ABSTRACT

'WE ARE THE OTHERS'
NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES WITHIN RACIALISED AND GENDERED DISCOURSES AMONG YOUNG WOMEN WITH LATIN AMERICAN BACKGROUND IN SWEDEN

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This research in-progress project investigates the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality and the importance of discourses related to these concepts. The focus is the shaping of identity among Latin American young women in their interaction with other girls within polarised, racialised, sexualised and gendered discourses regarding different immigrant groups as contrasted to each other and to the Swedish women. The study is based on qualitative methods, focus group discussions with Latin American women living in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood being the main method. Discursive as well as spatial exclusion are relevant here. The Swedish society is segregated both discursively and spatially with high-income-white areas and low-income-multi-ethnic areas.

When gender intersects with ethnicity and sexuality, the meaning of being a woman may be opposed rather than unified. Discursive divisions are made between "victims" of systems which idealise virginity in women while the "kicker" is used to refer to sexually active immigrant women also expected to be violent. Both are contrasted to the idea of the gender-equal Swedish woman.

In this context, the feminist theoretical perspective would need to deal with questions of how relations of women are constituted by ethnicity, race and sexuality. This study is informed by the feminist theoretical perspective and the analysis of power structures with a postcolonial perspective to understand the importance of discourses for identity-shaping processes and questions of how ethnicity, race and sexuality structure relations among women.