SEXUAL POLITICS OF “THE OTHER”: AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON VIETNAMESE FEMALE MIGRANTS IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Big opportunities for cross-border marriage or intimacy have been given through the mobility process. Vietnam, amongst Southeast Asian countries, has become a supplier of brides to other Asian and Western countries. Less attention has been paid to the side of migration which deals with the sexual life of these migrants. This research was conducted in order to explore sexual meaning and practices of Vietnamese migrant women in their cross-border sexual relationships in Thailand. Through the stories of forming cross-border relationships and experiences of female concerns in relation to family, women’s status, gender and sexuality, the women are moving back and forth across borders, and between cultures under the context of transnational social field. Moving back and forth has resulted in the formation of in-between identity, gender and sexuality. Sexual politics is a site of encounter between gender ideology and the women’s agency. On the one hand, family and gender ideology are imposed on the women’s body and sexuality. On the other hand, they also exercise their agency through negotiation, “othering” and redefinition. In this research, these Vietnamese women have utilized their situation of living in-between social place and space to exercise their power.

KEY WORDS: CROSS-BORDER MARRIAGE / OTHERING / FEMALE SEXUALITY / VIETNAMESE MIGRANT WOMEN

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