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Race, Kinship and the Ambivalence of Identity

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Introduction

In this chapter I explore the changing connections between 'race' and 'kinship'.[1] Both are realms in which identities, individual and collective, are constituted. Both are realms where ideas about genetics (and 'blood') have been and continue to be central. I argue that a key relationship between race and kinship, evident especially but not only in the Western world, is based on what I call race-kinship congruity. This is the idea that people who are related by consanguineous kinship should also have a 'racial' appearance that is congruent with – explicable in terms of – their kinship connections. The idea is based on longstanding notions of shared 'substance' (blood, genes) that are common to racialized and kinship thinking in many areas of the world. Race-kinship congruity has recently been unsettled by new technologies of reproduction, including the biotechnology of assisted reproduction and the bureaucratic technology of transnational adoption: both have the potential to undo the assumption that the 'substances' underlying racialized appearance and kinship should flow in parallel along genealogical routes. But, I argue, this unsettling does not have predictable or unidirectional consequences: the way is opened both for more deterministic reckonings of identity, based on simple notions of biology and genes, and for more flexible reckonings of identity, themselves deriving in part from the unsettling of the meaning of 'biology' and 'genes'.

Race-kinship congruity has been a variable construct, historically and geographically; it has offered different possibilities for thinking about human relatedness and racial identity. While new technologies of reproduction tend to focus attention on genetic connections, they represent a new assemblage which reshapes existing ideas about race and kinship, rather than a radical departure from them. While it is legitimate to say that we have entered an era of biologization, geneticization, biosociality and biological citizenship (Franklin 2001; Gibel Azoulay 2006; Lippman 1991; Rabinow 1992; Rose 2007), and perhaps also to fear that

this leads to greater biological determinism in reckoning kinship, race, identity and personhood (Lippman 1991; Nelkin and Lindee 1995), it is also helpful to mark the continuities with previous modes of thinking and to recognize the persistent coexistence of determinist with less determinist modes of thinking.

People appropriate and deploy scientific knowledge in varied ways that are more and less deterministic. Biology, while being subject to representation as the underlying key to everything, is now also potentially understandable as less determinate and more 'cultural', due precisely to the technological manipulations to which it is subject and to the increasing perception, by Western publics at least, that science is not outside society (Franklin 2000, 2003; Pálsson 2008; Strathern 1992; Wade 2002, 2007).

Race and Kinship

Racial thinking is based on a complex and shifting set of ideas about certain aspects of physical appearance, linked to descent and the inheritance of 'natural' and 'cultural' traits. These ideas have developed within a specific history of originally European and then global colonialism – as opposed to the ideas being simply one mode among a universal set of human ways of thinking about difference. Racial thinking is thinking about appearance, inherited substance and behaviour in relation to specific categories which emerge out of colonialism. Racial categories are the product of historical, political and economic contexts – they are social constructs in the usual terminology. These categories have shown remarkable historical resilience and, with multiple variations, have divided people into a small number of groups – roughly, Africans, Europeans, Native Americans, Asians and perhaps Australasians. Perhaps not surprisingly, the categories correspond broadly to the division (originally by Europeans) of the world into continents. When I talk about race, I refer to this complex of ideas and categories. I am talking about ideas about human difference, not about 'real' biological differences, although I am aware that recent debates in genomics and human variation have re-awakened the idea that continental geography corresponds to human genetic variation in ways that some refer to as 'racial' (see Koenig, Lee and Richardson 2008).

Racial thinking has strong links to Euro-American (and probably other) styles of thinking about kinship that are based on notions of 'blood' and the transmission of 'natural' and 'cultural' traits. If the key (although not the only) mode of establishing kinship connections is thought to be via substances, such as blood, passed on through sexual reproduction, then it is clear that race, as defined above, is deeply implicated in kinship and vice versa (Haraway 1997: 309, n. 1; Nelson 2008; Palmié 2007; Williams 1995). Kinship is important in order to understand race because racial identities imply notions of inheritance, both 'natural' and 'cultural', for which the most crucial means of transmission is the family, at least in Euro-American kinship (Wade 2002: Chapter 4).

In explaining mechanisms of heredity, Aristotle said that 'in nature, like produces like'. This underlying principle of continuity, which linked appearance (but also character) to sexual reproduction and kinship, was, for Aristotle, patrilineal and

connected father to child. It could be modified by other factors (maternal blood in the womb, diet, climate), which also impinged on the process of (re)production and explained why a child was not identical to his or her father (Wade 2002: 47). The basic idea that offspring should resemble their parents, while they may also differ from them, has been extremely durable in Western culture (Strathern 1992: 11–30) and indeed more widely (Astuti, Solomon and Carey 2004). Indeed, Herzfeld's comment that 'the idea that physical resemblance (the semiotic property of iconicity) reveals the presence of common blood predated the popularization of DNA-based metaphors and is likely to have facilitated that process' (2007: 319) barely hints at the historical depth of this idea.

In Latin America, the concept is recognized in such sayings as '*de tal palo, tal astilla*' (from such a tree, such a splinter) and '*hijo de tigre sale pintado*' (the son of a tiger comes out striped). In English, it is revealed in the phrase 'like father, like son' and in reference to a child as 'a chip off the old block'. The simplicity of such stock phrases hides the coexistence of both similarity and difference. No child looks exactly like a parent, so particular perceived resemblances are picked out in order to build relationships and for strategic purposes (Marre and Bestard 2009).

These ideas about family resemblance are independent of race, but when race is a factor in reckoning identity for a person and assigning value in a society, kinship can become racialized. This is especially the case when sexual relationships are mediated by racial hierarchy, as they have been all over the Americas (Hodes 1999; Wade 2009) and elsewhere, such that sexual reproduction that crosses the racial boundaries of a given society becomes highly charged with meanings. People then become very interested in the racialized appearance of a child in relation to its parents. The underlying assumption is that the racialized phenotype of the child can ultimately be explained by its parentage – i.e., race-kinship congruity. But the same parents can give birth to siblings who are quite varied in terms of racialized appearance, so this is not a mechanical process of reckoning.

In addition, the link between appearance and social identity is a profoundly cultural and historical one. Fields, for example, comments on 'the well-known anomaly of American racial convention that considers a white woman capable of giving birth to a black child but denies that a black woman can give birth to a white child' (Fields 1982: 149). For reasons linked to the particular character of the North American colonial system and the subsequent emergence of the U.S. nation, children who are the product of unions between parents assigned to different 'races' are allocated to the subordinate racial category. This creates a clear boundary between 'black' and 'white' and maintains a system of race-kinship congruity in which it is deemed 'that "black" people ought to have "black" ancestors and "white" people have "white" ones' (Palmié 2007: 213). This is a version of race-kinship congruity that assumes strict lineality.

In Latin America 'mixed-race' people are not necessarily assigned to the racial class of the socially subordinate parent: mixedness, or being *mestizo*, is a recognized or even predominant identity. Race-kinship congruity takes a more flexible form in that a straightforward continuity of racial identity between parents and child is

not assumed. While two parents who are 'black' (whether by self-identification or ascribed identity) would expect and be expected to have a child that is also 'black', parents who are '*mestizo*' by some reckoning (and there are lots of possibilities of identity and appearance within that broad category) could give birth to children who looked more or less '*moreno*' (brown) or '*claro*' (light) or, to use the Mexican term, '*güero*' (white, blond). Within a sibling set, one child might be the '*negro*' (black) or '*moreno*' of the family and another the '*blanco*'. In Colombia I found that a darker skinned child might be nicknamed '*el negro*': children of different families with this same nickname might look very different from each other, but they were all the darker skinned child of the family (Wade 1993). Differences in skin tone and racialized appearance make marked differences to how people feel they were treated in their families, as Moreno Figueroa (2008) shows in detail for Mexican women.

Within this variability, race-kinship congruity operates in a specific way: the racialized appearance of children, while variable, is still held to be explicable in terms of a child's immediate parentage and its deeper genealogy. People are highly sensitive to racialized ancestry as perceived in appearance. Relatives of a newborn are interested to see *cómo salió el bebé* (how did the baby come out; i.e., what it looked like in racial terms, especially how dark- or light-skinned it was). In Hispanic America the well-known phrase '*¿y tu abuela dónde está?*' ('And your grandmother, where is she?') is used to deflate the pretensions of a person whose appearance is perceived (to the local eye) to indicate some indigenous or black ancestry, yet who is denying such ancestry or perhaps deriding indigenous or black people. Interestingly, as in the U.S. case, it is the (grand)mother who is seen to pass on the traces of blackness or indigeneity. This gestures to the common American theme of sexual relations (or abuses) occurring, or having occurred in the past, most commonly between white men and black or indigenous women. Race-kinship congruity in the Americas has regional variants – more and less deterministic – which share common traits.

Changing Connections between Race and Kinship

The changing terrain of connections between race and kinship demonstrates that race-kinship congruity is not an ahistorical construct but varies according to context, as we have already seen for different regional contexts in the Americas.

In the late nineteenth century, when race was defined by European and North American scientists in terms of biological 'types', there was a strict relationship between race and kinship. For this era, Banton (1987) identifies a shift away from older notions of race as lineage, when a racial group was conceived as the descendants of a founding ancestor, who may have been phenotypically varied. The key idea was common ancestry. By the nineteenth century, says Banton, concepts of race had shifted towards the idea of racial type, in which certain aspects of physical appearance and other biological characteristics were the key. Yet there is a clear continuity across this shift in the sense that these racialized phenotypical features were seen as being transmitted through descent, albeit that, by the very late nineteenth century, descent itself was beginning to be seen in more limited biological terms of a 'germ plasm', a determining

essence transmitted by sexual reproduction (Wade 2002: 59). Still, descent could be deduced from appearance; phenotype was a clue to inherited racial essence.

Racial type entailed ideals of purity. Individuals of a given 'race' should intermarry and procreate with others of their type. Some scientists at this time treated racial type as equivalent to biological species, despite abundant evidence that interracial sex produced fertile offspring. Sidestepping this evidence, it was said that 'miscegenation' in the long run led to degeneration and weakness. In terms of kinship, then, families of one racial type should produce offspring of the same racial type. Race-kinship congruity was a strict norm and was understood in terms of the boundaries established by the concept of racial type. Eugenic policies could improve racial type by encouraging beneficial matches (and hygienic environments), but mate selection should operate within the boundaries of racial type (Kevles 1995). Departure from this congruity of race and kinship – resulting in 'mixed-race' individuals – provoked moral disapprobation and anxiety (Stoler 1992).

The historically specific character of constructs of race-kinship congruity is revealed in Stoler's work. She shows how in the Dutch East Indies colonial administrators and governors were concerned not just with sexual relations between whites and natives, which they saw as contaminating for the whites and productive of problematic offspring, but also with other relations of intimacy, such as white children's native nursemaids, who might also breastfeed their mistresses' babies. The quasifamilial closeness of the native women and the ingestion of their milk by white children were seen as potentially threatening and contaminating. 'Mixture' could occur through other channels than sex. Kinship embraced varied forms of substantial connectedness (Carsten 2001) and race-kinship congruity thus involved policing several dimensions of 'cultural intimacy' (Herzfeld 2007). In short, there were a number of modes of reckoning race through kinship. In Lamarckian style, biology itself was shaped, in part, by behaviour (by leading morally 'proper' lives, white people could pass on physical purity to their children) and this gave a less deterministic quality to biology than we might assume from our current perspective.

In Latin America in the same period, race-kinship congruity took a particular form. Elites generally practised a close correspondence between race and kinship, maintaining their own purity, as they had long done. Yet ideas about race, purveyed by intellectuals in the context of pondering on the fate of the nation, tended to avoid the biological determinism of scientific racism and ventured into a more cultural conception of race, developing the Lamarckian tendencies that also existed in Euro-American science (Stepan 1991). Perceived differences within national populations – between indigenous, white, black and mixed people – might be talked about in terms of culture, 'spirit', 'soul', history and tradition (De la Cadena 2000). Faced with the undeniably mixed character of their national populations, these intellectuals tried to dissociate kinship from race by talking about the latter in terms of cultural heritage. Their nations' departures from the scientific racial norm of race-kinship congruity could thus be cast in a more benign light. However, 'culture' in this idiom could retain a quasi-natural aspect, especially when phrased as a 'spirit' or 'soul' that was seen as virtually innate.

Nevertheless, race and kinship remained closely linked. In Mexico and some Andean countries, national icons were made of the figure of the *mestizo* or the *cholo* or *chola* (a term indicating a person of indigenous and European descent). The kinship that nationalism so frequently invokes as a unifying trope was phrased in terms of racial mixture (Appelbaum, Macpherson and Rosemblatt 2003). Meanwhile, as Caulfield (2000) shows for early twentieth-century Brazil, the 'honour' of white women was in practice protected by white men (for example, in the courts), who were hostile to the fracturing of a straightforward version of race-kinship congruity that race mixture threatened.

During the twentieth century, and especially after the Second World War, this Latin American move away from understanding race as a biological reality towards seeing it as a cultural reality became standard, in the West at least. Overt reference to biology and even to the term 'race', which carried connotations of previous scientific racial typologies, tended to be replaced by reference to 'ethnicity' and cultural difference – although, in fact, the concept of race retained a significant place in the life sciences as a description of human biological variation (Lieberman and Reynolds 1996; Reardon 2005: Chapter 2). Meanwhile, culture could become quasi-naturalized and essentialist and could still be deployed to discriminate against the same populations once defined in biologically racial terms (Balibar 1991; Gilroy 1987; Stolcke 1995). In this shift towards 'cultural racism', the congruence of race and kinship has apparently been undone. If difference and belonging are to be defined in terms of cultural features, then it should not matter what one's procreative partner or one's offspring look like 'racially' or where that appearance derives from in terms of ideas about ancestry. Yet it is readily evident that such things continue to matter to many people. Ideas about 'racial' ancestry and appearance – and the way these are conjugated in relations of kinship and family – continue to be very important, as many 'mixed-race' people attest (Olumide 2002; Parker and Song 2001).

In addition, culture cannot be separated so easily from ideas about biology or, more generally, 'human nature' (a phrase which nicely equivocates between the biological and the cultural). Concepts of race have never been only about biology, least of all during the era of scientific racism. If, in the eighteenth century, Linnaeus produced descriptions of races that indiscriminately included what we would now call biological and cultural features (Wade 2002: 55), it is also true that in the late nineteenth-century era of anthropometrical descriptions of racial types, there was much attention paid to the moral qualities of the 'races'. During the twentieth century, biology and culture became increasingly separated as analytic concepts, as anthropologists and others began to challenge scientific racism and its biological determinism, and to see human biological difference as relatively unimportant compared to cultural differences. Yet biology and culture continue to be entangled in everyday life, in large part through the medium of the family, where biological and cultural connections are forged together and where distinctions between what a person is through birth and what he or she is through upbringing become blurred (Edwards 2000). As Hall says of the current concepts of ethnicity which are apparently only about 'culture', the 'articulation of difference with Nature (biology

and the genetic) is present, but displaced *though kinship and intermarriage*' (2000: 223, emphasis in original).

In the last few decades, 'nature', 'biology' and 'kinship' have all been undergoing changes, prompted by biotechnological advances in the fields of genetics and assisted reproduction, and new forms of family arrangements such as transnational adoption and gay and lesbian families.[2] This raises the question of whether patterns of race-kinship congruity change as a result. The impact of DNA sequencing on scientific and popular concepts of race (and on the relationship between scientific and lay concepts) has been hotly debated (Brodwin 2002; Koenig, Lee and Richardson 2008; Pálsson 2007: Chapter 7) and there is uncertainty about the long-term effects of genomic technologies. When we come to look at other technologies – assisted conception and transnational adoption – the same uncertainty prevails. There seem to be ways in which these new modes of kinship reckoning serve as arenas in which existing popular ideas about race are not only reiterated but also renaturalized, and in which these ideas about race shape and constrain kinship connections. But there also seem to be ways in which existing ideas about race are challenged, destabilized and even denaturalized, and in which ideas about kinship are also reshaped.

Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs)

Much of the data on social contexts in which ideas about race intersect with practices of assisted conception seems to show that the underlying logic of race-kinship congruity is reinforced in these contexts. Thompson (2003) notes generally that 'phenotypic and other descriptors of race and ethnicity are one of the few things that form a common differentiating, kinship-conferring and legitimising organisational principle for the world's egg, sperm and embryo markets'. Campbell (2007) found evidence of donor-recipient matching practices for assisted conception in Spain, the U.K. and Norway, which used commonsense categories of race as a criterion.

In Spain, for example, the phenotypes of egg donors and receivers are classified and matched in terms of skin colour, eye colour, facial features, hair colour and texture, body size and blood group (Bestard 2002). This is to accord with Spanish law (Law 35/1988, Article 6, paragraph 5), which states that 'Donors should have the maximum phenotypic and immunological similarities and the maximum possibilities of compatibility with the receiver and her family environment' (cited in Bestard 2002). For at least some time, the IVF clinic under study by Bestard and his colleagues used a commonsense threefold racial classification of black, white and yellow, although this was adapted as demand grew. National legislation in Spain establishes the data that are to be collected on donors and users of ARTs, and these include physical data such as skin colour (pale or brown) and 'race'.[3]

In the U.K. too, racial matching was for a time officially advised, although the language used slipped between 'ethnicity' and 'race'. In October 2002 the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) amended section 3.18 of the fifth edition of its Code of Practice to read as follows:

> Where treatment is provided for a man and woman together, centres should strive as far as possible to match the physical characteristics and ethnic background of the donor [of gametes] to those of the infertile partner (or in the case of embryo donation, to both partners) unless there are good reasons for departing from this … For example, those seeking treatment should not be treated with gametes provided by a donor of a different racial origin unless there are compelling reasons for doing so.[4]

In the sixth edition of the Code (2003), the word 'racial' was dropped, while in the seventh edition (2007), all reference to ethnicity and race was removed, leaving an injunction to avoid any harm, 'physical, psychological or medical', to either the recipient or child.[5] These changes suggest a desire to publicly avoid policies that might smack of eugenics. Nevertheless, donors are advised that the information form they are required to fill in may ask for their 'ethnic group' as well as their 'physical characteristics'.[6]

This uneven tendency to match reproducers with gamete donors according to perceived or self-identified racial categories is not always the case. Sometimes, there are clear strategies of whitening involved, which suggest a desire to transform racialized identities towards an aesthetic norm of whiteness, as in longstanding practices of 'passing' in the U.S.A. and whitening in Latin America. Nahman's study of an Israeli IVF clinic shows that female clients often expressed a preference for light-skinned egg donors and ones without physical traits thought to be 'too Jewish' (Nahman 2006). This contrasts only in part with Kahn's (2000: 133) finding that the ideal egg donor was thought to be an unmarried Jewish woman. Teman found that some Israeli couples using surrogate mothers voiced doubts about dark-skinned surrogates who, they feared, might physically darken the baby in the process of gestation (Teman 2000; Wade 2002: 106–7). In the U.K. too, clinics reported in 2003 that some Asian and Middle Eastern women, whether living in or visiting the U.K., requested eggs from 'white' women and were able to receive them, despite the HFEA's guideline at the time that a 'compelling reason' was needed to depart from ethnic matching (*Sunday Times*, 16 November 2003: 7). In such cases, couples can have a child that might, from an abstract, objective perspective, be classified as 'mixed race', without there being a 'mixed race' sexual or social relationship between the parents. It is also worth noting that these women requested white women's eggs, whereas the same effect – from a mathematical point of view – could be achieved by requesting white men's sperm. Gendered aspects of ART usage – linked to ideas about the need for secure paternity – doubtless cross-cut calculations about racialized appearance.[7]

Both racial matching and racial whitening (or purposive mismatching) occur: there is not 'a consistent or paradigmatic operation for understanding contemporary racialisation in the context of assisted conception' (Wiegman 2003: 315). Instead there appears to be a process of what Thompson (2005: 145) calls 'strategic naturalisation' (and, I would add, strategic culturalization) as people seek to build their own networks of kin and narratives about family and kin. This leads to uneven effects. On the one hand, notions of strict race-kinship congruity appear in almost

nineteenth-century form, requiring generational continuity of racial identity between parents and children. This is often phrased in terms of avoiding harm to the child: the assumption is that 'racial mismatching' within the family could lead to trauma. On the other hand, people are disrupting such strict genealogical lineality with a consumerist logic of individual choice (Faubion and Hamilton 2007). Race-kinship congruity appears in much more flexible – one might say Latin American – form, with a family containing people of varying racialized appearance. Even the underlying principle of race-kinship congruity is unsettled to some extent, because the racialized appearance of the child is, potentially, not readily explicable in terms of its assumed parentage – two dark-skinned parents may have a light-skinned child – although it is always possible to make recourse to ideas about the unexpected ways children come out. Of course, even these disruptions of congruity end up reinforcing racial hierarchies, as they reiterate the value of whiteness. As Herzfeld (2007: 316) says, 'kinship around the world remains entangled with the aftershocks of colonialism'. If white parents were to request gametes from black donors, that would be a different matter …

Such eventualities do occur, but they tend to be seen as cases of IVF that 'go wrong'. They also reveal the unpredictable effects of ARTs on notions of kinship and race. Tyler looks at an IVF mixup that resulted in 'black' twins being born to a white mother in July 2002 in the U.K. In this case the mixup was due to a black man's sperm being mistakenly used to fertilize the white woman's ovum (Tyler 2007). Newspaper coverage of the event was ambivalent. Some papers emphasized the 'shock' and 'horror' of the mixup and one expert was cited to the effect that the mother might have a case for suing the National Health Service for negligence and 'battery' (i.e., an assault against her bodily integrity). Here the disjuncture between the racial identities of the mother and the children (identified as black, even though they could have been seen as 'mixed race') was emphasized in ways that obeyed a strictly lineal logic of race-kinship congruity. Other papers sympathized with the white mother's reported attachment to the two babies that she had nurtured in her womb, also citing the fact that the legal mother is the woman who actually gives birth to a child. (This was before it had been established that the children had a genetic connection to the mother.) In this case the difference in racial identity was not seen as a block to creating some kind of family feeling, although this was always tempered by phrases to the effect that the mother loved the babies 'even though' they were black. In the end, the legal process decided that the legal mother was the white woman and the legal father was the black man. However, it was recommended that the white woman's husband adopt the children and become the legal father. In the end, then, race-kinship congruity was fractured by the white woman's genetic and gestational connection with the children: two white parents ended up with 'black' or perhaps 'mixed race' children.

Tyler also collected data on the reactions to the mixup by local people in the city where she was doing fieldwork. She found that several of them – Asians, white British and mixed-race individuals – made recourse to ideas about 'throwbacks' and about how light-skinned parents could give birth to unexpectedly dark-skinned children.

This reaction shows people stretching the logic of race-kinship congruity to explain unexpected occurrences by reaching further up the putative genealogical tree for (hidden) evidence of blackness, but still explaining racialized appearance in terms of descent, and then using that logic to think about (if not explain) 'accidents' produced by new biotechnologies of reproduction which create very different modes of descent.

Transnational Adoption

In the U.K. and the U.S.A., at least, ethnic and racial matching in adoption has been the de facto if not the de jure position (Hollingsworth 1998; Macey 1995; Swize 2002).[8] The arguments defending this position usually cite the 'best interests of the child', asserting that nonwhite children (including those defined as 'mixed race' or 'dual heritage') need a nonwhite family environment in order to cope successfully with a society such as the U.K., where racism is a problem. Twine found that many black people in the U.K. city of Leicester basically agreed with this position, arguing that black mothers empathized better with their black or mixed-race children than white mothers who had mixed-race children (Twine 2000).

Transnational adoption tends to break with this convention. A fast-growing trend, especially in the last three decades, the procedure generally places children from Asia (e.g., China and Korea) and Latin America into European and U.S. households. Such placements usually create a family which is 'transracial' in some sense. In the 1990s Russia and Eastern European countries emerged as major places of origin for international adoptees (Marre 2007; Selman 2002), creating families which are not usually 'transracial'.

Transnational adoption that places nonwhite children with white parents breaks with the logic of race-kinship congruity: two white parents have a child that is nonwhite. Mixed-race unions challenge a strictly lineal version of race-kinship congruity, but they do so in predictable ways that reinforce the basic principle: the children are seen as having something – indeed, an equal share – from each parent inside them, in accordance with Western logics of cognatic kinship (Porqueres i Gené 2001, 2007; Schneider 1980). The children's racialized appearance still makes sense in terms of their parentage, even if they are often classified as 'black' in societies such as the U.K. and the U.S.A., thus creating a rupture between the social identity of the children and that of the nonblack parent (a rupture that is being challenged by the growing mixed-race movements in the U.K. and the U.S.A.). Transnational adoptive families create a still more challenging scenario.

Howell's work on transnational adoption in Norway shows how adoptive families deal with this. On the one hand, the word 'race' and issues of racialized physical appearance and difference of origins are not mentioned: families work hard, through a process of 'kinning', to assimilate the children and turn them into fully-fledged Norwegians who speak and act like Norwegians (Howell 2001). Howell argues that the children undergo a process of 'transubstantiation' in which their inner essence is changed, while only their appearance remains, which is often hardly commented on. 'Unlike transformation, which changes the form as well as possible

content, transubstantiation effects a fundamental change while the appearance remains simultaneously unaltered. In the case of transnationally adopted children, their incorporation into their parents' kin transcends the constraints of the blood tie, while the outward appearance remains unchanged' (Howell 2003: 470). Any reference to race is denied within the family, as it is in general in Norwegian society, where reference is made to, for example, the 'cultural differences' of nonwhite immigrants, although some recognition is given to the existence of racism (Howell and Melhuus 2007). In adoptive families too, cultural change is seen as crucial. The apparent break with the logic of race-kinship congruity is denied, in some sense, by silencing race (understood as the clues physical appearance is seen to give about origin and possible character), privileging culture and making the latter congruent with kinship.

Attitudes towards these adoptive children are rather different from those towards immigrants and their children (even the Norwegian-born ones) (Howell and Melhuus 2007). These are seen as culturally different, but race-kinship congruity works in a different way here, as the condition of immigrant is inherited by 'second-generation immigrants' and, despite evident cultural transformation for the locally-born children of immigrants, these children are seen as being like their parents in the key sense of not being properly and fully Norwegian. Culture is thus naturalized and, I would say, racialized.

On the other hand, the physical difference of the adoptive children from their parents, and everything this might suggest in terms of the absence of 'real' kinship, remains ineradicable at some level and is reflected in parents' concern with the 'original culture' of their adoptive children (Volkman 2005). Children are seen as arriving with a 'backpack' of genes and experiences (Howell 2003: 477), and parents strive to deal with this baggage. 'Adoptive families gather at annual social get-togethers of the India Association, the Columbia [sic] Association, and so on. They eat food and decorate the venue with artefacts from the children's country of origin; they may also dress the children in costumes from their birth country' (Howell 2003: 473). Parents may also undertake 'motherland' or 'roots' tours, travelling with their children to the country of origin so that the children have some sense of their dual sources of identity. Howell argues that these tours ultimately confirm the children's sense of identity as Norwegians, as they identify more with Norway than with their country of origin.

Yet these practices also implicitly recognize racial difference, albeit naturalized as cultural difference. These children are adopted as small infants, so their 'cultural background' in some sense is extremely shallow and thin, yet their racialized difference is being acknowledged by referring to 'cultural origins' in ways that suggest that culture is inherited with the genes. Marre also found this phenomenon among Spanish transnational adoptive parents. She cites one mother, featured in a 2003 Spanish television documentary, who wanted her Chinese child, adopted soon after birth, 'to learn her [the child's] language and maintain her culture' (Marre 2007: 73). Here, then, the logic of race-kinship congruity is reappearing in a more traditional form: at one level, these children are in effect seen as dual heritage. They have 'a bit

of both sides' in them – as do all children in cognatic kinship systems. This duality is not easily conceived in terms of the mere biology of appearance (Chinese) versus the deep formations of culture (Norwegian or Spanish), because the 'mere' biology is perceived – as always in racial discourse – to suggest some cultural connection. At the very least, children have to understand why they look the way they do and that knowledge, it seems, is insufficient if phrased simply in terms of biology; it has to be culturalized through dressing up in national costume, eating national food and visiting one's national roots. This seems to be motivated by the idea that adopted children should come to terms with their origins and understand themselves as persons, rather than by a desire to strengthen a child's self-esteem in the face of racism: Howell (2003) does not mention this as a motive. Parents do not generally see racism as a threat to their adopted children as such, although there are some fears that they might be mistaken for immigrants and suffer racism by accident, as it were (Howell and Melhuus 2007: 64). This indicates that parents recognize the possibility that racial difference enters into the heart of their families. But, above all, these practices of recognizing the differences that are indexed by ineradicable racialized physical difference are related to the parents' ways of coping with a race-kinship incongruity that profoundly intensifies the kinds of tensions that many adoptive families experience.

Conclusion

New modes of thinking about and enacting kinship, such as ARTs and transnational adoption, can be terrains of practice and thought on which existing ideas about the relationship between racial and kinship relatedness are reiterated and renaturalized, but also terrains on which those ideas are unsettled and challenged. ARTs are often based on ethnic and racial matching, but they may be manipulated to allow racial whitening in a way that allows a 'mixed-race' baby to appear from a nonmixed couple; they may also denaturalize the race-kinship logic by foregrounding the affective links that are thought to connect and indeed create kin. Transnational adoption likewise creates the possibility of nonwhite children belonging to white parents and upsets notions of what constitutes a 'normal' family. On the other hand, ideas about race-kinship congruity reappear in the form of naturalized cultural roots. As Franklin and McKinnon (2001a: 21) say, 'boundaries – of nations, cultures, species, races, persons, bodies, cells – have been breached' and thus unsettled, but at the same time there are ways in which 'such ruptures become occasions to re-establish and reinforce familiar normative categories'. There is an increase in options for reckoning, imagining and talking about belonging, connection, genealogy and thus also kinship and race. Race-kinship congruity has long been a variable construct, changing over time and space, as I argued in the first sections of this chapter. Its variability is increased in the context of new technologies.

The reckonings and imaginings around kinship and race always take place within the constraints established by the political, economic and social context – belonging to a given racialized category or a particular family or kin network will always be

a practice shaped very powerfully by that context. So what are the implications of the changing connections between race and kinship for the politics of identity and differences? It is clear that genetic technologies can open the way to biologically determinist and essentialist claims to identity – for example, in the use of ancestry testing discussed in several chapters of this book, although these tests also have contradictory effects that do not always reinforce essentialisms. However, the overall effect of ARTs and transnational adoption seems to me to undermine an essentialist and determinist politics of identity. Despite the injunctions of systems of governance that – in 'the best interests of the child' – push towards the racial-ethnic matching of parents with children in the area of assisted reproduction and adoption, people produce families that counter these trends. As we saw from the successive changes to the U.K. Code of Practice on gamete donation, governance policies may follow this lead, drawing back from racial matching as the default option. The increasing rate of mixed unions and the emergence of mixed-race movements in countries such as the U.K. and the U.S.A. certainly challenge simple race-kinship congruity and simple binary categorizations, but they still fall within the underlying logic of race-kinship congruity. In addition, mixedness alone, while it complicates classifications, does not undermine racism or racial hierarchy, as we know from Latin America.

But ARTs and transnational adoption open different avenues because they have the potential to create families that do undermine race-kinship congruity in more radical ways, and the existence of these families disrupts the racial classifications and racial thinking that racism depends on. As I have shown, these practices also provide terrains on which the racialized thinking that links race and kinship in predictable ways can be reproduced, so it is by no means all one-way traffic. But new choices also become available. The language of choice is apposite because, to some extent, there is a quasimarket in the domains of ARTs and adoption. Although both areas are regulated by the state and ethical guidelines, they are also partially privatized. As such, people can use money to access sources of both gametes and adoptive children. Indeed, in Spain there was initially a perception that some people adopted children from Africa or Asia in order to tap into a sense of being cosmopolitan and cool (Marre 2007: 81). In pursuing these choices, then, people may create families the existence of which challenges the racialized status quo of the societies in which they live. That status quo may also be reiterated within the same families and in people's perceptions of them, but it may be that the unsettling they cause is not entirely encompassed and evacuated by the reiteration. ARTs and transnational adoption are minority trends, to be sure, but as the Jamaican proverb tells us, a big tree may be felled by a small axe.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Katharina Schramm for inviting me to the workshop at which I presented the paper which forms the basis of this chapter. Some of the material in this chapter draws on the collaborative project, directed by Jeanette Edwards, called 'Public Understanding of Genetics: A Cross-cultural and Ethnographic Study of the "New Genetics" and Social Identity' (funded by the EU, contract QLG7-CT-2001-01668);

for more details, see http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/pug/about.htm, date accessed 23 February 2011. I also draw on my Introduction to an edited volume that arose from this project (Wade 2007).

2. There is a large literature on these changes. See, for example, Carsten (2000), Edwards and Salazar (2009), Finkler (2001), Franklin and McKinnon (2001b) and Strathern (1992). On transnational adoption, see Howell (2007) and Volkman (2005). On gay and lesbian families, see Hayden (1995) and Weston (1991).

3. See Real Decreto 412/1996 (http://www.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admin/rd412-1996. html, date accessed 23 February 2011). I am grateful to Ben Campbell for drawing my attention to this legislation.

4. See http://www.hfea.gov.uk/1606.html, date accessed 23 February 2011.

5. For all the Codes, see http://www.hfea.gov.uk/1682.html, date accessed 23 February 2011.

6. See http://www.hfea.gov.uk/1974.html, date accessed 23 February 2011.

7. In many varieties of Islamic religious thinking, sperm donation is forbidden (more so than egg donation, which can be allowed some Shia Islam areas), as it implies the threat of adultery (Inhorn 2003).

8. The law may not countenance same-race adoption policies – e.g., the U.S.A.'s Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (1995) prevented adoption agencies in receipt of federal funds from delaying the adoption of a child because of race – but in practice adoption agencies and social workers often prefer same-race placements. The same law allows race to be taken into account in the best interests of the child.

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