

## REFLECTING ON THE 'EURO' IN 'EURO-AMERICAN' KINSHIP: LITHUANIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

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### ABSTRACT

The epithet Euro-American is ubiquitous in contemporary social science research. There is a tendency, however, for the concept to suffer from a 'misplaced concreteness': it is variously used to refer to a population, a place, or even a culture. The collaborative study on which I report here was entitled 'Public Understanding of Genetics (PUG): a cross-cultural and ethnographic study of the 'new genetics' and social identity'. The aim was include, within the same framework, a range of publics, including lay and expert, as well as the media and legislation, and to investigate whether developments in genetic science and the use of genetic and reproductive technologies were impinging (or not) on people's understandings of kinship. We were able to focus, to some extent, on the interface between normative and popular understandings of genetics. In juxtaposing policy and popular discourse our aim was to discern the points at which they converge and diverge. In PUG we were interested, then, in the similarities and differences in kinship thinking across the European sites in which we worked. We attempted to apprehend cultural understandings of kinship through the prism of genetics, and we were using new reproductive and genetic technologies as an ethnographic window through which to explore kinship across Europe.

KEY WORDS: socio-cultural anthropology, anthropological interest in kinship, Euro-American kinship, Lithuania, United Kingdom.

### ANOTACIJA

Pataruoju metu atgyja susidomėjimas antropologine giminystės teorija. Giminystės temos antropologijoje atgaiviniama lėmė gausios novatoriškos biomedicininų intervencijų į moters apvaisinimo procesą, socialinių ir kultūrinių pasekmių studijos, taip pat persiformavusių šeimų ir įvaikinimo nacionalinių bei transnacionalinių atvejų tyrimai. Visa tai sukėlė intensyvių domėjimąsi reiškiniu, kuris buvo pavadintas „euro-amerikietiška giminyste“. Greta reikšmingų etnografinių studijų pasirodė ir kiti svarbūs feminizmo tyrinėtojų veikalai apie socialinius padarinius, sąlygotus vis naujų esminių laimėjimų genetikos technologijų srityje. Straipsnis remiasi Europos Komisijos finansuoto projekto, kuris iš esmės tyrė plačiosios visuomenės supratimą apie genetiką įvairiose Europos vietovėse, išvadomis. Projekto dalyviai mėgino, greta kitų dalykų, pažvelgti į giminystę per „naujosios genetikos“ prizmę ir panaudojo naujas reprodukcines ir genetines technologijas kaip etnografinį langelį, per kurį bandyta išvelgti kultūrinio giminystės suvokimo specifiką visoje Europoje. Remdamasi „kraujo“ ir „kraujo linijos/giminystės“ sąvokomis autorė įrodo, kad jie peržengia biologinės giminystės ribas. Kita vertus, yra visiškai aišku, kad egzistuoja technokratinės tendencijos, kurios iš esmės supaprastina sudėtingą giminystės sąvoką ir leidžia ją pavadinti „euro-amerikietiška“.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: sociokultūrinė antropologija, antropologinė giminystės teorija, euro-amerikietiškoji giminystės samprata, Lietuva, Jungtinė Karalystė.

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### A re-emerging anthropological interest in kinship

When writers use the language of kinship, say, to draw attention to affinities or similarities, is the connection one of analogy and metaphor (that is, how language is being used) or is the connection a genetic one (that is, a demonstrable kinship between phenomena)? Where does the creative energy lie? (Strathern 2004:37).

I think it true to say that, at least from British and North American anthropological perspectives, kinship as a core disciplinary concern has undergone a renaissance (see, for example, Franklin &

Mckinnon 2001; Carsten 2004, Parkin & Stone 2004). This renewed interest can be seen in the recent anthropological focus on what is often labelled as ‘Euro-American kinship’: a focus which has been fuelled, in no small part, by ‘new reproductive technologies’ (henceforth NRT<sup>1</sup>). In addition, the broader demographic shifts that have occurred in many European countries with changes in marriage and reproductive patterns have also played a part in a renewed anthropological interest in kinship and particularly of the ‘Euro-American’ kind (see for example Stacey 1991; Weston 1991; Modell 1994; Stone 1997; Simpson 1998). An increasing number of recombinant, ‘step’, single-parent and gay/lesbian-parent families, as well as higher rates of trans-national adoption and ever-more innovative medical intervention in conception all feed into the perception of change. The movement of infants, through adoption, from poorer countries to wealthier, as well as the movement of individuals and couples from one country to another, albeit temporarily, in order to gain access to particular fertility services denied them in their country of residence (a phenomenon which has referred to as ‘fertility tourism’), are facilitated by the internet. There are unprecedented means for some people to bypass involuntary childlessness, and this has the effect of deepening the gap between those who can afford to pay for fertility services and those who cannot; not to mention those who are forced to release their children for adoption because they cannot afford to adequately care for them. Such global shifts in kinship practices and the innovative and diverse ways in which families are created have inevitably attracted the attention of social anthropologists.

David Schneider is often identified as initiating a revolution in anthropological kinship theory with his allegation that ‘his predecessors and contemporaries were mired in a genealogical way of thinking that rested, if only tacitly, on a view of kinship as ultimately biological’ (Schneider 1984; Parkin & Stone 2004: 19). He has been held directly responsible for the demise of kinship in anthropology from the 1970s to 1990s and indirectly responsible for its revival in the early 1990s (Parkin & Stone 2004; and see Franklin 1997). But as Franklin and McKinnon (2001) remind us, there were pertinent critiques of the western bias in anthropological kinship theory before Schneider’s intervention. A number of feminist scholars had already interrogated the biological bias of anthropological kinship theory and had located it within dominant Eurocentric paradigms (Rubin 1975; MacCormack & Strathern 1980; Yanagisako 1979). Furthermore, it could also be argued that the rupture in the anthropological study of kinship, identified by a number of anthropologists, is from a specifically Anglo-American perspective. It is not clear that kinship ever really went out of fashion in France, for example, and a lineage could be traced from Lévi-Strauss to Héritier which bypasses Schneider and continues a long-standing French interest in filiation, alliance and incest.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, in France also, biotechnological intervention in human conception as well as ‘alternative’ family forms, including step, recombined, homosexual and adoptive families, appears to have added a new impetus to the study of kinship (Cadoret, in press).

<sup>1</sup> I use the term ‘new reproductive technologies’ (NRT) as a short hand for conceptive technologies including artificial insemination (AI), and *in-vitro* fertilisation (IVF) with or without the substitution (donation) of gametes and/or surrogacy arrangements. The term however requires a number of caveats not least to note that many of the techniques deployed are neither new nor very technological: there are records of AI being used on a person or the first time, in England in 1799, and in France in 1804 (Stolcke 1988) and artificial insemination requires little in the way of technology. Others use the term ‘assisted reproductive technologies’ with the slightly more felicitous acronym ART (see for example Čepaitienė, this volume).

<sup>2</sup> In debate about ‘the new kinship studies’, differences between French and Anglo anthropological approaches are often screened out. The differences that make a difference became apparent in the collaborative study on which this paper draws.

Studies which are located, or locate themselves, within the genre of 'the new kinship studies' have been partly inspired, then, by shifts occurring in the structure and composition of families and by technological and medical intervention in conception (see, for example, Kahn 2004, 2001; Ragoné 1994; Inhorn 1994; Carsten 2004; Thompson 2001). A major impetus of many recent studies has been to interrogate, following Schneider, the privileging of bio-genetic connection and, as a corrective, to put centre stage ways in which kinship is created either through care and effort or through shared substances that are not biogenetic. NRT have provided an ethnographic window through which to discern, amongst other things, cultural understandings of what constitutes persons and relatedness (Edwards et. al 1999; Edwards & Strathern 2000; Strathern 1992; Konrad 2005).

### **The Euro-American 'field'**

Auksuolė Čepaitienė (this volume) discusses her shifting understanding of the geographical abstraction in which her study of NRT and kinship in Lithuania took place. She writes of how she initially used the historical and cultural thickness of Lithuania, with its specific and former relationship to Soviet society, as a means of imagining the particularity and specificity of this particular European society. Given the fact that the political and ideological complexion of genetic science during the Soviet era was imbricated in contemporary Lithuanian understandings of genetics, Čepaitienė argues that it made sense for her to frame the distinctiveness of Lithuania within a Soviet and a post-Soviet grand narrative. She goes on, however, to show deftly how her anthropological focus on a particular 'community' – and more precisely her research in the town of Kuršėnai – inevitably shifted 'the field' of study. Her change in focus from the larger context of post-Soviet society to the smaller context of the local community resulted in a shift from one grand narrative (post-Soviet society) to another (kinship). In her words 'the small place of Kuršėnai became central in the production of knowledge on the large issue of kinship'. Following on from Čepaitienė's valuable insight, I want to focus on another grand narrative – that of 'Euro-American'. Again, a focus on the way in which kinship is formulated at the local level, be it in Kuršėnai or in Alltown, in the north of England, shifts the focus away from the Euro-Americanness of the phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> But is this merely a matter of scale or are we focusing on a different order of things?

The epithet Euro-American is ubiquitous in contemporary social science research. On the ground, however, its meaning is not fixed. It is used differently, for example, in the United States and in Britain. In the US, it often indexes a racial category distinguishing Americans of European ancestry from 'Afro-Americans', 'Asian-Americans', 'Native Americans' and so on. In his early work on 'American kinship' and in the distinction he posited between cultural and normative systems, Schneider was explicitly interested in Euro-American understandings of kinship (Schneider 1968). His informants were predominantly white, middle class and either Protestant, Catholic or Jewish and for him, initially at least, Euro-American stood for American.<sup>4</sup> If in the United States

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<sup>3</sup> Alltown is the pseudonym of a town in the north of England in which I have worked as an anthropologist on and off for seventeen years. It is in Lancashire and grew with the textile industry in the region. The cotton mills have now all closed down and the population has decreased markedly. Since the 1970s, the town has attracted a small number of incomers from the nearby urban conurbation who generally commute to the city to work. This recent wave of immigration has halted the decrease in the population which now stands at approximately 15,000 people.

<sup>4</sup> Although later he was to acknowledge the impact of class and ethnicity on what he was defining as American kinship (Schneider 1984; Handler 1995; and see also Stone 2000).

the concept is often used to differentiate, in the United Kingdom it is used to aggregate: to reflect what are thought to be resonances between and across European and North American world views. Social Scientists, including anthropologists, often deploy it to mark the similarities between European and North American ideologies. As a proxy for ‘western’, it refers to shared hegemonic discourses of, for example, science, governance and bureaucracy.

There is a tendency, however, for the concept to suffer from a ‘misplaced concreteness’: it is variously used to refer to a population, a place, or even a culture. Some anthropologists rail at its imprecision, while others point out that what has counted as ‘Euro-American’ in kinship theory is particularly and peculiarly British (see, for example, Bouquet 1993). Others insist on its usefulness in referring to discourses which are increasingly hegemonic and not confined within the socio-political borders of nation states. Perhaps it is important not throw the baby out with the bath water: if used to refer to discourse rather than people, and to idioms rather than places, it may still provide a useful heuristic tool with which to track dominant ideologies. But how such discourses and idioms, with their attendant world views, travel remains an empirical question and one which, to my mind, requires much more ethnographic attention.

The collaborative study on which I report here was entitled ‘Public Understanding of Genetics: a cross-cultural and ethnographic study of the ‘new genetics’ and social identity’ (henceforth PUG).<sup>5</sup> The aim was include, within the same framework, a range of publics, including lay and expert, as well as the media (newspapers) and legislation, and to investigate whether developments in genetic science and the use of genetic and reproductive technologies were impinging (or not) on people’s understandings of kinship. We were able to focus, to some extent, on the interface between normative and popular understandings of genetics. In juxtaposing policy and popular discourse our aim was to discern the points at which they converge and diverge.

There is evidence from our study of what I am calling (with tongue in cheek) Eurokin – of sensibilities and sentiments, as well as component parts and processes, which are shared across European countries and are not confined within the borders of nation-states. Across the countries in which we have been working and across a diverse range of publics, similar and familiar symbolic materials are woven into ‘webs of significance’. At the same time, however, there are intriguing differences across Europe and often the differences are writ large in policy and legislation.

In the context of transnational adoption in both Norway and Spain, policy makers and commentators as well as bureaucrats and politicians – the technocrats to borrow a term used by Signe Howell (forthcoming) – bring to the fore and emphasise bio-genetic aspects of relatedness. This is seen in the policy emphasis on the ‘need’ of adopted children to know, and to know of, their birth families and their ‘cultural heritage’. Similarly, support for the recent change in legislation in the UK which lifted the requirement for sperm donors to be anonymous was also couched in terms of the ‘need’ for children to know their biological origins. An emphasis on the enduring and essentialist nature of biological connectedness (with culture mapped on to it) is at odds with the more nuanced

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<sup>5</sup> The term ‘new genetics’ requires some explanation. We use the term loosely here to try and capture the emerging public and publicised interest in genetics which has its origins in the Human Genome Project and in the technologies of recombinant DNA. Geneticists have pointed out to us that the bio-genetic connections we refer to in the idiom of kinship is not new but an ‘old’ Mendelian model of transmission and inheritance: in this context ‘new’ genetics might refer to all genetic science since the discovery by Watson, Crick Franklin and Wilkins of the structure of DNA.

and contingent understandings of relatedness found outside the worlds of governance. Adoptive parents and their families, for example, have many ways of making kin of their adopted children.

### **The socialisation of kinship**

In PUG we were interested, then, in the similarities and differences in kinship thinking across the European sites in which we worked. We attempted to apprehend cultural understandings of kinship through the prism of genetics, and we were using new reproductive and genetic technologies (NRGT) as an ethnographic window through which to explore kinship across Europe.

A number of scholars have trenchantly argued that we are witness to a process of 'geneticisation' whereby developments in biotechnology and the prominence given to genetic explanation for social behaviour and medical disorder have resulted in significant social identities and relationships of, for example, health, kinship and ethnicity being understood and explained increasingly in terms of genetics (see, for example, Lippman 1994; Nelkin & Lindee 1995; Franklin 1997; Finkler 2000).<sup>6</sup> R. C. Lewontin writes of the bias that suggests 'everything we are, our sickness and health, our poverty and wealth, and the very structure of the society we live in are ultimately encoded in our DNA' (1993: 107). Sarah Franklin takes the geneticisation thesis further and with a focus on kinship argues that consanguinity has not only been 'geneticised', but also 'technologised, instrumentalised, commodified and informationalised' (Franklin 1997: 213-13); elsewhere she writes of what she sees as the 'biologisation' of kinship (Franklin 2001). In a similar vein, Kaja Finkler, focusing on the clinic, writes of the 'medicalisation of kinship' (Finkler 2000; and see Franklin & Strathern 1993 for the 'medicalisation of consanguinity').<sup>7</sup>

In the research we carried out under the umbrella of PUG, we found that genetic explanation is neither necessarily nor always a prominent feature of the way in which different publics across Europe make sense of kinship. If 'biological' explanation is mobilised, it is in conjunction with, or in contradistinction to, 'social' explanation. Bio-genetic knowledge about how human beings are constituted and related appears to be of a piece with socio-relational knowledge and both are evident across Europe. But it is important to emphasise at this point that biological connection goes beyond genetics and cannot be reduced to it.

In reporting and discussing fieldwork throughout the course of the PUG project, our discussion often revolved around what we identified as an oscillation between biological and social conceptualisations of kinship in our various fieldwork sites: we described this as a trafficking between concepts.<sup>8</sup> This movement was common in the European sites in which we were working, and we were

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of geneticisation follows through from an ideology of biological determinism which for geneticist R. C. Lewontin includes the idea that human beings 'differ in fundamental abilities because of innate differences, that those innate differences are biologically inherited and that human nature guarantees the formation of hierarchical society' (Lewontin 1993: 23).

<sup>7</sup> Finkler is interested in the implications for the family members of an individual who tests positive for a particular genetic disorder. She looks, for example, at the potential and limitations of concepts such as 'the right to know' and at issues of secrecy and disclosure.

<sup>8</sup> Fieldwork 'sites' included infertility clinics in Spain, rural and urban communities in Lithuania and England, gay and lesbian families in France, transnationally adopted families in Norway; as well as campaigning and political groups across these sites. The project also focused on NRGT and legislation (coordinated from Hungary) and the media (coordinated from Italy) in the seven countries (see <http://pug.man.ac.uk> for more information on the individual projects).

inexorably drawn to the language of oscillation: to a to-ing and fro-ing between social and biological connection.<sup>9</sup>

It is this trafficking between ‘the biological’ and ‘the social’ which is of interest here, and two interconnected points need to be underlined. First, what Europeans include either as biological or as social cannot necessarily be predicted. If it was clear to us that broad distinctions between the biological and the social, often couched in terms of nature and nurture, remained salient (in the light of, or perhaps despite of, ‘the new genetics’), precisely what they referred to was less clear. Second, the question remains as to how we, as analysts, knew what ‘belonged’ to the realms of the biological and the social? Presented with a matrix of kinship, we seemed to be able, readily and with alacrity, to categorise some aspects of relatedness, for example, as biological and others as social. Yet, as anthropologists know so well, the symbolic and metaphorical freight of the idioms of kinship need to be kept centre stage. Below, I turn to ‘blood’ and ‘bloodlines’ as core kinship idioms in both Lithuania and England, and argue that they exceed the realm of the biological.

### Making families into kin

Residents of Kuršėnai, a central Lithuanian town of approximately 16,000 people, talked to Auksuolė Čepaitienė and Darius Daukšas about the possibilities of, and limitations to, new reproductive and genetic technologies (NRTGT). In the process, Kuršėnai people revealed what they understood to be constitute family and kinship (*šeima* and *giminė / giminystė*). People talked of how a child is a necessary bond to the conjugal relationship – a child acts as glue, binding its parents together. In the words of one Kuršėnai man:

If there is a gathering of the close family circle, say, the family – my sister, brother, my wife, my brother’s wife, some of his wife’s relatives - we gather together for birthdays. After a drink or so, my brother tells us that ‘we kin’ have come here together, but then he indicates [to] his wife and says that she is not actually kin - just as my wife, Silva, is not my kin also. That’s how it is. But family is family (*šeima*), and kin are kin (*giminystė*). Everything should be kept within bounds - according to bloodlines. A wife should not be kin. But since the children are related to both parents, they bind the two together into kinship (*giminystė*).<sup>10</sup>

For this man, a husband and wife clearly and evidently belong to different ‘bloodlines’: they are not kin, which is why they can marry. But the children, in his words, ‘are related to both parents, they bind the two together in kinship’. In this kinship thinking, the child embodies the bloodlines of both its mother and its father – and in that sense embodies the relationship between the two parents. In so doing the child contains both its parents and is the embodiment of their union.

From my own fieldwork in the north of England, I also found that a child is known to bind its parents together and not only biological parents (and see Edwards 1999, 2000, 2005). The birth of a child both creates a **new** family, and links together two separate and pre-existing families. In common English usage no distinction is made between *šeima* and *giminystė*. The terms kinship and kin are not commonly used in contemporary English society. Instead the idiom of family is put to work in multiple ways. Its precise meaning is a function of scale: with meaning shifting according to

<sup>9</sup> We would have been hard-pressed to say that that one (i.e. the biological) underpinned the other (i.e. the social). Indeed ‘biocentrism’ was accompanied by ‘sociocentrism’ and rather than one underpinning the other they emerged in tandem. Europeans, it seems, are as capable of essentialising social aspects of kinship as they are of essentialising biological aspects.

<sup>10</sup> In the pamphlet ‘PUG and family and kinship in Europe’; see <http://pug.man.ac.uk>

context from the nuclear or residential family of parents and children (and parents may be (biological, adoptive, homosexual or step); to the *blood family* connecting consanguineous kin in ascendant and descendant generations on 'both sides'; to the extended family which might embrace 'in-laws' as well step-relatives; to ultimately 'the family of man' or of 'God'. Despite the fact that, in contrast to Lithuania, a linguistic distinction between family and kin is not usually made, the idea that a child binds its parents together is common. It is one reason, of course, why infertility or involuntary childlessness is understood to be problematic (and not only in England and Lithuania): childlessness (involuntary or otherwise) renders the relationship between the 'loving couple'<sup>11</sup> tenuous – lacking as it does the glue that binds them together. It is also one reason why the donation of gametes from a known donor is viewed with reservation. If the child embodies the relationship between its parents, it has the potential of creating a relationship between parents where there was no relationship before. Thus the possibility of a brother donating sperm to his brother gives people pause for thought partly because the ensuing child both contains, and develops from, the mingled bodily substances of its father's brother and its mother. It embodies a connection between the two.

Incest emerged frequently in my conversations with English folk about new reproductive technologies (and see Edwards 2004). People often recounted a scenario where children conceived using donated sperm originating from the same man could, in the future, and as adults, meet up. Not knowing they are related, the story continues, they could fall in love, marry and have children. It is common knowledge that a child born of an incestuous union will be marked in some way or another. It is said that offspring, from such a union, will inevitably display some kind of deformity (physical or mental). It is as if the child not only acts as a receptacle for the transgressive relationship of its parents (embodying that relationship), but it also makes it manifest (and known). The child embodies the freight of its parent's transgression, incubates it and makes it explicit and visible. Furthermore, the effect is enduring.

Similarly, thinking about in surrogacy arrangements people often turn to the enduring traces that the surrogate mother will leave on, or in, the child she has gestated. Listen to what one Kuršėnai woman told Čėpaitienė and Daukšas (forthcoming) about gestational surrogacy (where the surrogate mother's ova is not used):

[T]he only input in that case is the fact that the child develops in that woman's body. But it would still be affected by certain hormones, it would still bond the child [with her].

This woman draws our attention to the bond forged between a woman and the foetus she gestates, with or without a genetic connection. In this example, the shared substances that constitute the tie between surrogate mother and infant are hormones: the bond is made explicit and substantiated in hormonal substance. Thinking of gamete donation, Kuršėnai people also stressed that the child contains 'a portion of the woman' which carries and gives birth to it consequently is partly her 'own' (Čėpaitienė, forthcoming). Similarly, the child a surrogate mother gestates and gives birth to is partly her 'own'.

Listen now to the words of an English woman, in her early sixties, talking to me about the same kind of surrogacy arrangements:

... it's got that surrogate mother's blood - the foetus feeds off the blood supply of the mother - off the person who is carrying the child - so that mother's blood is still going through that surrogate baby's veins. So it's never truly the parent's - it's always part of the donor's blood scheme, isn't it? They always say 'blood's thicker than water' (cited in Edwards 2004).

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<sup>11</sup> A term, I borrow from Ann Cadoret (in press).

This woman also draws our attention to the **relationship** between the foetus (later the baby) and the surrogate mother. The surrogate mother's 'blood' will inevitably leave a trace in and on the baby which is enduring. A trace that can never 'truly' be eliminated, because as we know so well 'blood is thicker than water'. The notion of shared blood as an idiom of relatedness is powerful: it cannot be reduced either to the bio-genetic specifically or to biology more generally. It is symbolically and metaphorically powerful and as such we should resist the attempt to purify it – to draw out of it one congealed or clotted meaning.

In Lithuanian also, 'blood' is neither a fixed nor predictable quality. Čepaitienė (in press) writes of how in Kuršėnai:

It might be "pure (*grynas*)" and "purified (*išgrynintas*)", might be "true (*tikras*)" and "one's own (*savas*)", or "mother's blood (*motinos kraujas*)" and "father's blood (*tėvo kraujas*)". ... 'Blood' might "mix (*maišosi*)", "fade (*išblunka*)", "dilute (*skiedžiasi*)" and "wash out (*išsiplauna*)", and it might "call (*šaukiasi*)", "attract (*traukia*)", or be given to the other. In one case it appears that one has a "blood relation (*kraujo ryšys*)" and in other that "blood relation almost disappeared". Various cultural and social items might "interfere (*įsiterpti*)", be added or move together with 'blood': money, wealth, land, time, social standing/'erudition', communication, kind-heartedness, character, politics, religion, law, knowledge, etc.

It is useful to keep in mind this multi-valency of 'blood', when we think of the impact that ethnography across Europe can have on anthropological kinship theory and in particular on the post-Schneiderian critique that anthropologists exported a particular and ethnocentric model of kinship around the world. This model of kinship as the cultural elaboration of the biological 'facts of life', where nature is the baseline on which culture is built, is a very particular model – but not Euro-American in any ethnographic sense. It might be a model shared by technocrats and social commentators, it might even be hegemonic in worlds inspired by science and technology, but it is not universally or definitively European. The recent focus on Euro-American kinship (in the light of new reproductive technologies, or changing family forms, including recombined, homoparental<sup>12</sup>, and step-families, and in practices of transnational adoption and 'fertility tourism') raises a crucial question: whose model is it? Our research across a range of European sites reveals the way in which different publics can both privilege bio-genetic connection **and** play it down, which means they can also privilege non-biogenetic connection: that is, relatedness forged through care and attention as well as through shared hormones, houses and humour. Indeed 'biocentrism' is accompanied by 'sociocentrism' and rather than one underpinning the other they emerge in tandem and rely on each other for their purchase. Europeans, it seems, are as capable of essentialising social aspects of kinship as they are of essentialising biological aspects. The creativity of European kinship - the innumerable ways in which kin can be made, and in which kinship can be forged and sustained, as well as broken – stems partly from the tendency to naturalise different kinds of connections. Of interest is the non-essential nature of what we, as analysts, sometimes assume to be biological and the essential nature of what we readily identify as social. This raises questions about why, as anthropologists, we need to arbitrate: what gets occluded when we attempt to pin down the diverse ways in which people imagine relatedness in one or other of two categories?

The ethnographic examples above highlight the way in which 'blood' never fully maps on to biology: blood and biological connection are not coterminous. In other words, talk of blood and

<sup>12</sup> Also borrowed from Ann Cadoret (forthcoming) who prefers it to the more commonly used 'homosexual family' because it is the parents rather than the family who are homosexual.



bloodlines cannot be reduced to biological explanation – blood is thick with condensed meaning even if it is not always or everywhere ‘thicker than water’.

## Conclusions

This article raises more questions than it answers, and highlights the need for further anthropological, comparative and collaborative work across Europe, and for fine-grained ethnographic research that looks closely at the local manifestations of Euro-American kinship. There is no doubt that there are certain technocratic models of kinship which appear to travel easily around Europe and are made manifest in legislative and policy regimes. But how they inform and are informed by local or community understandings of kinship is an empirical question. In terms of kinship, while one model clearly does not fit all, there are nevertheless intriguing similarities between the Lithuanian and English kinship thinking mentioned here. This is partly about a shared ethnographic method which, in this case, drew kinship out of a conversation about NRGT and partly about shared legacies which predate ‘new genetics’.

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## **'EURO' KOMPONENTO REFLEKSIJA 'EURO-AMERIKIETIŠKOSIOS' GIMINYSTĖS SAMPRATOJE: LIETUVA IR JUNGtinĖ KARALYSTĖ**

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### **S a n t r a u k a**

Pataruoju metu atgyja susidomėjimas antropologine giminystės teorija. Šį susidomėjimą iš dalies paskatino naujų reprodukcinių technologijų (NRT) vystymasis, iš dalies moters statuso ir vaidmens kitimas, taip pat ir „šeimos“ sampratos demografiniai pokyčiai Vakarų pasaulyje. Giminystės temos antropologijoje atgaivinimą lėmė gausios novatoriškos biomedicininų intervencijų į moters apvaisinimo procesą (tokių kaip dirbtinis apvaisinimas, embriono ar gametų pakeitimas ir atsargų kaupimas, surogatinė motinystė) socialinių ir kultūrinių pasekmių studijos, taip pat persi-

formavusių šeimų ir įvaikinimo nacionalinių bei transnacionalinių atvejų tyrimai. Visa tai sukėlė intensyvią domėjimąsi reiškiniu, kuris buvo pavadintas „euro-amerikietiška giminyste“. Greta reikšmingų etnografinių studijų pasirodė ir kiti svarbūs (ypač feminizmo tyrinėtojų) veikalai apie socialinius padarinius, sąlygotus vis naujų esminių laimėjimų biotechnologijų (ypač genetikos technologijų) srityje. Daugybė mokslininkų argumentuotai įrodinėja, kad vyksta „genetizacijos“ procesas, pagal kurį reikšmingi socialiniai santykiai ir identitetas (pavyzdžiui, giminystės, etniškumo ar gerovės) vis dažniau suvokiami genetikos požiūriu.

Šis straipsnis remiasi Europos Komisijos finansuoto projekto, kuris iš esmės tyrė plačiosios visuomenės supratimą apie genetiką įvairiose Europos vietovėse, išvadomis. Projekto dalyviai mėgino, greta kitų dalykų, pažvelgti į giminystę per „naujosios genetikos“ prizmę ir panaudojo naujas reprodukcines ir genetines technologijas kaip etnografinį langelį, per kurį bandyta išvelgti kultūrinio giminystės suvokimo (greta kitų dalykų) specifiką visoje Europoje. Lyginamieji tyrimai vyko keliose Europos šalyse: Lietuvoje, Vengrijoje, Italijoje, Prancūzijoje, Ispanijoje, Norvegijoje ir Anglijoje. Taigi jie buvo pajėgūs iš esmės iširti „euro-amerikietiško“ sąvoką, t. y. atskleisti Europos ir Šiaurės Amerikos gyventojų genetinius panašumus. Tyrimo metu nustatyta, kad genetiniai aiškinimai dažnai nėra nei būtinas, nei labai reikšmingas įvairių Europos tautų giminystės sąvokos komponentas. Jei pasitelkiamas „biologinis“ aiškinimas, jis dažnai siejamas (arba supriešinamas) su „socialiniu“ aiškinimu. Biogenetinės žinios apie žmogaus organizmo sandarą ir ryšius susijusias su žiniomis apie socialinius santykius, ir tai akivaizdu visoje Europoje. Kita vertus, yra svarbu pabrėžti, kad biologiniai ryšiai yra platesnė sąvoka negu genetika ir negali būti susiaurinti vien iki genetinių ryšių.

Remdamasi „kraujo“ ir „kraujo linijos / giminystės“ terminais – pagrindinėmis giminystės ryšių idiomomis lietuvių ir anglų kalbomis – autorė įrodo, kad jie peržengia biologinės giminystės ribas. Susiaurinti šias idiomoms iki biologinio aiškinimo reikštų tiek analitinį, tiek politinį žongliravimą šiomis sąvokomis. Kita vertus, yra visiškai aišku, kad egzistuoja biurokratinės (arba technokratinės) tendencijos, kurios (prireikus) iš esmės supaprastina sudėtingą giminystės sąvoką, ir būtent tokią (biurokratinę) giminystę leidžia pavadinti „euro-amerikietiška“.

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