Introduction

Cross-Racial Gestational Surrogacy

On the 2007 premiere of the Lifetime television series *Army Wives*, the audience is introduced to a woman with a secret. This woman is Pamela, a former police officer who became a stay-at-home mother after her husband enlisted in the military; army men, she says, do not want their wives to work. In order to meet the financial pressures of a single-income family, Pamela agrees to an unusual form of employment: carrying twins for an infertile couple. Pamela keeps the surrogacy a secret from everyone except her husband, and intends to announce publicly that the babies have died during delivery after she relinquishes the children to their “real” parents. In classic television fashion, Pamela’s body does not cooperate with her plans, and the birth becomes a chaotic and alarming event. Pamela experiences her first contractions at a stuffy military tea party, where her water breaks immediately. Her labor advances dramatically, as signaled to the audience when a concerned bystander takes one look at Pamela lying on the bathroom floor and announces, “You’re gonna deliver!”

Pamela is then covertly rushed to the hospital by the group that will make up the *Army Wives* core characters, a cadre of military wives and Roland, the only military husband. Of course, Pamela does not make it to the hospital before the first baby begins to crown, requiring an emergency stop at a closed bar, where her new friends deliver the twins on a pool table. Despite all of the drama leading up to this moment, the true surprise is revealed when the white surrogate gives birth to two African American babies. Pamela explains the situation and is reassured that she is doing the right thing by both providing for her family and giving the gift of life. The episode, entitled “A Tribe Is Born,” ends with one of the women throwing open the curtains of the bar and literally shedding light on the surrogacy as well as the new “tribe” that has gathered to witness it.
Assisted Reproduction and Family Formation

This pilot episode of *Army Wives* speaks to a number of tensions surrounding how surrogacy is imagined in our culture, as well as the core themes of this book. A major debate regarding assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) among a wide range of scholars, ethicists, and particularly feminists has been whether the troubling implications of these technologies are offset by their potential to transform hegemonic and traditionally restrictive family formations. The sociological and anthropological study of reproduction has made abundantly clear that fertility is about more than biology. Our understanding of reproduction has always been informed by social rules and expectations, and these norms influence how individuals go about imagining the possibilities for family formation. The technologies that separate conception, pregnancy, and parenthood seem to offer new ways to think about reproduction, and thus much more agency to the individual to create families that may flaunt cultural norms. When motherhood is separated into biological, gestational, and social components, new opportunities for pregnancy and parenthood are created that put the very “nature” of race and kinship into question.

That being said, the nuclear family has not disintegrated since the advent of reproductive technologies, and neither have beliefs about the biological basis of racial difference been seriously undermined. What I term “cross-racial gestational surrogacy”—when a surrogate carries a pregnancy for intended parents of a different race—demonstrates how boundaries of likeness and difference are drawn and negotiated. Acts that on the surface seem to be radically nontraditional and even artificial are naturalized, such as a woman of color giving birth to the genetic children of a white couple. Indeed, reproductive technologies, including surrogacy, are primarily used in a manner that reinforces the reproduction of the white, heterosexual, married, middle-class family. Surrogacy, particularly cross-racial gestational surrogacy, is not just a scientific but also a cultural phenomenon that serves as a repository for unease and anxiety concerning central organizing principles in our society such as race, gender, and kinship. These constructs evolve in response to social change, including technological and scientific advancement, yet are not determined by biological or scientific “truths”;
rather, such concepts take form through interaction between scientific and popular discourses. Cross-racial surrogacy reveals how contemporary ideologies of race are tightly interwoven with beliefs about science, biology, genetics, and nature. In the most common instances of cross-racial surrogacy, intended parents rely upon the racialized reproductive labor of women of color, employing scientific narratives about genetic determinism to normalize this cross-racial contact. Meanwhile, they juggle the competing message that twenty-first-century America is “post-racial,” or has moved beyond racial hierarchies and discrimination, with the deeply entrenched belief that races are biologically discrete, natural entities.

So what are the potentials of these technologies? To answer that question, we must first understand what surrogacy entails in terms of medical intervention and financial commitment, and then take a look at who uses surrogacy and why. While surrogacy itself is not a reproductive technology, the most common form of commercial or paid surrogacy today (known as gestational surrogacy) relies upon relatively intensive medical interventions. When a surrogate is matched with an intended parent and all appropriate screening, testing, and counseling have taken place, an embryo transfer occurs. In preparation, the intended mother or donor receives a combination of hormonal medications to stimulate egg development, and then medication to trigger ovulation. Eggs are then harvested through transvaginal ultrasound aspiration, evaluated for maturity, and inseminated with the sperm of the intended father or donor. Meanwhile, in order for the embryos to implant successfully, the surrogate takes hormones to synchronize her uterine lining with the donor’s reproductive cycle. Within three to five days after the donor eggs are fertilized in the lab, the selected embryos are implanted into the surrogate’s uterus through a small catheter. Excess healthy embryos are often frozen and stored for later use, should the initial attempt fail or for a future pregnancy. The surrogate continues with the hormonal replacement regime until a negative or positive pregnancy test is confirmed; if the transfer was a success, the surrogate remains on the hormone regime throughout the first trimester. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments cost roughly $12,400 per cycle, and fail 70 percent of the time, suggesting an intensive investment in both time and finances.
This process is referred to as “gestational surrogacy” because the use of IVF means that the surrogate gestates, but is not genetically related to, the fetus. In “traditional surrogacy,” the surrogate is artificially inseminated with the father’s or donor’s sperm, and the process is thus less invasive and less expensive. Today, gestational surrogacy tends to be the preference of both surrogates and intended parents. Gestational surrogacy is much more common than traditional surrogacy in commercial (paid) arrangements because it is less likely that a non–genetically related surrogate will be deemed the legal mother should a custody dispute or other complication arise. A typical surrogacy in the United States is facilitated by a for-profit agency, and costs between $75,000 and $100,000. This bill often includes an estimated $20,000 payment to the surrogate, as well as fertility clinic fees, legal fees, egg donation fees, and payments to brokers.

While reproductive technologies such as IVF or intrauterine insemination (IUI) are commonly represented as mere aides to natural, heterosexual reproduction, the possibilities for family formation that are created by such technologies far exceed the bounds of the traditional nuclear family. This is in part reflected in the variety of reasons that lead people to choose surrogacy. For women, some of the most common are recurrent miscarriage, congenital absence of the uterus, a previous hysterectomy, and medical conditions or medications that make pregnancy too risky, such as cystic fibrosis, severe diabetes, or breast cancer. Women in many parts of the world are increasingly delaying childbearing until later in life, in part due to a lack of female- and family-friendly workplace policies. Without downplaying the extreme financial and emotional hardships that often attend reproductive technology use, they allow those who can afford them greater flexibility in forming families outside marriage, or after achieving career milestones. Surrogacy has also created new pathways for reproduction for queer families. Lesbians frequently use vaginal insemination, intrauterine insemination, and in vitro fertilization to achieve pregnancy, and may use surrogacy if neither partner is able to carry a pregnancy. Both lesbians and gay men frequently face barriers to adoption, and may be motivated to seek out ARTs by the desire to have a genetically related child. ARTs have the potential to intervene in normative models of family formation, whether by opening doors to parenthood for individuals who have his-
torically been barred by institutionalized heteronormativity and active
discrimination, or by creating kinship formations that are not biologi-
cally determined, phallocentric, or racially “pure.”

As the title suggests, this project is particularly interested in how race
intersects with reproductive technologies—how brown bodies are de-
ployed in the creation of white babies. Through the advent of the re-
productive technologies that make gestational surrogacy possible, the
maternal body no longer exists as the sole site of reproductive labor.
Both egg and sperm can be donated or purchased, and then fertilized
in a lab, and even the literal labor of pregnancy operates as an available
commodity. The separation between genetics and gestation has opened
the door to racial difference, in multiple forms. A gay male couple in Is-
rael, prohibited from using surrogacy in their own country, can purchase
eggs from a woman of their own religious and racial background and
then hire a woman in Nepal to bear the child. An infertile white woman
in Michigan can find an egg donor in Iowa and an African American
surrogate in a state “friendlier” to surrogacy, like California. A Hispanic
military wife in Texas can bear twins for a Swedish couple who are able
to provide eggs and sperm but not a hospitable womb, and who do not
drive in a country that allows for paid surrogacy. As a result of the advent
of gestational surrogacy through in vitro fertilization, the surrogate, no
longer a genetic contributor to the child, need not “match” the charac-
teristics or desires of the intended parents, including their race and eth-
nicity. This means that according to contemporary racial logic, women
of color who act as surrogates for white families are sharing a biological
connection (the “environment” of the womb and more) with the fetus,
while still giving birth to babies who are understood to be white. What
does cross-racial surrogacy tell us about the way we understand race as
a social, genetic, or biological factor? About racial “transmission” and
how it has changed over time? While ARTs have the potential to com-
licate the socially imposed boundaries that maintain the constructs of
race, kinship, and gender, the racialization of surrogacy reveals an ongo-
ing commitment to their maintenance. This project analyzes both the
emancipatory potential of ARTs and the changing means by which the
challenges they pose are reabsorbed into the hegemonic norm.

The aforementioned episode of Army Wives speaks to some of these
questions. Because she is carrying twins for a couple of another race,
Pamela is a cross-racial gestational surrogate. Yet contrary to what the *Army Wives* episode represents, the person of color in a cross-racial matching is nearly always the surrogate, not the intended parents. Surrogates and intended parents are frequently separated by disparities in class, educational background, and cultural capital, with the intended parents occupying the more privileged position. When the surrogate is a person of color and the intended parents are white, race affords the intended parents another layer of privilege. This reflects a long history in the United States of economically and racially dominant social groups relying on the reproductive labor of women of color as nannies, maids, and caretakers for the elderly.

The producers of *Army Wives* could have several strategic reasons for reversing the racial roles. In this episode of *Army Wives*, Pamela is prompted to explain her role as a surrogate in order to dismiss the specter of cross-racial sex. Indeed, the birth of nonwhite twins leads the group of women to collectively turn to Roland, the only male and only African American in their ranks, forcing him to deny paternity. Pamela is doubly situated as a nonmother to the children through visual and verbal reference to racial difference, reinforcing her gestational role as purely custodial. She thus does not become a "bad mother" by handing over the children to their genetic (read: real) parents, and remains sympathetic to the audience. The program is able to address race in the pilot episode without explicitly engaging with the issues of power and privilege that simmer just below the surface.

While this episode does not use the phrase “intended parents,” it is one that is routinely employed by surrogacy agencies as well as industry and scholarly sources. The term refers to the individuals who commission surrogacy and therefore “intend” to raise the child. This terminology differentiates the gestational role of the surrogate (and the genetic contribution of any donors involved in the process) from the social role of parenting. The concept of “intent” also has legal connotations; a well-known case of contested surrogacy in the 1990s was decided on the basis of intent, with the court ruling that a commissioning couple’s intent to parent trumped a gestational surrogate’s desire to retain custody of the nongenetic child to whom she gave birth. The precedent of intent set in this case has since been used to settle other surrogacy-related disputes. Given that intent has been used in a legal sense to bolster the rights of
commissioning couples at the expense of surrogates, it is also a phrase that potentially masks the privileges of the former, including race and class differences that may advantage intended parents socially, economically, and legally. The phrase “intended parents” will be used throughout this book, but I will also challenge its potential for benign anonymity by foregrounding intersectional analyses of how multiple identity categories coexist to cumulatively shape the experiences of all parties involved.

Cross-racial gestational surrogacy has proliferated in recent decades due to technological advancements in the reproductive technology industry, as well as prevailing popular discourses concerning racial “transmission.” Consumers of reproductive technologies are encouraged by popular scientific discourse to compartmentalize gestation and genetics, believing that the qualities that determine the identity of their future child are locked into the child’s genes. As a result, many intended parents do not hesitate to choose a gestational surrogate of a different race. This genetic essentialism, in which cultural meanings of the gene conflate with the scientific or biological, “reduces the self to a molecular entity, equating human beings, in all their social, historical, and moral complexity, with their genes.”

The role of the surrogate is minimized when DNA is framed as the sole arbiter of the “true self.” Genetic essentialism also raises questions for how our society defines race; as I will demonstrate, race and ethnicity are cast as attributes carried by sperm and egg in the ART industry, thus whiteness can be “commercially reproduced” even in cross-racial surrogacy arrangements. When intended parents, surrogates, donors, fertility clinics, and others all play their parts in the fiction that race is reproduced genetically, then these actors and institutions are reinforcing a social “truth” about race rather than a scientific one. In other words, ART use in the United States reifies cultural attitudes about the biological basis for racial difference, while scientific and academic arguments to the contrary largely fail to trickle down into the popular consciousness.

Although gestational carriers are employed in less than 1 percent of ART procedures tracked by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the figures are increasing exponentially, with the number of reporting fertility clinics that offer gestational carrier services rising from 69 percent in 2001 to 86 percent in 2011. Cross-racial gestational surrogacy is also a small but seemingly growing
phenomenon. In a groundbreaking ethnographic study, the anthropologist Heléna Ragoné calculated that roughly 30 percent of gestational arrangements in the largest surrogacy programs at the time were between surrogates and intended parents of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. The exact percentage of surrogacy contracts in the United States today that are cross-racial is unknown, in part because the CDC does not collect racial identifiers from the individual clinics that report ART success rates.

When women of color work as surrogates, they are tapping into a history of racialized reproductive labor in the United States in which dominant groups rely upon the reproductive potential of nonwhite women, women whose own reproductive desires have historically been thwarted and even demonized. Yet reproductive technologies are not determined by this history. The intimate interracial contact of cross-racial gestational surrogacy has the potential to blur boundaries of racial “purity.” It also disrupts long-standing hierarchies valuing the types of families that deserve to be reproduced, as in the revelatory moment in Army Wives when a white surrogate gives birth in the service of creating an African American family. This moment also expands upon traditional narratives of what birth means for the woman experiencing labor; it is through surrogacy that Pamela creates her own alternative family formation, made up of a group of army spouses that cross boundaries of race, class, sex, and military rank. Rather than bonding with the babies in the traditional fashion, whereby biology determines maternal nature, Pamela bonds with a group of fictive kin who support her in a way that her “real” family does not.

The challenge to traditional maternity that Pamela represents in this episode also raises some of the central questions of this book: what kind of ideological and cultural work is done socially and legally to shore up traditional notions of family, gender, and race in the face of changing reproductive technologies? How are reproductive technologies naturalized so that these hegemonic constructs retain cultural salience? Feminists and other ethicists have raised serious concerns about whether reproductive technologies and surrogacy represent increased agency for the various actors involved, including infertile women, egg donors, and surrogates. These concerns include whether or not the relative issues at stake for each of these groups are given equal weight; in other words,
does the “natural” desire of intended parents to create a biological family overshadow the potential economic and bodily exploitation of egg donors and surrogates? Or from another perspective, do paternalistic and culturally specific concerns about what constitutes exploitative labor in fact limit women’s agency and ability to support their families? While this project does not seek to resolve the ethical and moral implications of surrogacy, I am interested in the tension between the potential for ARTs to destabilize hegemonic ideologies of what it means to be family, a mother, to share “blood” and “likeness,” and the dominant uses of ARTs that tend to reinforce traditional constructs.

Methods and Overview of the Book

Surrogacy receives popular and legal attention that is disproportionate to its actual use. Why study surrogacy when it is a statistically infrequent means of family formation in the United States today? Why do the ethical, moral, and political conundrums raised by surrogacy loom so large in the public consciousness? As the sociologist Susan Markens argues, surrogacy can be read as a form of “symbolic politics,” or “debates that reflect underlying social tensions and concerns.”

Likewise, small-scale or minority phenomena such as cross-racial gestational surrogacy, gay and lesbian parenting, or interracial marriage provide insight into the battle lines that are drawn between hegemonic and counterhegemonic forces, as well as the ways normative ideologies exert and remake themselves in the wake of challenges. In light of this, the actual frequency of gestational surrogacy in the United States is not central to my argument; this project analyzes the discourse surrounding gestational surrogacy, how it is naturalized, and whether this naturalization serves to shore up dominant ideologies of race and kinship.

This book contributes to an active field of literature on reproductive technologies while addressing understudied aspects of surrogacy within this scholarship. With notable exceptions, feminist analyses of surrogacy have largely focused on the gendered implications of the practice and minimized the role of race. My research takes intersectionality as a crucial starting point, examining the ways identity categories come together to form nexuses of privilege and oppression. Fertility clinics, surrogacy agencies, and intended parents often dismiss the role of race
in gestational surrogacy arrangements as inconsequential, particularly in comparison to the race of egg and sperm donors who will contribute their genetic material. A surrogate is measured instead by markers of appropriate femininity, including the completeness of her own biological family and the perceived authenticity of her altruistic motivations. Yet gender identity is not isolated from socially identified race, and thus the race of the surrogate takes on varying levels of importance in relation to other intersectional constructs. For example, white European and American intended parents may read the race, class, and gender of surrogates in India as signifiers of docility, hyperfertility, and Otherness. These factors then increase the perceived attractiveness of Indian women as ideal reproductive laborers. Intersectionality adds a critical layer of analysis to cross-racial gestational surrogacy.

In addition to having a primary focus on gender, much of the relevant scholarship on reproductive technologies has been ethnographic. These works often study the motivations of the actors involved in ARTs and interrogate the ethical issues raised by such practices. This book is invested in a different set of questions, primarily concerning the discourse on surrogacy in the United States, and what it tells us about larger ideologies of race, gender, and kinship. Discourse consists of both what is said and what is silenced, and while capable of transmitting and producing power, it can also reveal the mechanisms of power and provide strategies for resistance. Discourse is “a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge”; thus my analysis speaks to how the discussions about race, gender, and kinship within surrogacy discourse are not isolated to this small-scale phenomenon, but actually have broader implications for shifting social roles and identities.

This project involves a multisited, qualitative analysis of sources, requiring an interdisciplinary methodology that treats surrogacy as a site that reveals larger social anxieties concerning race, gender, and kinship. Interdisciplinary, qualitative research allows for themes to emerge after the process of data collection; in this project, this means that the overarching questions about surrogacy led me to certain sites, texts, and sources, rather than limiting these sources to match one methodological approach. As I began to research the development of surrogacy into a transnational, multibillion-dollar industry, it was clear that this business is built upon shifting ideologies of femininity, racial difference,
and the value of women's work. Thus, I was drawn to multiple sites of investigation, including the law, mass media, the history of racialized reproductive labor, and the contemporary mediated spaces—the websites and databases—where the services of surrogate and egg donors are advertised. While these sites are multiple, they are not entirely disconnected from one another. They weave together the complicated strands of commerce, representation, policy, and historical precedent with contemporary and rapidly shifting cultural norms about what makes a family.

Chapter 1 places reproductive technologies in historical perspective, beginning with the 1978 birth of the first child born through in vitro fertilization, the attendant explosion of infertility services in the United States, and the development of gestational surrogacy. This chapter also considers how the advent of gestational surrogacy complicates the selection of a surrogate, the surrogate population, and the role of race in the reproductive technology industry. Chapter 1 introduces the feminist framework within which this book is situated by contextualizing the varied feminist responses to ARTs in the last several decades. Early feminist writing on ARTs commonly cast these technologies as either oppressive tools of the patriarchy or an unmitigated good. The realities of surrogacy beg for a more complicated framework; the following chapters situate cross-racial surrogacy within specific gendered, racial, historical, and legal contexts.

Chapter 2 is based on a qualitative analysis of mainstream media sources that covered surrogacy from 2000 to 2010, including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television news. Multiple—and often competing—narratives of surrogacy coexisted in the popular media. These narratives are significant because it is through the media that most people are introduced to surrogacy. This analysis resulted in the emergence of three primary themes in mainstream media coverage of surrogacy: a “women-helping-women” narrative, the call for regulation, and “the kinship question.” The theme of women helping women is most prevalent; it explains surrogacy primarily through the relationship between women, in which altruism motivates one woman to help another reach the apotheosis of femininity by becoming a mother. Problematically, the common representation of this exchange is as an equal one, whereby the differences between monetary compensation and a child
are flattened through the leveling effects of altruism. Another theme is the recurrent call for regulation, in which narratives of surrogacy (particularly those warning of the dangers of the practice) have moved away from a focus on the individual “bad” surrogate or manipulative intended parents. Instead, these narratives emphasize the lack of regulation at the state and federal level as the principal villain. In effect, the transfer of babies through surrogacy is not condemned as inherently exploitative to either women or children but is rather cast as a market in need of protective legislation. Finally, media discourse on surrogacy raises the kinship question, which reflects the anxieties raised by ARTs’ challenges to the traditional family. There are multiple strands of this discourse; some focus on the “unnatural,” “brave new world” aspect of ARTs, while others participate in the naturalization of ARTs by framing ART-created families as “just like us.”

Chapter 3 examines how discourses of race are influenced by the economic and reproductive imperatives of society at different historical moments. This chapter historicizes how ideologies of race and racial “transmission” were adapted during the era of cross-racial wet nursing in America in response to the labor needs of the white dominant classes. Both cross-racial wet nursing and cross-racial gestational surrogacy are evidence of the hegemonic power of dominant groups to naturalize deeply racialized and gendered practices in ways that economically benefit the interests of these groups. In this chapter I compare historical examples of racialized reproduction to contemporary examples with an analysis of two legal cases involving cross-racial gestational surrogacy: Johnson v. Calvert, the first case in the United States in which a gestational surrogate sought child custody, and the more recent 2009 trial, Marion County Division of Children’s Services v. Melinger. The specifics of these two cases vary dramatically; most notably, the African American surrogate Anna Johnson went to court for custody of the child she bore, while the more recent case focused on the parental fitness of the white intended father. What these trials have in common is that in both instances racial difference between the surrogate and intended parents served the interests of the racially and economically privileged parties. Like cross-racial wet nursing, cross-racial gestational surrogacy is part of a complicated history of racialized reproductive labor in the United States.
In chapter 4, I contextualize the shifting popular and scientific discourses of race since the mid-twentieth century by analyzing databases of egg donors and surrogates created by agencies to connect intended parents with the women who provide these services. From lists put together by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association, I selected agencies that provided both egg donation and surrogacy services. This allowed me to contrast how traits like the race and ethnicity of surrogates and egg donors were represented both within and across organizations. This chapter examines the tenacity with which a biological framework for race has persisted, aided by the increased commodification of scientific research. Race, alongside traits such as eye color, intelligence, and personality, is coded as having biological origins. Reproductive technologies demonstrate that despite scientific debates, ARTs and other race-based medicines continue to promote and reflect a popular understanding of distinct biological races. Thus the egg donor and surrogacy databases built by ART clinics reflect often-unspoken assumptions about race and heritability, and demonstrate how scientific and academic assertions of the biological meaninglessness of race largely fail to trickle down into the popular consciousness.

Chapter 5 extends my analysis of cross-racial gestational surrogacy to consider the transnational circuits of reproductive labor from the United States to India, particularly what is known as “reproductive tourism.” Broadly speaking, reproductive tourism is a relatively recent term coined to describe the increasing travel across national boundaries by individuals seeking fertility services, including donor eggs and sperm, procedures such as in vitro fertilization, and surrogacy. Reproductive tourism is motivated by a number of factors, such as the varied legal restrictions on ARTs in many European nations, long waiting lists for donors and surrogates, and prohibitively expensive prices that prospective parents can greatly reduce by “shopping around” for services. Through secondary sources, magazine, newspaper, and television coverage, and documentary films, this chapter examines how notions of race and genetic determinism are mapped uneasily onto surrogacy in India. Intended parents benefit from the racial and economic “difference” between themselves and Indian surrogates. These power differentials include the stark reality that surrogates have little recourse should they be
mistreated. Intended parents are also able to naturalize their claims to kinship with their future children in juxtaposition to the “Otherness” of the surrogate. I conclude this chapter with a reimagining of reproductive tourism as something that happens not only transnationally, but also within national borders. If one takes seriously the social disparities between contracting parties, I ask, does reproductive tourism also exist within the United States?

To varying extents, each chapter addresses material that is in some way time-sensitive. New media narratives of surrogacy are constantly being produced, fertility clinics are updating their databases with every new donor and surrogate that they accept, and the purview of reproductive tourism expands continuously as entrepreneurial individuals set their sights on nations whose reproductive resources remain untapped. Most significantly, innovations in reproductive technologies advance at a rate with which it is difficult, if not impossible, to keep pace. However, the arguments and theoretical frameworks that underpin this research remain relevant, largely because this project resonates beyond the specificity of ARTs and draws historicized comparisons that tap into a much longer tradition of cross-racial reproductive labor.

I conclude this study by linking the core themes to the increasing hostility to women’s reproductive rights at the local, state, and national level, namely, the recent spate of state amendments concerning fetal personhood. As feminist theory and practice have consistently urged us to recognize, personal or private matters such as ART use can in fact have enormous repercussions for how we think about, politicize, and adjudicate some of the most sacred aspects of our existence. While this book examines a narrow slice of the field of reproductive politics and reproductive justice, many readers will come to this topic with some personal experience or future aspirations regarding pregnancy, fertility, and family building. I was not a mother when I began researching this book, but have given birth to two children during the writing process. The experience of being pregnant while reading, researching, and writing about ideologies of gender, fertility, and motherhood has changed the way I think about my own position within these frameworks. I hope that this book will offer readers a new way of thinking as well, particularly about how our intersecting identities shape our expectations of fertility services, our access to them, and how we view ourselves as a
consumer or (re)producer within this active market. I hope that this book provides readers with the understanding that whether we ever enter the market for fertility services ourselves, surrogacy and the discourse surrounding it are indicative of broader social debates and contestation over gender roles, boundaries of racial difference, and the meaning of kinship.