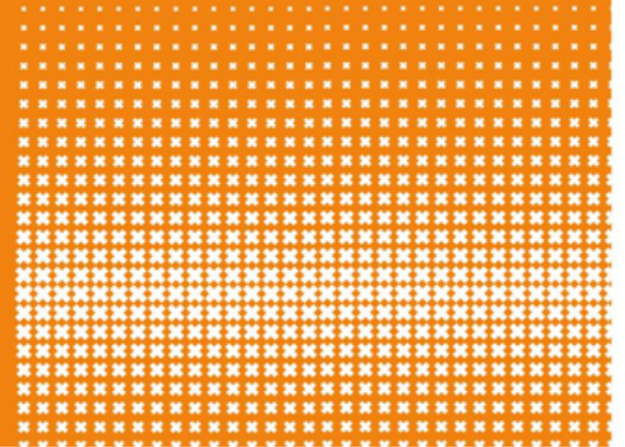




Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research



The continuity and discontinuity of family routines and rituals after separation

Wilma Bakker, Lia Karsten and Clara Mulder

Munich, 2011

Introduction

Since the 1960s family life has changed:

- New families arrangements
- Separation not longer the end of family
- Post-modern concept of separation (Smart, 2004)
- New ways of doing family



Research aim

Gain insight into the everyday experience of different types of post-separation families and the way in which they continue their family life.



Conceptualizing family life

Care giving

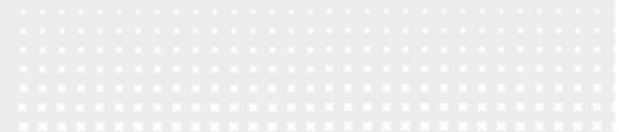
Solidarity

Intimacy

Responsibilities

Obligations

Sharing of resources



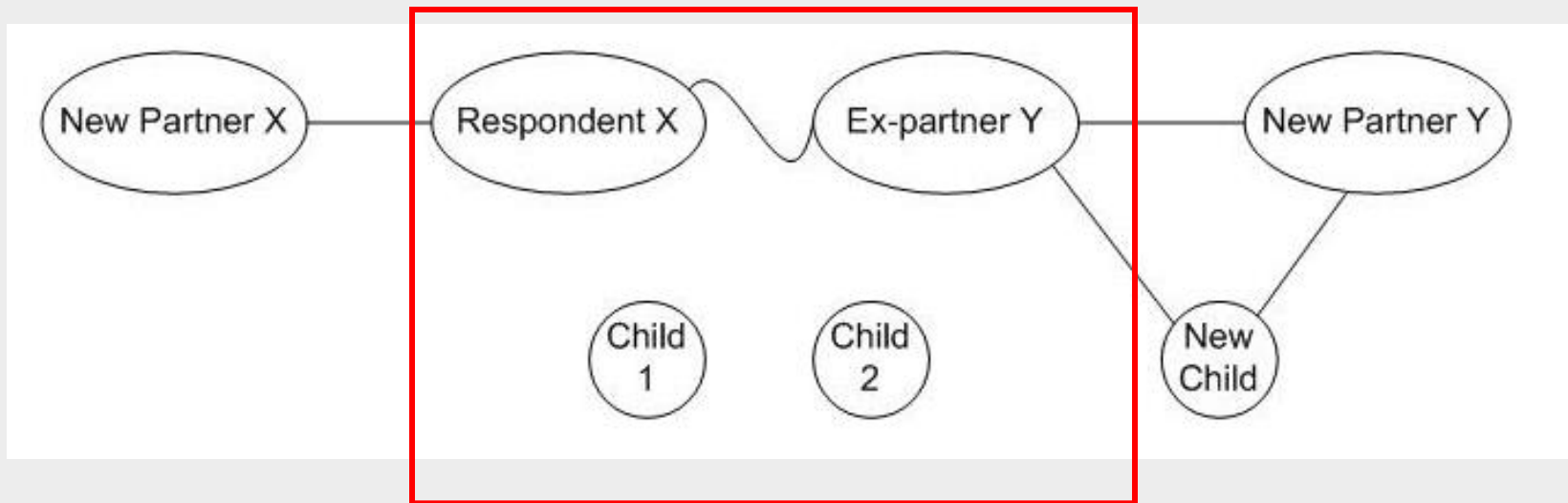
Family Routines and Rituals

	Routines	Rituals
Communication	instructional 'This need to be done'	symbolic 'This is who we are'
Commitment	momentary 'As long as the act takes'	affective 'Also after the act'
Continuity	no continuity in meaning	continuity in meaning

Methods

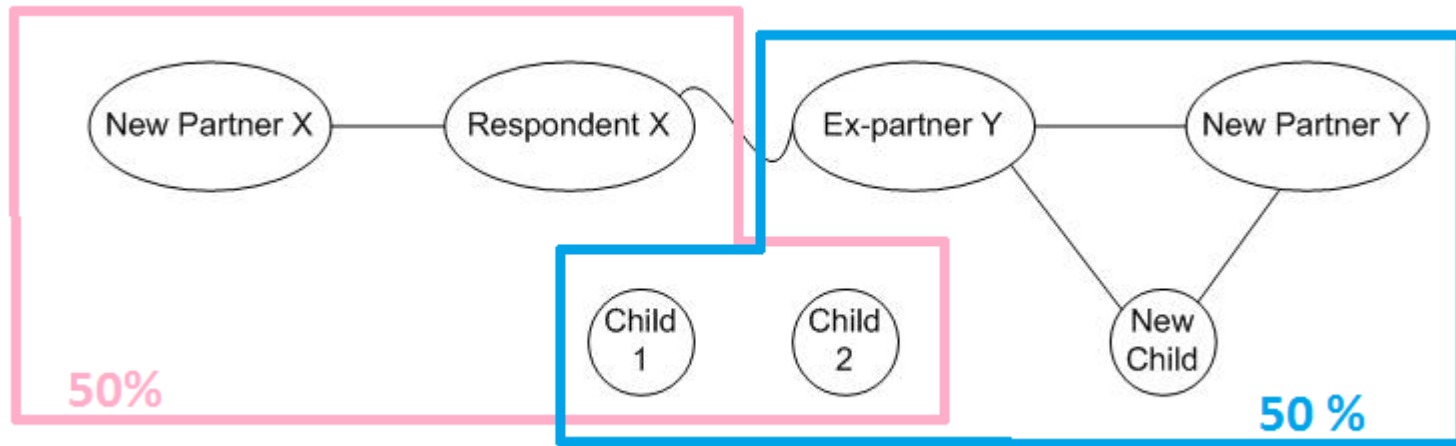
- Focus on: which family routines and rituals continue, in which way and with whom.
- 35 individual in-depth interviews with survey-respondents of the *Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS)*
- 15 co-parents (7 men & 8 women)
20 residential mothers
- Overview of every respondent

Post-separation family X



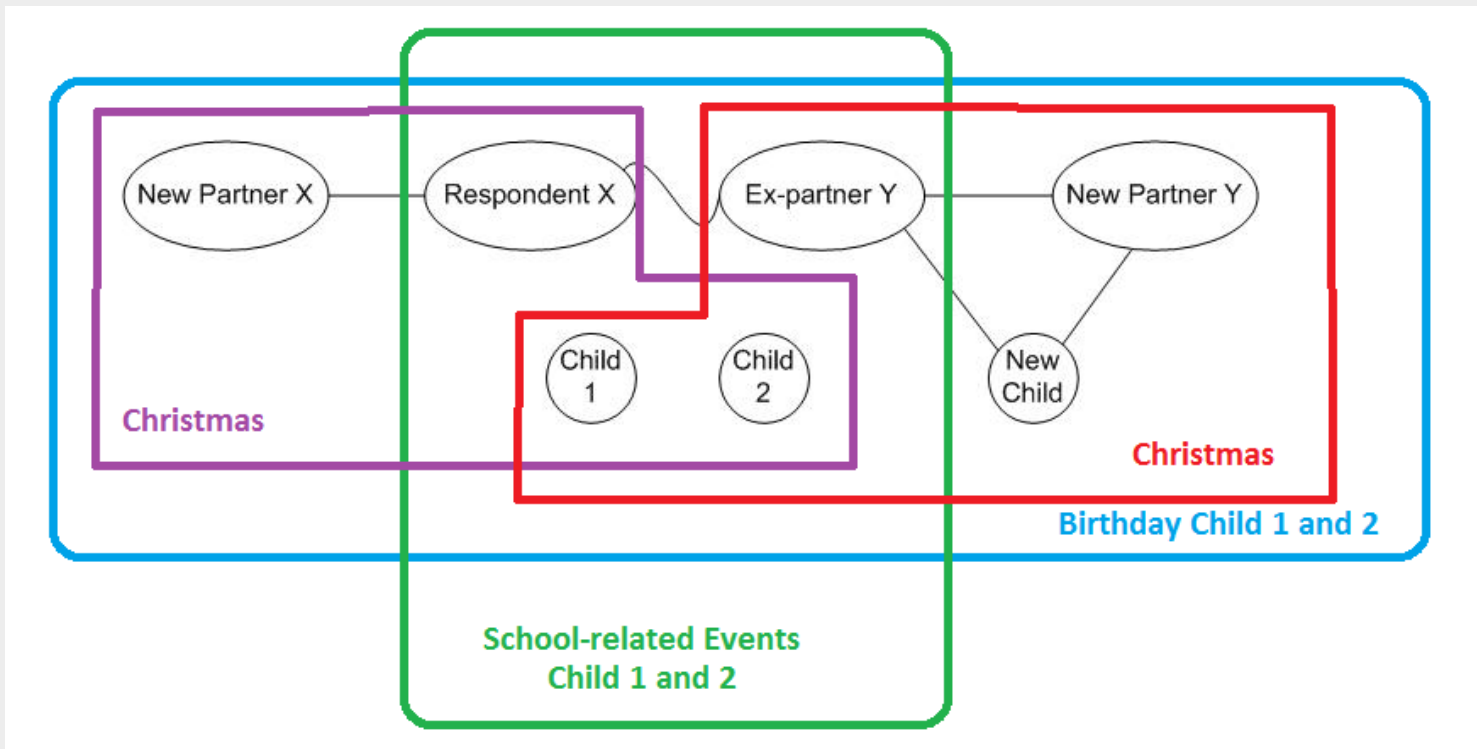
Post-separation family X

Living arrangement & Routines



Post-separation family X

Family rituals



3 types of post-separation families

	Type A Nuclear family	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
		n=12	n=16	n=7
Routines	Separately or together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Separately with both parents/ Only with residential parent	Only with residential parent
Rituals	Together with both parents	Together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Only with residential parent

Type 1: Shared rituals post-separation family

	Type A Nuclear family	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
		n=12	n=16	n=7
Routines	Separately or together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Separately with both parents/ Only with residential parent	Only with residential parent
Rituals	Together with both parents	Together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Only with residential parent

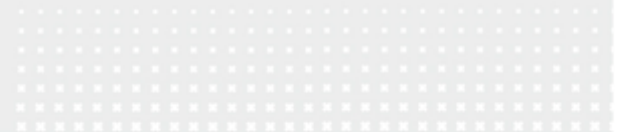
'We celebrate birthdays with the four of us [resp, ex-partner and their two children] by eating cake, going out or having diner at a restaurant. Having a moment as a family, because that is what we still are, although we live at different places.'

a co-mother



Type 1: Shared rituals post-separation family

- Result post-modern concept of separation
- Most co-parents, highly educated and < 1 km
- Moments former family is re-united
 - Traditional rituals
 - New rituals



'We also arrange a sort of family council once every six weeks, here or at her place and than we all come together. Our children, my ex-partner and nowadays also our new partners. We drink coffee and there is room to discuss all the things we want.'

a co-father



Type 1: Shared rituals post-separation family

- Not all have a good relationship
- New partners are a threat
- First years after separation



Type 2: Traditional post-separation family

	Type A Nuclear family	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
		n=12	n=16	n=7
Routines	Separately or together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Separately with both parents/ Only with residential parent	Only with residential parent
Rituals	Together with both parents	Together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Only with residential parent

'In the beginning you try to continue those family moments.

Birthdays are important days, so you try to celebrate them together. But it does not work that way.

Or at least, that is my experience. It faded away. You can not mix two separate families. That may be the perfect picture, but at the moment of separation you decide to live our own life.'

a residential mother

Type 2: Traditional post-separation family

- Most residential mothers, new partner, > 1 km
- New family replaces former family
- Minimizing communication with ex-partner

'He picks her up and brings her back home again. There is a good communication [sarcastic]; he uses the car horn when he arrives and than we know he is there. And sometimes it turns out that it is someone else who uses a car horn'.

a residential mother

Type 3: One-parent post-separation family

	Type A Nuclear family	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
		n=12	n=16	n=7
Routines	Separately or together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Separately with both parents/ Only with residential parent	Only with residential parent
Rituals	Together with both parents	Together with both parents	Separately with both parents	Only with residential parent

‘When she stays with her father for a week, he does not even cut her nails, for example.

He is only involved in the fun part.’

a residential mother

‘All the events at school, all the contact moments between school and the parents he is absent.

He is a real weekend daddy.’

a residential mother

Type 3: One-parent post-separation family

- All residential mothers
- > 10 km, low level of contact, no involvement ex-partner
- Minimizing communication with ex-partner:
what happens during the visits?

'For me it is easier. The less I talk to him, the easier it is for me. On the other hand, the less you talk to each other, the less you know of each other, if something is going on.'

a residential mother



Preliminary conclusions

- Two common pathways:
 - Shared ritual => traditional
 - One parent => traditional
- No shared routines: instrumental
- Not consistent with type of living arrangement
- Distance important factor
- Threats: level of conflict & new partner



Table 2. Characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Category	Type 1 n=12	Type 2 n=16	Type 3 n=7
Gender	female	9	12	7
	male	3	4	0
Arrangement	co-parenting	9	6	0
	weekend	3	10	7
Separated since	< 5 years	6	7	2
	> 5 and < 10 years	3	6	4
	> 10 years	3	3	1
Age kids at the moment of the interview	under 4	0	0	1
	5 tot 12	9	22	5
	12 e.o.	15	17	9
Age kids at the moment of separation	under 4	8	14	8
	5 tot 12	10	22	5
	12 e.o.	6	3	2
Distance	< 1 km	8	6	0
	< 10 km	4	7	2
	> 10 km	0	3	5
New partner	both	3	4	2
	resp	3	3	1
	ex	3	6	3
	both not	3	3	1
New child(ren)		1	2	2
Age	20 - 29 years	0	0	1
	30 - 39 years	0	0	3
	40 - 49 years	9	6	3
	> 50 years	3	1	0
Contracted work hours	No job	1	0	0
	Small part-time <25	2	2	3
	Large part-time 25 - 35	6	1	3
	Full-time (> 35)	3	4	1
Attained level of education	High	8	5	1
	Middle	4	1	4
	Low	0	1	2