Preface

This volume is one of two books of research from the Transparent network (transparent-project.com), an international research cooperation for studies of the transition to parenthood, established in 2010 and coordinated by Daniela Grunow and Marie Evertsson. At the time, quantitative research consistently showed a widening gap between increasingly egalitarian gender ideologies and actual patterns of behaviour, and this trend has continued since. In addition, evidence started to accumulate that financial reasons alone did not explain why so few couples realized an egalitarian division of paid and unpaid work during the transition to parenthood. Research also indicated that many young couples desired more equity in their division of paid work, housework and care giving than they managed to realize. At the same time, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, the work-care divisions established among new parents did not reflect the couples' joint best economic interest. The discrepancies between couples' actual and desired divisions of paid and unpaid forms of work and care were also known to have important social consequences. Yet, when we started this research, little was known about how norms change over the adult life course, how individuals create and maintain their gender identities in the early stages of family formation, and how nascent and new parents weigh his earnings and career prospects against hers when deciding about their future as a family. Studying these processes longitudinally and cross-nationally while listening to the couples' own stories was the aim of the Transparent network and ultimately resulted in this volume.

As outlined in detail in the volume preceding this one,¹ this joint comparative endeavour started in 2007 at Yale University in New Haven and was supported directly and indirectly by many different research institutions and various sources of funding over the years, which the authors contributing to this volume acknowledge in each of the chapters contained in this book. In addition, we, the editors of this volume would like to thank our host institutions, the Goethe University Frankfurt and the Department of Sociology and the Swedish Institute for Social Research at Stockholm University for supporting this research by granting us research time. Daniela Grunow would also like to acknowledge financial support from the European Research Council through an ERC Starting Grant (Grant agreement no. 263651), from the Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften, Bad Homburg, through a Goethe

Fellowship and from the German Research Foundation (DFG, Project “The household division of domestic labour as a process”, directed by Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Marina Rupp) and the Bavarian State Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Family and Women (Project “Between dreams and reality”), for conducting the German interviews at the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (ifb) in Germany. Marie Evertsson gratefully acknowledges funding from the Swedish Research Council (VR project no. 2008-1816), the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte project no. 2014-2347) and Stockholm University Linnaeus Center on Social Policy and Family Dynamics in Europe.

Throughout the long research process leading to this edited volume, we have engaged with and learned from different scholars and research groups in Europe, who have pioneered prospective longitudinal qualitative research with couples and parents in their home countries. Over the years, we have stayed in close contact with the researchers involved in the Transparent network and this edited volume while preparing, conducting and analysing interviews with nascent and new parents in nine European countries. For this volume, we, the editors, would like to thank the many scholars and research groups who have discussed our work-in-progress with us, you know who you are, and in particular Thordis Reimer (University of Hamburg), who commented on an early draft of the methods chapter (Chapter 2). Special thanks to Luisa Bischoff for helping with the organizational aspects of coordinating the final stages of completing this volume, in particular for careful research assistance and formatting work.

Readers of the previous volume *Couples' Transitions to Parenthood: Analysing Gender and Work in Europe* may wonder what has happened to the Dutch couples, as we were unable to follow their transition to parenthood in this present volume. The authors of the Dutch chapter in the previous volume, Maria Reimann and Mirjam Verweij, were unfortunately unable to contribute a follow-up chapter on the Dutch couples. We refer the readers interested in the experiences of these couples to the doctoral dissertation by Stephanie Wiesmann.² In this present volume, we learn about transitions to parenthood in another European country instead, thanks to Eva-Maria Schmidt, Ulrike Zartler and Susanne Vogl, who conducted longitudinal interviews with expectant parents during their transitions to parenthood in Austria.

In the research leading to this edited volume, we have learned a lot about how dual-earner parents prepare for and experience the transition to parenthood in different European countries. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the couples and parents of a new-born who shared their thoughts and stories with us; the authors of the chapters and the editors of this book.

In addition, we would like to thank the authors who have contributed to this edited volume for their scholarly dedication to this joint research project and

their continued trust in and patience with us as the editors. It has been great fun working with you and we will miss our constructive but yet joyful meetings. Thank you for demonstrating how powerful qualitative longitudinal research can be, especially if performed in long-term cross-national collaboration and scholarly exchange!

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Daniela Grunow and Marie Evertsson

NOTES

1. Grunow, D. and M. Evertsson (eds) (2016), *Couples' Transitions to Parenthood: Analysing Gender and Work in Europe*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
2. Wiesmann, S. (2010), '24/7 Negotiation in couple's transition to parenthood', Doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University.