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Contemplating Antiracist Mothering in the Lives of White Women in Multiracial Families

Although more white women live, love, and mother in multiracial contexts, there remains limited scholarship on them, particularly what role they can play in antiracism efforts. In this article, I consider what antiracist mothering means to white women in multiracial families, and how they practice antiracist mothering in their lives. I draw on data from two participant workshop discussions on antiracism and mothering, held as part of a larger qualitative study of ten white women in multiracial families in Canada. The participant dialogues reveal four key themes: facing fear, developing critical skills, finding "comfort in discomfort," and engaging in self-reflective learning. The research findings demonstrate how white women in multiracial families can be proactive in their negotiation and resistance to dominant discourses of race and racism, especially if they are willing to participate in ongoing learning. The research study suggests using an antiracism framework to explore the perspectives and practices of white mothers in multiracial families is informative to reconceptualizing their mothering roles, and how they can cultivate their own and their children's critical skills. Participant workshops are recommended as a method to engage issues of race and difference with white women in multiracial families.

In Canada, as in other diverse Western societies, more individuals are forming partnerships across multiple forms of difference (Milan and Hamm 2; Milan et al., 70). These partnerships increasingly include white women who are permanently transgressing "colour lines" to live, love, and have a family (Dalmage 9-31; O'Donoghue 126). Although more white women mother in multiracial contexts, there remains limited scholarship on them, particularly what role they can play in antiracism efforts (Twine 91-92).

When white women cross the fixed lines of the white patriarchal world, they

may witness their relationship to whiteness, race, and difference change dramatically. White women in multiracial families are "outsiders within," wherein they remain marked as white, yet they are intimately connected to nonwhite people (Luke 51). Their experiences and relationships with others are distinct from white women in monoracial families, but they do not experience racism in the same way women of colour do. For instance, Ruth Frankenberg argues that racism "rebounds" on white women in multiracial relationships in that it does not have the same level of impact on her as it does on her family, yet it has a distinctly different effect (112). Although white women's encounters with racism are relational, the material, psychological, and social implications it has directly impact her too (e.g., if she and her partner are refused housing, turned down for a financial loan, or her partner is denied employment) (Dalmage 63-64; Deliovsky 64, 124; Frankenberg 112).

White women in multiracial families thus come to occupy a unique positionality within and relationship to ideologies of race. Socialized to become "good white girls" (Moon 181), white women may have never considered themselves to be racialized beings, imagined themselves to be implicated in racial dynamics, or questioned their whiteness and white privilege (O'Donoghue 126; Robinson 171-172). Though certainly not an automatic result of being in a multiracial relationship, new relational experiences with people of colour can create opportunities for white women to cultivate new forms of racial consciousness and develop approaches to navigate racialized discourses (Britton 1315; Harman 191; Hill and Thomas 196-197).

When white women become part of multiracial families, they become responsible for the racial socialization of their multiracial children, even though they have likely never built the experiential skills or possessed the embodied knowledge to confront issues of race and racism in a white supremacist society. A central theme in literature on multiracial families and the limited existing scholarship on white women in multiracial families is the contestable role white women play as mothers to multiracial children (Bratter and King 170; Robinson 172; Verbian 217) Although white women do report concerns regarding their ability to facilitate the racial socialization of their children, they can learn strategies to address racism as part of their mothering work. Several scholars move beyond the focus of white women's maternal competency, but few studies examine the experiences of white mothers in multiracial families through antiracist and critical race frameworks (see Deliovsky; Frankenberg; Twine), and to my knowledge even less use antiracism research methods. In turn, scholars still have a limited understanding of how white women perceive antiracism in relation to their roles as mothers and how they imagine applying antiracism in their mothering labour. My qualitative study of white women in multiracial families in Canada begins to fill this gap.

This article examines how white women conceptualize and undertake antiracist mothering in their lives. I share excerpts from two participant workshop discussions on antiracism and mothering, held as part of a larger qualitative study of ten white women in multiracial families in Canada. The data reveal four key themes: facing fear, developing critical thinking skills and responsive strategies, finding "comfort in discomfort," and engaging in self-reflective learning. The research findings demonstrate white women can be proactive in their negotiation and resistance to dominant ideologies of race and difference, especially if they are willing to participate in ongoing learning. The research study suggests using an antiracism framework to explore the perspectives and practices of white mothers in multiracial families is informative to reconceptualizing their mothering role and how they can cultivate their own and their children's critical skills. Participant workshops are recommended as a method to engage issues of race and difference with white women in multiracial families.

Small Acts in Everyday Spaces: Antiracism

Antiracist scholars, George Dei and Agnes Calliste argue the objective of antiracism is to, "identify, challenge and change the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism and other forms of societal oppressions" (21). The focus of antiracism education is the growth of critical consciousness and capacity so individuals can be agentive in subverting, instead of passively condoning or perpetuating, oppressive conditions. Although antiracism education is generally thought of with respect to formal learning environments, antiracist activism needs to involve "knowledge-generating activities" in the educational spaces of the home and community, and a commitment to fight against oppressive ideologies in all areas of life, including the family (Calliste and Dei 11).

An integrated antiracist approach begins in the informal learning sites of daily life and practices, for it is within individuals' immediate social worlds they can start to make connections between personal experiences, and broader social, political, and economic realities (Dei, *Antiracism Education* 31). Histories of antiracism struggle demonstrate individuals can cultivate antiracist consciousness and be involved in antiracist praxis, but it begins with the self and one's social sphere (Derman-Sparks and Phillips 3). In the spaces of family and community life, white women in multiracial families can have opportunities to bear witness to racism and engage in learning that disrupts their existing worldviews. Most importantly, they can attempt the difficult work of learning tangible strategies to challenge dominant discourses of difference. When we as researchers and educators focus on the everyday as a site to connect personal,

collective, and structural conditions, we can imagine that habitual forms of labour can be politicized, and antiracist "knowledge-generating activities" can take multiple iterations, including mothering in home learning environments (Calliste and Dei 11). Antiracist activism thus needs to be defined in broad conceptual terms, which critically includes envisioning how little daily actions can collectively affect broader social and political change (Dei, *Anti-Racism Education* 31; Fleras 225; Martin et al. 79).

The notion that the practice of mothering is political has been put forth by numerous black and critical race feminists (see Collins; hooks; Fuentes; Naples). Throughout history, women who have been shut down of formal political spaces have been performing significant political and social labour in kitchens, churches, schools, and community centres. Adrien Wing and Laura Weselmann argue that mothering is a form of "critical race feminist praxis" integral to which is the act of nurturing that involves "providing individuals with the emotional and cultural self-esteem to survive in a racist, sexist, homophobic world" (278). As critical race feminists have articulated, white women and nonwhite women experience mothering and the family in very different ways (Dua 238; Thobani 113). Unlike white women who have occupied a strategic position reproducing the colonial order, black women have been responsible for providing maternal love and nurturance for black children, which is a form of political resistance in a white supremacist society (O'Reilly 179). Patricia Collins writes that mothering as political activism can also pertain to women "who care about Black women" (194). She notes white women with mixed-race children can be "politicized in fighting battles confronting their black children," as they gain new insights on mothering while raising their children in a racist world (194).

By attending to how white women in multiracial families perceive their mothering labour in relation to antiracism, we can begin to imagine them as agentive politicized subjects and explore how white women can be involved in resisting racial oppression through the political labour of motherhood (Collins 194; Comeau 27; Twine 263-265). This is part of what I do in my qualitative study, which I describe below.

Methodology

This article draws on two group participant workshops held in 2014 as part of a larger study on the lives of ten white Euro-Canadian women in multiracial families with black African immigrant partners in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (n = 4) and Vancouver, British Columbia (n = 6). All participants self-identified as white women in, or who had been in, multiracial families with black African partners, and were recruited through third party recruitment. The participants

ranged in age from mid-twenties to late thirties, and were predominantly of lower middle-class and middle-class backgrounds. The women had varied ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, including, Portuguese Catholic, Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jew, and Ukrainian Christian. The women were in relationships with their partners ranging from two to seventeen years, and the majority of women had children under the age of ten.

Two participant workshops were held, one in each research location (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Vancouver, British Columbia) and each lasted approximately two and a half to three hours. To maintain confidentiality, each participant signed a confidentiality agreement, and participants are identified by their pseudonym. The workshops were video and audio recorded and transcribed. Critical discourse analysis was used to analyze the transcribed data. To identify emergent and consistent themes and make connections between and across themes, a "high level" (abstract, conceptual, discursive) and "low level" (specific fixed data: geographic location, age, education level) coding process was used (Madison 37). To ensure validity, triangulation of multiple theoretical approaches and mixed methods was employed, and member checks were conducted throughout the research process (Lather 67, 78).

The study was informed by decolonizing, Indigenous, and feminist methodologies, and antiracism research methods. Antiracism research addresses "the nature of local resistance to oppression, and the learning objective is to create healthy spaces in which subjects can collaborate with researchers to understand the nature of social oppression" (Dei, "Critical Issues," 11). To facilitate collaborative learning in the group workshops, I created spaces of critical inquiry in which the participants could openly share personal narratives with one another, and articulate their reflections on race and antiracism; together, the participants and I could then make connections between their individual experiences and broader social, political, and economic conditions of inequity (11; Okolie 242).

The workshop objective was to create a space for the participants to meet one another and discuss three key topics, each of which had a corresponding written or visual text they reviewed prior to the workshop: 1. Whiteness, white privilege, and racial identity (Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"); 2. Immigration and multiculturalism (CBC's "True Love or Marriage Fraud?"); and 3. Mothering and antiracist parenting (Van Kerckhove's *How to be an Anti-Racist Parent: Real-Life Parents Share Real-Life Tips*). The focus of this article is on the third topic, mothering and antiracist parenting.

The Van Kerckhove text is an accessible booklet filled with brief vignettes and quotations by parents who reflect on their experiences confronting race with their children, and it also contains key tips and recommendations for

parents. The text facilitated participant dialogue regarding specific ways to confront racialized discourses in daily life, which the women articulated as an immediate concern throughout the study. Using the text as a medium for participant engagement enabled the women to consider what antiracist mothering means to them in practice, and what tools they require to face issues of difference with their children and others in their lives.

Findings

Facing Fear

Mimi has two children, aged eight and ten, with her now ex-husband from Kenya. For Mimi, antiracist mothering involves teaching her children they should not be afraid of differences and participate in avoidance behaviours in response to fear. During the Saskatoon workshop, she stated: "I just keep telling my kids—body shape, body size, body everything, colour, hair. Everyone is different. Why are you afraid to talk to a person who looks different? I always tell the kids not to be afraid of differences and to always ask if they have a question." Mimi overtly identifies the underlying emotion of fear that forms the basis for prejudice and discrimination of "others." Rather than stating ways her children may not speak or behave, she teaches them to name fear and to critically reflect on their own evolving understanding of difference in the social world. Mimi does this in part by recognizing differences (not erasing them) in real and complex ways and by encouraging her children to actively inquire, and thus not assume, about "others." Like Mimi, three other participants emphasized the value of asking questions and of understanding where racism comes from.

Azania has three-year-old twins with her Xhosa partner from South Africa. For her, confronting fear involves exposing her children to multiple forms of difference. In the Vancouver workshop, she said the following:

> I guess what I feel I need to do as a mom is expose my kids to as many different people and experiences as possible, and answer their questions. Like when they ask … different questions that are related to race, you can kind of sneak around them because they [questions related to race] feel uncomfortable to talk about. Actually, I think bringing them up and talking about them, and even involving other people [is good]. I feel like these are probably the ways that I have to give my kids the experience, because we do have a kind of white colonial past. I don't want them to think white people are bad—it's in their blood too—but I want them to know they should think critically, and ask questions, and never take things for face value. I guess that's how I would approach race.

Azania identifies several key considerations for antiracist mothering. First, she names her responsibility as a mother to provide opportunities for her children to witness and to question differences, and to directly answer her children's questions. She identifies the fear that exists for parents when she acknowledges evading questions about race can easily take place, since race is "uncomfortable to talk about." Azania also significantly links a "white colonial past" to her children's identity, and she implicates this in her duty not only to teach her children about differences, but to complicate the individualizing, pathological explanations of racism and discrimination (Wetherell and Potter 208). She does this by locating oppression within the historical and social context of "a white colonial past", and ultimately within the children themselves—"it's in their blood too."

Developing Critical Thinking Skills and Responsive Strategies

Azania's conceptualization of antiracist mothering is similar to another participant, Zanadu, who has five children between the ages of four to fifteen, with her Maasai partner from Kenya. Zanadu is committed to disrupting the "prejudice problematic" or the notion that prejudice is isolated to the intentional and sovereign individual actor (Wetherell and Potter 201-20). In her critical literacy reading practices with her children, she wishes to demonstrate to them that everyone is implicated in the reproduction of racial ideologies. During the Saskatoon workshop, she shared her perspectives on teaching her children about differences:

> I also really want them to understand where the racism comes from, and like put themselves in the shoes of the person who is speaking in a racist way for them to understand why they would possibly think that way; because I think it's easier to identify with the victim of the racism … yet the other person has their own story…that's equally important because our kids and we have our own prejudices—really we're not different, it's just in different ways.

Like Mimi, Azania, and other participants, Zanadu wants her children to cultivate critical inquiry skills and responsive strategies. She problematizes and complicates the notion that racism and discrimination are individualized acts of prejudice by people who are fundamentally different; rather, she states, "our kids and we have our own prejudices—really we're not different." Most significantly, Zanadu turns the gaze on the perpetuator in order to analyze why they are behaving in the manner they are. In this way, she challenges the binary of perpetuator-victim to suggest people all exist on a continuum; we all

hold "our own prejudices." Zanadu's articulation is a marked distinction from the predominant tendency to adhere to this binary by focusing on the victim and maintaining distance from the perpetuator (Herman 7; Tucker 77-78). Zanadu also discussed how she mentors her children to play a proactive educative role in their interactions with others, largely premised on her assertion that most individuals are "completely ignorant" and do not intend to reproduce racialized discourses.

Maya was pregnant with her first child with her new husband from Nigeria during the Saskatoon workshop. In it, she articulated her concern about how she and her daughter would be perceived in the social world and, in particular, how she would respond to the commonly posed question to white mothers in multiracial families: "So did you adopt?" (Dalmage 115-16). Like other participants, Maya reiterated the instructive role she would be play as part of her responsive strategy.

> *I think, ok this is someone showing me—I don't like using the word—their ignorance, so I'm going to help them, educate them … so I think that would be good to figure out, something to say … instead of, "ok, don't say those questions or something" … I want to help people learn how to be because I know a lot of people are just curious and they don't know how to say it.*

Similar to Zanadu, Maya notes that many people lack awareness about how to pose questions and constructively discuss social differences. Maya's assertions relate to the broader liberal multicultural frameworks within which we learn what differences "are" and how we are meant (and not meant) to discuss such issues. Instead of policing someone's inquiry—"don't say those questions"—Maya chooses to play an educative role as part of her responsive approach. By making the decision to facilitate the possibility for constructive dialogue, Maya resists the "blame and shame" game within liberal multicultural approaches to difference (Wetherell and Potter 211). The group workshop was an informative learning opportunity for Maya in particular; pregnant with her first child, Maya said she gained insight from the other women's experiences, and through her interactions with them, she could reflect on what critical thinking skills and responsive strategies she wants to cultivate.

Finding "Comfort in Discomfort"

The workshop format and the antiracist parenting text created a space for the women to reflect on their limited understanding of racism, the discourses of difference they were socialized into as children, and their discomfort talking about race with their children and others. Certainly not all participants were

aware of their own internationalization of racialized discourses; in fact many women constructed racism as something that exists outside of their intimate relationships, and their motivation to face possibly uncomfortable discussions about difference and oppression was driven by their interest in protecting and supporting their children.

A prevalent notion in the conversations about antiracism and mothering was to find some kind of comfort in discomfort as a mother, and as a white mother in particular. As increasingly evidenced by research in early childhood development, children's awareness and reproduction of racial ideologies begins much earlier than previously thought (MacNaughton and Davis 17-30; Matlock and DiAngelo 70-71, 89). Claims to childhood innocence can lead to sheltering children from critical forms of dialogue that must take place as part of early childhood socialization in age-appropriate ways. Parental concerns about discussing racism and oppression with their children can thus, in part, reflect the parents' own unease and in effect serve to protect them, not their children. Shutting down uncomfortable dialogue is counterproductive to antiracism efforts, and acts to reinforce the silencing and erasure practices of white supremacy (Matlock and DiAngelo, 89).

For several women in the study, social differences are regularly discussed in their homes with their young children. For example, Imogen, a woman in her mid-thirties who has a three-year-old son with her Venda partner from South Africa, and Mimi both work in social service professions and express interest in social issues. Their articulations during the workshops demonstrated conversations about race are part of their everyday professional and private discourse. Through frequency and conscious effort, their level of "comfort in discomfort" negotiating racism has grown. This is dissimilar to other participants, such as Miranda, who has two sons (six months and three years old) with her husband from the Democratic Republic of Congo. During the Vancouver workshop, she shared her apprehension about moving beyond multicultural framings of difference.

> I guess I just feel uncomfortable talking about any sort of—I have no problem having conversations about people's different colour of skin; "Daddy and mommy are different colours, that's why you have this beautiful colour" … I've just had "there are differences in the world" conversations … I would be heartbroken and I don't know how to equip him to deal with that [racism].

Miranda acknowledges conversations about race and racism will be inevitable as her son interacts with more children when he enters the formal school system. She is uncertain how to provide him with the racial socialization he requires because she has never cultivated these skills. The sense of unease and

unknowing Miranda articulates was echoed by many participants, especially women who had not necessarily contemplated, or who were perhaps avoiding, how racial issues will manifest in their children's lives. Remaining within the relative safety of surface celebrations of difference is comfortable to do, since many children's books and resources that address racial and cultural differences are written within the dominant liberal multicultural paradigm. It is also easy to avoid conversations about race and discrimination because of the prevalence of liberal multicultural policies and social norms within key Canadian institutions, including the education system. Unfortunately, celebrating diversity, promoting tolerance, and adhering to colourblindness do not enable parents, educators, or children to cultivate the skills they require to fight interpersonal and systemic inequity, and exposure to varied cultural activities, artwork, or languages will not create structural change. It is therefore imperative Miranda—like many other white parents and educators who are left to navigate the often insidious manifestations of racism their children will face without experiential knowledge and skills—take responsibility to seek out antiracism resources and support.

In the workshops, the women shared ideas about how to push through "comfortable discomfort" and proactively bring up discrimination with their children. Two participants suggested the topic of bullying as one effective way for mothers to enter into critical conversations about constructions of difference and power, explicitly because bullying is already a familiar topic to children in the school system. The impact of the other women's approaches to uncomfortable conversations during the Vancouver workshop on Miranda's mothering was evident in her follow-up correspondence after the study.

> *Prior to my involvement in your study I hadn't really given much thought to how to approach the subject of race with my kids. I figured I would just answer questions as they arose, but now I am rethinking this approach (or rather lack thereof). Since the workshop I have tried to bring up in a gentle and relaxed way, conversations about different types of families and backgrounds…. Last night I read [my son] a book called "nighttime noises" with all black characters (the book is just about a kid who is scared of going to bed; nothing about race, per se) and I tried to make a learning opportunity of it.*

Miranda is making a conscious shift to cultivate new skills and initiate more critical mothering practices with her child. Her use of a children's literary text enables her to make storybook reading "a learning opportunity." Miranda is finding her 'comfort in discomfort' by practicing calm and casual ways to communicate with her child about social differences; doing so as part

of her daily ritual of reading can make talking about race part of her regular mothering discourse.

Self-Reflective Learning

Countering claims of colourblindness, the workshop participants emphasized the need to "check themselves" by acknowledging their own assumptions and biases, and how these may be playing out in oppressive ways, especially in front of their children. During the Saskatoon workshop, Maya said: "When you do something wrong, say, 'I shouldn't have said that, that totally came from a bad place,' instead of just [brushing it off]." Also in the Saskatoon workshop, Zanadu made herself vulnerable by providing an example of a situation in which she used oppressive language. "I did that with 'gay.' I was like 'that's so gay.' My fourteen-year-old daughter is really big on homophobia and stuff, and I was like, 'Oh I can't believe that!' I haven't said that in so long; we used to say that as teenagers and everything. But I caught myself and admitted it and everything." The women who made themselves vulnerable in the workshop discussions illustrate the necessity of implicating oneself in educative practices as a mother. They demonstrate that antiracist mothering obligates oneself to not only participate in racial consciousness development with children but also be open, engaged in critical self-reflection, and committed to life-long learning and action as a primary educator (Dei et al., 156; Matlock and DiAngelo 90). I observed that Zanadu and other women in the study who were the most active in addressing issues of equity with their children were also the most open and committed to their own continued growth (Allen 249-50).

In the Vancouver workshop, Imogen identified self-reflective learning as part of what it means to be a white mother and antiracist parent in a multiracial family. Referencing the antiracist parenting text that states "Never stop dismantling your own racist beliefs" (Van Kerckhove 4), Imogen reflected:

> I feel like it's our responsibility; I mean if you're aware of something it is always your responsibility to be aware or knowledgeable or inform yourself, so I guess [as an] antiracist parent, there's one part: "never stop dismantling your own racist beliefs"; of course just because you're married to a black man, and have children of colour doesn't mean you're not still seeped and embedded in that kind of system ... and you might be more informed ... but you know you just have to be aware or just never think you know everything. If you get challenged by your husband or your children in some way, like take a step back and think about it, continually have conversations; it's really valuable.

Imogen argues awareness of racism brings responsibility, yet it does not automatically lead one to participate in antiracist action. Being an antiracist mother is not about becoming a nonracist person; it is about remaining aware, gaining knowledge, and always being critically reflective of one's own "racist beliefs." Part of this accountability as the white partner in a multiracial family is to face and challenge oneself about how one reproduces and can possibly resist inequitable racial power relations in one's own family.

Discussion

The women's reflections on mothering and antiracism illustrate how white women in multiracial families can exercise agency in their negotiation of dominant discourses of race by learning skills and strategies to proactively respond to racism as mothers to their children and mentors to others in their lives. Many participants would not necessarily define their mothering as antiracist activism. Yet if we imagine their labour within an integrated antiracist framework, we can consider how white women in multiracial families can actualize "a cooperative and collaborative pedagogy" in which they can cultivate their own and their children's critical tools for political and social activism (Dei et al., 6; Twine 143-44).

Informed by antiracist theory and methods, the workshops provided a space for the participants to examine social differences through dialogue with one another and through engagement with the antiracist parenting text. Meeting other white women in multiracial families, something two participants had never experienced before, allowed the women to discuss contentious issues about race in ways many women stated they could not do with friends with monoracial families. The workshop dialogues, facilitated by the scenarios presented in the text, made antiracism in everyday life more concrete, and enabled the participants to consider their mothering labour within an antiracism framework.

In the workshops, I found the participants were willing to take risks, to varying extents, to share deeply personal stories with one another, and to face challenging conversations about issues of race, difference, and power, even participants who recounted they had not contemplated how racism would affect their children. By doing so, they made the workshops both an intellectual and emotional encounter. As per antiracism pedagogies, this kind of invested engagement is necessary to witness racism and to challenge existing assumptions about social differences (Berlak 135; Kumashiro 7-8). Although the participants expressed concerns about their ability to face racial issues, the women willing to take risks, to learn and to face the limits of their knowing as white women, appeared to be the most involved in the workshop process. After the workshops, four participants articulated they became more aware and interested in issues

of race and difference, and three specifically stated they wanted to take a more proactive approach to addressing racism with their children.

At the same time, I observed that adherence to dominant liberal multicultural discourses was still thematic in the women's articulations. For instance, in both workshops, the participants emphasized the importance of having diverse students in their children's learning environments, and assumed the presence of nonwhite children correlated with the reduction or absence of racial discrimination. Despite the women's unique experiences with racism, many appeared to uphold the idea that exposure to diversity provides the remedy to intolerance, a logic challenged by antiracist scholars (Dei and Calliste 21; Fleras 225, 233; Srivastava 301; Wetherell and Potter 210). I noted many of the participants struggled with how to handle racial discrimination within their natal families, and they were inconsistent with how they labelled racism. It appeared most women felt comfortable identifying the racialized discourses of friends and strangers, but they hesitated to name racist assertions made by family members. For example, four women identified their parents as "ignorant" or "traditional" in attempts to rationalize their parents' racist attitudes and to avoid dissonance in their relationships. On the other hand, the women's natal families, namely their parental relationships, are a site of agency where they can practice resistance to racial ideologies.

I also found that several participants made contradictory statements. They demonstrated racial consciousness and articulated antiracist perspectives, yet within the same conversation, they participated in negative forms of racialization. For instance, J, a mother of a teenage daughter and two sons under ten with her husband from Ghana, remarked how she actively disrupts racism in her natal family, yet she continued to use negatively racialized language and characterizations of racialized groups. In part, J and the other women's statements reflect the contradictory nature of liberal multicultural discourses themselves, as well as the lack of counter-discourses the participants had to challenge their existing conceptual frameworks of race and difference (Dalmage 20-27; Reisigl and Wodak 28; Wetherell and Potter 219). Recognizing and working within these discursive contradictions is central to antiracism pedagogies, and white women in multiracial families require more opportunities (such as the workshops) and more antiracist resources and mentors to support their development of counter-discourses of difference and antiracist approaches.

Conclusion

Although it is necessary to pursue antiracist work in the formal space of the classroom, we must also recognize and examine how antiracist learning and action can and does take place for white mothers in multiracial families in home

learning environments. The workshop dialogues on mothering and antiracism demonstrate how white Euro-Canadian women in multiracial families can possibly be part of antiracist action by learning strategies to resist oppressive ideologies and developing the critical skills the mothers and their children require for political and social activism (Twine 265). As "outsiders within" (Luke 51), white women in multiracial families have a distinct experience of racial ideologies and are increasingly mothering across "colour lines." I argue we need to shift the focus beyond discussing white women's maternal (in) competence in the racial socialization of their multiracial children, and use antiracist frameworks to further explore how they not only conceptualize but actualize antiracist mothering in their lives.

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