-driven location decisions provided other conditions are satisfied by the specific context.

These findings may be useful for cities that are pursuing economic development policies that target both creative firms and middle-class families. Such cities could provide these assets as components of creative firm support systems on the neighborhood scale. Given that district assets such as schools are normally seen as residential rather than firm amenities, they are not commonly seen as part of creative firm support systems. Yet, as the findings from this chapter illustrate, they can function as means to attract and nurture urban post-industrial economic activities.
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5.10 Conclusions

This explorative, qualitative research has indicated that creative entrepreneurs with children make carefully weighed decisions on places to live and work within cities. Their choices for place to work are partly based on a short distance to home, to schools, to daycare facilities, to parks, and to supermarkets and stores. These facilities are important as a result of their family life with children, rather than to the work component of their lives. This finding applies in particular to creative entrepreneurs with children up to 12 years of age, both those working from home and those with separate business premises. Most of the latter had deliberately chosen to locate their office close to their dwelling in order to simplify their daily schedules combining work with caring and household tasks. Thus, it would seem that creative entrepreneurs do not act only as individuals in their location decisions and daily private activities, as creative class theory suggests (see, for example, Florida, 2002), but also take into account their household dynamics. Therefore, urban live-work districts that want to attract creative entrepreneurs should offer features that are attractive to creative entrepreneurs both for their firms and for their private lives that combine work and private activities on a daily basis.

Second, the findings indicate that creative entrepreneurs are able to give much weight to the quality of place in choosing where to live and work as a result of their high levels of self-employment and the small size of their firms, both in terms of number of workers and required floor area. Many interviewees stated that they did not need to physically meet their clients that often, and mostly contacted them by telephone and email. This finding helps explain why they valued the district qualities of their place of work above proximity to clients and to other creative firms with whom they collaborated. To summarize, they appear to be relatively footloose in terms of their place of work, and consequently are able to choose a place to live before deciding on a place to work (see also Markusen, 2006, p. 1926). Thus, unlike many other economic sectors, location decisions by creative entrepreneurs are not only circumscribed by constraints, but also guided by opportunities offered.

These findings add specific insights to a broader body of research on the location behavior of knowledge-intensive firms. In academic research on post-Fordist, knowledge-based urban economies (see, for example, Florida, 2002; Musterd et al., 2007; Scott, 2007), soft location factors, and content-driven or lifestyle-based work motivations are increasingly recognized as influencing work practices and
firm location behavior. The studies noted below exemplify such work motivations, lifestyles, and soft location factors for several creative and knowledge-intensive sectors in various countries.

For German theatre artists, “l’art pour l’art” work motivations were found to be essential to their bohemian lifestyle (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p. 530). According to these authors, similar work ethoses and lifestyles containing bohemian elements can be observed in other sectors of artistic and creative production, leading to “non-economic, lifestyle-based logics of [work] practice” (2007, p. 536).

In a large study on Dutch highly skilled freelancers (covering a variety of professions including journalists, artists, managers, and technical professionals), over 60% were motivated by flexibility in time investment and the greater variety in their work compared with being an employee. For about 40% of these independent professionals, a better work-life balance was an important reason for choosing a freelance career. However, when considering the various professions, the main motivations for freelancing differed: journalists were often motivated by flexibility and the work-life balance, whereas technical professions and managers sought greater challenges and more money (Born, 2009, pp.160-161, p.193).

When studying Canadian artists, Ley (2003) found that they congregated in their nation’s most expensive cities. Ley remarks that “once again, their [location] behavior defies economic rationality, confirming that they are marching to a different drummer” (Ley, 2003, p. 2534; see also Markusen, 2006, p. 1931).

Marlet (2009) found that Dutch cities offering residential amenities including a good quality of housing stock, heritage, proximity to nature, cultural venues, and restaurants were the most attractive for professionals belonging to the creative class in Florida’s categorization. Recent research into manufacturing and business services found that the location behavior of firms is, alongside economic motivations, in part opportunity-driven: in particular entrepreneurs with young firms attach much value to staying close to their personal social networks, including their families (Stam, 2007). Stam (2007) defines such opportunity-driven location behavior by firms as being based on opportunities that are recognized by entrepreneurs, for example proximity to an entrepreneur’s social network, rather than problemistic location behavior that is guided, for example, by a need for more office space.

Taken together, these studies indicate a connection between the work motives and lifestyles of specific occupational groups, and their location choices of places to live and work. Thus, with creative entrepreneurs with children experiencing a time-squeeze in
their daily activity patterns, just as the literature has shown for urban middle-
class working families (Jarvis, 2005; Karsten, 2003, 2007), district assets such as
stores, schools, and parks may encourage such opportunity-driven location be-
havior by creative firms. Mixed-use districts enable an easier work-life balance
than generally possible with office parks and industrial estates.

5.11 Research implications

The findings reported in this chapter open perspectives for new interdisciplinary
research at the intersection of three sub-fields of geographic research: location
behavior of creative and knowledge-intensive industries; location behavior of gen-
trifying firms; and entrepreneurship in relation to context and place.

First, for further research into the location behavior of creative and knowledge-
intensive industries, my findings indicate that highly skilled entrepreneurs may
make intertwined choices for places to work and to live in their roles as both
workers and members of households, with these choices being driven by both
commercial and personal constraints and opportunities. The findings reported
here suggest that as long as people can make a living in, or within an acceptable
traveling time from, a place, it is this whole package that counts in their location
decisions.

Second, to inform urban policies about economic activities that seem both foot-
loose as well as important catalysts for district revitalization and urban economies,
research could look into the phenomenon of “gentrifying firms.” While this term
is not commonly used, it is acknowledged that some types of firms tend to relocate
to urban mixed-use areas. This line of research could look into questions such as:
For what types of economic activities does it seem appropriate to locate in urban
mixed-use areas? What are their current locational patterns? How are these
locational patterns explained by supply factors related to current urban land use
and zoning; and what are the demand factors, including an entrepreneur’s own
location decisions and preferences for places to work?

Third, these two lines of research, the location behavior of creative and knowledge-
intensive industries and of gentrifying firms, could be merged with research into
the relationship between entrepreneurship and place. My findings illustrate how
the personal and household contexts of entrepreneurs affect their location deci-
sions whereas most research into entrepreneurship seeks to explain entrepreneur-
ship as originating from an industrial, sectoral, or temporal context. Furthermore,
the findings reported here add to a relatively small body of research into the relationship between entrepreneurship and place on the local spatial scale, and how this relationship affects the location decisions of entrepreneurs (Aoyama, Murphy & Hanson, 2011, p. 51-57; Hanson, 2009; Stam, 2007).

In connecting these three fields of research, it may be useful to keep in mind that firms in some creative and knowledge-intensive sectors may behave “just like real people.” To examine whether, how, and why this holds for specific economic activities, it is necessary to investigate the daily activities of these firms, their entrepreneurs, and other workers around the clock. Such research could inform academia and planning practice how constraints and opportunities in firm location choices help shape urban place.

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5.12 References

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