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Marcia C. Inhorn

Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA

In this unique special issue of *Anthropology and Medicine*, guest editors Zeynep Gürtin and Charlotte Faircloth bring to fruition an intellectual conversation begun three years ago at the 2015 American Anthropological Association annual meeting. There, for the first time, they united anthropologists working in two disparate fields—parenting studies and the anthropology of reproduction. The papers delivered in that cross-cutting session demonstrated two important, but taken-for-granted facts: first, that people utilizing assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) do so in the quest for parenthood; and second, that ART studies usually end at the point of conception, thereby leaving us to ponder how post-ART parenthood unfolds.

As Gürtin and Faircloth have argued since then in several path-breaking publications (Faircloth 2013; Faircloth and Gürtin 2017a, 2017b; Gürtin 2014, 2016), scholarship must attend to the ART-parenthood nexus, for people's pathways to assisted reproduction always involve imagining, accounting for, and attempting to achieve hoped-for motherhood and fatherhood. Desires for parenthood persist around the globe, with nearly 95% of the world's adults telling survey researchers that they want to have children (Inhorn and Patrizio 2015). Children are needed for social and economic reasons. But they are also desired for the joy, meaning, and purpose they bring to parents' lives. Understanding this 'child desire' (Inhorn 1996, 2015) is critical. It underlies the 'fertility-infertility dialectic' (Inhorn 1994), or why infertile people often resort to ARTs (if given the chance), especially in high-fertility societies where children and parenthood are socially expected (Inhorn 1994, 2015). Indeed, in the 40 years since the birth of the world's first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, in England, ARTs have spread around the globe, with infertile couples becoming the parents of nearly 8 million IVF babies (De Geyter 2018).

That ARTs 'make parents' is the key insight forwarded by feminist technoscience scholar Charis Thompson (2005) in her seminal volume, *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. In that book, Thompson shows that men and women willingly engage in complex 'ontological choreographies' in their often herculean efforts to become parents of IVF offspring. Yet, as Thompson (2002) pointed out in another classic essay entitled 'Fertile Ground: Feminists Theorize Infertility', much of the feminist scholarship on ARTs ignores these parenting desires. Instead, most feminist scholars have focused on the potential harms (social, physical and economic) brought on by new ART interventions. Although this feminist critique of ART risk is clearly justified, Thompson argues that we must also attempt to understand why these technologies are so important to people—what potential benefits and rewards the technologies offer. Ultimately, Thompson

CONTACT Marcia C. Inhorn marcia.inhorn@yale.edu
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advocates for committed feminist ethnography that makes sense of the human desires, motivations, investments, struggles, joys and subjectivities of ART users themselves, both men and women.

To that end, this special issue is exemplary, and builds on Gürtin and Faircloth's work to bring the scholarship on assisted reproduction and parenting into dialogue with each other, including an earlier journal special section entitled 'Making Parents' (Faircloth and Gürtin, 2017b) after Thompson's insight. In this special issue of *Anthropology and Medicine*, each paper is based on intensive ethnography or in-depth interviews, mostly undertaken with less studied populations of ART users. These include: (1) single women who use sperm donation to become 'solo' mothers by choice (the paper by Susanna Graham); (2) infertile women who use donor eggs to conceive with their male partners (the paper by Kathleen Hammond); (3) straight and gay individuals and couples who embark upon costly overseas surrogacy arrangements (the paper by Ingvill Stuvoy); (4) surrogate women who explain why they undertake this form of reproductive labour (the paper by Elly Teman and Zsuzsa Berend); (5) lesbian women and gay men who choose to conceive and co-parent together (the paper by Cathy Herbrand); and (6) health professionals who provide fertility preservation services (namely, sperm and egg freezing) for the increasing population of transgender clients (the paper by Jenny Gunnarsson Payne and Theo Erbenius).

Ultimately, these very complex reproductive arrangements—involving egg and sperm donation, commercial gestational surrogacy, gay and lesbian parenting, and transgender reproduction—are designed to enable heretofore unprecedented pathways to parenthood. Yet, in almost all of these cases, empirical evidence of how these reproductive arrangements are sustained and experienced remains remarkably thin. Foregrounding and filling in these empirical lacunae is very important, especially in cases where we know too little about potential reproductive risks, as well as successful outcomes (e.g. ART use among transmen and women).

Through careful and sensitive ethnography, the papers in this special issue attempt to provide the empirical scaffolding to account for *why* people make particular reproductive and parenting decisions and *what* the consequences might be. As Gürtin and Faircloth argue in the Introduction, such reflexivity and accountability are critical, given that conception is increasingly ART-mediated and parenting decisions are ever more complex. Moreover, the parenting of children created through ARTs has often been described as particularly 'intense'. This is partly because ART children often arrive in 'multiples' (i.e. twins, triplets and beyond), but also because ART offspring are deemed especially 'precious' to their parents after years of infertility, treatment, and sometimes heartbreaking agony.

As shown in the emerging ethnographic literature (Faircloth 2013), parenting in general—and not just of ART children—is becoming ever more involved, time-consuming, expensive, committed, competitive, and demanding, creating for parents heightened pressures, external judgments, and feelings of guilt. In this era of 'intensive parenting' (Faircloth and Gürtin 2017a), it is important to understand that reproductive decisions—including about whether or not to bear a certain kind of ART child—may be rife with anxiety and worries. Calling this 'anxious reproduction', Faircloth and Gürtin (2017a, p. 13) note:

> Paradoxically, while both ARTs and parenting expertise aim to 'assist' reproductive agents in their conception and child-rearing endeavors, they also generate new choices, burdens, responsibilities and accountabilities. The result, unsurprisingly, is increasing anxiety for

> parents and intending parents. In this moment of 'anxious reproduction', despite diligence and the use of multiple resources, reproductive agents often end up feeling overwhelmed, scrutinized and 'not good enough' parents…alert[ing] us to the unrealistic, and counterproductive, expectations currently placed on reproducing the next generation.

Several of the papers in this issue reflect upon these anxieties, with study interlocutors worrying about their own decisions and the ramifications of such decisions for future offspring. For example, Graham's study of 'single mothers by choice' highlights the self-reflexive questioning that many women undertake when contemplating solo motherhood via sperm donation. Concerns about being 'selfish' for wanting a biological child, and the risks of raising a child without a father, are women's key ethical dilemmas. Similarly, in Hammond's paper on egg donation, we see how women struggle to reconcile their own infertility when 'genetically linked' motherhood is typically valorised. In many cases, women experience grief and worry over the perceived 'conjugal inequality' of their own absent genetic links, ultimately trying to distance themselves from their use of donor eggs. As seen in both studies, such decisions to use donor gametes are not easy in a world where biogenetic relatedness is still often upheld as paramount, despite increasing reproductive options.

In addition to heightened anxiety, this turn to ART-assisted conception entails tremendous parental investments—physical, financial and emotional. This may be especially true in cases of commercial gestational surrogacy. Stuvoy's paper in particular focuses on monetary investments—how the costs associated with surrogacy add up, with clinics offering price lists, cost breakdowns, formal contracts, and schedules of reimbursements. Sometimes emptying their bank accounts—for example, Stuvoy's study participants spent between US$35,000 and $400,000 on their overseas surrogacy arrangements—the intended parents of surrogate children rarely view these outlays as 'buying a baby'. Rather, they see these expenditures as the beginning of ongoing investments in their own parenthood and their future children's lives. Although ART baby-making has been thoroughly criticized for its high profit margins and commercialization—as shown most clearly in Debra Spar's (2006) influential volume, *The Baby Business: How Money, Science, and Politics Drive the Commerce of Conception*—Stuvoy's account foregrounds the readiness, self-sacrifice, and careful calculations undertaken by intended parents, both men and women, gay and straight, together and alone.

Surrogates, too, make substantial investments, even though their own self-reflexive accounts are rarely foregrounded in the surrogacy literature. In the interesting cross-cultural study by Teman and Berend, the authors use their ethnographic research with surrogates in the US and Israel to produce a key finding. Namely, surrogates do not see themselves as 'bonding' with a 'baby of their own' (which they must then painfully 'give away'). Rather, they seem themselves as 'making parents' of other couples, with whom they hope to forge and maintain lasting friendships. For surrogates, producing other people's families is a morally meaningful act, often done as a labour of love and care for a couple who cannot otherwise have children. In short, Teman and Berend highlight surrogates' emotional investments, moving beyond feminist critiques that tend to frame surrogacy experiences in terms of exploitation.

A question raised by this and other papers is whether ARTs are somehow transgressive in making 'new' kinds of parents and families. The contribution that most directly addresses this question is by Herbrand, whose ethnographic study focuses on gay men and lesbian

women who conceive and co-parent together. On the one hand, these co-parenting arrangements can entail as many as four co-parents and two or more residences, thus constituting new, non-heteronormative, non-nuclear family structures. On the other hand, as Herbrand's study shows, nearly all the co-parents she interviewed considered the biogenetic link between parent and child, and especially mother and child, to be sacrosanct, thereby reinscribing traditional kinship ties and privileging maternity above paternity in parenting.

Of all the papers in this special issue, Herbrand's shows most clearly men's paternal investments in children. Research on ARTs and parenting is usually carried out by women scholars, who work exclusively with women interlocutors. Herbrand's study of collaborative families is thus a refreshing departure. In general, we need to put men back into our reproductive and parenting studies. For example, some men are themselves infertile, and can only become fathers through resort to ARTs (Inhorn 2012). Similarly, other men who are fertile may end up investing heavily in ARTs to support their partners' paths to parenthood. Although half of the world's reproducers are men, their participation in the ART and parenting worlds has barely received the meaningful scholarly recognition that it deserves.

Finally, this special issue turns to the future of reproduction and parenting, as clearly laid out in the paper by Gunnarsson Payne and Erbenius. With the advent of oocyte cryopreservation (i.e. egg freezing), transmen can now become fathers using their own gametes, as can transwomen who have frozen their sperm. Transgender parenthood is no longer inconceivable. Thus, as Gunnarsson Payne and Erbenius' paper shows, health professionals are beginning to 'concretize' fertility care practices in anticipation of increasing numbers of trans patients.

Although the future of trans reproduction remains unclear, it is beginning to be discussed in scholarly and activist circles, as was clear at the recent conference on 'Remaking Reproduction: The Global Politics of Reproductive Technologies', held at Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge, from 27 June 2018 to 29 June 2018. There, five scholars and activists participated in a 'Trans Roundtable', bringing to the fore the ethical, legal, and experiential issues surrounding transgender reproduction. Not only is fertility preservation through sperm and egg storage now possible, but the advent of uterine transplantation points to a day when transwomen may be able to bear their own children.

In conclusion, the beauty of this special issue is that it asks—and then answers—so many pressing questions about the contemporary state of technologically assisted procreation and what these ARTs mean for parents. Ultimately, this special issue should be required reading for all anthropologists and sociologists of reproduction as well as parenthood studies, plus the clinicians, policymakers and activists who hope to bring about a more just reproductive world.

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