

Preface

THE TRANSITION TO AN EDITED VOLUME

The work that eventually resulted in this international edited volume took its first tottering steps in 2007 at Yale University in New Haven. At that point we, the editors, decided to join forces and try to export the longitudinal interview study of parents-to-be that was being conducted by a team of researchers, including Daniela Grunow, Florian Schulz, Harald Rost, Marina Rupp, Hans-Peter Blossfeld, Anna Dechant and Annika Rinklake, at the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb) in Germany. As the editors of this volume, we are forever indebted to Karl-Ulrich Mayer who brought us together and, as the director of the Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course at Yale, provided us with a wonderful research environment as we started this international endeavour. In 2008, Marie Evertsson (PI), Jenny Alsarve, Katarina Boye and Christine Roman applied for and received funding for the Swedish part of the project and the search for additional country partners started. In 2009, we presented the project at the EQUALSOC (Economic Change, Quality of Life & Social Cohesion) network conference in Berlin. At this time, Sonia Bertolini (Italy), María José Gonzáles, Marta Domínguez-Folgueras and Irene Lapuerta (Spain) heard our presentation and were interested. Together with colleagues (see the authors of Chapters 8 and 9), they applied for funding in their respective countries, and as both the Italian and the Spanish teams were successful, this subsequently led to interviews being conducted in the period from 2010 to 2012. In 2010, Daniela Grunow received an ERC Starting Grant which expanded on the international comparison that laid the ground for this edited volume. As a part of this grant, the interviews with the Polish couples contained in this edited volume were conducted in 2011–12 by Maria Reimann, a PhD student financed by the APPARENT project (apparent-project.com, see Chapter 10). Apart from financing the Polish part of the project, the APPARENT project has been of vital importance by contributing to the financing of the researcher team meetings.

In 2010, we founded the Transparent network (transparent-project.com) and arranged the first meeting with the participating country teams

in Amsterdam. Apart from the already involved country representatives from Germany, Sweden, Italy and Spain, we also invited Stefanie Wiesmann who had conducted and analysed similar interviews with Dutch parents in 2004–2005 as part of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS, nkps.nl, see Wiesmann, 2010¹). Based on her experiences, we felt reassured and decided to use these data in a secondary data analysis, thereby adding also the Dutch case to this edited volume, analysed by Mirjam Verweij and Maria Reimann (see Chapter 6). Throughout this process, it has been vital for us to learn from the pioneer countries and research groups, while at the same time staying in close contact, discussing interview guidelines and data collection processes, as new teams joined the group. As indicated in the methods chapter (Chapter 3), it was clear that the original German guidelines needed to be adjusted to the different contexts. Hence, the teams needed to coordinate their various strategies of data collection and analysis. Therefore, the first, and to some degree also the second, workshop (which was hosted by the Spanish team in Barcelona in 2011) served to enable a discussion of the similarities and differences between countries in order to, as far as possible, make sure that the interview guidelines were streamlined while also leaving room for country variation. At the third workshop in Stockholm in 2012, we were happy to add the Czech team to the group, at the workshop represented by Olga Nešporová and Růžena Hornáková Stuchlá (from the Czech Republic, Chapter 11). The Swiss team joined a little later, after a meeting with Daniela Grunow in Lausanne. The data analysed by the authors of the Swiss country study stem from the project 'Devenir Parent' (interviews conducted in 2006–2007) and are a subsample of the original dataset to match the research design used within the Transparent network. In March 2014, we had a first complete draft version of the edited volume and invited all authors and a group of distinguished experts from the areas of qualitative methods, comparative research, transitions to parenthood and gender, as external readers and commentators, to a workshop in Frankfurt am Main. The discussions and suggestions brought up at this workshop were vital in informing revisions of single chapters and in guiding the final stages of editing this volume.

In the research culminating in this edited volume, we have learned a lot about how parents-to-be in eight European countries plan and prepare for the transition to parenthood. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the 166 couples, the mothers and fathers-to-be who let us (the editors and authors of this book) into their homes and lives and shared their thoughts and ideas about the period to come with us. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

In addition to being about the journey to parenthood, this book is a result of our own scientific journey aimed at linking the couples' specific experiences and individual expectations to the everyday realities provided by the gender culture, family policy and socio-economic context surrounding them. We would like to thank the authors who have contributed to this edited volume for their trust in, and patience with, us as editors and for their scholarly dedication throughout this scientific journey. It has been a true pleasure working with you.

This work could not have existed without the many people who have generously helped us by providing comments on the various drafts of the chapters assembled in this edited volume. We would like to especially thank the participants of the Transparent Workshop in Frankfurt am Main in 2014: Sandra Buchler, Rineke van Daalen, Heather Hofmeister, Giseline Kuipers, Phil Langer, Tina Miller, Bren Neale, Ann Nilsen, Livia Olah, Claudius Wagemann, and the members of the Apparent team at Goethe University Frankfurt. An extra thank you goes out to Bren Neale for commenting on the methods chapter during the final stages of completing this volume. We would also like to thank Gunnar Andersson, Sandra Buchler, Ann-Zofie Duvander, Karin Halldén, and the country teams for providing comments on the final chapter. Thanks also to the participants of the 'Love and care in times of capitalism' conference at Goethe University for their comments on the introductory chapter. Special thanks to Sandra Buchler for providing highly valuable comments to the editors and country teams throughout the process of language editing. Many thanks to Luisa Bischoff for research assistance during the editing process.

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NOTE

1. Wiesmann, S. (2010) *24/7 Negotiation in Couples' Transition to Parenthood*. Doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University.