

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Lesbian Motherhood and Artificial Reproductive Technologies in North America: Race, Gender, Kinship, and the Reproduction of Dominant Narratives

Zoey Smith

Department of Political Science, College of Arts and Science, University of Saskatchewan

**ABSTRACT**

This paper reviews current ethnographic literature on lesbian motherhood as it relates to artificial reproductive technologies (ART) through intersectional, biopolitical and critical-race frameworks. I argue that white, lesbian intending mothers' intersecting identity markers of whiteness and queerness place them in a unique position within ART discourses. ART functions as a biopolitical mechanism, which aims to normalize and naturalize privilege in hierarchized power structures, while suggesting that the meanings that it produces are objectively scientific rather than socially constructed. I propose that ART mechanizes white lesbian women's insecurities as queer women, nearing the falsified construction ideal motherhood, by exerting pressure on them to conform and therefore, reproduce dominant reproduction narratives. Simultaneously, I assert that white, lesbian, intending mothers' positionality could enable critical interrogation into the harmful social stratifications that ART perpetuates based on race, class, ability, and sexuality. In sum, a review of relevant literature is used to posit that women privileged within dominant ART discourses must utilize that privilege to create meaningful change.

*Keywords:* lesbian, queer, motherhood, artificial reproductive technologies, critical-race theory, intersectionality, biopower

**INTRODUCTION**

Lesbian motherhood commonly signifies a site of resistance capable of subverting traditional, North American, nuclear family formation and gendered kinship roles by isolating parenthood from fatherhood and patriarchy (Lewin, 2016; Herbrand 2018, 311). However, in-depth ethnographic inquiry has revealed that lesbian family formation in North America often works within the boundaries of nuclear family structures (Lewin 2016).

Artificial reproductive technologies (ART) can produce a similar disruptive imagery of a family detached from fatherhood and patriarchy through anonymous donor options (Ryan and Moras 2017, 581; Cutas et al. 2014). When lesbian motherhood is adjoined with ART, access to ideal motherhood, and as an extension, womanhood is granted to some and denied to others (Lewin 1993, 192). Although ART providers have recently attempted to make the technology appear more accessible, it continues to subtly promote white<sup>1</sup>, feminine, middle-class, and able-bodied as ideal

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper Black will be capitalized while white will remain lowercase. Capitalizing the “B” in Black has become an increasingly common practice that respects a common Black identity while still affirming the social construction of Blackness as a racial category (Chicago Manual 2020). Underlying the argument presented in this

and natural in the context of family formation in North America (Pande 2021, 342; Goodrow 2019; Davis 2020, 58). As a result, racialized, masculinized, low-income, and disabled bodies are often exoticized or left out of popular queer reproductive and ART discourses.

Dominant discourses embedded in structures that dictate the hierarchies of gender, race, ability, class, and sexuality are often reified rather than resisted in white, lesbian family-building, particularly when compounded with ART (Goodrow 2019, 140). This is achieved through the naturalization of socially dominant categories subtle socio-scientific discursive practices produce (Foucault 1984b, 172; 1984a, 259). For example, Goodrow suggests that the most cutting-edge ART, preimplantation embryo selection technologies, enables parents to choose social sex, physical characteristics, and genetic predispositions through advanced science, while subtly encouraging the attenuation of disability, neurodivergence, and difference (2019, 148). I argue that while all individuals, including white lesbian mothers, are constrained by the ideal family narrative, the material effects of these limitations are felt most significantly by individuals with additionally minoritized subject positions. Further, as a biopolitical mechanism, ART reproduces and sustains hegemonic ordering through naturalization, which deters white privileged lesbian mothers from pursuing subversive approaches to familial relationality and imaginative queered kinship.

This article is divided into three main sections, all of which are grounded in ethnographic, intersectional, and critical-race theory frameworks (Crenshaw 1990; Fassin 2011). First, I outline a history of meaning making

surrounding North American (NA) motherhood to contextualize the anthropological study of lesbian motherhood in NA, and how motherhood and femininity are constructed and constrained within prescriptive notions of the nuclear family. Second, using Foucault's theory of biopower, I examine ART as a biopolitical mechanism that functions to reproduce subjugating discourses surrounding race, ability, class, and sexuality. Finally, I consider the ways that ART and white, upper-middle-class lesbian family-building intersect and sustain one another by normalizing specific subject positions while further marginalizing others.

## LESBIAN MOTEHRHOOD IN NORTH AMERICA

### *North American Motherhood and the Nuclear Family*

Dominant NA power structures are dependent on controlling the sexual behaviours and kinship practices of their citizens (Stoler 1989, 634; Foucault 1984a, 267 Tallbear 2018, 146). Foucault famously argued that in the nineteenth century, "sex became a crucial target of power organized around the management of life..." (1984a, 268). Middle-class white morality was tied to colonial women, who were secured to the private sphere of the home (Stoler 1989, 649). Correspondingly, heterosexual monogamous marriage was intimately connected to the construction of NA nation-states (Tallbear 2018, 146). While colonizing women were pressured to reproduce, Black and Indigenous women's sexualities and reproduction were scrupulously and unjustly governed and constructed in deleterious ways (Davis 2020, 56). From the onset of European colonization

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article is the identification of both Black and white as socially constructed racial categories imbued with social meanings that generate material consequences. In recognition that whiteness is a racial category, many scholars and activists have chosen to capitalize the "W" in white. However, capitalizing white also risks emulating rhetoric of white supremacy (Laws 2020). Further, a capitalized white stipulates a common shared identity across white identifying people, which may exist, but is largely cohered through the construction of a hierarchized other that secures the privileged position of whiteness as a racial category. For these reasons, while this paper argues that recognizing whiteness as a racial category is critical for social change, white will remain all lower-case.

in NA during the 1600s, interracial marital and sexual contact were closely monitored and regulated by colonial authorities (Stoler 1984). Stoler argues that from early colonization through to the twentieth century, the construction of racial categories was necessary for colonial control (Stoler 1984, 635). Due to their reproductive capacity, women were categorized as either white or racialized (Stoler 1984, 635). Along with restricting prescribed gender roles, these categorizations became exceedingly important for the symbolic justification of colonial conquest (Stoler 1984, 643). White European women were representatively bound to national purity and the nuclear family, while racialized women were representatively bound to degeneration from this purity; from there, long, documented histories of racialized eugenics in colonial nations emerged (Stoler 1984, 635; Goodrow 2019, 139–143; Levine 2010, 51–52; Davis 2020, 56).

While racialized men were largely targeted by the justice system for interacting with white women, racialized women encountered eugenic technologies justified by scientific rhetoric and medical procedures, such as forced sterilization (Stoler 1984, 644). Simultaneously, Black and Indigenous populations in NA were subject to medical experimentation, such as the infamous J. Marion Sims experiment, in which enslaved Black women were exploited to develop procedures to repair vesicovaginal fluids (Davis 2020, 61). In these experiments the women were not offered anesthesia. Davis notes that medical mistreatment of racialized women continues today, with forced sterilization, coercive implementation of intrauterine devices (IUD), substandard delivery room care and outcomes, and exploitative medical procedures still rampant in the reproductive medical community (2020, 56–57, see also Goodrow 2019). Histories of abuse have led to biomedical distrust amongst women of colour, who are then further distanced from nuclear family ideals through

their disconnection from the reproductive care offered to white women (Davis 2020). I maintain that in NA social constructions of gender and race are inseparable from the construction of family and reproduction.

The nuclear family model continues to be largely mythological; most NA families do not conform to its particularities (Ryan and Moras 2017, 580). However, nuclear family imaginaries continue to subject women to tense networks of meaning concerning womanhood, motherhood, and reproduction (Stoler 1984, 634; Lewin 1983, 193). As such, clear resistance to the nuclear family model is often perceived as a radical challenge to the power structures that sustain the NA nation-state (Ryan and Moras 2017, 580; Fassin 2011). Lesbian and single mothers have been identified as individuals who, because of an absence of father in their family-building, signify that radical resistance to this model is possible (Ryan and Moras 2017, 581). Indeed, the kinship practices of individuals with diverse sexualities and genders so typify unique family formation that cisgender, heterosexual families may be viewed as ‘queered’ through processes such as the following: collectivity, which encourages collective judgement and resource sharing in the care of a child, with communities including fathers, mothers, extended family, and non-biological care-givers (Silver 2020); mutual choice among blended families, who through remarriage or re-partnering, continue to co-parent their children, affirming one another’s capacity to make decisions in the best interest of the child (Parks 2013); polyamory, defined as family and relationship structures that include more than two monogamously coupled individuals or parents (Park 2013; Flack 2009); and challenges to monomaterialism, a construct which functionally distances the biological mother from both extended mothering options, such as step-parenting, and from support networks of mothers who may arise from the strategies listed above (Parks 2013). Despite the tendency to

synonymize ‘queered’ and ‘radical’ family structures, in practice lesbian mothers frequently reproduce the narratives, symbols and imageries that uphold the nuclear family model and its constituting power structures.

#### *North American Lesbian Motherhood*

Multiple scholars have approached lesbian motherhood with the expectation of locating subversion (Lewin 2016, 599). However, ethnographic research has found that the nuclear family model maintains its prevalence in lesbian family practices. Lewin’s seminal ethnographic work with lesbian mothers suggests that the tendency to conform is likely grounded in the fundamental pressures exerted on all NA women (1993, 192).

Lewin’s longitudinal research reveals that lesbian motherhood does not differ starkly from heterosexual motherhood; ultimately, both are constrained under contemporary patriarchal expectations surrounding proper femininity and gendered performance (1993, 17 and 192). However, Lewin elucidates that lesbian women’s additional marginalization likely creates an exaggerated response to perceived and real pressure to properly perform motherhood (1993, 191–192). This aligns with contemporary scholarship that elucidates that ‘queered’ family formations are increasingly practiced by heterosexual couples whose privilege affords them more space to subvert social norms (Park 2019, 154; Silver 2020, 3; Tallbear 2018, 152–153). Like lesbian mothers, Black and Indigenous women of colour are often assumed to be at the forefront of decolonial familial subversion (Silver 2020, 5–6; Tallbear 2018). However, several studies illustrate that many lesbian women of colour reproduce gendered familial structures even more intently than their white counterparts (Reed et al. 2011).

Lewin posits that multiply-minoritized lesbian women may be more likely to conform to narratives such as the performance of constructed familial gendered roles to protect

themselves from further patriarchal and heterosexist speculation (Lewin 1993, 2017; Herbrand 2018, 315–316). However, her study does not address subject positions that are additionally marginalized under colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, and neoliberal institutions. Multiply-minoritized individuals are theorized, under the minority stress model, to experience both external, environmental stressors such as poverty or poor healthcare, and internal reactive stressors, such as internalized racism, or the internalized belief that ideal motherhood is less accessible to them (Cyrus 2010, 196). Multiply-minoritized individuals include those with intersecting subjugated identity markers, such as queer, low income, disabled, Black, Latino, Indigenous, or otherwise racialized. Multiply-minoritized individuals face unique and compounded exclusions from power, access, and equity under dominant, hegemonic institutional and structural norms (Cyrus 2010, 196–7). For multiply-minoritized lesbian mothers, research has shown that strict behavioural expectations for parenting are established under the gaze of heteronormative speculation. Beneath that gaze racialized, low-income, and disabled bodies, who risk further subjugation by subverting normativity, are offered fewer choices and experience more governance as well as stricter internal-external controls (Reed et al. 2011, 752; Pande 2021, 337; Roberts 2009, 798).

Reed and colleague’s 2011 ethnographic study with Black, low-income, young, lesbian mothers at a drop-in center for at risk-youth in the United States exemplifies this notion. They explain that this group of mothers strongly align themselves with traditional NA nuclear family formation. In fact, these mothers adamantly police themselves and others to adhere to the roles: “femmes” “stemmes” and “babies’ daddies” or “studs” (Reed et al. 2011, 757). Each of these roles mark proximity to ideal motherhood, which is dependent on levels of normative femininity (Reed et al.

2011, 757). Ideal motherhood is a location reserved for mothers, who are nearest to the nuclear family and normative cisgender femininity. Reed and colleagues elucidate that

Black lesbian communities often have gender identity norms that play a role in organizing sexual and romantic life...There may be pressure for some to bear children, whereas others may be condemned...individual reproductive decisions are culturally mediated and influenced by social control and support. (Reed et al. 2011, 752)

Each family role present in this community context is intimately bound to the relationships that the women have to men, who provide them with sperm. Within the community, sex with men is viewed as violating norms associated with both sexuality and gender; however, access to medically assisted ART is limited as a result of the women's marginalized socioeconomic status (Reed et al., 759-7610. Therefore, sex with men, while most often necessary for pregnancy, is viewed disparagingly and constructs new sets of social norms that may be violated (Reed et al., 761). Ultimately, without access to the anonymity provided by ART these relationships are surveilled more intently (Reed et al. 2011, 758).

Due to the necessity of hegemony under colonial, patriarchal neoliberalism, when one group of women are granted access to dominant locations within motherhood, others are further marginalized by the mechanisms and institutions that grant this admittance (Lewin 2016 604; Goodrow 2019, 141; Davis 2020, 57). ART is one of these mechanisms—one that many upper-middle-class, white lesbian mothers depend on to build families (Ryan and Moras 2017, 581). While attempting to fit into normative roles to avoid speculation and subjugation, these mothers often

unconsciously reproduce constructions of biological race, dichotomous familial gender roles, and modified eugenicist thought.

### **ARTIFICIAL REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES: BIOPOWER, RACE, CLASS, AND ABILITY**

#### *The Bio-Politics of Artificial Reproductive Technologies*

Lesbian women in otherwise dominant subject positions are given the option to somewhat emulate prevailing heteronormative patriarchal ideals when using ART. Simultaneously, multiply-minoritized individuals are often symbolically and materially excluded from access to the framework of ideal motherhood that ART affords their more privileged peers (Ryan and Moras 2017, 593). However, across intersecting identity markers, many lesbian women who use ART are responding to normalizing structural pressures that are intensified by their minoritized sexual identity (Lewin 1993, 192; 2016; Ryan and Moras 2017; Herbrand 2020). As such, white, middle-class, able-bodied lesbian mothers enact traditional family and gender roles within a cultural context that exerts excessive pressure for the performance of ideal motherhood and womanhood (Lewin 2017; 1993, 192; Herbrand 2018, 318–319.) ART acts upon these insecurities and provides a limited set of options that sustain dominant colonial, patriarchal and neoliberal family-building narratives.

Michel Foucault's theory of biopower delineates the ways that the body is politicized and controlled (1984a, 262). Medical interventions into reproduction are a clear example of a bio-political mechanism that regulates the surveilled body, as sex and sexuality are crucial to the creation and maintenance of power structures (262 and 266). The body, blood relations, and kinship are all regulated and normalized to create and maintain power hierarchies (266–268). Therefore, within bio-political discourse, ART can be viewed as mechanisms of control that are co-constitutive

with the deeply personal and political sites of the body and kinship.

ART are presented as radical interventions into reproduction and parenthood that can ensure specific medical outcomes, produce normative biological family aesthetics, and provide motherhood to individuals who might not otherwise become pregnant. (Ryan and Moras 2017, 581; Goodrow 2019, 138; Roberts 2009, 786). However, in alignment with the biopower theoretic, critics of ART point out that in the process of meticulously designing motherhood, normative cultural narratives that subjugate and oppress are necessarily reproduced (Ryan and Moras 2017, 581; Goodrow 2019, 138; Roberts 2009, 786). Lesbian mothers using ART are often navigating pressures to conform to heteronormative family ideals. Under such scrutiny “racial matching”, through which gamete selection ensures that children look like both of their parents, becomes imperative (Pande 2021, 336). Ryan and Moras explain that parents pursue “matching” because “[they] know[s] that a lack of family homogeneity is used to deny the legitimacy of same-sex families” (2017, 585). Because ART is most accessible to upper-middle class, white couples or single parents, their whiteness becomes naturalized and concealed within ART (Davis 2020, 57). White intending mothers often fail to recognize themselves as a part of racial constructs and are therefore less likely to acknowledge racial matching as an activation of racial representation (Ryan and Moras 2017, 585; Fassin 2011, 420). A lack of necessitated acknowledgement of race amongst white intending parents is co-constructed with ART discourses that present whiteness as the default through advertising, the nuanced rhetoric of racial and shade matching, and decreased options for people of colour pursuing ART (Pande 2021). This both reifies dominant colonial racial hierarchies, which make whiteness

invisible and beneficial, and has material consequences for lesbian women of colour pursuing ART and parenthood more broadly.

### *Artificial Reproductive Technology: Race and Class*

ART has become a transnational industry with providers in the global South offering less expensive treatments than those in the global North (Pande 2021, 335). As such, reproductive travel has proliferated, and global neoliberal power structures are reproduced through the industry (335). Pande’s mobile ethnographic study found that within the transnational reproductive technologies industry, ART “reproduces the desirability of whiteness” (335). Pande observed that a desire for racial matching from intending parents from the global North increases the demand for eggs from white South African women who provide whiteness at a lower cost than donors from the US (338). Often gamete banks that provide South African eggs and sperm are in India or Southeast Asia (338–339). Production of whiteness in the transnational reproductive industry is reactive to the desires of its most affluent customers: those from the global North importing biological kinship<sup>2</sup> from sending countries.

Choosing gametes for the purpose of parent-child aesthetic matching might be viewed as harmless; however, Ryan and Moras have shown that often white mothers do not recognize that by choosing white donors they are strategically selecting their prospective child’s race (2017, 581). Like Ryan and Moras, I do not suggest that white women should opt to have children of colour. Rather, I contend that an uncritical approach to ART discourses, which naturalize and privilege whiteness as unmarked or a default, must be challenged (588). Fassin elucidates that “[r]acial embodiment does not only concern those who had the

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<sup>2</sup> Biological kinship denotes the degree to which two or more species or humans share genetic relatedness. Within ART, biological kinship between parent and child may be achieved over and above, for example, adoption.

intimate conviction of the reality of ...discrimination” (2011, 421). Naming whiteness as a construct is imperative to understanding the ways that technologies as mechanisms of control can reproduce colonial racism (Fassin 2011, 421; Foucault 1984a, 268–269). The link between race and body is not natural, but naturalization of a dominant norm enables further control and contributes to oppressive, hierarchizing policy and practice (Fassin 2011, 421). Normalization and naturalization of dominant subject positions are central to the harms associated with ART.

Because of an increased demand from white parents desiring extremely specific matches in heritage, Black and Latino gametes in ART have become sparse (Ryan and Moras 2017, 573). As such, women of colour are presented with restricted options and are subjected to what Dana-Ain Davis calls “obstetric racism” within and outside of NA (2020, 58; Pande 2021, 336). While transnationality has perhaps made ART more accessible to less wealthy individuals, these technologies continue to be expensive and largely tailored toward the white middle-class. In Canada for instance, the average cost of a single round of invitro fertilization is twenty thousand dollars, while in India the cost ranges from approximately eight to fifteen thousand dollars (Nova Scotia Government; CNY Fertility). Intending parents who do not use ART often face criticism for their use of alternative, less expensive methods, such as intercourse with men or at home donor insemination. This solidifies a hierarchy of parenthood grounded in privileged or oppressed class positionality (Reed et al 2011, 762; Davis 2020, 57). In many ways, then, pregnancy norms become symbolically associated with class-status.

### *Artificial Reproductive Technology and Disability*

One of ART’s functions is to inform parents of potential disability. Consequently, disability activists have identified ART’s capacity to promote contemporary eugenicist practice (Goodrow 2019, 144). Eugenics is a branch of pseudo-scientific thought that emerged from the novel study of genetics and in response to the political crisis of booming populations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Goodrow 2019, 139–140). The principal assumption underlying eugenics is that certain portions of the populace, namely those in dominant hegemonic positions, are more genetically fit and should therefore form the reproductive base of the population (Goodrow 2019, 139–149). Goodrow uses the concept of positive and negative eugenics to illustrate how repressive reproductive technologies, such as subsidized long-acting contraceptives or sterilization targeted toward women of colour, women accessing welfare, and incarcerated women are contemporary forms of negative eugenics (Goodrow 2019, 144). Simultaneously, white, upper-middle class women are offered reproductive technologies that encourage high fertility and provide insight about potential disabilities that may lead to selective abortion (Goodrow 2019, 144 and 151). While it is not inherently harmful to offer women the option to screen for disability or to increase their fertility, uneven access to these technologies reproduces hierarchies that facilitate reproductive choice only for those with specific positionalities (Goodrow 2019, 144). Ultimately, akin to past eugenicist politics, certain women’s bodies are safeguarded while others are used, constrained, and devalued (Pande 2021, 344). ART was founded within a cultural context that has a violent history of reproductive control that impacts all individuals. This control is particularly evident for those whose sexuality, race, gender, or ability divert from the dominant norm.

## ARTIFICIAL REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND LESBIAN MOTHERHOOD

Individual, white lesbian mothers are not central to the issues outlined above. Nevertheless, as a queer, white woman, I self-reflexively believe that we must recognize and name the privilege associated with our whiteness. This might be encouraged by reflecting on the ways that discrimination against our sexuality places us in a precarious space within reproductive narratives. ART as a mechanism of control over the body may utilize those insecurities, complicating resistance and reflection. Whiteness is so naturalized and demarked within our cultural context that it is often uncritically assumed that the accessibility offered to white individuals with intersecting subordinated identities is natural or normal (Fassin 2011; Foucault 1984a). However, racial embodiment is not natural. Rather, all privileged and oppressed positionalities are contextually specific and historically, socially, and culturally constructed (Fassin 2011, 420). Reproduction is a site wherein embodied experiences may be imbued with symbolic social and material meanings. While these meanings are contextual, cultural, and performative, gender, race and ability are often viewed in reproductive narratives as natural, innate, and biological (Herbrand 2018 311). ART discourses typify the notion that idealized forms of human reproduction are not socially meaningful and are rather a matter of objective fact.

Ideal performances of womanhood are tied to motherhood. Within this intersection a hierarchy of ideal motherhood emerges (Reed et al. 2011, 751). White lesbian women encounter a choice wherein, by perpetuating the norm, they may be granted access to nearly ideal motherhood and thus womanhood. Here, they may be placed just below heterosexual, white, feminine, coupled mothers (Reed et al. 2011, 751). Therefore, in pursuit of the social support that has historically been denied to

lesbian mothers, white lesbian mothers may perpetuate other idealized norms.

While ART does represent a step forward for lesbian women who wish to pursue motherhood, it is imperative that white lesbian women ask exactly who benefits from this technology. Critical engagement with ART as a technology that reproduces hegemony on lines of race, ability, and class is crucial to dismantling the structures and systems that continue to subjugate most women while privileging few. Processes of critical engagement are as numerous as the individual positionalities that approach them to influence change in themselves and others. However, for white individuals, critical engagement with constructs embedded in colonial patriarchy demands the recognition that whiteness both exists and awards privilege (Fassin 2011). Challenging the presuppositions embedded in ART is a step toward dismantling myths surrounding family and motherhood and creating space for new kinds of decolonized kinship practices that are rooted in fluidity, relationality, and openness (Tallbear 2018, 146; Silver 2020). By evaluating NA kinship myths and the mechanisms that support them, new forms of family may emerge. Here, white lesbian mothers have a unique opportunity to critically deconstruct the concept of ideal motherhood by naming whiteness as their access point.

## CONCLUSION

By evaluating ethnographic research on lesbian motherhood and the proliferation of ART through intersectional and critical-race frameworks, I have asserted that ART functions as a bio-political mechanism, active in mediating the pursuit of ideal motherhood. I argue that white, lesbian mothers unquestioning use of ART perpetuates: the gendered myth of NA ideal motherhood within the nuclear family; reifies social stratification on the lines of race, class, and ability; and constrains new forms of kinship that may challenge reproductive myths maintained by and embedded



within existing power structures. This article recognizes that kinship, and its many expansive significations across cultures and subject positions, functions as a unique site of control when wielded by dominant hegemonic structures, and that when reclaimed might redefine family-building as a site of positive power and coalition building toward a more just future (Silver 2020, 2). Family diversification and queered kinship structures may functionally unveil, and question dichotomized gender roles, increasing the roles available to all individuals in a society. Simultaneously, expanding social perceptions of kinship would diminish the persistent pressure of achieving ideal motherhood for privileged, multiply-minoritized, queer and heterosexual mothers alike. Here, interventions into bio-political technologies become imperative for pursuing kinship meanings built by and for those who are actively building family.

I have attempted to reflexively posit that white lesbian intending mothers are uniquely positioned in this discourse, as their marginalized sexuality places ideal motherhood slightly out of reach, while their whiteness brings it slightly closer (Reed et al. 2011, 751; Davis 2020, 57). ART functionalizes white, lesbian women's insecurities by exerting pressure on them to conform to ideal motherhood to avoid heterosexist and patriarchal speculation and gain social support (Reed et al., 2011). Thereafter ART, like other discursive mechanisms of control, skillfully demark, naturalize, and normalize privilege, while purporting to produce objective scientific rather than socially constructed meanings (Foucault 1984a, 262; 267). I contend that due to their positionality as both privileged and marginalized in ideal motherhood, white lesbian women are in a unique position to critically engage and challenge the harmful social stratifications that ART perpetuates, while potentially creating space for new and diverse family meanings.

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