Preface

This volume is one of four published books containing the research stemming from the international and multidisciplinary research program ‘GLOBALIFE – Life Courses in the Globalization Process,’ funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (Hanover, Germany) and established and directed by Hans-Peter Blossfeld. The project began in September 1999 at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, and moved to Bamberg University, Germany, in September 2002; it concluded in early 2005. In total, the project employed 23 scientists directly and contracted an additional 44 external collaborators from 17 different countries. It produced about 80 working papers in addition to these edited volumes and an extensive list of other publications. Our profound thanks go to the Volkswagen Foundation in Hanover for their financial support that made this ambitious project possible.

GLOBALIFE studied the implications of the globalization process for the life courses of individuals in various OECD-type societies. The project examined how globalization impacts four aspects of the life course: (1) the transition to adulthood, (2) men’s mid-career mobility, (3) women’s mid-career employment transitions; and (4) late careers and retirement. This volume represents the work generated in the third phase of this project.

We examine how women in 13 industrialized societies navigate work and family careers in an era of globalization and rising economic uncertainty. Globalization has powerfully shaped both national economies and individual life courses during the last decades. The emergence of a single worldwide market has therefore enhanced the number of competitors and increased the demand for flexible labor forces. Mid-career women may be affected by globalized working environments due to their outsider position in many labor markets and the various competing demands for their time across paid employment and unpaid caregiving.

There are many people to thank in a project of this magnitude. During the preparation of this volume, the project consisted of core project members located at Bamberg University, including: Sandra Buchholz, Daniela Grunow, Dana Hamplová, Steffen Hillmert, Dirk Hofäcker, Karin Kurz, Detlev Lück, Štěpánka Pollnerová and Kadri Täht. We thank all for their counsel and support. We especially recognize project members on site who contributed chapters to this volume, including Sandra Buchholz, Daniela Grunow, Dana Hamplová, Dirk Hofäcker and Detlev Lück. Our gratitude goes to Melinda Mills for advice and support throughout the research and manuscript preparation, and to Fabrizio Bernardi for valuable editorial
advice. We also thank Karin Kurz who trained the student assistants and gave us helpful advice for preparing the typescript in addition to substantive research support. We also thank Ingeborg McIntyre, Petra Ries and Kathrina Schafhauser for competent administrative support.

Many student assistants were involved in the research phase whom we would like to thank, including Wiebke Paulus, Simone Bloem, Katrin Busch, Cathrin Conradi, Fabian Czerwinski, Melanie Flügel, Lena Gehringer, Eva-Maria Goertz, Daniel Halbritter, Karin Handke, Evelyn Hock, Stefan Kirsch, Juliana Körnert, Jens Kratzmann, Kerstin Künsebeck, Jochen Landes, Alexander Lenz, Nicole Maul, Sonja Meixner, Corinna Mergner, Jan Mewes, Monika Schmich, Anna-Maria Thomas, Joanna Urban, Pia Wagner, Ulrike Wolf, Dagmar Zanker and Markus Zielonka.

Christian Haag, Wolfgang Kraus, Susanne Lindner, Ilona Relikowski and Susanne Stedtfeld showed exceptional dedication and assistance in the preparation and deserve special thanks for assisting with the typescript in addition to their research support. Extraordinary thanks go to John Bendix who came in at the right moment to improve the consistency, accuracy and readability of the chapters in our book, well beyond our expectations.

An important goal of the GLOBALIFE project was to create and utilize an international research network that would collectively pursue specific substantive and methodological issues in the analysis of life courses in the globalization process. This volume would not be possible without the external contributors to this volume, experts in their respective countries, who devoted time and energy to the project by traveling for workshops, corresponding regularly over the course of several years, and above all producing top-quality research to illuminate the life courses of mid-career women. Our gratitude goes to Matthijs Kalmijn, Ruud Luijkx, Thomas Korpi, Charlotte Stern, Sören Leth-Sörensen, Erzsébet Bukodi, Péter Róbert, Jelena Helemäe, Ellu Saar, Ania Plomien, Katrin Golsch, Emilio A. Parrado, Maurizio Pisati, Antonio Schizzerotto and Carles Simó Noguera for their enthusiastic, professional, and cooperative teamwork throughout.

Our appreciation goes to David Vince, Jo Betteridge, Catherine Elgar and Felicity Plester at Edward Elgar Publishing for their kind and helpful support through the process of publication. We would also like to thank Phyllis Moen, Karl Ulrich Meyer, and the many individuals who responded to our work when it was presented at various conferences and who helped improve the final outcome. Finally, we are in debt to the hundreds of thousands of women who gave their time and information to surveys over the course of decades that enable this work to be possible.

Hans-Peter Blossfeld
Heather Hofmeister
Bamberg University, Germany