

## The structure of race differentiation is first of all rhetorical

### Open letter to the Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I hope this finds you well. I can imagine how proud you were, surprisingly joining the BLM protestors and kneeling down in the memory of George Floyd. Becoming the first world leader to have bravely taken a side while cameras were rolling. Oh Canada! Oh Justin! That day, I had wished we were neighbors so we could have had a social distancing chat about it through our fences.

Although we are not neighbors, allow me to pretend we are having a virtual conversation as the new normal dictates. A conversation on race. I acknowledge it is an acrimonious discussion, but I also think the time has come to address it differently. Now that awareness has increased worldwide, I follow your advice after you watched the video of Chief Adam Allan's assault to "get to the bottom of this".

At the verge of late anti-black racism protests, this powerful message from Crush hit my mind: "it is not enough to be quietly not racist, now is the time to be vocally anti-racism".

Floyd's last words calling for his "MAMA" while suffocating hit me hard as a mom. It brought the realization that parents should no more be the quiet majority but the loudest one. Unwilling to commonly give in to the labelling of racial issue as the simplistic result of police brutality, it is essential for Mothers Of Menaced Species #MOMS to step in. Our responsibility is fully engaged since black intense history taught us for centuries and generations that racism will catch up with our bloodline somehow. For those of us who raise kids in a white majority society, it is our duty to do whatever necessary to prevent them from being frail individuals at high risk of lacking self-confidence and self-esteem, thus facing mental health disorders. Urging for vocal and strong anti-racism actions engages us, the MOMS, as well as fiercely and tirelessly claiming the urgent eradication of racial bullying. The achievement of change will be determined by our strong determination of being a foolproof asset. After all, isn't it the decision of Emmet Till's mother to have an open casket funeral that ignited the Civil Rights Movement in USA?

Yet, it is not sufficient. Above all, it crucially requires structural change of our society model at the federal level. And the starting point should be the abolition of **structural differentiation**, may the intentions be good or not. Hereby a few stories about the drama it causes us.

Months ago, my Nigerien friend Zeinabou became distraught. Her usually very talkative son, 4th grade student in Vancouver, appeared introvert, suddenly unwilling to go to school. "Mom, I am just **trying to fit in**" is what he would reply every time she raised concern about this behavior change. Never having to deal with identity issues back in Africa where she was raised as part of a majority, Zeinabou failed to identify the turmoil her little man, the only Black boy in the school, was facing. She had no choice but to send him to a social worker for counselling, before relocating. Later, she found out that in fact, her son was just repeating what his teachers were telling him at school: try to fit in.

You might find this one interesting: lately, my sister-in-law in Montreal called me, outraged. A white co-worker sent her newly hired daughter a condescending email, expressing her enthusiasm to help her "learn and grow her skills". In the colleague's perception, my niece's skills necessarily needed to be upgraded. Weeks later, the colleague tried to redeem herself. She had found out that in fact my niece, born and raised in Europe, successfully graduated with two masters' degree, before moving with her parents to Canada. Sadly, the color of her skin had equated to a **no-skill assumption**.

One last story. My Burundian neighbor who is a skilled worker newcomer permanent resident applying for a federal position told me how she couldn't wrap her head around having become a "**visible minority**".

Dear Mr. Prime Minister, we could write a collection of book series on that type of stories. Let's face it. Systemic racial stigmatization towards non-white people is a pandemic which curve never flattens. Sometimes it is subtle, other times flagrant but always there, like a virus with no hope of vaccine. A global pandemic indeed. You may have not read about this. Brace yourself. In October 2017, 170,000 Chinese visited and enjoyed the exhibition "This is Africa", [juxtaposing images of wild African animals with black people](#), at Hubei Provincial Museum.

I can now hear you. Yes, we totally agree those racially discriminatory events will never happen in Canada. However, while we acknowledge that our cherished country stands out from Western peers when it comes to human rights, we, the MOMS, feel the urgency to recommend structural change to bring about major shift in racial issues. Quoting you, *"it's really important that we all come forward and look at bold ideas that we can take on very soon to fix the systemic discrimination that continues to exist in our country"*. In my opinion, it starts with one drastic change: the abolition of rhetorical differentiation between races. Here we are, having Caucasians, Asians, Latinos, Indigenous, Filipinos, ... and BLACKS, a color, but mostly a stigma. I have often wondered how a Sri Lankan applicant feels when filling the employment equity form. Should it be as a South Asian or as a Black? As you see, the rhetorical of race is profoundly structural and somehow sustains the foundations of the race problem.

Dear Prime Minister, I wouldn't dare to take up too much of your precious time. I wish we could dig in those bold ideas someday when I get the chance to be your neighbor.

A liberal #MOMS  
Awa