ABSTRACT

GENDERED RACISM AND THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE
Media representations and identity work among “immigrant youth” in contemporary Sweden

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When Political Scientist Susan Moller Okin poses the question “Is multiculturalism bad for women?” she re-opens a debate in the Anglo-Saxon countries around issues of race, ethnicity and gender. In contemporary Swedish gender studies and feminist debates this question remains rather unexplored. With the recent hullabaloo concerning so-called honour killings and other forms of allegedly culturally induced oppression against “ethnic” women – predominately from the “Muslim world” – the ways in which gender and ethnicity intersect can no longer go unaddressed. The aim of this article is to reflect upon the racialised construction of “cultural difference” and its repercussions on “immigrant” youth living in Sweden. The article is based on two case studies. Drawing from critical scholarship on ethnicity and racism, as well as from postcolonial feminist theory, the first part of this article surveys and analyses hegemonic racialised discourses in mainstream media and its gendered manifestations. With reference to my own research, the second part points to some of the ways in which these current racialised discourses play out in the lives of “immigrant” youth living in Sweden.

1 An abridged version of this paper will be published in NORA, No. 2, 2003. I would like to thank Peo Hansen for reading and commenting on this article.