

Destabilising Sex Work & Intimacy?

Gender Performances of Female
Thai Migrants Selling Sex in Denmark

Marlene Spanger

PhD Thesis



Department of Society & Globalisation
Roskilde University

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Destabilising Sex Work & Intimacy?

This PhD thesis is submitted as four articles. It investigates how female Thai migrants selling sex construct femininities that ground a number of subject positions such as mother, wife, migrant and sex worker in relation to already existing subject positions constructed by the Danish state and represented within the policy field of prostitution. The study draws on poststructuralist feminist theory and is based on interviews, participant observations and documentary text material.

Falling in two parts, the first part lays down the framework of the four articles consisting of an introduction, theoretical framework, methods and findings. The second part consists of the articles. Moreover, the articles answer the overall research question: 'How do female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce sex work and intimacy, represented by the Danish policy field, by doing gender in various ways?'

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PhD Programme: Governance, Welfare and Citizenship

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*Marlene Spanger, Østerbro
October 3, 2010*

PART I FRAMEWORK

1 Introduction

Challenging the Dichotomy of 'Sex Worker versus Prostitute'

I have followed the media's coverage and the prostitution policy field's conceptualisation of female migrants selling sex in Denmark during the last decade. These migrants have been articulated as 'victims of trafficking', 'modern female slaves', 'empowered women' or 'entrepreneurs'. Despite the different voices and views on female migrants' sex sale in the Danish debate, they all spring from a dichotomous thinking that refers to a question of victimisation versus agency, trafficking versus labour migration. This conceptual framework was established during the 1980s and has since then dominated the international political debates on human trafficking, migrant-related prostitution and global sex work (Kempadoo et al., 2005; Doezema, 1998).

To me, it remains questionable whether this dichotomous thinking is capable of capturing the complexities and ambiguities of the everyday lives of female migrants selling sex in Denmark in relation to the Danish social policy field on prostitution. At an early stage within my research process I realised that romance, marriage and mothering as the intimacy aspect of female Thai migrants' lives somehow relate to their sale of sexual services. Thus, I investigate the ways in which female Thai migrants' sex sale intersects with their everyday lives away from the sex work and how their practices and understandings destabilise as well as reproduce the understandings of 'prostitution' and 'the prostitute' represented by the Danish prostitution policy field. This opens up to other perspectives in order to destabilise the two positions of 'sex worker' versus 'prostitute' within a Danish context. In this case I bring in the theoretical perspectives of gendered subjects, policy field and migration, which allows me to consider the complexity of the lives of migrants selling sex.

Questioning how migrants selling sex in Denmark are comprehended by the Danish policy field of prostitution directs my attention to what kind of consequences it has for female Thai migrant sex workers.

This PhD thesis is submitted as four articles linked together by the subject area, a main question and a theoretical framework consisting of different perspectives: poststructuralist feminist thinking, multi-layered citizenship and migration. In combination, the articles

investigate how female Thai migrants selling sex construct femininities that ground a number of what Judith Butler terms 'subject positions' (mother, wife, sex worker, migrant etc.) in relation to already existing subject positions constructed by the Danish state represented within the policy field of prostitution. Drawing on Carol Lee Bacchi's (2005, 2009) discursive approach in analysing policies focusing on silences and subject positions, the first article analyses the Danish policy field of prostitution. In the following three articles I am inspired by Butler's (1990, 1993, 1997) theory on gender and subject formations which I combine with perspectives on migration, transnational marriages, global care chains, citizenship and space. Bringing in different perspectives, these three articles analyse how the female Thai migrants' sex sale intersects with their gendered subject positions away from the sex work.

The next section introduces the different perspectives that have inspired me to analyse the link between the Danish policy field of prostitution and female Thai migrants selling sex.

Policy Field, Gendered Subjects and Migration

Interested in examining the ways in which migrant sex workers are perceived and approached by the Danish state, e.g. within the social work and by the immigration authorities, I focus on how female migrants who sell sex are discursively produced and categorised as well as what is not said about them. Inspired by Michel Foucault's ([1976] 1994, [1969] 2006) and Bacchi's (2009, 2005, 1999) critical discourse approach, I focus on how discourses constitute and transform the policy field of prostitution as well as produce how migrants selling sex are represented as a problem. Beside my focus on how the Danish policy field on prostitution relates to female Thai migrant sex workers I am also concerned with how the policies on migration regarding family reunification set up limits for their citizenship in Denmark.

As I analyse how the sex sale plays different parts in the female Thai migrants' practices and understandings in relation to how they are comprehended as 'prostitutes' within the policy field of prostitution, Butler becomes relevant. In her (1997) understanding of how subject formations take place, agency is a central concept. Butler's understandings of agency spring from a quite different context compared to the dichotomous thinking, i.e. 'agency versus victimisation', related to how we talk about prostitution. Butler pays attention to a theoretical discussion on how the processes of agency create the subject. She argues that subject formations always implicate agency. Thus, it is not a question whether the subject

takes agency or not, but a question of where/what the agency of the female Thai migrants will lead (to), and what consequences the agency of the subjects has.

Inspired by Butler's (1990) gender theory I refer to 'female' migrants and not to migrant 'women', while Thai migrant sex workers encompasses both female-born persons, transgendered persons¹ and cross-dressers (m-t-f)², all defining themselves as females. Having changed sex from male to female by surgery and using hormones and/or dressing-up, they only sell sexual services as 'females'. This diversity of femininity results in multiple interpretations of femininity amongst female Thai migrant sex workers. In addition, I analyse how female Thai migrants establish multiple subject positions (sex worker, wife etc.) through gender performances in different spaces that construct their everyday lives in Denmark (Gregson & Rose, 2000).

Based on intersectionality (Davis, 2008; Brah & Phoenix, 2004) I argue that it is not just the category of gender that shapes the lives of these migrants, but a number of intersecting categories. Davis (2008: 79) reminds us that an intersectional approach enables us to do analytical work that captures ambiguities and complexities. Informed by this approach (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Brah & Phoenix, 2004) I conduct two forms of intersectional analyses. First, encouraged by Butler's theory, I analyse how the intersecting categories of gender, body, sexual desire and practices establish gendered subject formations. Second, I also analyse how the different gendered subject positions of wife, mother and sex worker intersect depending on particular historical moments and contexts. Although I am well aware of the relevance of how the category of race intersects with gender and sexuality, race is not highly prioritised, but sporadically applied in the present PhD thesis. Conducting an intersectional analysis, I find more than three categories too much. However, I recognise the relevance of analysing how notions of race contribute to the construction of the subject positions of Thai migrants.³

¹ Transgendered persons (male-to-female) are also called Kathoeyes in Thailand. Kathoey refers to a transgendered identity constructed on the basis of local culture. However, they are also to be found among the Thai migrant sex workers in Europe. Some have undergone professional medical surgeries, while others find alternative ways of reshaping the body (Brummelhuis, 1999).

² M-t-f is an acronym for 'male-to-female'.

³ A number of scholars (see Manderson, 1992; Bishop & Robinson, 1998; Davidson, 1998; Kempadoo, 1999; Thorbek & Pattanaik, 2002; Jackson & Cook, 1999) demonstrate how images of female Thais within the global sex industry are based on the intersectionality of gender, sexuality and race. For example the construction of the female Thai as 'the servile sexual other' is produced within a postcolonial discourse (Bishop & Robinson, 1998). Also Myong Petersen (2009a) analyses how constructed racialised fantasies about Asian femininity in Denmark, in particular notions of 'The Thai Woman', are marked by notions of hypersexualisation referring to 'submissiveness' and 'inherently sexual promiscuity'. Also Mulinari et al. (2009) discuss racialisation in relation to specifically the Nordic context. For another reason for not taking in the category of race, see chapter 3.

Emphasising the migration perspective with regard to the Danish migration policy, the fact that they identify themselves as Thai, have various connections to Thailand and are a part of the Thai migrant community in Denmark, I am inspired by literature on transnational migration, transnational marriages, sex tourism, global care chains, multi-layered citizenship etc. From a transnational perspective, the female Thai migrants selling sex can no longer be confined by the boundaries of the nation state due to the possibilities for them to participate simultaneously in local, national and transnational communities. The body of literature on transnational migration (e.g. Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Sørensen & Guarnizo, 2007) inspires me to focus on connections and relations between how they establish transnational social fields through familial, social and economical connections between Denmark and Thailand. From another angle, the literature on global care chains (Yeates, 2007) informs us about how care-giving relates to the ways in which they do transnational and local motherhood, while literature on the transnational sex industry and transnational marriage (e.g. Cheng, 2007; Faier, 2007) helps me to analyse how female Thais construct the subject positions of wife and sex worker. Applying the concept of 'multi-layered citizenship' (Yuval-Davis, 1999; Lister, 1997), I investigate how 'full and equal rights' do not automatically follow when the female Thai migrants gain a residence permit in Denmark.

Thus, benefitting from the different bodies of literature it is my aim to capture the complexities and ambiguities in analysing how the sex sale relates to the female Thai migrants in different ways and destabilises as well as reproduces the Danish prostitution policy field's comprehension of female migrants selling sex.

(Fe)male Thai Sex Workers on the Move

Female Thai migration to Denmark is part of a broader migration movement in which the migrants "play an increasing role in all regions and all types of migration" (Castles & Miller, 2003: 9).⁴ A comprehensive body of literature demonstrates (see e.g. Lutz, 2008; Isaksen, 2007; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Agustín, 2007; Parreñas, 2001; Sørensen & Guarnizo, 2007; Brennan, 2003; Kristvik, 2005; Kempadoo, 1999; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998) how women from less affluent parts of the world migrate to the richer societies seeking better income opportunities in order to improve everyday life for themselves and their families, first and foremost children and parents.

⁴ I choose the female Thai migrants selling sex as my case, since it is one of the larger migrant groups within the field of prostitution in Denmark (Sørensen, 2007; Rasmussen, 2007). Despite a fairly non-existing research on migrants selling sex in Denmark, the social programmes have knowledge of and contact to the Thai migrant sex workers, which helped me establish contact to them during the first phase.

To some migrants, going abroad is a means to acquire upward social mobility in the sending society, often combined with dreams of living in the Western world. To do so, a majority of female migrants from less affluent countries take up unskilled labour varying from domestic work, working as maids or cleaners, to sex work as dancers, hosts at strip bars etc. in the richer parts of the world. As part of this global development, the female Thai migrants sell sexual services through massage parlours and bars; be it full time, part time, for a short period or for many years.⁵ They often combine sex work with other forms of unskilled temporary labour as waitresses, kitchen assistants, cleaners, factory and plant labour etc. Such trends reflect a gendered global division of labour and an ethnic segmentation when female migrants from the less affluent parts of the world sell domestic and/or sexual services (Ehrenreich & Hochchild, 2003).

The number of migrant sex workers in Denmark is unknown. Despite the uncertainty about the number of migrants selling sex in Denmark, a number of actors representing the Danish policy field of prostitution agree that the majority of sex workers in Denmark are female migrants (National Commission of the Danish Police, 2009: 32). Moreover, The National Board of Social Services estimates that the number of female migrants selling sex in Denmark has increased lately (Sørensen, 2008: 5). Thai migrants are perceived as one of the larger ethnic groups of migrants selling sex at the massage parlours in Denmark (Rasmussen, 2007: 38). The policy field of prostitution is witnessing a struggle concerning how to tally the numbers of people selling sex. Such struggles reflect that tallying is a technique of documentation that is attributed with the quality of being objective and truth-producing (Spanger, 2008).⁶

In Denmark, it is predominantly other female Thai migrants or their Danish husbands who introduce them to the sex industry (Plambech, 2007; Spanger, 2006; Lisborg, 2001; Sørensen, 2007). The predominant pattern among Thai migrants who sell sex is that they are not subject to violence, force and/or fraud (Kristvik, 2005; Plambech, 2007; Spanger, 2006).

⁵ Kristvik (2005) draws the same conclusion in the Norwegian case.

⁶ My reading of the struggles about tallying is inspired by Foucault ([1969] 2006).

The institution of marriage is a crucial part of the migration strategy of the female Thai migrants since marrying a Danish citizen ensures them, as non-EU-citizens, that they can obtain residence and work permits.⁷ According to a national report (Sørensen, 2007: 24) and results from my fieldwork, female Thai migrant sex workers in general obtain residence permits in Denmark by marrying Danish men.⁸ Mix (2003) and Kristvik (2005) have identified a similar gendered migration pattern in Germany and Norway. Predominantly, the female Thai migrants selling sex establish contact to their future husbands through tourism or connections to the Thai migrant communities in the receiving societies. Very often the encounter between the female Thai and the Danish man is established by other family members or acquaintances who already live in Denmark. In line with the results of Kristvik (2005), my material shows that after some years the female migrants bring their child(ren) to Denmark and perhaps have new children with their Danish husband, and often the marriage breaks down. Holding a residence permit in Denmark – which entails financial and residential dependency on their Danish husband – having economical obligations towards other family members in Thailand and having no or little education renders them in a vulnerable position in Denmark. In addition, the female Thai sex workers in Denmark often go through financial, social and health-related struggles concerning their sex work and their marriage in terms of debt, gambling, domestic violence and poor knowledge of the social system in Denmark (Spanger, 2006; Sørensen, 2007; Plambech, 2007).

People who sell sex in Denmark are offered social and health-related counselling through a number of public programmes. Particularly rights connected to the position of selling sex in Denmark are limited due to the legislation on prostitution. Prostitution is not perceived as work, which means that sex workers do not have any occupational rights. However, all income from the sale of sex is taxed (Rasmussen, 2007).

⁷ See Ministry for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs (2007). The Thai migrant community in Denmark consists mostly of female migrants. In 2009, the total number of Thai migrants in Denmark was 7,316, consisting of 6,109 women and 1,207 men (Statistics Denmark, 2009). The numbers are based on Thai citizenship (migrants and their descendants) and Thailand as country of origin. 248 male Thai and 1,123 female Thai have acquired Danish citizenship (*ibid.*). Moreover, these numbers include children adopted from Thailand whom I define as another category of migrants in Denmark. The numbers show a gender bias with a clear majority of female Thai migrants. This number includes male Thai migrants who are sons of the female migrants, and some are transgendered persons who define themselves as female. In their Thai passports they are registered as men even after they have undergone surgery. In contrast, Danish citizens who change their sex are re-registered according to their new sex. The community relies primarily on initiatives from the female Thai migrants. It is through sisters, mothers and female friends that they establish contact to Denmark (Spanger, 2006). Within this small but diverse Thai migrant community in Denmark Thai sex workers form a specific social group.

⁸ The heterosexual encounter between the female Thai migrant and the Danish male citizen is a gender pattern that in general dominates the Thai migrant community, including Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark.

Existing Research

Research on current prostitution and sex work⁹ within social science is nearly a non-existing research area in Denmark. Other than the PhD project of Bjønness' (in prep.) about the relationship between Danish women selling sex and social workers, hardly any work exists which investigates prostitution or sex work from a gender, cultural, migratory, social relational or sexual perspective.¹⁰

The literature on Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark relies on a few smaller surveys written under the auspices of the national social and welfare initiatives or as MA studies (Plambech, 2007; Sørensen, 2007; Lisborg, 2001; Mannion, 1999) – all reproducing the dichotomy of prostitution versus sex work / victims versus agents. Norwegian and German literature (see Kristvik, 2005; Mix, 2002, 2003; Ruenkaew, 2002) draws similar portraits of female Thai migrants selling sex in Norway and Germany. This literature also reproduces the dichotomy.

Reports (Sørensen, 2007; Mannion, 1999) related to social work within prostitution in Denmark are engendered by a social policy discourse identifying a social group in terms of their social and economic struggles caused by the sex sale and migration. From another perspective, Plambech (2007), Kristvik (2005), Ruenkaew (2002), Mix (2002, 2003) and Lisborg (2001) approach sex workers as agents or as “entrepreneurs constrained by economically limited opportunities” (Lisborg, 2001: 84) or view “transnational prostitution as a kind of transnational labour migration” (Ruenkaew, 2002: 69).¹¹ The purpose of emphasising the agency, the will or the entrepreneurship of female migrant sex workers is to oppose a victimisation. The reproduction of a dichotomy between ‘victimisation versus agency’ springs from an international feminist debate that takes place among feminist scholars and sex work activists.

Within feminist discourse, one body of literature understands prostitution as a structural and symbolic result of a patriarchal society. Davison pursues Pateman's idea of ‘the sexual contract’, conceptualising prostitution “as an institution which allows certain powers of command over one's body to be exercised by another... He [the client] pays in order that he may command the prostitute to make body orifices available to him, to smile, to dance....” (Davidson, 1998: 9-10). Even if sexual exchange is based on the idea of reciprocity and voluntariness, Davidson argues that the transaction is always limited by

⁹ Deliberately, I write both prostitution and sex work stressing that ‘prostitution’ refers to a social policy discourse in Denmark, whereas sex work to a greater extent refers to a labour perspective. My considerations for employing the concept of sex work and selling sex are elaborated below in this section.

¹⁰ However, within the discipline of history prostitution has been examined – in particular, within the social history of women (see Vammen, 1986; Lützen, 1998; Pedersen, 2002, 2007; Spanger, 2002b, 2007).

¹¹ This literature is based on ethnographic fieldwork or social work.

particular social, political and economic conditions which subordinate the (female) prostitute. Another feminist statement, represented by 'pro-sex workers' rights', combats the stigmatisation of employees in the sex industry by advocating for occupational rights, health and safety standards to protect the sex workers (Doezema, 1998; Agustín, 2005). Within this line of reasoning, the issue of a patriarchal system and gender suppression is almost absent. Instead, viewing prostitution as acknowledged labour draws attention to sex workers' labour rights as another feminist strategy for deconstructing the whore stigma (e.g. Pheterson, 1996; Doezema, 1998; Chapkis, 2002). Pheterson (1996) stresses that it is not the sex transaction that is the problem for prostitutes, but rather that the transaction is often identified as unchaste and degrading. Scholars who incline towards the 'pro-sex worker rights' approach accuse neo-abolitionists of objectifying prostitutes when identifying them as victims (Kempadoo et al., 2005). Scholars (see e.g. Chapkis, 2003; Doezema, 2001; Kempadoo et al., 2005; Agustín, 2007) who break with the understanding of migrant sex workers as victims (regardless of the premises of their sex sale) argue that investigating prostitution as a part of the patriarchal system is a Western feminist construct of 'the suffering poor third world prostitute'.

Concepts of 'Selling Sex', 'Sex Worker', 'Prostitute'

The concepts of *sex work* (sex worker) and *prostitution* (prostitute) originate in a dichotomous understanding of women's sale of sexual services. According to Davidson (1998: 9-10), the concept of prostitution refers to the sale of access to the body. Her concept of prostitution relies on a structuralist perspective that induces a gender system of unequal power relations. Danish authorities and NGOs that understand prostitution as a social problem deploy the concepts of prostitution and the prostitute. In this PhD thesis I refer only to 'prostitution' and 'the prostitute' in relation to the Danish authorities and NGOs.

Referring to the sex sale of female Thai migrants I employ the concepts female Thai migrants 'selling sex', 'sex work' or 'sex worker'. Here the concept of sex work defines various kinds of sexual services (intercourse, strip, telephone sex, pornography etc.). Even though I employ the concepts 'sex workers' and 'sex work', I do not refer to the political definition of sex worker/sex work emanating from pro-sex workers rights. Thus, my use of the concept of sex worker does not refer to a profession that all Thai migrants identify with. To a greater extent, sex work is perceived as a way to earn money; as an activity. Thus, the Thais do not verbalise their sex sale as 'prostitution' or 'sex work'. Nencel (2001) describes similar experiences in her study on prostitution and Peruvian women, which is the reason why she employs the concept of 'women-who-prostitute'. First, she avoids the politicised

concepts of 'prostitution/prostitute' versus 'sex work/sex worker'. Second, her aim is to emphasise the sex sale as a practice rather than an identity (Nencel 2001: 3ff.). Although I agree with Nencel in disassociating from 'the sex worker' or 'the prostitute' identities, I argue that selling sex is more than a practice. Rather, I assume that the sex sale positions the female Thai migrants selling sex in different situations. Inspired by poststructuralist thinking I investigate how the sex sale relates to the way in which female Thai migrants do gender in different situations away from their sex work.

The next section outlines the research questions and presents where the different perspectives are applied in the individual articles.

Research Questions and Composition

Focusing on the female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark, I pose the following main question that structures the four articles:

How do female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce sex work and intimacy, represented by the Danish policy field of prostitution, through their way of doing gender in various ways?

Based on the main question, the four questions of the thesis run as follows:

- Article 1: How is the Danish policy field of prostitution constituted and transformed?
- Article 2: How is motherhood performed within the group of female Thai migrant sex workers?
- Article 3: How is love constructed within the intersection of the subject positions of wife, migrant and sex worker in female Thai migrant sex workers' narratives?
- Article 4: How do Thai migrant sex workers reproduce and subvert heterosexuality through the performance of gender in different spaces?

Falling in two parts, the first part lays down the framework of the four articles consisting of the following chapters: 1. 'Introduction' (this chapter), 2. 'Theoretical Framework', 3. 'Methods and Material', 4. 'Doing Research: Positionings, Possibilities and Limitations' and 5. 'Findings'. The second part consists of the four articles.

Part I: Chapter 2 presents and discusses how the theoretical concepts and perspectives are employed in the dissertation. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, I am inspired by a number of theoretical discussions that derive from mainly gender and transnational migration studies, but also policy studies and human critical geography. Chapter 3 outlines the applied methods: participant observation, interviewing and documentary texts. All four articles rely on the same material produced through methods that spring from poststructuralist feminist thinking. Chapter 4 delineates how the material is a result of access, social relations and interactions. Addressing the issue of the subject position of the researcher, I discuss how my subject position is a part of the process of producing material. In addition, this chapter discusses struggles in operating in the heavily politicised field of prostitution. Chapter 5 summarises the articles and presents the findings by answering the overall main question.

Part II: Article 1 analyse the transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution. This article draws on Foucault's and Bacchi's understandings of discourse, i.e. as problem representations within policies. It analyses the constitution and transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution. Applying literature on global care chains, citizenship and transnational migration, article 2 analyse how the female Thai migrants construct transnational and local motherhood in relation to the social work within prostitution and the Danish policy on family reunification. The article is co-authored by associate professor Hanne Marlene Dahl. Article 3 investigates how the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant intersect in the female Thai migrant sex workers' construction of romantic love. This article benefits from literature on transnational marriage, sex tourism industry and intersectionality. Article 4 synthesises Butler's gender theory and theory on spatial acts with the purpose of analysing female Thai migrants' performances of gender. The article demonstrates how they become intelligible gendered subjects as female sex worker, mother, and respectable heterosexual male Thai migrant depending on their spatial acts.

Each article contains a short section on methodology and method, given that such a section is required by the journals. This means that there is some overlap between the method sections of the articles and Part I (chapters 3 and 4).

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I outline an array of theoretical concepts and perspectives that form the theoretical and analytical framework of the thesis. I do so by introducing and discussing the relevance of the different theoretical concepts and perspectives, asking how the framework is applied in the thesis with regard to answering the overall research question, and how the concepts and perspectives relate to each other.

The first section provides a short introduction to poststructuralist feminist thinking as the overall approach that unifies and links together the articles. The next section introduces to Bacchi's (2009, 2005) and Butler's (1990, 1997) interpretation of Foucault ([1976]1994) by focusing on analysing discourses as well as their approach to: policy (Bacchi), subjection, heterosexuality and gender (Butler). Thus, Butler's and Bacchi's theories provide the overall analytical lens. At the same time, their theories are specifically applied in two of the articles (article 1 and 4). From different disciplines they contribute to developing feminist poststructuralist thinking. In continuation of this thinking I introduce to intersectionality as central to the overall framework of the thesis. This concept is presented and discussed in the third section where I propose intersectionality implicitly.

Sections 4 (Multi-layered Citizenship) and 5 (Transnational Migration) outline theoretical concepts and perspectives that represent another analytical level compared to what Butler's and Bacchi's perspectives represent. These two sections provide theoretical and analytical lenses for analysing conditions that constrain the female Thai migrants' gender performances as well as how they construct subject positions. In other words, these analytical concepts and perspectives help me grasp the society they live in. Section 4 introduces to the concept of multi-layered citizenship, and section 5 outlines the research area of transnational migration consisting of studies on transnational social fields, female migration (referring to labour, marriage and selling sex), global care chains and the perspective of space. The chapter terminates in a brief conclusion. With different intensity and different purposes the concepts and perspectives form the framework that enables me to investigate how the practices and understandings of female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce understandings of 'prostitution' and 'the prostitute' represented by the Danish prostitution policy field.

Taking a Poststructuralist Feminist Perspective

On an overall level, poststructuralist feminist thinking informs my thesis, which is why I briefly elaborate on the theoretical debates that have inspired me in working out the analytical framework and my methodological considerations. I am propelled by feminist poststructuralist thinking. It offers insights into how categories, identities and ‘problematizations’ on specific issues (e.g. within policies) that are taken-for-granted establish power imbalances leading to processes of exclusion and marginalisation (Bacchi, 2009) – for example how gender policies for some women are beneficial, but for other women harmful (Bacchi, 2009; Lykke, 2008: 40). Nonetheless, one of the turning points within poststructuralist feminist thinking is the break with feminist theories which presume that a universal basis for feminism exists that is grounded in a sex/gender distinction embedded in and reproducing a heterosexual discourse. This break stems from Butler’s monograph *Gender Trouble* from 1990. Her philosophical theory on how the subject is created, termed ‘subjection’, is inspired by Foucault’s thinking.¹² In particular, her crucial contribution to poststructuralist feminist thinking was a break with the feminist movement’s essentialist identity politics grounded in the dualistic thinking on gender (Rosenberg, 2007: 16).¹³ Butler’s goal in *Gender Trouble* is to eliminate the unproblematised discourse on ‘womanhood’ that reproduces the normative category of gender (Lykke, 2008: 40). Her critique leads to the discussion on intersectionality in terms of employing multiple categories in constructing gender. In this sense, *Gender Trouble* can be viewed as a part of a political wave within the feminist movement during the 1980s and onwards that argued for a differentiation between women; that the category woman needed to be connected to other categories such as class, sexuality, race and ethnicity. Other critical voices came from black, postcolonial, lesbian and queer feminists. Taking this political as well as scientific break within feminism as her point of departure, Lykke (2008: 41) argues that gender studies transform into a critical study on the problematic meanings that the category of gender is ascribed.

Following poststructuralist feminist thinking, represented by Butler, Salih (2002: 46) describes the construction of gendered subjects as a process “or a ‘becoming’ rather than an

¹² In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler refers to Foucault’s concept of discourse (Salih, 2002: 47). Her concept of subjection is outlined in the section: ‘Subjection and Agency’ in this chapter. Foucault’s thinking is also elaborated in the section: ‘Policy Field’ in the present chapter as well as in the first article, ‘Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution’, section: ‘Discourse, policy field and ‘problem’ representation’ (article 1).

¹³ I will not go further into the debate on identity politics, feminism and representation. I am aware of Butler’s critique of the feminist movements’ insistence on a stable subject, relying on a sex/gender distinction embedded in and reproducing a heterosexual discourse. Butler (1990: 31) displays and problematises how these feminist movements’ identity politics produces mechanisms of exclusion.

ontological state of being” that takes place through discourse formations. In this way subjects are discursively constituted.

On an overall level, I am inspired by poststructuralist feminist thinking in various ways. First, Butler’s thinking encourages me to question the dichotomy of the gendered subject of ‘prostitute’ (victim) versus ‘sex worker’ (agent) that dominates the conceptual framework within the Danish policy field of prostitution and altogether within everyday discourses that problematise sex sale. Second, Foucault ([1976] 1994) and Bacchi (1999, 2009) inform my focus on permissible ways of speaking about prostitution and sex work within policy-making areas.

Capturing how gendered subject positions are constituted among female Thai migrants selling sex in their everyday lives or within a policy field by applying Butler and Foucault’s abstract theories requires translation work. First and foremost, I received help from Bacchi (2009) with regard to developing an analysis strategy for investigating a policy-making field.¹⁴ Second, in the beginning of my study I realised that the way in which some female Thai migrant sex workers do gender destabilises a Western discourse on heterosexuality, which makes Butler’s theory on gender relevant. Moreover, analysing the female Thai migrants’ everyday lives I emphasise how societal conditions are premises in the process of subject formations by bringing in perspectives such as transnational migration and multi-layered citizenship. Højgaard and Staunæs (2007: 127ff.) point out that ‘the dash’ between individual/subject/subjectivity on the one hand and society/context/culture on the other hand is a disputed issue in terms of which concepts or perspectives are suitable for capturing transformations of the subject. This discussion I will not go into. Instead, I underscore that in the three last articles (see article 2, 3 and 4) different types of categories and contexts are employed.¹⁵

Transparency and critical reflection are important premises in feminist poststructuralist studies (Lather, 2000, 1986; Haraway, 1991). Related to such premises, Haraway (1991) introduces the concept of ‘situated knowledge’. Briefly outlined, this is a way to avoid what Haraway terms the ‘god-trick’, referring to the notion of the researcher’s ability to position his or her self outside that which is analysed (Lykke, 2008: 17). Haraway (1991, 195) describes doing research as a creative process focusing on the “critical positioning in inhomogeneous gendered social space”. Following Haraway, all bodies, inscribed in the

¹⁴ The following section and the last article elaborate how I propose Bacchi.

¹⁵ A number of empirically driven gender studies, informed by sociological, psychological and pedagogical lenses, have translated Butler’s theory into analytical tools (see e.g. Davis, 2008; Trautner, 2005; Søndergaard, 1996; Stormhøj, 1999; Staunæs, 2004; Myong Petersen, 2009a; Præstmann Hansen, 2010).

field of science, are marked in terms of a number of the categories (e.g. gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity and class). This means that the researcher always does research from a particular site/sight¹⁶, which implies reflection on ethical and political concerns, in order to become a responsible researcher (Lykke, 2008: 17).

From a feminist poststructuralist view, the researcher does not 'discover' the real world when producing material or, in other words, 'the world does not speak itself'. Rather, in co-operation with the studied people, the researcher produces material through "power-charged social relations of 'conversations'" (Haraway, 1991: 198). Understanding the production of knowledge as an exercise where 'objects do not pre-exist' their context, the study can never be complete or finished, but will always be under construction. Viewing the studied people (the researcher and the interpreters) as subjects who 'are becoming' (Haraway, 1991: 193), i.e. as a never-ending process of subject formation, entails that the production of material is an outcome of social interactions and relations between the subjects. In this way the production of knowledge is not neutral. Relying on Butler's (1990, 1997) theory on subject formations I argue that the researcher as well as the other subjects construct and negotiate multiple subject positions within these processes depending on particular power relations and practices embedded in discourses. This is elaborated in chapters 3 and 4: 'Methods and Material' and 'Doing Research: Positionings, Possibilities and Limitations'.

Discourses at Different Levels

Informed by Foucault's ([1976]1994; [1969]2006) understanding of discourse, as well as Bacchi's (1999, 2009) and Butler's (1997, 1990) interpretation of Foucault's thinking, this section outlines how I apply the concept of discourse in different ways. First and foremost, discourse is a part of my assumptions grounded in feminist poststructuralist thinking. This means that discourse is a premise in the analytical work presented in the articles as well as in my production of material. I apply discourse in two different ways in the articles. First, analysing policy fields by using a discursive lens, I understand a policy field as 'discursive field' consisting of a number of competing and/or complementing discourses. This enables me to analyse how disagreements and power relations create dynamics that lead to transformations within a policy field. Second, investigating how discourses operate in the everyday lives of the female Thai migrant sex workers, I analyse how discourses enable and limit their agency by focusing on how subject positions are constructed.

¹⁶ Haraway refers to a duality of site/sight (locality and place/view and lens) (Lykke, 2008: 18).

Proposing a poststructuralist approach, discourse becomes a key element interconnected with power. In particular, the ideas of Foucault have been criticised, refined and transformed within poststructuralist gender studies (see e.g. McNay, 1992; Butler, 1990, 1997; Bacchi, 1999, 2005, 2009). Conducting two forms of discourse-inspired analyses, I involve two different ways of interpreting and refining Foucault's concept of discourse. Primarily, the varieties in refining Foucault's understanding of discourse are rooted in different disciplines. I take an interdisciplinary perspective inspired by Bacchi's (1999, 2005, 2009) policy studies and Butler's (1990, 1997) philosophical/psychological approach to subject formations. They both represent a poststructuralist feminist thinking, but they have different foci; a political and an internal subject. The two ways of refining Foucault's understanding of discourse are not mutually exclusive. Rather, I argue that the two approaches complement each other in this thesis when investigating how speech about migrants' sex sale within the policy field of prostitution relates to the way in which the subject positions of female Thai migrant sex workers are constructed.

Before presenting Bacchi's and Butler's way of applying Foucault, I briefly define his understanding of discourse. Following Foucault ([1969] 2006: 121), a discourse is a delimited, coherent system of thought that structures and lays down rules for agency and ways in which it is possible to speak. For an elaboration of Foucault's definition, see the article 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution', section: 'Discourse, Policy Field and 'Problem' Representation' (article 1).

Policy Field

Bacchi (1999, 2005, 2009) contributes to literature on governing processes and formations of policy fields paying attention to 'problem representations' within policies. Refining Foucault's understanding of discourse she scrutinises silences and what is taken-for-granted within policy areas as a way to investigate how "we are governed". Bacchi (1999) distinguishes between *power of discourse* (constructing certain possibilities for thought) and *the power to make discourse* (meaning "aris[ing] not from language, but from institutional practices, from power relations, from social positions") (Bacchi, 1999: 41), which she refines in her work on analysing policies through discourse theory (see Bacchi, 2009). In the first article, 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1), I am inspired by Bacchi's (2009) analysis strategy on problem representations analysing how prostitution has developed into a policy-making field. I perceive the interplay between a number of discourses as a premise in the creation of

the policy field. In other words, I analyse the shaping of a policy field through the ways that discourses struggle and complement each other. In this way discourses imply power in terms of “who can speak, from where, when and with what authority” (Bacchi, 1999: 41). Drawing on Foucault (1983, 1994 [1976]), power is not an intrinsic force that defines or is possessed by an individual, a group, a class or a particular force, a structure or an institution. Rather, power is exercised through the interplay between endless unequal relations. Inspired by Bacchi (2009), the involved actors (public, semi-public and private organisations) reproduce and embody discourses differently. The practices, ‘problems’ and statements put forward by the actors reflect a sedimentation of the discourses. During this process the discourses constitute positions and produce categories. Moreover, both within contested statements within the discourse, as well as through influences from other discourses, an ongoing transformation of the discourse takes place. Based on the first article (‘Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution’ (article 1)), I argue that such ongoing transformations can only be identified by a historical perspective.

Analysing how discourses constitute the policy field I am able to capture ‘naturalised’ or taken-for-granted assumptions and ways of thinking that predominate a policy field (Bacchi, 2009). Such a critical approach qualifies a discussion on how a policy field relates to citizens’ lives, focusing on who gains advantages or disadvantages in the given policy field. Bringing in such a perspective points to how the policy fields that produce legal rights and obligations as well as political values establish boundaries and premises for how this group of migrants selling sex belongs to the Danish nation-state.

Taking another analytical lens, but still grounded in Foucault’s thinking, the next section introduces how my inspiration from Butler is applied.

Gender Performances, Subjection and Agency

I use Butler’s theory on how the subject is constructed and her theory on gender (1997, 1990). On an overall level, I take advantage of her theory on ‘subjection’ that informs us on how subject formations take place involving agency and discourse. On another level I draw on her theory of heterosexuality and gender, developing an analytical lens in the last article ‘Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark’ (article 4).

As opposed to both Foucault and Bacchi, Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) focuses on the agency of the subjects. Butler (1997: 17) propounds a critique of Foucault’s thinking about power and the subject, pointing out the absence of agency of the subject in his work. Butler’s theory on

gender (1990, 1993) has given rise to a dispute among feminist scholars that revolves around the questions: is it possible to talk about the agency of the subject if the subject does not exist pre-discursively? Or *who* or *what* leads to the transformation of gender? Butler has been criticised for being too flighty about the concept of agency (Stormhøj, 2003; Webster, 2000; Butler, 1997). Following Foucault, she argues that *becoming* a subject signifies processes of power that subordinate the individual. At the same time, power provides for the existence of the subject since power forms the subject. Butler terms this process *subjection*: “consist[ing] in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never choose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency” (Butler, 1997: 2). In other words, the subject is produced within an ambivalent process of power of compulsion and reproduction conditioned by the heterosexual discourse that constitutes and dissolves the very same subject at once. In her work from 1990, Butler emphasises how the transformations of the subject rely on gender performance that subverts and destabilises the discourse of heterosexuality, whereas in her work from 1997 she elaborates the theory of the agency of the subject from an internal perspective by paying attention to the psychic life of the subject itself.

The thesis does not focus on such an internal perspective, even if I do not reject Butler’s internal perspective. Rather, the articles analyse the gender performances of the female Thai migrants selling sex regarding how they position themselves in different situations and spaces in their everyday lives. Briefly, power acts on the subject in two ways: first, external power makes the subject’s *becoming* possible. Second, internal power enables the subject’s ‘own’ acting (Butler, 1997: 14). This subjection is a ‘two-step’ process of power that appears as “two incommensurable temporal modalities” (ibid.: 14) where “the subject is itself a site of ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the *effect* of a prior power and as the *condition of possibilities* for a radically conditioned form of agency” (Butler, 1997: 14-15). Ambivalence becomes the premise of existence of the subject, which is captured by the tension between what Butler (1997: 18) calls “already there and the yet-to-come”. In this way Butler refines the ambiguous process of power subordinating the subject and at the same time constituting the subject. Thus it is in between subversion and subordination that the process of “becoming a subject” takes place. This ambivalent process implies the agency of the subject signified by gender performance:¹⁷ reiterations of norms, bodily practices, gestures, appearance and words. In that sense, gendered subject positions are constituted (Butler, 1990: 173). According to Butler (1990: 185), it is not a question of whether the subject repeats (the norms, practices etc.) or not, because it is always repeating. Instead, she stresses that it is a question of *how* the subject repeats, which is linked to the subject’s ‘own’ agency.

¹⁷ Gender performance underscores that gender is a *doing* without a *being* behind.

On the one hand, reiteration is not mechanical, but “produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence” in terms of the heterosexual discourse (Butler, 1990: 33). Thus, the subject is not able to stand outside the norms (Butler, 1993: 17). On the other hand, reiteration implies power that shifts and reverses within the process of the two temporal modalities. The process of gender performance creates a tension between an institutionalisation of gender and the possibility of displacing or subverting gender. Gender performance that subverts the heterosexual matrix and constitutes e.g. transgendered subject positions reflects the agency of the subject instituted by the very same power mechanisms of the sex/gender distinction. Butler thus elaborates how subject formation takes place through subjection and agency, still claiming that the subject does not exist pre-discursively as one of the cornerstones in poststructuralist thinking.

Besides applying Butler’s theory on subjection on an overall level, I point to her theory on gender (1990, 1993), i.e. how the creation of the gendered subject emanates from the discourse of heterosexuality. Finding her theory on gender quite abstract, since Butler (1990) focuses on how the subject is culturally intelligible within specific Western epistemological and philosophical discourses, I intend to refine her theory into an analytical tool. In contrast to Butler, I investigate how the subject becomes culturally intelligible within everyday life discourses through what Gregson and Rose (2000) call spatial acts. Thus, drawing on a philosophical discussion of Butler’s theory on heterosexuality and gender, I develop analytical tools for a quite different setting in the article ‘Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark’ (article 4).¹⁸ Capturing how they perform gender and construct gendered subject positions in everyday life offers me an opportunity to discuss how they destabilise and reproduce categories that are applied by social workers that represent the Danish policy field of prostitution.

Paying attention to Foucault’s understanding of discourse and the way in which the concept is refined by feminist poststructuralist thinking I investigate discourses in two different ways. On the one hand, I analyse how struggling and/or completing discourses together constitute and transform a policy field within a time span of around 100 years. To

¹⁸ Butler’s (1990) version of gender relies on four components (body, social gender, sexual practice and sexual desire) that are combined in different ways and break with the categories of woman/man based on a sex/gender distinction that destabilises and reproduces heterosexual discourses. Inspired by Butler, I investigate how femininity is performed both within and across a sex/gender distinction, given that the female Thai migrants selling sex count both female-born persons, transgendered persons and cross-dressers (male-to-female) all identifying themselves as females, as already mentioned in the introduction. Drawing on Butler’s (1990) concept of gender, I explore how they perform femininity in different ways that relate to how they signify and negotiate different gendered subject positions.

do so, I identify how organisations and institutions sediment discourses. On the other hand, zooming in on everyday practices I focus on how female Thai migrants selling sex construct and negotiate gendered subject positions that destabilise and reproduce an everyday discourse on heterosexuality. Taking in a historical perspective as well as an everyday perspective enables me to identify the complexity of discourse transformations that demonstrates the inertia of a discourse.

Understanding gender as a construct that needs to be rethought depending on a particular context or set of conditions, poststructuralist feminist theory opens up for analysing gender in relation to other categories or identities. The following introduces to the theory of intersectionality.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an overall premise in the thesis with regard to my analytical work in the articles and in the production of material. In this section I present two feminist approaches to the intersectionality theory, and I outline how I use this theory, focusing on what intersects and which approach I am inspired of.

Intersectionality is not a new theoretical idea, but a result of a theoretical thinking grounded in interdisciplinary studies. Within different bodies of feminist literature intersections of categories have been studied. The categories of gender, race and ethnicity spring from postcolonial and anti-racist feminist studies, whereas studies on gender and sexuality intersections spring from lesbian feminism and queer studies (Lykke, 2008: 104ff.). With Crenshaw's article (1994) 'Mapping the margins', intersectionality gained ground within feminist studies. It resulted in an increasingly European discussion on intersectionality.¹⁹

The central point of intersectionality is that not just one category or system (e.g. gender hierarchy) constructs the subject, whether in the form of an individual, a social group or a policy. Instead, identities happen through the intersections of various categories, and it is via these that the identity processes or policy formations must be analysed (see e.g. Phoenix, 2006). Intersectionality can be a very vague term. Inspired by Phoenix (2006) and McCall (2005), I argue that three methodologically interlinked issues need to be taken into account; issues which lead to common disagreement among those who use the

¹⁹ See e.g. the journals: *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* (2006, 2010), *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidsskrift* (2005), *The European Journal of Women's Studies* (2006), Knapp (2005), Davis (2008).

intersectional approach.²⁰ The first concerns the forms of analysis, the second what intersects, and the third methodology. A discussion of these enables an exposition of my analytical strategies.

The forms of analysis: Crenshaw (1994) highlighted intersectional analysis by examining how patterns of suppression and the identity politics of race and gender intertwine and maintain social groups in a marginalised position. She (1994: 2-3) conducted a structural political analysis of how gender and race intersect. Subsequently, the intersectionality method was re-interpreted primarily within interdisciplinary studies mainly conducted by feminist scholars, but also influenced by disciplines such as sociology, political science and social psychology because “particular methods are appropriate to particular subject matters” (McCall, 2005: 1795).²¹ Thus, the method is captured and used in various forms of analysis that range from interrogating identity politics (Crenshaw, 1994; Collins, 1996) through analysing social group formations (McCall, 2005) to processes of subjection (Staunæs, 2004; Myong Petersen, 2009a). Intersecting categories are not neutral, but represent different hierarchies and create a grid of power relations which shape identity politics, social groupings and subjects (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 201). This leads me to the second issue, *what intersects?*

The classic categories are: gender, race, sexuality and class (Crenshaw, 1994; Phoenix, 2006; Lykke, 2005). Based on the idea that gender is not singular, but depends on a number of categories, gender is analysed through different hierarchies of for example race, class and sexuality (Phoenix, 2006: 28). In this thesis I apply intersectionality theory in different ways. First, different from the classic categories I analyse how the gendered subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant intersect among female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark in article ‘Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark’ (article 3). Thus, I do not focus on intersecting categories establishing gender, but on the subject positions. The analytical concepts are created in relation to my empirical material, while the selection of these subject positions is a consequence of the correlation between their migration, marriage to Danish men and sex sale. Moreover, the subject positions are defined by the ways they perform gender. Thus, I

²⁰ I am inspired by McCall’s (2005) and Phoenix’s (2006) ways of identifying various approaches to intersectionality.

²¹ Some scholars (e.g. Phoenix, Knapp) claim that a redefinition based on the combination of the specific academic tradition, locality and empirical context occurred when the term travelled from the US to the UK, Germany and the Nordic countries. Whereas Crenshaw represents an American tradition, Phoenix represents a British tradition. In line with Christensen and Siim (2005) I question if there is a Nordic tradition per se. I should rather argue that Nordic studies applying an intersectional analysis draw on different traditions in terms of methodology and fields of studies (policy, sociology etc.) and subject matters. Moreover, Knapp (2005) points out that intersectionality is a rapidly travelling transatlantic theory.

address gender as an underlying category throughout in the thesis. Second, inspired by Butler's gender theory on how gender and sexuality intersect, I analyse how the subjection of female Thai migrant sex workers takes place through gender performances based on the intersecting categories of gender, body, sexual desire and sexual practices in the article 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark' (article 4). Third, in Chapter 4, 'Doing Research: Positionings, Possibilities and Limitations', I reflect upon how the subject positions of the researcher (me), research assistant and informants are constructed through the intersection of the social categories: gender, sexuality and nationality, as premise for producing material.

The last issue concerns *the methodological approach*. Reflecting discussions within feminist theories, intersectionality has adopted and developed a range of methodologies. The two major approaches have been termed standpoint and poststructuralist (Phoenix, 2006). Scholars who incline towards a standpoint approach attach great importance to structures as pre-given and determining the shaping of identities, inequality patterns etc. (see Collins, 1996; Crenshaw, 1994). Hierarchies of gender, race and sexuality are comprehended as stable or locked systems which can be seen as a crossroads when they intersect. Here, I take a poststructuralist approach foregrounding agency. Common to poststructuralist feminist theory is that identities, subjects, social groups or systems are not pre-given, stable or fixed. Instead they are identified as constructions that are negotiated in ongoing processes which involve repeating and interpreting practices (Phoenix, 2006; Søndergaard, 2002). However, the social world is not entirely fluid, but implies different forms of power. Thus, I underline the tensions between continuity and rupture. These elements constitute the process and explain change over time.

Investigating how gendered subject formations are constituted by intersecting multiple categories and power hierarchies (Lykke, 2005: 106), I am able to capture how the categories of sex work and prostitution are in various ways destabilised and reproduced within the policy field of prostitution and within female Thai migrant sex workers' everyday lives. Following Lykke's (2005: 105ff.) distinction between 'explicit' and 'implicit' feminist intersectionality theory I apply the last one, by not using the concept of intersectionality directly, although I analyse how a number of categories intersect, as well as how the subject positions of mother, sex worker, female migrant and wife intersect.

I do not apply postcolonial studies explicitly in the articles, but is indirectly inspired by a postcolonial thinking which underpins the articles. Bringing postcolonial feminist theory into a Nordic context is a rather new development within postcolonial feminist studies

(Mulinari et al., 2009).²² This development has also to a greater extent gained ground for studies on how race intersects with gender and nation, or gender and sexuality intersect in a Nordic context. In the anthology *Complying with colonialism: gender, race and ethnicity in the Nordic region* from 2010, Mulinari et al. suggest that the Nordic countries have been complicit to colonialism in multiple ways. The Nordic countries are perceived as often invisible participants in what Mulinari et al. (2009: 2) call the (post)colonial order referring to the power relation between former colonisers and colonised as well as the 'First', 'Second' and 'Third' World countries. Thus, the Nordic countries have taken part in and still take part in processes that encompass "(post)colonial imaginaries, practices and products [that] are to be a part of what is understood as the 'national' and 'traditional' culture of the Nordic countries" (Mulinari et al., 2009: 1-2). Postcolonial feminist studies (Myong Petersen, 2009a; Mulinari et al., 2009) on race formations and processes of racialisation in relation to current migration problematise how the welfare states construct gender, family and nationhood as well as how discourses of gender equality create othering processes and images based on race, gender and sexuality. This perspective is relevant in relation to female migrants' sex sale vis-à-vis how the media and the welfare states construct subject positions in their attempt to comprehend migrant sex workers. The outcome is often sexualised or victimised images embedded in historical colonial discourses (see e.g. Jacobsen & Stenvoll, 2010; Spanger, 2002a). Although race is not an explicit category in the thesis, I am inspired by postcolonial feminist studies (see also the article 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1) and the article 'Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark' (article 3)).

The following sections, 'Multi-layered Citizenship' and 'Transnational Migration', differ from the former sections. The following sections representing analytical perspectives and concepts enable me to grasp the society in which the female Thai migrant sex workers live.

Multi-layered Citizenship

Lister's (1997) concept of citizenship and Yuval-Davis' (1999) concepts of multi-layered citizenship and belonging are relevant to this thesis. This is because their perspectives provide a lens to identify how the Danish state, through legal rights and obligations,

²² Within a Danish context a number of studies analyse racialisation (see e.g. Myong Petersen, 2009a; Præstmann Hansen, 2010), whereas ethnicity has gained ground as a research area in the Nordic countries (see. e.g. Røgilds, 1994; Mørck, 1998; Staunæs, 2004).

constrains how migrants construct their belonging in Denmark. Compared to the overall theoretical framework based on poststructuralist feminist thinking, this perspective holds another status since this literature enables me to analyse the conditions of how the female Thai migrants selling sex produce gendered subject positions.

The definition of citizenship used within current academic literature has changed from a narrow to a wider and more complex understanding. The former definition of citizenship is based on the political relations between the individual and the nation-state. This narrow definition refers solely to legal membership of a political, economic or geographic community entailing rights and obligations. According to Coffey (2004: 47-48) this is a fixed approach that leaves out agency and a dynamic nature of citizenship. On the contrary, a body of citizenship literature²³ that emanates from amongst other things feminist and global studies offers a more comprehensive, diffuse and complex definition that evokes issues such as recognition, belonging, participation and transnational movements that interact with citizenship (Coffey 2004: 47ff.). The body of citizenship literature that breaks with this narrow citizenship concept extends the classical citizenship rights by introducing reproductive rights, intimate rights, ecological rights etc.

Lister (1997) and Yuval-Davis (1999, 2005, 2006) challenge this narrow and fixed approach to citizenship by taking a feminist perspective as well as emphasising a *multi-layered* perspective. Besides, paying attention to legal citizenship (including formal rights and obligations) both Yuval-Davis and Lister recognise that not all groups benefit from a citizenship grounded in the borders of the nation-state. Even though Lister and Yuval-Davis both break with the former fixed and narrow citizenship definition, I will argue that their redefinitions of citizenship differ from each other.

Lister's (1997) central aim is to introduce a feminist perspective into the studies on citizenship. She argues that the male citizen and his interests and concerns dictate the agenda in much of the gender-neutral literature on citizenship. Lister, on the other hand (1997: 3), addresses a feminist perspective on citizenship that gives full recognition to the multiple and shifting identities of women by focusing on their agency. According to Lister (1997), citizenship is about the ways that the individual member is linked to a community through rights and obligations. It is a process of struggles in terms of how to gain new rights and redefining existing rights that implicate inclusion and exclusion of the members. Exploring how women's social, civil and political rights and obligations are constructed she considers that the ideal of citizenship is to enable gender equality in society and at the same

²³ For literature that represents a wider and more complex concept of citizenship, see e.g. Lister (1997), Yuval-Davis (1999, 2005, 2006), Isin (2000) and Richardson (2000).

time recognise women's responsibilities in the private sphere (childcare and household). Lister (1997: 9) points out that she is aware of the sensitivity to the differences that exist among women, but does not elaborate on the differences and the power relations between women. Even though she (1997: 42ff.) underscores how a number of criteria that relate to gender, ethnicity, class, race etc. establish processes of inclusion and exclusion, Lister does not explicitly discuss how these criteria constrain the social construction of the category of 'woman'. Following Lister pointing out the relevance of a feminist perspective, I argue that bringing in the category of 'woman', relying on a sex/gender distinction, cannot comprise the differences within the group of female Thai migrants selling sex (see the concluding article 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark', article 4). Instead I am inspired by Butler's gender theory that destabilises the category of 'woman'.

Belongings and Multi-layered

Yuval-Davis' (2006) complex concept of 'belonging' provides a lens for going beyond formal rights and obligations and investigates how people or social groups construct attachments to communities based on differentiating categories (gender, race, class etc.). At the same time, Yuval-Davis emphasises 'politics of belonging' in terms of who 'deserves' to belong and who does not 'deserve' to belong, and who is and who is not entitled to receive aid from e.g. the nation-state, or who is allowed to belong as full and equal citizens (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 207). Based on political values and goals, boundaries that are established within nation-states also imply inclusion and exclusion of certain groups depending on their social locations. Breaking with the concept of the naturalization of belonging, Yuval-Davis understands belonging as a dynamic process focusing on "belonging in particular ways to particular collectives" (2006: 197). Referring to Yuval-Davis' (1999: 122) multi-layered citizenship can no longer solely be confined by the boundaries of the nation-state due to the migrants' opportunity to participate simultaneously in local, national and transnational communities.

Yuval-Davis' (2006, 1999) concepts of belonging and multi-layered citizenship have in particular inspired me to focus on how the mothering performed by the female Thai migrants selling sex cannot exclusively be defined within nation-state borders, which challenges notions of mothering produced by the Danish social authorities combined with the social help offered to the female Thais by the Danish state (see the article 'The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?', article 2). Moreover, I argue that these links are conditions that constrain the female Thai migrant sex workers' constructions of gendered subject positions and their constructions of citizenship.

Rights and Obligations

Inspired by Lister's (1997) approach to citizenship rights and obligations, I am concerned with the Thai migrant sex workers' rights and obligations. Lister (1997) pays attention primarily to the classic triads of civil, political and social rights to and obligations involved in obtaining full citizenship in a community.²⁴ Inspired by Lister, I only focus on how social rights are related to the female Thai migrants selling sex. According to Lister (1997: 16), social rights refer to receiving a modicum of economic welfare and security. Social rights are a sense of precondition for civil and political rights: "social rights enable the citizens to exercise their political and civil rights.... and create the conditions for full social and political participation" (Lister, 1997: 34). The social obligations of female Thai migrants selling sex include tax payments, labour and obligations in relation to the Danish integration programme. The social rights include rights to receive social benefit from the Danish states, care rights over their children and rights to receive health and social counselling in relation to selling sex. Yuval-Davis (2006: 208) contributes to expanding citizenship rights with spatial rights that imply the right to enter and remain in a nation-state or territory: "the right to migrate, the right to abode, the right to work..." (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 208). Her idea of spatial rights is relevant in relation to this thesis. Informed by both Yuval-Davis' and Lister's perspective of rights in relation to citizenship, I define spatial rights as migratory rights. In addition, migratory rights and social rights are in the case of female Thai migrants selling sex intersect referring the rights to acquire a temporary residence and work permit, the right to bring one's children to the receiving society and right to the marry a Danish citizen as the only way to acquire a residence permit. Based on the intersection of migratory and social rights I define female Thai migrant sex workers rights as socio-migratory rights.

Migration policy serves as context in the article 'The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?' (article 2) that discusses female Thai sex workers' motherhood and their right to bring and take care of their children in Denmark. Policies regarding sex sale and migration policy serve as contexts in the article 'Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark' (article 3) which focuses on how these policies constrain the female Thai migrants selling sex.

Grounding my analysis in Lister's and Yuval-Davis' approach to citizenship, I am capable of focusing on their residence permit through marriage, sale of sex in Denmark and

²⁴ Lister (1997: 15ff.) rethinks Marshall's thoughts on the modern citizenship that relies on civil, political and social rights and obligations.

their caregiver function (socially and economically) towards their children. These elements of their life experiences that take place in both private and public space are at the same time a part of a multi-layered environment. This demonstrates that these female Thai migrants create multiple belongings through their subject positions as wife, migrant, sex worker and mother limited by the Danish migration and prostitution policies. At the same time, their informal rights and obligations towards various communities (related to their family and their sale of sex) go beyond national boundaries. This leads to the next section that outlines how transnational migration and marriage, global care chains and space are relevant perspectives.

Transnational Migration

Studying female Thai migrants selling sex from a multi-layered perspective I am encouraged by different bodies of migration literature that address how female migrants create transnational social fields and relations from the perspectives of labour, care, selling sex and marriage. Common to the employed literature is that it takes a feminist perspective focusing on the feminisation of international migration. Similar to the literature on citizenship, the literature on migration offers analytical perspectives in order to analyse the conditions of how these female Thai migrants produce and negotiate multiple subject positions. In particular, this literature is applied in the second and the third articles: 'The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?' and 'Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai migration to Denmark'. In contrast to the perspectives of transnational social fields and migration I also propose the concept of spatial act as an analytical category in the last article, 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark' (article 4).

Transnational Social Fields

The concept of transnational migration that I am inspired by emanates from anthropological literature on migrants living abroad temporarily or permanently (see e.g. Smith, 1994; Basch et al., 1994; Al-Ali & Koser, 2002; Nyberg Sørensen, 2002; Nyberg Sørensen & Guarnizo, 2007; Levitt & Schiller, 2004). This body of literature on transnational migration focuses on the agency of the migrants and/or family members living in the country of origin. It suggests that the social and political experiences of migrants that are spread across national boundaries constitute a single field of social relations termed a 'transnational social field' (Basch et al., 1994; Levitt & Schiller, 2004). For example, the

migrants develop and maintain multiple relationships (familial, economic, social, organisational, religious and political) that cross national borders. Basch et al. (1994: 7) define transnationalism as “processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”. Despite an increasingly transnational mobility of people, goods and ideas, Basch et al. (1994: 30) do not disallow the role of the nation-state by stating that “the world is still very much divided politically into nation-states”. Rather, the interplay between the different layers of the local, national and transnational frames the everyday lives of the migrants.

Levitt & Schiller (2004: 1010) revisit the concept of transnational social field with the purpose of refining Basch et al.’s (1994) approach, arguing that a transnational social field is constituted by *ways of being* and *ways of belonging*. *Ways of being* refer to the social relations and practices that individuals engage in, whereas *ways of belonging* refer to practices that signal an identity linked to a particular group. For example, a person that maintains a high degree of contact to the country of origin does not necessarily identify with the country of origin. Other migrants have little contact to the country of origin, but identify with a particular group that has a kind of connection to the country of origin through memory or nostalgia (Levitt & Schiller, 2004: 1010).

Although I do bring in the perspective of transnational social fields, I do not investigate the construct of transnational social fields. Instead, I point out that transnational relations are conditions for studying these migrants’ gendered subject positions. Encouraged by the literature on transnational social fields I examine how the female Thai migrants selling sex create transnational practices (e.g. telephone calls, Skype, e-mails and letters, financial remittances) and (social, emotional and economical) relations between themselves and their families in the sending societies. This perspective corresponds very well with Yuval-Davis’ (1999, 2006) concepts of multi-layered citizenship and belongings.

Transnational Female Migration

International migration literature that emphasises a feminist perspective informs us how migration is feminised in the sense that women from the periphery migrating to Western countries are the most vulnerable and flexible, and offer the cheapest labour in order to remain competitive (Castles & Miller, 2003). Despite such unequal structures current migration studies (Nyberg Sørensen, 2002; Avila & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1997; Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Parreñas 2001) demonstrate how women are initiators of migration regardless of age and marital status in certain flows of transnational migration. Such studies perceive migration as a gendered process in terms of decisions to go abroad, contact to the sending society, employment opportunities etc. From a gender perspective focusing on the

agency of female labour migrants, Nyberg Sørensen (2002) demonstrates how they are capable of creating a new status and improving their lives. From this perspective, a body of literature (Avila & Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001; Nyberg Sørensen, 2002; Nyberg Sørensen & Guarnizo, 2007) investigates how female migrants construct motherhood.

Agustín (2007: 23) stresses that migrants working in the sex industry are often neglected within studies on women and labour migration. Rather, studies on female labour migration give priority to the domestic and the caring sector focusing on how the migrants create transnational identities and practices (see e.g. Parreñas, 2001; Isaksen et al., 2008).²⁵ However, a few studies on migrant sex workers include the process of transnational migration as part of their background (see e.g. Mix & Piper, 2003; Brennan, 2003; Ruenkaew, 2002). Informed by other bodies of literature I am inspired by studies that link sex work, marriage and romantic love across nation-states (Cheng, 2007; Faier, 2007) and the research area of sex tourism (see Cohen, 1982; Kempadoo, 1999; Cabeza, 2006). A synthesising of these two debates encourages me to challenge the dichotomy of 'sex work' versus 'prostitution', which I explicitly do in the third article 'Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark'.

Global Care Chain

The literature on global care chains (Yeates, 2009; Hochschild, 2003; Lutz, 2008; Isaksen et al., 2008; Isaksen, 2007) is another body of literature that stems partly from the debate on female migration and partly from literature on care. Global care chains shed light on transnational female migration from a rather different perspective compared to the above-mentioned literature, by focusing on female migrants as both care workers (nannies, nurses etc.) abroad and as caregivers towards their children in the sending society. The framework of Global Care Chains informed by Hochschild (2003) and Isaksen et al. (2008) explores how a care drain from the less affluent parts of the world to the richer parts of the world takes place. The feminist literature on transnational motherhood provides an understanding of care as meeting various kinds of needs. This understanding reflects the complexity of doing motherhood performed across national boundaries. The theory on global care chains directs my attention to the socio-emotional costs of the migrating mothers, the erosion of social ties back home and the reproduction of a highly gendered system with the rise of global care chains.

²⁵ It is within studies on female migrant care workers and providers that the Global Care Chains approach is developed (see e.g. Hochschild, 2003).

From a different perspective, Yeates (2009) synthesises the literature on transnational motherhood (e.g. Parreñas, 2001) and the concept of global commodity chains. She offers a complex analytical framework by bringing in an array of dimensions that relate to the process of migration.²⁶ Like Nyberg Sørensen (2002), Yeates stresses that migrant women are often wrongly and exclusively constructed as ‘immiserated victims’. Moreover, she expands the concept to include professional groups of care workers other than nannies (2004, 2009). Encouraged by Yeates’ (2009) interpretation of global care chains combined with the literature on transnational motherhood we can see female Thai migrant sex workers as care givers performing different kinds of motherhood conditioned by a particular migration regime.

Space

In the article ‘Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark’ (article 4), transnational relations are not brought to the fore as a condition. Instead, I analyse how the gender performances of the female migrant sex workers depend on what Gregson and Rose (2000) term ‘spatial acts’. Inspired by Butler’s (1990) theory on gender performance, they offer a definition of performing spatial acts. Feminist geographic scholars (e.g. McDowell, 1999; Massey, 1994; Wilson, 2001) demonstrate how a binary gender hierarchy is deeply implicated in the social production of space through an association with dichotomies of spaces: public (man)/private (woman), home (woman)/work (man). In the thesis I destabilises such dichotomy by analyse how their negotiations of the subject positions of mother, sex worker and heterosexual male Thai migrant depend on how they perform gender through spatial acts.

In summary, I am inspired by poststructuralist feminist thinking when I draw on Bacchi’s strategy for analysing discourses and Butler’s concept of subject and agency as well as her theory on heterosexuality and gender; both inspired by Foucault’s thinking of discourse. Moreover, they are explicitly applied in the first and the last article. In addition, I propose concepts and perspectives captured from bodies of literature on citizenship, transnational migration encompassing transnational social fields, female labour migration, sex tourism, transnational marriage and global care chains and space. These concepts and perspectives do not have the same status as the theories of Bacchi and Butler. Instead, they provide analytical tools to encapsulate the various conditions of the way in which the female Thai

²⁶ See the article ‘The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?’, section: ‘Motherhood, Care Chains and Citizenship in Globalising Processes’ (article 2).

migrant sex workers perform for example gender as well as produce and negotiate subject positions in their lived lives.

Benefitting from poststructuralist feminist theory I introduce different analytical cuts in order to investigate how female Thai migrants selling sex relate to the Danish policy field of prostitution. The first article scrutinises the transformation of the policy field of prostitution inspired by a discursive lens informed by Foucault's understanding of discourse and power, as well as drawing on Bacchi's analytical strategy of 'what the problem is represented to be'. The second and the third article analyse how the gendered subject positions are ascribed meanings. In particular, the second article zooms in on how the subject positions of mother and sex worker are constructed through negotiations in conversations between female Thai migrants selling sex and social workers. Here motherhood is analysed within the context of transnational female migration, care and citizenship. The third article focuses on how the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant intersect in the female Thai migrants' narrative on romantic love analysed within the context of migration-motivated marriage and transnational sex work. The subject positions of the female Thai migrants selling sex are scrutinised by way of a quite different analytical cut. Aided by Butler's theory on gender and Gregson and Rose's (2000) concept of spatial acts, I draw attention to how female Thai migrants who sell sex destabilise and reproduce gendered subject positions that destabilise as well as reproduce the discourse of heterosexuality.

Having outlined my theoretical framework, the next chapter delves into my methodical concerns.

3 Methods and Materials

The aim of the chapter is to discuss the methods applied in the thesis. These methods ground a common platform for the four articles in terms of producing material for analysing how the Danish policy field of prostitution is linked to the way in which female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise sex work and intimacy through their gendered performances.

Employing different techniques and methods (compiling documentary texts, interviewing and participant observation) during my fieldwork for the purpose of producing material, the chapter starts out by outlining how I delimit the field in which the production of material takes place, followed by a brief discussion of ethical considerations. The next sections present and discuss the methods of participant observation, interviewing and compiling documentary text material and the outcome of the methods. The chapter ends up presenting the analysis strategies that ground the analyses in all four articles.

Informed by Bacchi's (2005) distinction within the analytical traditions in discourse theory between *discourse analysis* and *analysing discourses* I am able to undertake different forms of analyses focusing on the agency of the subjects and the formation of a policy field. In particular, Bacchi emphasises that blending the insights from two perspectives within discourse theory "calls for reflection both on the discourses within which we operate, and examination of the active deployment of concepts and categories for political purposes" (ibid.: 208). The task of a *discourse analysis* is to identify how subjects negotiate e.g. gender, sexuality etc. through discourses relying on interview material. Based on interviews and observations I analyse how the female Thai migrant sex workers perform and negotiate gender and sexuality within the discourse of heterosexuality that constitutes the multiple subject positions of wife, female migrant, sex worker, mother, heterosexual male etc. By contrast, the task of *analysing discourses* is to identify discourses within particular documents, e.g. policy speeches (Bacchi, 2005: 199). Based on documentary material of action plans, legislation, memorandums, minutes, reports, articles etc. I analyse how discourses with different strengths constitute the policy field of prostitution. In the article 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1) I identify five discourses from a historical angle.

Limiting the Field

When investigating female Thai migrant sex workers it is not enough to understand the field as what Järvinen and Mik-Meyer (2005: 97) call a 'collective entity' or 'long-term fieldwork' referring to a particular isolated culture or subculture. Challenging the methodological idea of 'the field' as territorially fixed communities or stable, localised cultures, Gupta and Ferguson's (1997) discussion of the concept of 'field' is a central contribution to the rethinking of the classic image of fieldwork viewed as the lone white male anthropologist living in an isolated 'native village' compiling neutral observations. Rather, I am inspired by ethnographic fieldwork (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Hasse, 2002; Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999) that understands the field as a social construction and not as a specific isolated physical space. Hasse (2002: 33ff.) suggests that a field is a social construction determined by the interplay between the physical spaces that the researcher moves through (visiting people, participating in an event or compiling material at the computer) and the interests of the researcher in terms of epistemological considerations, research questions, abstract concepts and topics. The particular lens of the researcher through which she/he understands the field does not only depend on the researcher's interests and the physical spaces that are visited, but also on the social locations of the researcher. Bringing in Haraway's (1991: 189-191) idea on scientific objectivity as an illusion termed as a god-trick, she suggests that knowledge, in my case scientific knowledge on the citizenship of female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark, is situated and embodied; that the production of knowledge is produced from somewhere. Referring to Haraway's (1991) idea of 'situated knowledge', Hasse (2000) argues that the multiple identities of the researcher (as woman, researcher, white etc.) affect how we interpret the field, and how the people we study interpret the researcher. In particular, Hasse (2000: 43) emphasises that we can adopt various social positions from where we view the world, but we are always participating as positioned subjects. In this sense the field is abstract, movable and multiple.

Inspired by Gupta and Ferguson (1997) and Hasse (2002), I will argue that the field is constituted by the interplay between the epistemological approach (in this case poststructuralist feminist thinking), abstract concepts (in this case gendered subjects, policy field, transnational migration, prostitution, sex work and citizenship) emanating from my scientific interests and physical places. Three predominant methods, namely participant observation, interviewing and compiling documentary text material, compose my fieldwork revolving around four settings: I) a counselling programme targeting Thai migrants sex workers, II) female Thai migrants working at bars and massage parlours at night, III) the Thai migrant community in the area of greater Copenhagen, and IV) actors

(administrators, experts, authorities etc.) representing the policy field of prostitution and trafficking in Denmark. My focus was foremost on the group of the female Thai migrant sex workers and not on Thai migrants in general.

From September 2005 to April 2006 I performed participant observations by following a counselling programme once or twice a week, visiting massage parlours, ordinary bars and strip bars, participating in various Thai events as well as meeting twice with the four key actors who were connected to the first action plan and participating in a coordinating meeting for all the actors involved in a counselling programme targeting sex workers. Besides the participant observations I interviewed and compiled documentary text material.

During my fieldwork I realised that prostitution and sex work is clearly a highly sensitive issue among the Thai female migrant sex workers. First, being often involved in tax fraud, pimping and criminal networks implying loan systems etc. the migrants were sometimes suspicious of my position; did I represent the police or the media? Second, during recent years trafficking and migrants selling sex have been hot issues in the media. Consequently, within a Danish context the establishment of the figure 'The Thai Woman' is closely linked to the whore stigma, always willing to sell sex, connoting on the one hand a victim of patriarchy and on the other hand sexual promiscuity (Myong Petersen, 2009b). These stereotypes probably affect the Thai migrants somehow, for example one of the female Thai migrants stated she did not want to be regarded as a whore or as promiscuous. However, the central paradox is the following: on the one hand, earning money through prostitution is a well-known practice within the Thai community. But on the other hand, this practice is socially tabooed in Denmark. Furthermore, Thai migrants in general have to struggle with the stereotypical picture of all Thais as prostitutes. Nevertheless, it is striking that some Thai migrant sex workers become recognised as respectable members of the Thai community in Denmark acquiring high social status, which I experienced during fieldwork. This indicates that female Thai sex workers are not an isolated social group within this migrant community. Gaining this insight resulted in me starting to visit places and events that female Thai migrant sex workers visit or participate in (Thai concerts, annual Thai festivals arranged by one of the temples, a Thai super market, Thai clubs and bars, one of the Buddhist temples etc.) while I followed a counselling project. At night I went out visiting bars (strip bars, ordinary bars and clubs managed by Thais). Conducting fieldwork at different settings provides a more nuanced picture of female Thai migrants selling sex. Throughout this part of my fieldwork I produced material for doing discourse analyses, focusing on how they negotiates the subject positions of sex worker, mother and wife by examining how they perform gender and sexuality.

At the institutional level I contacted The National Board of Social Services²⁷ and a number of programmes that have migrant sex workers as their target group. By establishing contact to some of the institutions that represent the policy field of prostitution in Denmark I was able to participate in cross-functional network meetings for institutions involved in policy and social work within prostitution; be it authorities, administrators, experts or practitioners (both a NGO and GOs).²⁸ Within this part of my fieldwork I produced material for analysing discourses focusing on how discourses constitute and transform a policy field; in this case the Danish policy field of prostitution.

Ethical Considerations

As mentioned earlier, studying female migrants selling sexual services is a highly sensitive issue that is surrounded by moral and political agendas combined with prejudice. This gives rise to the production of stereotypical notions of females selling sex. Such premises make it rather difficult to undertake a study, striving to avoid being affected by a political agenda, dominating views on prostitution and stereotyping notions. With reference to Brinkmann & Kvale (2008: 263) I argue that such premises give rise to a number of ethical questions during the entire research process, from research design over the production of material to the publication of the study; ethical questions that cannot be solved once and for all, but to a greater extent must be viewed as ongoing considerations during the research process (*ibid.*). In order to take into account that I navigate within a highly politicised and sensitive area, I find three ethical issues particularly relevant. According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2008: 274), the first and the second issue I bring up refer to ethical considerations in relation to the studied people within the specific research situation, whereas the third issue refers to a general discussion.

My first question was: how do I gain access to the field and win the confidence of the informants? Being conscious of the kinds of subject positions (coloured female researcher, social worker, female Thai migrant and interviewee) that were in play I was aware of the power relations. Being aware of their body language, what was not told, and what they actually said reflected their boundaries with regard to what questions and interview themes they were interested in telling me about. In the following sections and in the next chapter

²⁷ According to the National Board of Social Services itself the institution is an independent subdivision of the Ministry of Social Welfare, although it is obliged to provide services to the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Department of Gender Equality. The National Board of Social Services is a central actor in this part of my fieldwork, seeing that it is responsible for executing the national action plans to combat human trafficking (see article 1).

²⁸ Chapter 4 'Doing Research: Positionings, Possibilities and Limitations' elaborates how I entered the field.

ethical aspects related to the research process of producing material are considered; in particular in relation to how I established contact to the female Thai migrants selling sex and to the actors representing the policy field of prostitution as well as how I gained the migrants' confidence. In addition, following the counselling programme the social worker always asked permission of letting me attend her meeting with the female Thai migrants selling sex the first time I was introduced. Likewise, she always introduced me and asked permission of my attendance at meeting with the authorities.

Second, I find the ethical issue of anonymity of the studied people relevant. Due to a sensitivity of the subject of selling sex and the heavy politicisation of migrants selling sex in Denmark, all interviewees, informants and counselling programmes that are part of my fieldwork have been anonymised. Likewise, I do not go into further detail about the geographical locations of the neighbourhoods, streets, buildings and places (restaurants, bars etc). In particular, I was quite aware of the stigmatisation of the female Thai migrant sex workers, and that many of them hide their sex sale from their family members. Moreover, I have also anonymised social workers and counselling programmes, because the policy field of prostitution in Denmark is rather a small milieu where everyone knows everyone. All names are changed, some of the interviewees are divided into two persons, and some parts of their narratives have been carefully rearranged. Although anonymity protects the integrity of the interviewees and is an ethical demand, Brinkmann & Kvale (2008: 267) emphasise that anonymity can "also deny them 'the very voice in the research that might originally have been claimed as its aim'". A way of avoiding such pitfalls is to carefully include and make the different subject positions and voices visible within the presentation of the premises for producing material and in the analysis work. This leads us the third ethical question: how do I, as researcher, construct the studied people, in this case female Thai migrants selling, during the analysis work? This question refers to ethical considerations in terms of "what happens when the methodologies and knowledge produced circulate in the wider culture and affects humans and society" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008: 274). During my analysis work I have been quite deliberate on how I constructed the female Thai migrant sex workers. It is my aim to avoid reproducing stereotypical notions such as: 'the female victims of human trafficking' or 'the happy whore' etc. Contrary, I intend to present them as complete persons; so to say spread out the description of their characters by catching the complexity of how they construct and negotiate the subject positions of 'mother', 'wife', 'female migrant' etc. during their everyday lives instead of reducing them to 'flat categories'. To do so, I have focused on their narratives about their actions and views rather than on their motives.

representing the position of a coloured female researcher, affected the social relations created during the social work. Differently, visiting the bars and participating in events at the Thai migrant community, the premises of the encounter were 'only' challenged by my gaze or what I was looking for.

Informed by Kristiansen & Krogstrup (1999: 105ff.), I would say that participant observation is defined by the researcher's establishment of informal and close relations to a few key persons within the field who are able to provide the researcher with crucial information. On the one hand, creating informal and close contact (creating a kind of friendship) to a few persons can provide access to crucial knowledge of informal rules and norms, places and people. On the other hand, participant observation also has its disadvantages. The key informant can easily turn into a gatekeeper (ibid.: 107). The ways in which I undertook participant observation and related to such a key person are elaborated in chapter 4. Moreover, Hasse (2002: 30) argues that participant observation is full of paradoxes, since the researcher is a medium, a tool and an interpreter simultaneously. This calls into question how we should undertake participant observation. Returning to Haraway's idea on situated knowledge, participant observations always produce positioned knowledge that develops with time. Thus, Hasse (2002: 39) argues that entering into a field that the researcher perhaps is already familiar with produces new knowledge and insights because the field is entered from the subject position as researcher. Even though the fieldwork took place in a geographical area that I was already familiar with, the participant observations at the four settings (the counselling programme, bars and massage parlours, Thai migrant community and the policy field of prostitution) were new places for me. I considered these new places in the familiar geographical area from a new perspective, which resulted in new knowledge and insights. The social interaction during the encounter between the informants and my self establishes the subject positions from where I as researcher produce the material. The ways in which the social interaction takes place, and how the subject positions, created by social locations (gender, race and sexuality etc.), are established and challenged etc. as premises for my material are elaborated in chapter 4 'Doing Research: Positionings, Possibilities and Limitations'. Returning to the four settings, the following section outlines where I conducted participant observation, what I was looking for, and why.

What to Look for? Where? and Why?

First setting: Due to the difficulties establishing an agreement with a programme that allowed me to carry out participant observations I only set up a few criteria, i.e. that the counselling programme was in contact with Thai migrants selling sex, and that I was

allowed to follow a social worker in her/his counselling work towards female Thai migrants selling sex. These criteria I fulfilled.

During the day, I carried out participant observations at a counselling programme targeted migrants selling sex at massage parlours. I made observations in her meetings with the female Thais in different situations: at the police, at a shelter for battered women, at the hospital, at the homes of the female Thais, at the office of the counselling programme etc. I also experienced more informal situations when the social worker and I went out eating lunch with some of the Thai migrant sex workers. On the one hand not troubling the work situations of the social worker, and on the other hand not creating a situation as someone surveilling the meetings, I assisted her by taking minutes of the meetings, drafting a letter to the Danish Immigration Service etc. Staying in the background and not interfering in the meeting, it was my plan to signify that I was not a social worker. In this way I was hoping that the migrants were able to distinguish clearly between the agenda of the social worker and my agenda as researcher. Nonetheless, the female Thais at first often positioned me as a social worker even though my project was introduced as a separate research project. Through this strategy it was also my plan to gain their confidence.

Originally, it was my intention to produce material that solely focused on the agency of Thai migrant sex workers. However, this strategy changed during the first weeks at the counselling programme. I realised that I was also producing material about the relationship and interaction between the social worker and the female Thai migrants. Undertaking participant observations at the counselling programme I realised that I had the opportunity to produce material that: First, creates the basis for analysing how gendered subject positions are established, performed and negotiated within the encounter between the social worker and the sex worker. Second, through the social work and meeting the Thai migrants that are connected to the counselling programme getting an insight into how they are a part of the Thai migrant community; how they structure their everyday lives in terms of which places they visit and the activities within the Thai migrant community they take an interest in. Third, following the counselling programme informed me about the link between the policy level and the social work.

Second setting: The criterion for conducting observations at the bars was that female Thai migrants were working or visiting such places regularly. At night I conducted participant observations together with my research assistant (Niels, a white Danish male student who speaks Thai) at strip bars and at an ordinary Thai bar, while I visited massage parlours during the day. During night times at the bars Niels and I were looking at how the Danish male guests and the female Thai migrant sex workers interacted and created or did not create relations, how the Danish men tried to establish contact with the female Thais. I

observed how some of the female Thais were business-like, aggressive or friendly towards the male clients, what kind of clothes the female Thais wore, who they addressed, and how they gesticulated. Such superficial appearances display how gender is performed, and how different sexual encounters are established. I also had informal conversations with Thai female migrant sex workers at bars or at massage parlours, and with male Danes at bars. Such observations, supplemented with interviews, form the basis of my analysis of gender hierarchies between the different social groups of female Thai migrant sex workers; be it female-born subjects, transgendered subjects (m-t-f) or cross-dressers.

Third setting: Besides the participant observations at the counselling programme I also visited places that are part of the female Thai migrant sex workers' everyday lives in Denmark. The places include a Buddhist temple managed by a Thai monk, Thai grocery stores, public Thai events (concerts and festivals) held within the Thai migrant community, Thai clubs etc. which supplement the interviews with key informants within the Thai community. Participating in and visiting such events and places offers me glimpse of who else engages in such activities (primarily female Thais, both female-born subjects, transgendered subjects (m-t-f) and Danish men married to the female Thai migrant sex workers), whom they talk to, and how they perform gender through bodily practices. Thus, I focused on surfaces in terms of bodily practices. Secondly, participant observations were also a way of finding interviewees. Although it involved conducting participant observations at central events and talking to key persons within the Thai migrant community, this setting is not the central part of my fieldwork.

Fourth setting: Through my encounters with a number of the counselling programmes targeting migrant sex workers and participation in two network meetings for administrators, practitioners and experts I acquired an overview of which institutions constitute the policy field of prostitution, what is being said, from where and what is silenced. This knowledge supplements the documentary text material. First, conducting participant observations at the counselling programme was also a strategy to establish contact to the sex workers for the purpose of interviewing them. Second, the participant observations at the institutional level gave me the opportunity to gain an overview of and to see through the relations between the actors involved in the policy field of prostitution as well as what kind of documentary materials they produce.

Primarily, organising my fieldwork into these four settings gave me an opportunity to produce material about the agency of the female Thai migrant sex workers in their everyday lives in different situations, how they perform and transform gender, and how their performances of gender are produced in particular spaces and situations. Here,

mapping out places, events, key persons and social and economic relations provides tools for analysing social spaces. Second, conducting fieldwork within the policy field of prostitution (both at an administrative level and at a practical level), I produced material on the positions within this policy field and on how the administrative and practical level is connected. This creates the basis for analysing how the problem of migrant prostitution is represented and articulated through a number of discourses.

Interviewing

The material produced through interviews grounds the discourse-inspired analyses in three of the articles (see articles 2, 3 and 4) that analysing gender performances and constructs of subject positions. Due to the difficulties in finding female Thais who sell sex and are willing to give an interview, I only established the following criteria: that they are migrants from Thailand and have or have had experiences with selling sex in Denmark regardless where (at massage parlours, streets or bars). Moreover, I conducted expert interviews and interviews with key persons within the Thai migrant community in Denmark.

I have undertaken 14 interviews with Thai migrants all defining themselves as female Thai migrants. Ten are biologically born women, three are transgendered persons (male to female) and one is a cross-dresser. All the female Thai migrants were between the ages of 25 to 40 years old and had acquired residence permits through marriage. Some have permanent residence permits, others were applying for residence permits, and others could not yet apply at the time I interviewed them due to the Danish legislation on family reunification (see article 2). Some of the interviewees were divorced, others married, and one was a widow. All have sold or sell sexual services full time or part time in Denmark at massage parlours or at bars as dancers and hostesses. Nearly all female-born persons have children that either live in Denmark or in Thailand at family members' homes (frequently grandparents or siblings). They have all, to some extent, contact with Thailand, but the contact varies from migrant to migrant. The articles 'The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?' (article 2) and 'Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark' (article 3) contain presentations of female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark. Three female Thai migrant sex workers were interviewed twice, the others were not interested in being contacted by me again, or I did not have further questions after playing back the interview on my mp3 player. The interviews lasted from half an hour to two hours. Some of the interviewees speak Danish, while a few speak English. I do not speak Thai, which

meant that I was dependent on an interpreter if they did not speak Danish or English. Using two interpreters, the social worker, Ina, from the counselling programme, and a Danish male student, Niels, who also functioned as my research assistant outside the counselling programme, was a deliberate strategy.²⁹ Through them I chose two different strategies in establishing contact to Thai migrants selling sex. This is elaborated in chapter 4. All interviewees relating to the programme were recorded. The interviews in Thai have been checked and transcribed by the other interpreter, seeing that I experienced that Ina did not translate literally. This created also greater validity in the process of transcription. Some of the women I got in contact with at the massage parlours did not want to be taped. Instead I took notes writing down their answers as well as their feelings (sadness, upset, hesitating etc.). Such notes were elaborated right after interviewing them. The interviews took place in different settings depending where the interviewees preferred to be interviewed; sometimes at the workplaces of the interviewees in breaks or outside opening hours, and sometimes when they were off work. I interviewed them either at the massage parlour, at one of their other workplaces or at their homes. One interview took place at my research assistant's home due to the locality (the interviewee wished to be interviewed close to her home, but not at her place). Some of the interviewees were of few words and difficult to interview, while others were eager to tell me about their experiences.

Besides interviewing female Thai migrant sex workers I have conducted interviews with seven key persons from the Thai migrant community: six shop/restaurant owners and one bartender who have close contact to Thai migrant sex workers. Interviewing those persons, who are not in the sex industry but who are key persons in the Thai community, is relevant when gaining knowledge of the Thai community from other perspectives. Such a perspective contributes to a wider understanding of the female Thai migrants' everyday lives, given that they see themselves as a part of the Thai migrant community in Denmark. Moreover, I conducted interviews with eight experts within the field of trafficking and prostitution (two representatives from the police, four social workers and two administrators) who all have contact to or knowledge about Thai migrant sex workers. They informed me about female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark, how they approach and view them. All interviews were recorded and lasted from one to two hours.

When employing a poststructuralist feminist perspective, the material is understood as being produced through active interchanges of meanings between the researcher and the

²⁹ Interviewees connected to the counselling programme only accepted Ina as an interpreter, even though Ina and I told them that I had another interpreter who is not part of the Thai migrant community. Many of the female Thais connected to the programme have had bad experiences with other Thai interpreters, i.e. violations of professional secrecy.

interviewee (see e.g. Haavind, 2000; Lather, 1986). In other words, as Lather (1986: 266) stresses, the interviews must be conducted in an interactive and dialogical manner. Perceiving sex work as a sensitive field dominated by prejudice and a stigmatisation of female sex workers, I deliberated carefully the use of concepts as well as how to introduce myself and my research assistant to the female Thai sex workers. Meeting them for the first time I underscored that I was a researcher studying Thais' everyday lives in Denmark, migration and how they earned money. Not using terms such as: sex work, sex worker, prostitute, prostitution, whore etc. was a strategy to avoid the dichotomies sex workers/victims and instead focus on how they signify the sale of sex. Or, if they defined themselves as sex workers or talked about being prostitutes, I used the same terms. In the case of conducting interviews among female-born Thai migrants, the subject of children and motherhood became subjects we had in common. Dialog concerning motherhood became one way to create a basis for a successful interview. Navigating within this sensitive field I deliberately avoided asking about racism and discrimination as I was afraid that such questions could break the fragile confidence, because I already questioned them about their sex sale, which was my main objective. First, asking about racism and discrimination I was afraid of evoking unpleasant memories that they would not share with me and in this way break the interchanges during the interviews. Second, combining the interview themes racism and discrimination with the theme of selling sex I was afraid that they thought I perceived of them as 'women from the third world who are victims of human trafficking', which in the end could stigmatise them further. Such a stereotypical subject position is dominant within the social work and very often linked to moral and emotional attitudes. Moreover, I did not ask directly if and how their ethnicity and their looks (their skin colour) make a difference when selling sex or having relationships and/or living together with a white man. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the category of race being left out in my analysis of the subject positions of the female Thai migrants selling sex, for example how gender, race and sexuality intersect. Thus, I argue that the researcher must be aware of the ongoing positioning and how we constantly negotiate possible subject positions that imply power relations. For example the subject positions of 'academic middle-class coloured woman', 'the third-world coloured woman selling sex in Denmark' or 'the white young academic male' are all grounded in the categories of gender, sexuality, race, class, age etc., and they affect the complex power relations between the interviewee(s) and the researcher. In the informal talks and in one interview with a female Thai sex worker, undertaken by Niels, the heterosexual relation and speaking Thai became his way of getting them to talk. Thus, our way of performing gender and (hetero)sexuality created conditions for producing material in terms of interviews.

No statements or narratives are neutral, but social constructions produced by various positions (Haavind, 2000: 26). That is the reason why the researcher at various levels (at the level of philosophy of science as well as at the level of interaction within the encounter between the researcher and the studied people) has to be conscious of her or his position. Hasse (2000) argues that material in itself is nothing, but exclusively depends on interpretation. The first step of analysing already takes place in the process of constructing themes and questions in terms of developing interview guides (Søndergaard, 2002). For example the category of gender is not neutral. Instead, Hasse (2000: 9ff.) identifies the category of gender as a kind of 'methodological tool of analysis', since both interviewee and researcher realise and fix the world through categories (ibid.). Addressing this approach resulted in an increased awareness of how my informants ascribed meaning to the categories of femininity, gender, sexuality etc., and how they narrated their gendered practices, sexual practices etc., which reflects how they construct and negotiate various subject positions.

Asking and Listening

My interview guide was not absolute, but adjusted during the fieldwork in relation to new insights, or if some of the questions proved unfruitful. I have developed two to three interview guides in relation to the three social groups: Thai migrant sex workers, Thai key persons from the migrant community, and professionals working with Thai migrant sex workers.

Female Thai migrant sex workers: Beside personal data (age, citizenship and residence permit, gender, education, maternity and children): The interview guide is divided into three overall themes:

- a) processes of migration: decisions regarding migration, earlier migration experiences, contact(s) to Denmark, household tasks before and after leaving Thailand etc.
- b) everyday life in Denmark: narratives on *who* they care for and *where* reflect the informants' idea of belonging and home across national boundaries (Smith, 1994). The forms and intensity of transnational relations and activities (material remittances, family patterns, visits, petty trading of goods from Thailand, ideas about Thailand) reflect how the migrants establish transnational social fields and transformation of subject positions affected by transnational activities. Everyday routines like the

organisation of the marriage, children and network outside prostitution display their position in Denmark as migrants.

c) income source(s): who introduced the migrants to the bar/massage parlour, organising (when and where), people connected to the place, forms of contact to social workers or authorities, security, everyday routines (working clothes, clients, breaks, sexual services etc.).

By discussing these issues and raising these questions it was my intention to produce material on the Thai migrants selling sex, how they understand the sale of sex, and how it intersected with other parts of their everyday lives and migration. Realising an internal distinction between female-born persons and transgendered persons among Thai migrants selling sexual services, I asked them about 'the other women' in relation to themselves, their relationship to Danish men and 'the other women's' relationship to men (boyfriends, husbands and clients). By doing so, I displayed how they perform femininity and sexuality. Asking where and when femininities are perceived as accepted or tabooed, who they desire and why, how they shape their body through life styles, surgery, hormones etc. I analyse the transformation and transgression of different femininities dependent on spatial acts (see article 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark', article 4).

Thai key persons from the migrant community: By interviewing key persons about their migration process, everyday lives in Denmark and labour and connection to the Thai migrant community and their views on Thai migrants selling sex, I produced material on the Thai migrant community and on how Thai migrants selling sex are positioned by other Thai migrants.

Professionals working with Thai migrant sex workers: By interviewing the professionals having knowledge about Thai migrants selling sex, I acquired knowledge on female Thai migrants selling sex from a social work, policy, administrative and police perspective as well as their view on migrants selling sex in Denmark. Furthermore, interviewing various professionals representing different public, semi-public and private units gave me an insight into contradictions, network formations and competitions within the field of policy and social work on prostitution and trafficking.

Documentary Text Material

The text materials that form the basis of my analysis of what Bacchi (2005) terms discourses on policies is in this PhD thesis considered as qualitative material. This gives rise to methodological considerations about how I compile documentary texts as qualitative material focusing on criteria of selection and how the documentary texts ground the analysis of the policy field of prostitution.

I have compiled documentary text material published within professional, occupational and organisational settings addressed to other professionals such as employees and professionals (within the policy field), politicians etc. This material can be organised into five categories based on the context in which the documentary texts were produced, focusing on the purposes of the documents and on which institution produced the documents. Moreover, the categories reflect the different levels and areas representing different views and approaches to the policy field of prostitution:

- 1) ministry and administration,
- 2) social workers and programme-executing policies
- 3) other authorities (e.g. the police)
- 4) legislation
- 5) NGOs and newspapers that are not subjected to the national policy.

1) Ministry and administration: Texts produced at the governmental level represent ministries (e.g. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Department of Gender Equality) dealing with human trafficking and the policy field of prostitution and government agencies, in this case The Danish Centre against Human Trafficking which is a part of The National Board of Social Services that administrates development plans and strategies pertaining to prostitution and trafficking. Within this category I have compiled action plans, memorandums, minutes, annual reports and evaluations as well as information material from the centre's web site. These texts function as tools within the administrative practices and within the implementation processes. Some of the materials (actions plans) are a result of political decisions at the governmental level. Other texts are to a greater extent a result of knowledge produced by the programme that implemented the action plans. I have only acquired publicly available documentary text material. This means that internal documents that to a greater extent reflect contestations, e.g. between the involved actors within the policy field of prostitution, are not a part of my material. However, participating at meetings I experienced contestations and disagreement among the participants.

2) Social workers and programme-executing policies: The materials consisting of status reports, descriptions of the programmes and activities produced by programmes and institutions implementing the policies related to migrant sex work and action plans on combating trafficking in human beings. Undertaking social work, the programmes and institutions produce knowledge on prostitution and trafficking that underlie the policy work within the area of prostitution (with regard to migrant sex work) and trafficking in human beings. On the one hand, the status reports are a way in which the administrators of the action plans can undertake surveillance of how the programmes implement the policy. On the other hand, status reports also function as a way in which the institutions achieve influence on the development of the methods of social work, as the status reports also contain knowledge that lays the ground for future policy work. Functioning as a tool to control the programmes implementing the policies, I assume that such status reports might omit problematic issues that contest ideas or goals of the action plans. In addition, the documenting activities and practices do not necessarily reflect what actually happened.

I have contacted all programmes that are in contact with Thai migrants selling sex, although one programme denied me access, arguing that the records contained sensitive information about the migrant sex workers, despite the fact that the responsible institution at governmental level gave me access to internal documentary material. Such records could perhaps give me an insight into how this programme articulates the problem of trafficking and migrant prostitution. Unfortunately, I gave up gaining access to this material due to my time frame and not wishing to cause too many problems, as I was afraid of losing access to the field. In this way the programme that denied me access functioned as a gatekeeper trying to exclude me from gaining knowledge on migrants selling sex. Moreover, the process of gaining access reflected contestations over knowledge and power relations within this policy field, which I suddenly in a sense became a part of. I have supplemented the documentary texts with interviews and participant observations.

3) Other authorities (e.g. the police): The third category includes another authority, the National Commission of the Danish Police that cooperates with the institutions and programme represented in the above-mentioned categories (one and two). Representing the legal discourse, this institution has a quite different approach to and task concerning trafficking and prostitution. This actor is not central in this study, but a part of the policy field working together with the above-mentioned actors.

4) Legislation: The fourth category encompasses national legislations related to prostitution and trafficking, as well as the international convention of UN that the Danish nation state is assigned to.

5) NGOs and newspapers that are not subjected to the national policy: A fifth category encompasses articles and web sites produced by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and newspapers. This material communicates expert knowledge and the NGOs' own view on human trafficking and prostitution/sex work (if they are articles written in journals published by the particular NGOs) to a wider audience (lay persons).

Applying documentary work as ethnographic qualitative material, Atkinson and Coffey remind us that we should place the documents "in organizational settings, the cultural values attached to them, their distinctive types and forms" (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004: 58). Considering documentary text materials, such as policy documents and articles communicating policies, as qualitative material raises the following question: from which context is the text taken? Who (institution, not necessarily the specific author) has produced it? What kind of function does the text have? For whom is the text written? By bringing in these questions during the process of selecting text materials for the purpose of conducting a policy analysis inspired by Bacchi (2009)³⁰ I am capable of identifying which institutions form the policy field of prostitution, and how they are interrelated. In particular, I focus on which institutions articulate prostitution as a problem, and what discursive affects are produced.

When read through a poststructuralist lens, the documentary text material is not a transparent representation of organisational routines or decision-making processes or some kind of evidence. Rather, the documents construct particular representations derived from particular logics (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004: 58). In addition, the document is suitable in developing a clearer understanding of an organisation (Mik-Meyer, 2005: 194-195). In different ways these institutions (organised into the five categories) are related to each other through the topic of prostitution and human trafficking. The government's status reports of the action plans are key documents in selecting actors (and eventually text materials produced by these actors) in the sense that the status reports described the involved actors and their tasks. However, focusing on the transformation of a policy field I selected documentary texts that relate to the same topic and address the same action plan as a way

³⁰ Bacchi's approach: 'What's the problem represented to be' (2009) lays ground for the methodological approach in the article: 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1). This article also elaborates her approach.

to identify new social practices and how different discourses are activated and reproduced. Materials from all the categories produce and reproduce discourses, which displays the balance of power between the discourses that ground how prostitution is problematised.

Analysis Strategies

Bacchi’s (2005) distinction within the analytical traditions in discourse theory – *analysing discourses* and *discourse analysis* – lays the ground for developing the analysis strategies within the articles.

Despite the fact that each article draws on either documentary text materials, notes from participant observations and/or interview transcriptions, the different types of materials are combined and supplement each other in the different articles. For example, the short records produced by the counselling programme that briefly describe the migration of the female Thai migrant sex workers and their relations in Denmark support the interviews. Notes from participant observations at particular institutions and internal meetings also supplement the documentary text materials that are produced by the institutions, for administrators, experts and practitioners.

Articles	Focus	Primary material	Analysis strategy
Article 1	Policy field, analysing discourses	Documentary text material	Analysing discourses
Article 2	Agency of the subjects	Notes from participant observations and interview transcriptions	Discourse analysis focusing on the themes: motherhood, care, citizens rights and obligations, and migration
Article 3	Agency of the subjects	Interview material	Discourse analysis focusing on the themes: romantic love, migration, marriage and sex work
Article 4	Agency of the subjects	Notes from participant observations and interview transcriptions	Discourse analysis focusing on the themes: gender, heterosexuality, body, sexual desire and sexual practices

Article 1: ‘Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution’, article 2: ‘The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?’ article 3: ‘Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai migration to Denmark’, and article 4: Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark’.

The first article analyses the transformations within the policy field of prostitution from a discursive perspective focusing on how problem representations of human trafficking have led to a discursive rupture, and what kind of effects this rupture has. As already mentioned in the section 'Documentary Text Material', I analyse discourses focusing on how prostitution is articulated as a problem, analysing: articulations, silences, ruptures and contestations grounded on documentary text material. Through this strategy I analyse how discourses compete, overlap and supplement each other in constituting and transforming the policy field of prostitution.

Common to articles 2, 3 and 4 is that I am inspired by what Bacchi (2005) terms a discourse analysis in all three articles, focusing on subject formations or how subjects negotiate and destabilise various gendered subject positions grounded in discourses.

The second article is co-authored by associate professor Hanne Marlene Dahl. This article is also a thematic analysis relying on a combination of interview transcriptions and notes from participant observations. Taking the following themes: citizenship, care, motherhood and transnational migration as our point of departure, we analyse transformations of motherhood determined by sex work and transnational links to sending societies and the migration regime in Denmark.

The third article relies on interview transcriptions. Inspired by an intersectional approach I focus on the themes: romantic love, migration, marriage and sex work analysing how the subject positions of wife, female migrant and sex worker are closely interwoven through narratives of romantic love.

The fourth article relies also on a combination of interview transcriptions and notes from participant observations. I focus on how the female Thai migrant sex workers understand heterosexuality through their gender performances. Drawing on Butler's components of gender, body, sexual desire and practices I analyse how gender plays a part in sex work and constitutes the gendered subject positions of sex worker, mother, heterosexual and homosexual male Thai migrant.

After having outlined the methods the following chapter provides examples from the fieldwork, focusing on the access and negotiating subject positions that ground the premises for producing the material.

4 Doing Research: Positionings, Possibilities and Limitations

This chapter outlines and discusses what kind of *access* I gained to different situations, places and groups of people during my participant observations (Warming, 2005; Hasse, 2002, 2000; Prieur, 1998; Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 1999). I was accompanied by a research assistant at night and followed a social worker during the day. In particular, the social worker functioned as a means to access, but the same person also became what Kristiansen & Krogstrup (1999: 107) call a gatekeeper. Inspired by Hasse's (2002, 2000) and Warming's (2005) approach to participant observations I discuss what kind of possibilities and limitations I was provided with in relation to my position as researcher, coloured, woman etc. On this note, Hasse (2000: 43) emphasises that we always participate as positioned, but occupy various positions. In other words, cognition derives from positioned experiences (Warming, 2005). Moreover, the researcher's experiences are created by her or his position within a given space and situation (Warming, 2005: 153), which I argue depends on what kind of access the researcher obtains. In particular, the chapter demonstrates how the subject positions of researcher, sex worker, social worker and research assistant are constantly negotiated through categories, social relations and practices as premises for my production of material.

From other studies on sex work (Shaver, 2005; Nencel, 2001; Chapkis, 1997) and experiences from a former study (Spanger, 2001) on migrant sex workers in Denmark I knew that it is rather difficult to find migrant sex workers who agree to do an interview. People who sell sexual services are a heterogenous social group who are marginalised for different reasons (Shaver, 2005). First, in some cases sex work implies benefit fraud and other criminal acts. Second, selling sex is often a concealed activity to families and friends implying alertness towards outsiders (journalists, police, researchers etc.). Third, selling sex is commonly treated and perceived as an identity encumbered with prejudice and stereotypes rather than merely an income-generating activity (Nencel, 2001; Pheterson, 1994). Shaver (2005) argues that the above-mentioned issues amount to three challenges that arise when conducting ethnographic studies on the marginalised people selling sex. In particular, the dichotomy between victims versus sex workers is still prevalent within social science (Shaver, 2005: 297). Likewise, in the context of social work in Denmark, migrant sex workers are predominantly identified through the discourse of human trafficking and/or viewed as

social problems.³¹ Such dichotomies reproduce the stereotypes of 'good' / 'bad' women. Moreover, 'the victimised female migrant' does not leave room for highly complex narratives or the heterogeneity among female Thai migrants selling sex. At the same time one of my entrances to this heavily politicised field was a social counselling programme. This paradox became a premise for my production of the material. This calls for particular reflections in terms of the selection of entrances and the access to Thai migrant sex workers.

Due to the difficulties establishing contact to the female Thai migrant sex workers I chose two entrances: making contact with Thai migrant sex workers through social work and taking contact to massage parlours and bars directly together with a research assistant. Following these two key persons my strategy was to create multiple perspectives. Establishing various entrances and perspectives creates the basis for analysing contradictions, transformations and ruptures. Here confidence as well as gatekeeping became central elements in the premises for producing material. Inspired by Nencel's (2001) ethnographic fieldwork on women selling sex in Lima I have structured my participant observations in a day and night rhythm. Visiting bars and participating in different events in the Thai migrant community at night and following the counselling programme during the daytime gave me an opportunity to meet Thai migrant sex workers in different everyday situations and settings that resulted in different kinds of narratives. Together the female Thais narratives draw a complex picture of their everyday lives.

The first section gives an example of how my subject position – constituted by gender, race, sexuality and nation – provided opportunities to obtain knowledge on how female Thais selling sex construct gender. The following sections discuss the interactions between the researcher (me) and the social workers, focusing on power relations in terms of gatekeeping and confidence. The last section reflects upon how the research assistant and I destabilised the space of commercial sex due to our constellation of gender, race and sexuality. After this the chapter concludes.

Negotiating Femininity at Kulap's Massage Parlour

As a younger, coloured middle-class female adoptee from South Korea living my entire life in Denmark my appearance puzzled or created an explicit reaction among the female Thai migrant sex workers and the white Danish male customers at the bars. Notions of gender, race, sexuality and nation came into play as categories that lay the ground for multiple

³¹ See the article 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1).

formations of subject positions. Drawing on Butler (1990),³² the construction of the subject is a process that relies on performance reiterating norms, practices, appearances etc. Butler calls this process *subjection*, talking about *becoming* a subject, which signifies a process of power that subordinates the individual. At the same time, power provides for the existence of the subject, given that power forms the subject. The constitution and negotiation of my subject position within this space of commercial sex created possibilities and limitations with regard to obtaining insights into the ways in which the female Thai migrants construct femininity. With reference to Haraway's (1991) idea of being deliberate about one's own social positions,³³ seeing that a social position can never be neutral, I argue that the construction of the subject positions of the research assistant, the key informant, the female Thai migrants selling sex as well as my own subject position during the participant observations derive on the intersection³⁴ of a number of categories. Depending on whom of my two key persons I was with, the social worker Ina or my research assistant Niels, two different constellations would appear, based on the intersection of gender, sexuality, nation, profession and race. Moreover, these constellations provided different perspectives on female Thai migrants selling sex as well as reactions from them.

In particular during my participant observations I experienced how the categories of gender and race intersect with nation. The category of nation is a kind of tool to distinguish between who belongs and who does not belong, 'us' versus 'them', Thai versus non-Thai. Always, when I met the migrants for the first time, they would ask about my nationality of origin due to my looks, not defining me as a Thai or a Dane. Often, they got puzzled by my Asian look intersecting with my language (I speak Danish) and attitudes (how I move, my clothes, hair colour etc.). One might say that I destabilise the national category by not fitting into how they define a Dane or a Thai.³⁵

The following narrative is an example taken from my visit at a massage parlour that clearly demonstrates how our positions, i.e. those of the female Thai migrant sex workers and

³²For an elaboration of Butler's theory see chapter 2: 'Theoretical Framework' and the article 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark', section: 'Theoretical framework: Performativity, subjection and space' (article 4).

³³I will not go into a further discussion on the differences between social position and subject position.

³⁴Within gender studies the approach of intersectionality investigates how gender intersects with a number of other socially differentiated categories such as ethnicity, race, class, sexuality etc. (see also chapter 2: Theoretical Framework, section: 'Intersectionality'). In particular, the constitution of the different subject positions created by the relations between me, the social worker or the other interpreter and the studied people made the categories of gender, race, sexuality and nation come into play during the fieldwork.

³⁵According to Jenkins (1996: 83), categories such as nation function as a fundamental technique to navigate through a complex social world which distinguishes between 'us and them', i.e. who belongs and who does not belong to a particular social group.

myself respectively, were established through relations based on the intersection of gender, sexuality, race and nation.

Besides selling sex, Kulap is in charge of the massage parlour. Two female Thai migrants work there. They are asleep when I arrive around noon. Today, two friends, Lee Ann and Soi, are visiting Kulap, too. Often they drop by playing cards, watching Thai films and eating together. They both have a past in the sex industry working as escorts and at a strip bar. All the migrants are in their 30s. During my visit I experience that appearance and bodily practices very much preoccupy Kulap and her two friends in their everyday lives. Kulap is quite stocky and small compared to her guests who are tall and slim. During Lee Ann's and Soi's stay at the massage parlour they regularly check and adjust their make-up and clothes, which reflects how much effort they put into their looks. Right at the beginning of my visit Lee Ann gives me a puzzled look, unsure of my country of origin due to my look and my Danish language. She has difficulties positioning me. Perhaps her bewilderment is underscored by my clothes. During my participant observations both during the day and at night I was wearing buttoned-up shirts or a sweater and no flashy make-up or high heels. Lee Ann states that Kulap and I do not look like Thais with our small eyes, round faces and light skin; rather Japanese or Chinese. I tell her that I am adopted from Korea and have lived all my life in Denmark, and that I am at the moment doing a study on Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark, focusing on their migration and their everyday lives in Denmark.

Like Lee Ann and Soi, Kulap seems very aware of how femininity is performed. Directed to me Kulap says, "You see how good-looking Lee Ann is!" This she repeats several times during my visit, complimenting the body and face of Lee Ann.

Both Lee Ann and Soi are transgendered persons (m-t-f). Very proudly Lee Ann explains to me how she underwent surgery. Every part of her body and face has been adjusted, and Kulap explains to me that not all men can see and feel that she is transgendered. In the meantime, Soi has changed clothes from pants and a shirt to a dress that she has just bought and that very easily could be mixed-up with a petticoat. Now she is lying sprawled on the sofa watching a Thai film. During my talk with Lee Ann and Kulap about their lives Lee Ann suddenly sits down on Soi's sofa and just for fun puts her arm around her, catching one of her breasts and stating with a laughing voice, "She has coconuts" – the breast does not move at all when Lee Ann squeezes it. Soi just smiles, ignoring her, and continues to watch the Thai film. Before lunch Lee Ann puts on more make-up; foundation and eye shadow. One of the sex workers, who was sleeping when I came, is awake. Looking at her, Lee Ann suddenly tells me that this female Thai migrant and I have the same hair structure – thick, dried and frizzy! I look at the woman. Lee Ann

continues to tell me that she used to have the same hair structure, but after a treatment with a Thai hair product her hair became soft and not so bristle and frizzy. A little confused about her change in subject I compliment her hair structure and continue to ask about her former work at the bar. Working at the bar Lee Ann stresses that you have to 'be present'; dance, look good, the make-up and the hair must be perfect etc. She compares the bar work with the work in the massage parlour, emphasising that at the massage parlour there is room for long breaks, and that here you can relax.

Accepting a less inferior position among the female Thai migrants at the massage parlour was a way for me to signify that I am not a threat to how they perform femininity. It was a kind of strategy to gain their confidence and to be accepted, which I hoped meant that I obtained insights into how they perform gender within the space of commercial sex.

Commenting on my look – the frizzy hair, small eyes and round face – and positioning me as Chinese or Japanese in relation to the Thai migrants at the massage parlour, different gendered and racialised positions are established. This makes it possible for me to analyse how they perform gender as well as their notions of ideal femininity within the space of commercial sex. Furthermore, a central gendered demarcation between female-born persons and transgendered persons (m-t-f) is drawn during my visit. Positioning Lee Ann as 'beautiful' Kulap confirms a heterosexual gender hierarchy where Lee Ann represents the ideal of femininity. This hierarchy intersects with a racial hierarchy. Positioned as representing ideal femininity having a reorganised face constructed as a more white feminine face (larger nose, eyes constructed as Caucasian eyes and an oval-shaped face) Lee Ann also reproduces a racial and gendered hierarchy by stating that Kulap and I look more Chinese or Japanese, which in this case is positioned as inferior to white femininity. Positioned as inferior within such a racialised heterosexual gender hierarchy has been an advantage to me during the participant observations. In addition, the competition in performing femininity between female-born subjects and transgendered subjects exists among female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark.³⁶

Obtaining Access through Social Work

I contacted four counselling programmes having migrant sex workers as their target group. Besides establishing contact to the programmes I participated in national network meetings

³⁶ Another interviewee tells me about the competition between transgendered persons (m-t-f) and female-born women (see the article 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark' (article 4).

for social workers within the field of prostitution and undertook a number of interviews with professionals (social workers, advisors, police officers etc.) all in direct contact with Thai migrant sex workers (for further details regarding interviewees see chapter four, section: 'Interviews'). These activities and interviews have provided me with an insight into the organisation of the social work concerning prostitution and trafficking, which is a small and rather intimate field of social work. From the 1990s to 2000 the field was characterised by short-term projects funded by the state and run by a few fiery souls.³⁷ Furthermore, this field of social work is also determined by competition between the different programmes and organisations, expressed by the way in which they approach 'the prostitute', and how they undertake social work. This competition has resulted in difficulties concerning the ability of the programmes and organisations to cooperate with each other.³⁸ According to the programmes, introducing me to the female Thais selling sex through the social work would spoil the contact between the social work and the migrant, which was already fragile. In other words, the programmes were afraid of ruining the confidence of the migrants towards the social worker. Moreover, some of the programmes also seemed rather suspicious towards my work and my approach to females migrants selling sex. Probably this aspect affected whether they would help me or not.

The two first programmes agreed to introduce my project to the female Thais selling sex by handing out my written introduction in Thai as well as meeting me a couple of times for the purpose of exchanging knowledge about female Thai migrant sex workers. This resulted in only one interview. The third programme imposed the condition that they reserved the rights to edit my final draft where the programme or the women who are connected to the programme are outlined, described or analysed. Following the codex of independent scientific inquiry I rejected the condition of the programme, and our cooperation resulted in me being allowed to follow the outreach social work twice and conduct one interview with a social worker who undertakes the outreach work among Thai migrants. Rejecting their offer can be viewed as my way to avoid a position without any opportunity to affect the conditions for doing research.

Experiences from my participant observations in this programme following the outreach social work definitely reflect a power relation between the subject positions of social workers, researcher (me) and client. The following example is extreme. It

³⁷ See also the article: 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1).

³⁸ The National Board of Social Services was to standardise the methods of the social work within the field of prostitution. This development work presupposed a co-operation between the different programmes.

demonstrates how power is exercised between the social workers, the female Thai migrants and me, who represents the researcher position.³⁹

Positioned as an Unwelcome Researcher

Around noon I meet the two social workers, Lizzie and Laid at the office. They have selected a number of massage parlours we will visit. Some are new and some they already have contact with. Before we are going out, Lizzie, who performs the leading position, is obviously annoyed that I am coming along. She makes it very clear to me that I am not allowed to “disturb the field” by destroying the confidence that the social workers have established to the female Thai migrants selling sex. At a more subtle level I could ‘disturb’ the social work by producing knowledge that was not consistent with their understanding and knowledge of prostitution. The remark “disturbing the field” is often dropped by the social workers in my presence. Within the setting of outreach social work, journalists, students or researchers are often perceived as people who disturb social work; and I am one of them. They ignore me by not talking to me but only to one another between the visits at the massage parlours, and I have a quite clear feeling of being unwelcome from the very start. I try to remain conscious of my own performance, not letting my growing annoyance towards the social workers show. At the same time I do not have anything to offer the Thai migrant sex workers like the social workers have, in terms of knowledge about the Danish system. Thus, my access to these migrants relies solely on the social workers. In this case they have a double function both as entrance and as gatekeepers. This places me in an inferior power relation to the social workers where I am dependent on them without any option to destabilise the relation. In other words I am excluded from affecting the situation by initiating interaction. In particular, at one of the massage parlours the power relations between the subject positions of researcher, social worker and client through the balance of power stand out distinctly.

A female Thai opens the door at the massage parlour. She has just gotten up, telling us that the other women are still sleep. Guided to a small sofa in a crammed living room Lizzie very quickly places herself in the middle of the sofa. Demonstratively, she makes sure that there is room for Laid which means that there is hardly any room for me on the sofa. However, I sit down taking no notice. Smiling and nodding repeatedly Lizzie signifies attention, empathy and understanding when Laid speaks to the Thai migrant in a friendly

³⁹ See also the construction of social work within the Danish field of prostitution in Bjonness (2008).

voice.⁴⁰ Gesticulating, she makes it clear to the female Thai migrant that Laid and she represent the programme, and that I am a researcher not representing the programme. The gesturing accentuates that we have different errands. However, I present my study and give her my written presentation saying that if she later on changes her mind concerning giving an interview, that is alright.

According to the female Thai migrant she works as a doorkeeper, saying that she has her children to care for here in Denmark. Even though she 'only' works here as doorkeeper, she is interested in Lizzie and Laid's offer regarding guidance on safe sex and sexually transmitted diseases. After the guidance Laid asks if she is familiar with human trafficking or force, or if any of the sex workers at the massage parlour are victims of human trafficking. She rejects this very quickly and stresses that they are probably not interested in talking to us. Instead, she starts talking about herself; her housing problems and children. I ask for an interview, but she refuses, afraid of gossip in the Thai migrant community. I tell her about anonymity. She refuses again, continues to tell us about her family, and that she was the breadwinner. Lizzie looks at her in a sympathising way, and nodding in approval the female Thai addresses Lizzie and Laid, directly saying that: "I want to tell you my story, because you can help me to get an apartment". Pointing at me "she is not allowed to use the information". I feel quite unwelcome. According to her social worker at the municipality it will take years before she will be offered an apartment. Lizzie shakes her head saying that it is not true. They would like to provide her with housing. The female Thai migrant adds that she would like to receive psychological counselling, too, underscoring that she does not want her social worker from the municipality involved because she receives social security at the same time as she is working at the massage parlour. Lizzie suggests that she produces a list containing her urgent needs for a meeting next week. They make an appointment for a meeting at the office of the programme and we leave. The fact that the client makes explicit choices as to who is allowed to gain an insight into her life shows that she has no problems distinguishing between social work and research.

The subject positions of the social worker and client are established through power relations instituted by the social work. On the one hand, possessing knowledge on how to receive housing and psychological counselling and being able to offer knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases institute the subject position of social worker. This subject position ensures the opportunity to exercise power, controlling the client and establishing

⁴⁰ Before we entered the massage parlour the tone of Lizzie and Laid was rather unpretentious, talking quite perkily and loudly about 'the negroes', referring to the African migrant sex workers and their (the social workers) "brothel work"; playing with the meaning of sex sale and undertaking counselling work at the massage parlours. The perky tone is in striking contrast to the serious and sympathetic attitude performed by the social workers after entering the massage parlour. This change reflects how a change of context implies a change of positions within social work.

access to gaining knowledge on the sex sale and everyday lives of the migrants. On the other hand, the client is not unequivocally inferior to the social worker, given that becoming a social worker depends on the encounter between the social worker and the client and how the migrant responds to the help of the social worker. Deciding how much access the social worker can acquire, the client also has the opportunity to exercise power towards the social worker. Within this process of producing and negotiating these subject positions, the social worker and the client, I was left out in the cold having nothing in turn to offer, nor was I given the opportunity to gain the needed confidence. The opportunity to contribute knowledge about female Thai migrants living in Denmark was refused promptly by the client. This resulted in no access to producing material, and I was forced to find other alternatives. This narrative reflects how the social workers function as gatekeepers in relation to the researcher, based on the way in which power relations are created during participant observations.

Following the Social Worker Ina during the Day

Returning to the last counselling programme, this programme agreed to let me follow the social worker Ina. The objective of the programme is to inform about safe sex and offer support and counselling regarding social and health problems affecting migrants selling sexual services. This counselling programme derives on the social policy discourse on integration, social welfare work and ideas on marginalised minority groups. It is this counselling programme that forms the setting of my participant observations during the daytime.⁴¹

Ina has daily contact to the Thai migrant sex workers. She either meets the Thai migrants selling sex during her outreach, or the women (no men or transgender persons) who have heard about the programme through other female migrant turn to the programme of their own accord. The sex workers are connected to the programme in different ways. Some receive regular help, other sporadic help or only a few times. The migrants who are connected to this programme sell sex in the local area at massage parlours or from the strip bars, but they do not necessarily live here. Even so, many of the migrants stress that they belong to this neighbourhood because of the Thai groceries, supermarkets, restaurants and the Thai bar. Ina's task is to guide and assist the Thai migrant sex workers when they apply for housing, get in touch with the police, hospitals or security offices etc. She also visits them at their homes helping them in different everyday

⁴¹ Due to the anonymity of the studied migrants and the counselling programme, more detailed information on the programme is left out.

situations. It is assumed within social work that those migrants in prostitution have difficulties in contacting Danish authorities when they are in trouble.

Besides Ina, two other social workers are employed at the programme. One is responsible for the programme and undertakes the administrative work. The others have the same tasks as Ina. During the fieldwork I only meet them a couple of times. Thus, they are rather marginal figures in relation to my work.

Ina's background as a Thai herself is important in relation to her tasks at the programme, given that the administrators of this public programme assume that her knowledge of Thai culture and speaking Thai as well as knowing the Danish social system make her qualified to offer help and counselling to this ethnic social group. Thus, Danish social work takes into account the idea of cultural and linguistic barriers between social workers and migrants. Performing extroversion and powerfulness and having experiences as an interpreter, too, Ina is employed as social worker. Based on her history of migration she sees herself as having a double-sided cultural background, distinguishing between a 'Danish culture' and a 'Thai culture'. This experience is viewed as a qualification within this form of social work. For example Ina's surname, acquired through marriage, signifies 'Danishness' while her middle name signifies 'Thainess' originating from her family. Aware that her surname and middle name connote different national belongings she uses the names strategically in her work, explaining to me "when I call for a cab I use my Danish surname making sure that they will come right away". Contrary, only her middle name is written on her visiting card related to the programme as a way to create contact to Thai migrants selling sex. Working as social worker at this programme, Ina's tasks are somewhat fluent. With a relatively high degree of self-determination Ina's personal criteria and ideas of what is most appropriate for the female Thai migrants selling sex dominate her daily work.

The power relation between Ina and I was constructed by educational background, knowledge on and access to the Thai migrant sex workers. Ina's language skills and knowledge of Thai migrants in Denmark are her opportunities to establish a powerful position in relation to me as well as the social counselling work targeting Thai migrant sex workers. Functioning as my gatekeeper she had the power to decide whom I should meet and interview as well as how and what to talk about. Competition and battle became a predominant premise of the relationship between Ina and me, and at the same time being helpful and engaged also defined the relationship. However, throughout the entire participant observations during the day I was dependent on Ina's goodwill. Seeing that I benefited from her access to and the confidence between her and the female Thai migrants

selling sex, our relation was unequal, resulting in few opportunities for me to create the premises for producing material. Nonetheless, I created different counter strategies challenging the way in which Ina allowed me access to establishing contact to the female Thais selling sex. In the following section I outline examples of how particular power relations between Ina and me affected my premise for producing material.

Manoeuvring between the Social Worker, Migrant Sex Workers and Social Authorities

On the one hand, Ina was engaged and interested to begin with; eager to let me follow her in her work at the programme as well as introducing me to a number of Thai migrants who were connected to it. On the other hand, she was very aware of whom I established contact to: social workers, other interpreters and key persons within the Thai migrant sex worker milieu. Ina did not appreciate my participant observations at bars by night. She tried to function as a gatekeeper to me, by asking me whom else I talked to and what bars I visited at night. In addition, she advised me not to visit the bars at all. It became a kind of counter strategy for me with regard to creating opportunities to acquire a nuanced insight into the everyday lives of the female Thais selling sex, given that Ina was unable to control my access outside of the social work.

During the daytime she became gatekeeper in different ways. First, she selected and established the contact to the female Thai migrants selling sex. This was one of the preconditions if I wanted to follow the programme. Ina's close and intimate contact to these migrants meant that I established contact to them relatively fast, resulting in them telling me their stories about their everyday struggles. However, my contact to the migrants depended on my contact to Ina. Second, she functioned as interpreter if the migrants did not speak Danish or English. Because she was positioned as both social worker and interpreter the female Thai migrants selling sex did not always distinguish between Ina's two positions even though they were reminded several times. Trying to make it clear when she was interpreter for me and when she was social worker we conducted the interviews on the days when Ina was not working on the programme. Furthermore, every time I undertook an interview Ina and I underscored towards the interviewees that she was just an interpreter and not a social worker. However, they always positioned her as social worker, and to some extent neither was *she* able to dissociate herself from her position as social worker. For example I experienced that her interpretation of my questions and their answers were occasionally affected by her view on selling sex as well as by the relationship between her and the migrants, and this particular relation was also a precondition for undertaking the interviews. Thus, the positions of the social worker and the interpreter

were interwoven, and in practice they could not be separated. Taking misinterpretation into account, the interviews in Thai that are recorded were checked by my other Thai interpreter.

The following example from an interview with the female Thai Nook shows how Ina simplifies my questions. I am interviewing her about her former employer at a bar:

Marlene: *Can you describe the relationship [between Nook and her former employer]? In what way has she helped you? Or how has she been a support? What have you learned from her?*

Ina [translation of my questions]:

Well, how can you explain how you are close to each other? How she helps you?

I was asking for a more detailed description of the relationship between her and her former employer that reflects complexity and a nuanced relationship. Instead, Ina reformulates my question to a more 'closed' question that reflects Ina's own presumption that they have a close relationship, referring to them as friends. Ina's simplification highlights how she reduces the options for answering during her interpretation of my question. The reformulated question results in an answer explaining the working positions:

Nook: *No, Ina you see is she owner of the place, my boss right!*

The first time I met the Thai migrants connected to the programme I handed out a flyer that explained my errand, and Ina and I together explained to the female Thai migrant sex workers that I was not a new employee, but a researcher studying Thai migration to Denmark focusing on migrant sex workers. Still, they often positioned us both as employees at the programme. For example, one evening I met one of the sex workers connected to the programme who was already informed of my identity as researcher. Meeting me in the space of commercial sex, however, she positioned me as a social worker.

The female Thais often positioned me as an employee at the programme. Being quite aware of how I acted in the situations together with Ina and the migrants and when I participated in meetings with Ina, the migrants and different authorities, it was my intention to signify that I was not employed. Rather I was trying to position myself as being intelligible as a reliable person who is not an employee or a social worker, given that my agenda was different from Ina's. For example I positioned myself as assisting Ina, taking minutes of meetings or asking rather than commenting on her and the migrants' practices or her points of view regarding the migrants. I had no intention of challenging her position as the

professional or the “expert” through my agency. Positioning myself explicitly in another subject position, as researcher, I intended to facilitate other narratives and perspectives than the social work obtained. As mentioned before, while following the programme the relation between Ina and me was not always unproblematic, and this affected my access to the sex workers. In some situations difficulties and conflicts occurred. Ina, for example, would have one agenda, namely removing the female Thais from selling sex, which was not my aim. Our different aims were in some situations made visible and reflected in the material. The following example is taken from the article ‘Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrants Sex Workers in Denmark’ (article 4) that analyses the gendered constructions through performances of motherhood and sex work. This extract from the interview with the Thai migrant sex worker Nook displays the disagreement between Ina and me, too, regarding our different positions and purposes. Originally, the arrangement was that I interviewed Nook, and Ina’s task was just to interpret. During the interview the positions of interpreter and social worker slightly blurred.

A conversation between Nook and Ina took place concerning whether Nook should return to working at the bar which was her former workplace:

- Ina *Yes we have to be prepared that Nook has to be in employment when she applies for custody. You have to find a job in the daytime.*
- Nook *Do I have to find a job!*
- Ina *You have to find a job. If you want to be awarded custody on your own, then they [the social authorities] look at.....*
- Nook *Yes, but in reality.....in my heart I want to work as before [at the strip bar]. But it's just that that it's at night*
- Ina *But who can take care of Stella at night? It, it....*
- Nook *That is the problem!*
- Marlene *But can't you find a babysitter? If you make good money you can pay a babysitter. Other people work at night.*
- Ina *Yes, it's a bit of a slippery downward path as it won't work in the long run. And how can she do it, and when...and when is Stella old enough for somebody else to take care of her...*
- Nook *Yes, I am tired of thinking about the future.....*
- Ina *Mmm, if she [Nook] was cleaning assistant at night, then it would be fine, but she is not....*

Instead, of being passive I interfere bringing up an alternative that opposes Ina's purpose. Such an action displays how I challenge Ina's powerful position as a social worker by questioning her knowledge on prostitution. At the same time my interfering can also be read as an attempt to offer another approach to selling sex. It became my counter strategy for negotiating my position within the context of social work. Well aware that Ina perceives selling sex to be a social problem, representing the discourse of social policy,⁴² I employ a kind of labour approach or try to normalise Nook's way of earning money to make room for an elaboration or clarification of Nook on her sale of sex. Retrospectively, by doing so I was trying to gain Nook's confidence, which was different from the confidence Ina gained. The extract from the interview also reflects contradictions and ruptures. Being aware that I was not in a neutral position my subject position, as researcher, was established by relations to the subject position of the interpreter/social worker and the interviewee through different purposes, strategies and understandings of e.g. sex work, gender or motherhood.

The Double-Edged Sword: Help and Control

As mentioned before, Ina's contact to the female Thais is closely based on confidence and engagement, and yet the relation between them and her can be described as ambiguous. Moreover, her contact and relations to the female Thai migrant sex workers became crucial for my access to them.

Ina provides housing to the female Thai migrant sex workers who experience housing shortage by establishing contact to the municipality housing administration and persuading the administration of the necessity to solve the housing shortage of these migrants. Likewise, through informal networks within the Thai migrant community she tries to find new jobs for them as well. In particular, she has arranged new jobs as cleaners for a number of the female Thai migrants selling sex. Some of them reject the job opportunity, others accept. Hesitating, Nee accepts after Ina has informed her that having a proper job, paying taxes and living in her own flat will prove that she is a responsible mother so that her parental rights will not be stripped. To me, Ina stresses that "it is for the women's own good" that she takes action on behalf of them; arranging housing and jobs, instructing them how to be good mothers etc. Telling the female Thai migrants that the forcible removal of their children is an option due to their selling sex is Ina's strategy to persuade them to stop the sale of sexual services. In my opinion, it is a strategy that borders on threat. Ina's work can thus be characterised by the very fine line between help and control. This delicate

⁴² For an elaboration on the discourse of social policy see the article 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution' (article 1).

balance between helping and controlling the Thai migrants selling sex is additionally challenged by the familiar relationship between Ina and some of them. Small-talking, drinking coffee together, eating lunch together either at their places or at a Thai restaurant the positions of social worker and client are erased, which creates space for individual (in this case Ina's) criteria in terms of what is appropriate help. Undertaking participant observations under such circumstances blurs my position and errand functions to the Thai migrants connected to the programme. Probably they had difficulties in positioning me in relation to Ina. This resulted in my having difficulties gaining their confidence without Ina's help, which precluded me from obtaining insights about their views on the programme and on Ina's attitude towards their sex sale.

Helping the female Thais Ina has been offered gifts, such as a piece of jewellery, from the Thai migrants who feel that they are deeply indebted to Ina. She refuses, explaining to them that the state pays a good salary, and that helping them is a part of the social welfare system here in Denmark.

Spending lots of time assisting and counselling Nalinee, applying for a residence permit, assisting at a meeting with the police (in relation to domestic violence), providing housing etc. Ina is nearly tired of helping her. Ina has refused a couple of times an expensive piece of jewellery from Nalinee. First, receiving such a present would place Ina in a position of obligation that dislocates her ability to exercise power. Second, such a present disturbs her professionalism within the Danish welfare system. Accepting the present would position her as an ordinary citizen. By not accepting the present Ina maintains her position as a professional who legitimises the way in which she exercises power as a social worker towards the Thai migrants selling sex. Presumably, that is why Ina occasionally dissociates herself from the Thais like in the case of Nalinee. However, Ina's patience towards Nalinee ends when the latter is hospitalised.

As we arrive Nalinee is eating her lunch. Ina talks to Nalinee about her being released from the hospital. Clearly, Ina is annoyed with Nalinee and seems a bit snappish. Nalinee is hospitalised due to pains in her abdomen. According to the doctor it is not at all critical. However, Nalinee seems tired and groggy. She has nausea and difficulties walking due to the pain, and at the same time she explains that the right side of her back hurts. Ina translates, and the doctor and nurse seem quite confused about how Nalinee feels. Moreover, Nalinee is confused about that fact that the doctor performed an arthroscopy instead of just giving her penicillin. Ina translates between the doctor, nurse and the female Thai migrant. At one point Ina's patience regarding Nalinee's questions to the doctor and

nurse ends. Addressing the doctor and the nurse Ina takes over explaining that Thais believe that every disease can be cured by penicillin, and that penicillin is sold (illegally) at the Thai supermarkets in Denmark. Ina continues explaining that Thais surrender completely when they are hospitalised, signifying that Thais are rather passive patients. Nonetheless, addressing the doctor and the nurse Nalinee asks a number of questions regarding her abdomen and sexual life, her pains in her back etc.

In the case of Nalinee, Ina recommends that the hospital offers Nalinee some pain reliever (a couple of Panodil) to bring home, explaining that it would make her gain confidence in the Danish healthcare system and feel reassured. The doctor is fairly uncomprehending to what Ina recommends as well as to Nalinee's reactions during the preliminary examination yesterday and after the arthroscopy today. Nevertheless, the doctor answers Nalinee's questions, and the nurse provides her with a couple of Panodil before she is released from the hospital. A couple of weeks later, Ina has not contacted Nalinee because Ina feels that she sometimes gets too close personally and emotionally. Ina tells me that she finds Nalinee's gratefulness too much. Ina's idea of being professional does not include receiving gifts from the clients, but includes an engagement in the lives of the Thai migrants selling sex.

In addition, on the one hand being engaged in, giving moral support to and assisting and counselling characterises the way in which Ina approaches the migrants. On the other hand, she is also dominating and controlling. She sets up clear criteria that are based on her personal idea of appropriate behaviour. Thus, her position of the social worker becomes ambiguous.

My participant observations at the social counselling programme had an abrupt ending. One evening Niels and I met Nook at a strip bar at night. She was on a visit, not working. I had promised Ina not to initiate contact if I met the female Thai migrants who are connected to the programme at night. Nook seemed glad to meet me, and we small-talked a little bit. I told her that I would not tell Ina that we had met at the strip bar because I was sure that Ina would not appreciate that she visited the bar. The next day Ina called me. She could not understand what I was doing at the bar together with a white man who talks Thai and who was not my husband (when I started to follow the counselling programme I informed Ina about my fieldwork at night). Ina was mad at me, and according to her Nook was also mad at me for going to the bar. For a long time Ina tried to get in contact with the owner of the bar to make an arrangement regarding an information campaign on AIDS/HIV, which she has not managed yet. Moreover, the owner of the bar is a central and quite famous figure among Thai migrant sex workers.

According to Ina, the owner of the bar could not distinguish between my study and her social programme. As a result I was not allowed to follow the programme anymore, Ina refused to communicate contact to the Thai migrants, and she asked me not to contact the owner of the bar. Ina's arguments and views on my participant observations at night display that she positioned herself as the expert having the privilege to hold an ownership of 'the field of Thai migrant sex worker', stressing that I was destroying her help to the female Thais. On the other hand, her arguments also display which position controls the field and the production of knowledge on sex work. In addition, I read her reaction, pretty upset, as an expression of feeling that her career opportunities were being threatened. Probably, to Ina, my participant observations at night also became a sign of broken trust. This example reflects how the power relation between Ina and me is displaced. Due to this displacement Ina finds herself in a vulnerable position. As a way of re-establishing the power relation Ina became a gatekeeper by precluding me from following her work.

Undertaking participant observation by following Ina at the programme resulted in an unequal power relation between Ina and me, as social worker and researcher respectively. As an effect of our power relation I searched for other accesses to female Thai migrants selling sex. This situation dislocated her position as the expert, given that I gained an opportunity to produce knowledge without her controlling me. Gaining access to places and female Thai migrants selling sex as well as key persons within the Thai migrant community through my research assistant and interpreter, a white male student speaking Thai, became an alternative strategy.

The following section discusses another access relying on rather different positions established by the intersection of gender, heterosexuality, educational background and racialisation.

Destabilising the Space of Commercial Sex by Night

A white Danish male student, Niels, speaking Thai and having contact to key persons within the Thai migrant community in Denmark introduced me to new places and people. In particular, we visited bars together at night. Such premises for producing material became somewhat different from the participant observations during the daytime together with Ina. Primarily, Niels assisted me when undertaking participant observations at bars at night.

Studying Thai culture, language and studies on Thailand, our respective focus was displaced, and a battle or competition about knowledge did not determine our relation and

the way in which our positions were established within the field. However, I faced other struggles regarding entering the space of commercial sex compared to my participant observations during the daytime. As a point of departure I hired Niels and developed the framework for visiting bars at night while at the same time being sensitive to Niels' suggestions and ideas, given that he knew a number of Thais in Denmark. Moreover, having an academic background made it easier for us to discuss our positions at the bars and our encounters with the female Thais selling sex and the Danish male guests with regard to what to look for, whom we came in contact with and what we talked about with the Danish male guests and the female Thai migrants.

During the night we visited seven ordinary bars and strip bars owned by Thai migrants. In addition we participated in two large events at the Thai migrant community. Thai migrants from all over the country participated in both. One of the ordinary Thai bars is a well-known place in the Thai migrant community. Primarily, it is a meeting place for two social groups of guests: female Thai migrants and Danish men who relate to the Thai migrant community through marriage, longer and shorter relationships and/or take interest in Thailand by frequent holidays in Thailand.

At night the sexual identity came into play during our visits at the bars. As Coffey (2005: 410) notes, our (i.e. the researchers') "sexuality, emotional and physical desires do not disappear on entering the field". According to Coffey, sexual identity can affect the process of undertaking participant observations. For example she underscores that the marital status of female anthropologists has affected their access to the field (ibid.: 412). In the case of my participant observations, sexual identity did come into play, which affected my access to the Thai migrant sex workers. 'Disturbing' the space of commercial sex by our social positioning, relying on the categories of heterosexuality, gender, race and nation, my male research assistant and I were constructed as a heterosexual couple hard to position within the space of commercial sex. Together we were not intelligible, so to say. Wearing everyday clothing both of us attended together, but did not signalise that we were a couple (holding hands, kissing etc.), and at the same time I look Asian, but speak Danish, while Niels looks Danish, but speaks fluent Thai. The female Thais and the Danish male guests become somewhat confused and have difficulties positioning us as respectively customer and sex worker. By our lack of interest in selling or buying sexual services or flirting with the male customers and female sex workers we destabilised the space of commercial sex. Separately we met different reactions. At the bars it was predominantly Niels who established contact to the female sex workers and not me. Considering him a young white heterosexual man the female Thai migrants selling sex were curious about him, e.g. why he

spoke Thai, and at the same time he was not interested in their sexual services, but in their private lives. If there were no potential clients at the massage parlours or at the bar, some of them talked to him. Quite quickly the Thai migrants realised that Niels was not a potential client. Rather, they found him interesting given that he represented a different masculinity that challenged the stereotypical notion of the white Danish man within this space.

Contrary, the men at the bar sometimes contacted me, often positioning me as one of the 'Thai or Asian women'. Quite aware of how the intersection of the categories of race and gender could position me as sex worker from the perspective of the male customers, I was calculatedly not wearing sexy or 'provocative' clothes during my visits at the bars at night, but instead ordinary jeans and a black or grey sweater with polo neck, intending to represent another femininity. By doing so, I deliberately distanced myself from the subject position of sex worker. Rather, I attempted to reproduce the subject position of researcher. Nonetheless, when the men addressed me, sexual undertones were in play. This I found rather unpleasant, given that such an attitude positioned me as a sex object or a sex worker, which I distanced myself from. Being within the space of commercial sex and as seen from my position, i.e. that of a feminist researcher, their gaze at me and how they started a conversation with me reproduced discriminating and sexist stereotypical notions of what Davidson & Taylor (1999: 38) call "Western sex tourists' fantasies of "docile" and "willing" Asian women". When they tried to flirt with me I rejected them, even though some of the men still told me about their relationship to female Thai migrants or their view on Thailand. For me it was a balancing act to get insights about female Thai migrants selling sexual services and at the same time not be exposed to sexualised racism carried out by the Danish men.

By way of a number of examples from my participant observations alone as well as those conducted together with my research assistant at bars at night and within a counselling programme following a social worker I have demonstrated how the relations between the subject positions of researcher, sex worker, social worker and research assistant set up possibilities and limitations for me producing material.

Social workers introduced me to the female Thai migrants selling sex while at the same time functioning as gatekeepers; deciding to whom and when I would be introduced. In particular, confidence or the lack of confidence were central elements in our relations. Being Asian myself, but not identifying myself as Thai, and being assisted by a Danish young man speaking Thai, such constellations of subject positions have in different ways puzzled the female Thai migrants selling sex. In some cases it resulted in interviews and conversations; other times they rejected to do an interview or just to talk to me.

Having outlined and reflected upon the premises for producing material, chapter five, *Findings*, returns to the overall aim, linking the agency of the female Thai migrant sex workers' everyday lives in Denmark to the Danish policy fields of prostitution and migration, asking how they transgress sex work, gender and intimacy.

5 Findings

This PhD thesis consists of four articles written as autonomous features for journals and an anthology with separate aims and conclusions. Together the articles challenge and discuss studies on sex work and prostitution by drawing on poststructuralist feminist theories on gendered subjects and policy field, as well as theory on citizenship, migration and space.

First, I introduce the articles' main arguments and findings. In different ways, the articles contribute to answering the main question with regard to themes and forms of analysis. Second, I discuss how the findings of the articles answer the main question: how do female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce sex work and intimacy, represented by the Danish policy field of prostitution, through their way of doing gender in various ways? Lastly, I briefly discuss future research on female migrants selling sex.

The Articles

Based on documentary text material, primarily the Actions Plans to combat human trafficking produced by professionals within the policy field of prostitution, and inspired by Foucault ([1976]1994; [1969]2006) and Bacchi (2009), the first article, 'Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution', argues that the problematisation of human trafficking in Denmark has functioned as a lever for a feminist discursive breakthrough in the policy field of prostitution.

Former literature (e.g. Bernstein, 2007; Kantola & Squires, 2004; Outshoorn, 2001) identifies two predominant discourses: 'sex worker' and (neo) 'abolitionist' that reflect the dichotomy of 'sex work' (agent) versus 'prostitution' (victim). In contrast to this, I identify five discourses at another level in order to go beyond the dichotomous thinking. The article analyses how the policy field since 1906 and up until 2010 has been shaped by five discourses: feminist, religious, medico-scientific, juridical and social policy that are historically grounded. Through discursive ruptures and by being complementary, contrasting and/or overlapping, these five discourses constitute and transform the policy field. I identify two discursive ruptures, the first happening in the 1920s with a shift from a

juridical to a medico-scientific discourse and the second in the 1970s when the medico-scientific discourse lost its hegemony to a social policy discourse. The article suggests that a third discursive rupture took place, springing from the problematisation of human trafficking since 2000, namely a feminist discourse. Focusing on where and how human trafficking has been represented as a problem, zooming in on ways of speaking about prostitution and silences the article demonstrates how the policy field of prostitution has undergone transformations. Initiated by the government's first Action Plan to combat human trafficking that was launched in 2002, the policy field of prostitution is expanding, formalised and centralised, grounded particularly in a social policy and a feminist discourse. However, also juridical and medico-scientific discourses are at play. Nonetheless, the social policy discourse appears as the most visible and dominating within the Danish authorities' problematising of sex sale as a social problem. A wide range of private and semi-private organisations, primarily represented by parts of the Danish feminist movement, reproduce a certain feminist discourse. In particular, the feminist discourse is constituted by contending statements that refer to the dichotomous thinking of sex work versus prostitution, agency versus victim. The predominant articulation of human trafficking is grounded in the social policy discourse and statements that represent the feminist discourse respectively, with the two complementing each other. Together, such discursive formations produce gendered subject positions such as 'female victims of human trafficking' and the 'Third World Female Sex Slave' rescued by the 'White First World Feminist'. Such subject positions and this problematisation of human trafficking legitimise the social rescue efforts that leave the premises of the rescue efforts unquestioned. Simultaneously, the feminist breakthrough has been a tool for parts of the women's movement in the political struggle to enforce prohibition on buying sex in Denmark.

In this article about the transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution, I have identified specific historical and social conditions that form the basis of the following three articles, concentrating on the everyday practices and understandings of the female Thai migrant sex workers.

The article 'Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?' is co-authored by Associate Professor Hanne Marlene Dahl. Based on two stories we analyse how female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark perform single motherhood conditioned by a particular migration regime in Denmark. Here we focus on policies on immigration (family reunification), prostitution and human trafficking. By bringing in two widespread ways of doing motherhood, the article displays the complexity of the female Thai migrant sex workers' motherhood.

In particular, the article challenges notions of motherhood reflected in literature on global care chains (Hochschild, 2001, 2003; Isaksen et al., 2008) by employing three kinds of lenses in order to analyse how mothering is an ongoing process of doing that reflects complexity and ambiguity. Informed by these three lenses encompassing theories on transnational motherhood (Parreñas, 2001), global care chains (Yeates, 2009) and citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Lister, 1997), we demonstrate that there is no simple solutions to the problems of global care chains.

The first story features children of a migrant who stay behind at some relative's home. Here motherhood is based on emotional presence and physical absence, and performances of motherhood are practised through telephone call and visits, which Lutz (2008) terms 'Skype Motherhood'. The example demonstrates how the contact to the children changed due to their mother's job situation. Earlier, she was able to travel frequently to Thailand in connection with the work at her ex-husband's company. At these business trips she visited her children and her mother. Today, working at a massage clinic she does motherhood solely through calls. In the other story, the female Thai migrant brought her child to Denmark after having lived for 3 years in Denmark, switching from transnational to local motherhood. Her motherhood is based on security in terms of economy and educational opportunities, physical presence (regular social intercourse) and emotional absence. This absence is linked to her everyday life working late at a massage parlour or helping her sister at her massage parlour. At the same time, she is able to provide for school and educational opportunities for her child in Denmark. In the last story, the female Thai migrant sex worker is confronted with the dominating discourse of motherhood within social work in Denmark that constructs motherhood as being emotionally and physically present.

Regardless of the children's residence, both stories demonstrate that the female Thai migrants selling sex have obtained some sort of financial security for themselves and their children due to the migration. However, working at massage parlours (or at a massage clinic) and having new boyfriends, it is difficult for the female migrant sex workers to take care of their children as single mothers if the children live with them in Denmark. Moreover, bringing their children to Denmark depends on their Danish husbands' consent since they are the ones responsible for taking care of both the female migrants and their child(ren); be it in terms of accommodation or financially. Together, the stories demonstrate the complexity and ambiguity in performing motherhood as a female migrant living permanently abroad. This complexity calls for differentiated policy solutions concerning their citizenship rights to care-giving.

The article 'Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark' analyses how the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant intersect in female Thai migrant sex workers' narrative on romantic love. I argue that the way in which the subject positions of the female Thai migrants selling sex intersect reflects a complexity that destabilises the fixed categories of 'sex worker' and 'prostitute'. Inspired by Cabeza's (2004, 2006) work on sex tourism and love, I contribute to the literature on migrants' sex sale by bringing in the category of romantic love. Further on, the article also challenges the distinction of categories of 'domestic workers' and 'sex workers' as well as the categories of 'marriage migration' and 'labour migration' put forward by the literature on female migration. Considering the female sex workers' narratives of love as a social construction, the article offers a complex analysis of the agency of the female Thai migrants selling sex.

Getting work in Denmark and marrying a Dane are crucial premises for female Thai migrant sex workers' process of migration. As non-EU citizens, Thai migrants can only obtain temporary residence permits through marrying a Danish citizen. They are all documented migrants having a minimum of rights. Nearly all the interviewees have divorced their first Danish husbands. Subsequently, they have met new male Danes with whom they strike up new love affairs. In some cases, the Thai migrant massage parlours are also a social gathering point where the female migrants socialise (eat together, watch Thai films and play cards). In many cases, their Danish spouses or boyfriends are a part of this milieu. Here intimate relations between the female Thais and the male Danes are established.

The article brings in two stories that display in different ways how female Thai migrant sex workers construct romantic love by ascribing it different meanings through narratives on sex work, migration and marriage. Thus, romantic love is a category which is negotiated in relation to sex work, marriage and migration. Here gifts, money and activities such as selling sex are seen as signs of love. In the first story, the female Thai migrant is introduced to her husband in Denmark. In this story, love is connected to dreams about a 'the good husband' and a 'Westernised' nuclear family. The expectations of romantic love carefully interweave into the negotiations between the female Thai migrant and her Danish husband expecting that she sell sexual services. In the other story, the female Thai migrant meets her future husband in Thailand where she works as a dancer. Giving up her job as a dancer and instead receiving remittances from her future husband for a period, she sees this as a sign of devotion to the Danish man reflecting romantic love. At the same time, she is aware of how her future husband represents 'the White Western Man' going abroad to the exotic lure of Pattaya. The narratives of love can also be read as a counter strategy, i.e. as a

way to avoid the whore stigma or the 'Victimised Third World Prostitute'. Well aware of the economically unequal premises in their marriages to the Danish men, the female Thais' narratives on romantic love become central in their encounter with me and the social worker, as a way not to appear cynical or helpless. Thus, the female Thai migrant's multiple ways of ascribing romantic love meaning reflect an intersection of the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant that destabilises the categories of sex work and prostitution.

The final article, 'Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark', analyses how female Thai migrants selling sex understand, reproduce and subvert normative heterosexuality through performances of femininity and masculinity. As in the former articles, this article analyses two case stories that represent different ways of performing heterosexual femininity among Thai migrant sex workers. I concentrate on female-born subjects, transgendered subjects and cross-dressers. The first case story is about an encounter between the social authorities and a female-born sex worker concerning the motherhood of the last-mentioned and her work as a dancer at a strip bar. The other case story is about a cross-dresser (m-t-f) working as a hairdresser during the daytime, presenting as a well-respected heterosexual male migrant, and at night time working at a massage parlour as a female sex worker. Based on a synthesis of Butler's (1990) theory on gender and Gregson and Roses' (2000) theory on spatial acts, the article analyses how gender performances are constituted by spatial acts and social relations. I argue that through these spatial acts they become intelligible or non-intelligible as gendered subjects in terms of sex worker, mother, well-respected heterosexual male migrant and gay depending on the different situations and spaces.

The article demonstrates how the gendered subject position of sex worker is articulated as a profession that depends on performing the 'right' femininity in term of being seductive and desirable heterosexual objects. Such gender performances make them intelligible in the space of commercial sex. This understanding of sex work, however, is not intelligible and accepted within the space of domesticity. In particular, in the face of social authorities such an understanding of a sex worker is inconsistent with the active, responsible and caring mother. Hence, sex work is perceived as a menace to motherhood within the space of domesticity. Cross-dressing female sex workers are not at all articulated and become invisible within the social work targeting 'prostitutes'. Within the space of commercial sex, female-born subjects and transgendered subjects (m-t-f) are dominating categories that compete among Thai migrants selling sex, whereas cross-dressing female Thai sex workers are socially marginalised - rather invisible.

Combining the two stories, the discourse of heterosexuality, closely linked to space, is threatened by its own instability in different ways through the Thai migrant sex workers' gender performances. Subversion and reproduction of the discourse of heterosexuality are dependent on where and the way in which they perform sex work, motherhood, respectable heterosexual masculinity or homosexuality.

Destabilising Sex Work and Intimacy?

Inspired by poststructuralist feminist theory, primarily informed by Bacchi (2009) and Butler (1990, 1997), I have applied a critical perspective that offers analytical tools for capturing 'naturalised' assumptions and ways of thinking (permissible ways of thinking), as well as complexities, ambiguities and destabilisation. I find this theoretical approach remarkably suitable because the topic of sex sale is highly politicised and often underpinned by normative agendas. Aided by Butler and Bacchi, I question dualist thinking, primarily the sex/gender distinction that constitutes the category of woman, but also other instances of dualisms such as: prostitution versus sex work (agent versus victim) and sex worker versus mother. According to Butler, the subject is created through performance and discursively constituted through multiple categories and power relations. Inspired by Bacchi, I focus on problematisations and speech reflecting discursive statements within policies. Drawing on Butler and Bacchi I have analysed how subject formations, subject positions and policy fields are created through ruptures and silences, but also through predominant statements and categories within specific discourses within the policy field of prostitution or specific spaces.

In different ways, female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce notions of sex work and intimacy (motherhood and marriage) that are represented by the Danish prostitution policy field. The majority of the female-born Thai migrant sex workers that I talked to have children. Paying attention to their social problems, the counselling of the social workers also includes issues other than their sex sale, for example their relation to their children and husbands. As regards the Danish policy field of prostitution that includes social work, the gendered subject positions of 'sex worker' and 'mother' constitute each other in the encounter between female Thai migrants selling sex and social workers. Within such encounters the subject positions are ascribed different meanings by the female Thai migrant sex workers and the social workers. Despite the fact that the female Thai migrant sex workers experience emotional and/or social struggles vis-à-vis caring for their child(ren), it is not a question of either selling sex or performing 'proper' motherhood to

them, which seems to be the case for the social workers. In this way they destabilise how sex sale is comprehended by social work, since selling sex is constructed as a contrast to mothering.

The female Thai migrant sex workers assign economic (e.g. school and education) and material security a high priority in their mothering. Compared to the financial aspect, being emotionally present and physically absent, or emotionally absent and physically present, reflect the complexities in how they perform motherhood. Simultaneously, mothering is an ongoing process that sometimes changes from transnational – ‘Skype motherhood’ – to local motherhood. Such complexities cannot be embraced by fixed ideal subject positions of motherhood represented by the social work articulating mothering as being emotionally and physically present.

The subject position of ‘Third World Female Victims of Human Trafficking’ is in stark contrast to the practices of female Thai migrant sex workers as breadwinners having financial responsibility for their children. Referring to the sex sale as a matter of performing seductive and attractive heterosexual femininity and fancying selling sex rather than taking up unskilled work (cleaning, factory or domestic jobs), the female Thai migrants destabilise how sex work is comprehended by the Danish policy field of prostitution. Here, the category of migrant women selling sex is articulated as being populated by potential victims of human trafficking despite their migratory status; be it documented or undocumented.

The intersections of sex work, marriage and female migration that take place in the case of female Thai migrant sex workers destabilise the fixed categories of sex work, prostitution and intimacy represented by the Danish social authorities. Since romantic love and sex sale are constructed as dualistic categories, romantic love is silenced within the discourses of social policy and the feminist discourse that dominate the policy field of prostitution. The female Thai migrants’ perception of their everyday practices regarding marriage and selling sex is closely linked to narratives on romantic love, and also it is not necessarily a question of either selling sex or marrying. Rather, it is often a ‘both and’, which destabilises the subject positions of ‘Third World Female Victims’ put forward by parts of the policy field of prostitution, primarily represented by parts of the women’s movement in Denmark.

Despite the fact that the female-born subjects destabilise notions of motherhood, wife and sex worker, they reproduce the sex/gender distinction that constitutes a heterosexual discourse. This makes them intelligible within the Danish policy field of prostitution, whereas the subject positions of transgendered and cross-dressing sex workers are not intelligible and instead become invisible within this policy field. On the one hand, in

becoming invisible they avoid being problematised as victims of human trafficking and identified in rather stereotypical subject positions connoting processes of 'Othering'. On the other hand, they have difficulties getting help. The visibility of female-born Thai migrant sex workers results in opportunities to acquire social and health counselling in relation to the social and health struggles they experience.

The female Thai migrants' marriage to Danish male citizens is a crucial premise to gain a minimum of socio-migratory citizenship rights in Denmark. In the first period after the migrants arrive in Denmark, the Danish spouses provide for them, and subsequently they apply for work. This legislation places them in a quite vulnerable position and effects unequal power relations due to dependency on their husbands concerning their residence permit, economy and housing. In addition, financial obligations towards children and/or other family members in Thailand often lead to disagreements between female migrants and their Danish spouses, and in some cases bringing their children to Denmark complicates the marriage further. Confidence is a crucial aspect in these relations that are based on economic and social inequality and where the elements of exploitation and suspiciousness are at the fore. Such conditions produced by a strict migration policy just enhance or brace the fixed subject positions of 'Female Slave of Human Trafficking' or 'Third World Female Victim'.

Prospective Research

I will now return to the title of the thesis, *Destabilising Sex Work and Intimacy?* Besides the fact that it refers to the way in which female Thai migrants selling sex destabilise and reproduce the categories of sex work and intimacy, the title also refers to the question whether this study contributes to or challenges existing research on 'migration-related sex work' or 'transnational prostitution'. For decades, the academic literature on sex work has to a certain degree been characterised by a challenging of the dichotomy of sex work versus prostitution that has dominated the political debate on female migrants' sex sale. Based on the four articles, I question whether this lens is a useful one.

Studying the policy field of prostitution, I argue that the dichotomy of sex work versus prostitution is a powerful dichotomy. However, analysing the complexities of the policy field and its transformations I argue that another way of analysing discourses is needed, as a way to destabilise the dichotomy of sex work versus prostitution, which maintains victimhood.

From another perspective, Jacobsen and Skilbrei (2010) investigate victimhood.⁴³ They focus on how victimhood is represented in public debates and relate these representations to what they call the 'self' of the female migrants who sell sex. They investigate how victimisation is an effective social construction. Thus, they offer a new and much needed perspective compared to earlier narratives on migration and prostitution. Although I agree that victimhood is a construct that is reproduced within e.g. policy fields of prostitution, I bring in another analytical lens in order to understand the complexity and ambiguity of the subject positions of female migrants selling sex. To do so, I focus on how the female Thai migrants selling sex through their practices and understanding destabilise fixed categories of sex work and prostitution that imply elements of victimisation.

Within the body of literature on global care chains, victimhood is a rather dominant perspective that easily leaves out the complexity and transformations of how female migrants do motherhood. By perceiving the motherhood of the female migrant as a performance, it is possible to critically question the often fixed and normative category of motherhood and instead reveal ambiguities that shape the subject formation of motherhood. Moreover, the literature on migration, global care chains and migrant-related sex work often puts forward the analytical categories of 'domestic worker', 'sex worker', 'care worker', 'labour migration' and 'marriage migration' when analysing the everyday lives of female migrants. A poststructuralist feminist perspective offers analytical tools for questioning such categories that maintain migrant sex workers in fixed subject positions that easily leave out complexities and ambiguities in their narratives, as in the case of female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark. Often they combine different kinds of unskilled labour; cleaning, sex work, factory work and work as kitchen assistants. This leads me to the next question on how to study female migrants selling sex. In line with Cabeza (2004, 2006), I argue that affection or intimacy and racialisation as central intersecting categories are highly relevant for the analysis of the complexities of migrants' sex sale. New ways to study transnational sex work wait ahead.

⁴³ Jacobsen and Skilbrei (2010) investigate the Norwegian debate on prostitution and Russian female migrant sex workers in Norway.

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Summary

Destabilising Sex Work & Intimacy? Gender Performances of Female Thai Migrants Selling Sex in Denmark

This PhD thesis is submitted as four articles and investigates how female Thai migrants selling sex construct femininities that ground a number of subject positions such as mother, wife, migrant and sex worker in relation to already existing subject positions constructed by the Danish state represented within the policy field of prostitution. The study draws on poststructuralist feminist theory and is based on interviews with female Thai migrants selling sex and social workers, participant observations and documentary text material.

Falling in two parts, the first part lays down the framework of the four articles consisting of an introduction, theoretical framework, methods and findings. Moreover, the four articles answer the overall research question: 'How do female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce sex work and intimacy, represented by the Danish policy field, through their way of doing gender in various ways?' The second part consists of four articles.

The first article analyses the transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution focusing on the Action Plans to combat human trafficking. It analyses the constitution and transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution from a historical perspective. The article demonstrates how the predominant articulation of human trafficking is grounded in the social policy discourse and the feminist discourse; two discourses that complement each other. Together, such discourse formations produce gendered subject positions such as 'female victims of human trafficking' and the 'Third World Female Sex Slave' rescued by the 'White First World Feminist'. Such subject positions and this problematisation of human trafficking legitimise the social rescue efforts that leave the premises of the rescue efforts unquestioned. Simultaneously, the feminist breakthrough has been a tool for parts of the women's movement in the political struggle to enforce prohibition on buying sex in Denmark. The second article applies literature on global care chains, citizenship and transnational migration and analyses how the female Thai migrants construct transnational and local motherhood in relation to the social work within prostitution and the Danish policy on family reunification. The article demonstrates the complexity and ambiguity in performing motherhood as female migrant living permanently abroad. Such an everyday life calls for differentiated policy solutions concerning their citizenship rights on care-giving. The third article investigates how the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant intersect in the female Thai migrant sex workers' narratives on romantic love. This article benefits from literature on transnational marriage and the sex tourism industry. It demonstrates how the female Thai migrants ascribe meaning to romantic love in multiple ways which reflect a destabilisation of the categories of sex work and prostitution. The last article synthesises Butler's gender theory and theory on spatial acts with the purpose of analysing how the female Thai migrants' performances of gender depend on their spatial acts. The article demonstrates how they become intelligible gendered subjects as female sex workers, mothers and respectable heterosexual male Thai migrants depending on their spatial acts.

The dissertation proposes that female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark destabilise and reproduce the fixed categories of prostitution and intimacy in different ways. These categories are produced within the Danish prostitution policy field and come into existence through the migrants' performances of motherhood and marriage which closely intersect with their sex sale.

Resumé

Destabilisering af sexarbejde & intimitet?

Kønsfremførelser hos kvindelige thailandske migranter, der sælger sex i Danmark

Denne ph.d.-afhandling, der består af fire artikler, undersøger, hvordan kvindelige thailandske migranternes sexkøb konstruerer kvindelighed forankret i en række subjektpositioner som mor, hustru og sexarbejder i forhold til allerede eksisterende subjektpositioner konstrueret inden for det danske politikfelt prostitution. Undersøgelsen trækker på poststrukturalistisk feministisk teori og er baseret på interviews med kvindelige thailandske migranter, der sælger sex, og socialarbejdere samt deltagende observationer og diverse dokumenter.

Afhandlingen falder i to dele. Den første del er rammen for de fire artikler, som består af en introduktion, en teoretisk ramme, metodeovervejelser og konklusion samt et overordnet forskningsspørgsmål: Hvordan destabiliserer og reproducerer kvindelige thailandske migranter, der sælger sex i Danmark, det danske prostitutionspolitikfelts kategorier 'sexarbejde' og 'intimitet'?

Den anden del består af fire artikler. Den første artikel analyserer forandringerne inden for prostitutionspolitikfeltet med fokus på handlingsplanerne for bekæmpelse af menneskehandel. Artiklen analyserer, hvordan dette politikfelt konstitueres og ændres ud fra et historisk perspektiv. Artiklen viser, hvordan italesættelser af menneskehandel er forankret i den socialpolitiske diskurs og argumenter, der repræsenterer en feministisk diskurs. Disse supplerer hinanden og konstituerer kønnede subjektpositioner som 'kvindelige ofre for menneskehandel' og 'den tredje verdens kvindelige sexslaver', som reddes af 'hvide første verdensfeminister'. Disse subjektpositioner og denne problematisering af menneskehandel legitimerer det sociale redningsarbejde. Samtidig har det feministiske gennembrud været et redskab for dele af kvindebevægelsen i den politiske kamp for at få indført et forbud mod sexkøb i Danmark. Den anden artikel trækker på litteratur om globale omsorgskæder, medborgerskab og transnational migration. Artiklen analyserer, hvordan kvindelige thailandske migranter konstruerer transnationalt og lokalt moderskab i forhold til, hvordan moderskab konstrueres inden for det sociale arbejde og i forhold til dansk politik om familiesammenføring. Artiklen viser kompleksiteten og tvetydigheden i kvindelige migranternes moderskab, der kræver differentierede politiske løsninger med hensyn til deres omsorgsrettigheder. Den tredje artikel undersøger, hvordan kategorierne ægtefælle, sexarbejder og kvindelig migrant sammenflettes i kvindelige thailandske sexarbejderen fortællinger om romantisk kærlighed. Denne artikel trækker på litteratur om transnationale ægteskaber og sexturisme. Artiklen demonstrerer, hvordan kvindelige thailandske migranter, der sælger sex, tilskriver romantisk kærlighed flere betydninger, som afspejler en destabilisering af kategorierne sexarbejde og prostitution. Den sidste artikel anvender Butlers kønsteori og teori om rum. Artiklens formål er at analysere, hvordan kvindelige thailandske migranternes kønsfremførelser afhænger af rum. Artiklen viser, hvordan de bliver genkendelige som kvindelig sexarbejder, mor og respektabel heteroseksuel mandlig migrant gennem deres rumlige handlinger.

Afhandlingen foreslår, at de forskellige måder, hvorpå kvindelige thailandske migranter, der sælger sex i Danmark, destabiliserer og reproducerer de fikserede kategorier prostitution og intimitet, finder sted gennem den måde, hvorpå de udfører moderskab og ægteskab, som igen fletter sig sammen med deres salg af seksuelle ydelser.

PART 2 Articles

Article 1: Human Trafficking a Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution

Resubmitted to *Critical Social Policy*, September 16, 2010

Article 2: The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/or Absence?

Co-authored by Hanne Marlene Dahl.

The article is a contribution to the anthology edited by Ann Lise Isaksen Widding (2010) *Global Care in Nordic Countries*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, Pp.1-21

Article 3: Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai migration to Denmark

Resubmitted to *Sexualities*, July 23, 2010

Article 4: Gender Performances as Spatial Acts: (Fe)male Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Denmark

Resubmitted to *Gender, Place & Culture*, March 18, 2010

Human Trafficking as Lever for Feminist Voices? Transformations of the Danish Policy Field of Prostitution

Abstract

In Denmark, human trafficking has emerged as a central issue within the policy field of prostitution during the last decade. Taking a Foucauldian approach from a historical perspective, understanding the policy field of prostitution as a discursive terrain, the article analyses the thinking that lies behind policies on prostitution by identifying ruptures and discursive struggles which lead to transformations of the policy field. In particular, this article investigates how the problematisation of human trafficking has created space for a feminist discourse breakthrough within the policy field of prostitution during the last decade. Asking how/where this 'problem' has been produced, what ways of speaking are permissible, and what is silenced, the article discusses limitations and possibilities within this policy field.

Keywords

Discourse, Feminism, Policy Field, Prostitution, Human Trafficking

Introduction

Migration-related prostitution has received international political attention from institutions like the UN and the EU which problematise the phenomenon as trafficking in women (Aradau, 2008; Ditmore, 2005; Chapkis, 2003). The same tendency appears in Denmark. From the late 1990s and onwards, the state has observed that the number of female migrants working within prostitution has increased dramatically in Denmark. In the same period a problematisation of human trafficking within the policy field of prostitution in Denmark has arisen and developed from both national and international processes (pressures). This political attention in Denmark led to the promulgation of a penal code on human trafficking in 2002. In the same year the Danish government launched the first Action Plan to combat human trafficking, and in 2007 another Action Plan was launched. Both Action Plans are written into the policy field of prostitution with its particular concerns.¹ Together they articulate and initiate a number of policy proposals and activities (developing criteria for a national definition of human trafficking, repatriation programme, procedures in counselling and assisting victims of human trafficking, as well as developing new partnerships and networks across public institutions and NGOs). In particular, the Danish policy initiatives to combat human trafficking have been a tool for the women's movement in the political struggle to enforce prohibition on buying sex in Denmark. A similar development has taken place within an international context (Kantola & Squires, 2004). From diverging positions women's movement organisations have been operating within the political arena at both a national level and a supranational level advocating for female sex workers' rights on the one hand or regarding "all prostitution as oppression of women or as an act of violence against women" on the other (Outshoorn, 2005: 153).

A body of literature (Bernstein, 2007; Kantola & Squires, 2004; Outshoorn, 2005, 2001; Kilvington et al., 2001; Danna, 2001) on prostitution and trafficking policy offers insights into how the two contrasting feminist positions, 'sex worker' (defending sex workers' rights) and 'abolitionist' (calling for the abolition of prostitution), have had an enormous impact on the creation of prostitution policies in Western Europe. These two positions of 'sex work' and 'abolitionist', occurring in different variations, have dominated the international political debate which is closely linked to the feminist

academic debate (see e.g. Chapkis, 2003; Doezema, 1998). This literature identifies a number of discourses such as 'sex work discourse', 'sexual domination discourse', 'moral order discourse' (Kantola & Squires, 2004; Outshoorn, 2005, 2001) that signify positions within the policy-making field of prostitution, revolving around the contrasting feminist positions 'sex worker' vs. 'abolitionist'. According to Kantola & Squires (2004) and Outshoorn (2001), the discourses draw on a number of perspectives and on rhetoric that targets religion, feminism, human rights etc. Outshoorn (2001) demonstrates how a shift from 'an older moral discourse' to a 'sex work discourse' has taken place in the Netherlands. Kantola & Squires (2004) show how two discourses have dominated the policy field of prostitution in the UK since 1980s up until today: 'a public nuisance discourse' referring to the English liberal legal framework and 'a moral order discourse' referring to a complex synthesising of international human rights rhetoric with a religious and feminist perspective compatible with 'a sexual domination discourse'. Moreover, they (2004: 95) compare the UK with the Netherlands stressing the absence of 'a sex work discourse' in the UK. Bernstein (2007) analyses how the re-emergence of abolitionism derives from a religious discourse associated with evangelical Christians who dominate current anti-trafficking policies.

I take another analytical discourse perspective. Contrary to Kantola & Squires (2004) and Outshoorn (2001), I identify feminist, religious, medico-scientific, juridical and social policy as historically-grounded discourses. To do so, the article goes beyond the dualistic positions of 'sex work' versus 'abolitionist' by analysing the national policy field of prostitution on a different discursive level. Emphasising the complexity of intertwining discourses I analyse how a policy field is a social construct shaped by discursive ruptures and contrasting, struggling and/or overlapping discourses that change over a period of time. The aim of the article is to investigate how the Danish policy field of prostitution is constituted and transformed. In particular, I argue that the current problematisation of human trafficking since 2000 has functioned as a lever to a feminist discursive breakthrough within the Danish policy field of prostitution. I use the metaphor of lever to signal how certain political positions are able to build upon particular ways of representing a "problem". Informed by Bacchi (2009) I understand discourses as the underlying premise for 'problem' representations that constitute and transform the national policy field of prostitution. In keeping with this

understanding, I analyse permissible ways of speaking about 'prostitutes' and consequences in terms of silences and new alternative subject positions.

The following section elaborates my analytic strategy inspired by Bacchi (2009) and discusses how the article contributes to the academic literature on feminism's impact on prostitution and human trafficking policies. Inspired by Dahl's (2000) concept of discursive terrain the next section presents a historical discursive mapping of the policy field of prostitution throughout the past century in Denmark. From the historical perspective and paying attention to Bacchi's discourse analysis strategy the following sections analyse how the 'problem' representation of human trafficking transforms and leads to a discursive rupture. Thereafter the article concludes.

Discourse, policy field and 'problem' representations

Investigating how problem representations create and transform the policy field of prostitution in Denmark, I draw on Bacchi's (2009) and Foucault's ([1976]1994; [1969]2006) approach to analysing policy. Analysing current discursive formations including ruptures signifying transformation, created through a historical process, requires a longer span of time (Dahl, 2000: 14). Paying attention to Foucault ([1969]2006: 4-5) I identify five discourses: juridical, medico-scientific, religious, social policy and feminist that have constituted the policy-making field of prostitution in Denmark since 1906 and up until 2010 by competing, overlapping and/or complementing each other. Thus, the discourses struggle or battle over the meanings assigned to prostitution and human trafficking. The metaphor of battle points out that changes or relations are established through contest and difference, but also through recognisability. Through such discursive struggles subject positions and categories are established and negotiated by being put into discourse (Dahl 2000: 127).

The selection of these five discourses relies on a Foucault-inspired critical discourse analysis paying attention to his idea of a discourse, developed briefly below (Bacchi, 1999: 40; Foucault, [1976]1994, [1969]2006). The analysis draws on historical studies (Spanger, 2007, 2002; Pedersen, 2002; Christensen, 1995) that reflect former 'problem' representations on prostitution, and on current documentary text material, including action plans to 'combat' human trafficking, progress reports, evaluations and white

papers produced at the governmental level representing ministries, and descriptions of the programmes and activities produced by public institutions implementing the policies and by NGOs.

Following Foucault ([1969]2006), a discourse is a delimited, coherent system of thought that structures, and lays down rules for, speech and action as well as the ways in which it is possible to speak and act about a particular subject or object. It is “a group of statements that belong to a single system of formation” (Foucault, [1969]2006: 121). Thus, a discourse follows its own truth-producing logic, although statements belonging to the same system of formation can be contrary. In contrast to Kantola & Squires (2004) and Outshoorn (2001) I argue that the positions of ‘sex worker’ and ‘abolitionist’ do not represent two different feminist discourses. Rather, they are different statements within the same feminist discourse, articulating how the sale of sex affects women. A discourse also implies silences, the speech that is outside and not contained by the discourse.

Foucault reminds us that speech does not stem from within the core of an individual, prior to discourse, but that speech (debate, visual and written communication), materiality, practice, concepts etc. become intelligible *due to* the discourse. To undertake this investigation, the article analyses speech, concepts and relations as modes of exercising discourses, termed discursive practices. The shaping of the discourse takes place through a double process: the discourse is a result of speech, and the discourse produces the subjects and sets the subject positions. It is my intention to reveal subject positions derived from the problematisation of human trafficking.

In line with Bacchi (2009), who draws on Foucault, I understand a policy field as a creative and a constitutive process where different ways of thinking in fairly systematic manners are expressed through specific practices, relationships and articulations. Such policy initiatives reflect ‘problem representations’. Drawing on Bacchi’s (2009) methodology for analysing policies in terms of asking how governing takes place – implying “there is a problem” that needs to be solved – I am able to reveal ‘problems’ in public policies. This directs our attention to how particular social groups are governed and to “questioning taken-for-granted assumptions that lodge in government policies and policy proposals” (Bacchi 2009: xv). The problematisation of

human trafficking implies possibilities and limitations in how we understand and speak about female migrants selling sex, creates alternative potential constructions of human trafficking, produces possible subject positions ('migrant sex workers', 'victims of trafficking' etc.), while it silences others. Analysing discourses that ground the policy-making field of prostitution through documents I apply three of Bacchi's (2009: 12ff.) analytical questions:²

I start out examining what is being said in order to uncover how objects (coercion, victim etc.) are put into discourse and inscribed with certain meanings, followed by the question: "How/where has this representation of the 'problem' [of human trafficking] been produced, disseminated and defended?" (ibid.: 19). This question refers to practices and processes that allow particular problematisations to become dominant. Examining who gets the right to speak, from where and what is being said I identify how the institutional actors operate within discourse and deploy objects and categories for political purposes (Bacchi, 2009). Second, asking: "what is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?" (ibid.: 12) Bacchi suggests a scrutiny of conditions that allow certain problematisations or permissible ways of speaking to reproduce the discourse. Such categories are taken for granted and left unsaid as rules of discourse (Foucault, [1969]2006: 42), while others are silenced. Third, inspired by Bacchi's (2009: 15) question: "what effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?" I discuss in the conclusion how some citizens benefit from, while others are harmed by, the particular problematisation of human trafficking current in Denmark.

Before analysing the problematisation of human trafficking the following section outlines how different discourses have intertwined from 1906 to 2010, constituting and transforming the Danish policy field of prostitution.

The policy field of prostitution as a historical discursive terrain

The discursive terrain, which consists of five discourses, is characterised by ruptures and has changed over time: juridical, medico-scientific, religious, feminist and social policy. At the same time, the discourses have, to different extents, shaped the policy field of prostitution.

Prostitution as a discursive terrain: 1906-2010

Discourses Time	Juridical	Medico-scientific	Religious	Feminist	Social policy
1906-1920	Offensive behaviour in public space. A private affair.	Spread of venereal diseases.	Moral purity through work. Fallen/virtuous woman.	Both genders are answerable.	
1920- 1950	Offensive behaviour in public space. A private affair.	Spread of venereal diseases. Sexual deviance. Mentally degenerated.	Moral purity through work. Fallen/virtuous woman.	Both genders are answerable.	
1950- 1970	A private affair. Social security fraud.	Spread of venereal diseases.			Poverty. Social problems.
1970- 1990	A private affair. Social security fraud.	Health promotion campaigns.	Philanthropic work. Rescue prostitutes.	Violence against women. Gender inequality.	Social and psychological causes.
1990-1999	A private affair. Social security fraud.	Health promotion campaigns.	Philanthropic work. Rescue prostitutes.	Violence against women. Gender inequality.	Social and psychological causes.
2000- 2003	A private affair. Pimping. Force and confinement.	Health promotion campaigns.	Philanthropic work. Rescue victims of human trafficking.	Violence against women. Victims of gender inequality. Racialisation.	Social and psychological causes. Global inequality and poverty.
2003-2006	A private affair. Pimping. Force and confinement. Repatriation.	Health promotion campaigns.	Philanthropic work. Rescue victims of human trafficking.	Violence against women. Victims of gender inequality. Racialisation.	Social and psychological causes. Global inequality and poverty.
2007-2010	A private affair. Pimping. Force and confinement. Repatriation.	Health promotion campaigns.	Philanthropic work. Rescue victims of human trafficking.	Violence against women. Victims of gender inequality. Racialisation. Sex sale as women's free choice.	Social and psychological causes. Global inequality and poverty.

A horizontal reading of the tables shows the balance of power between discourses within each period. The shade of colour indicates the relative weight of each discourse, with a darker colour indicating a degree of domination. A vertical reading of the tables shows the historical development of each discourse over the period of study (1906-2010). The individual discourses are also subject to constant change brought about from *where* and *who gets the right to speak*, and from *what is being said*, viewed as processes of negotiation, competition and interplay among the actors. The boxes written in bold indicate a discursive rupture within these periods.

The appearance of the term 'racialisation' in the period 2000-2003 signals the need to be aware of cross-cutting discourses that help shape the discursive terrain. Specifically in Denmark in this period there was an articulated concern about the numbers of migrants from specific countries (e.g. Pro-Centre, 2000, 2001). I assume that this underpinned concern was a barely disguised racial subtext.³ As we shall see, it can be argued that this racial subtext acted as a 'lever' promoting a problematisation of human trafficking that created an opening for feminists, but with particular racial undertones. I refer here to the way in which feminists in Denmark come to portray the 'victims' of human trafficking as vulnerable 'Third World women'.

The fear of moral decline and spread of venereal diseases

The 1874 law on prostitution (1874 to 1906) was based on the idea that prostitution was a 'necessary evil', an unavoidable and natural part of society. Nevertheless, through the law, the authorities planned to create an enclosure so that the prostitutes were invisible to children and 'honourable women' (Lützen, 1998). This sort of state regulation was aimed not at *preventing* prostitution, but at *controlling* its adverse effects, such as venereal diseases and a 'moral decline'. Until 1906, the women were held responsible for these effects. Similar state regulation took place in other European countries at that time (Kilvington, 2001: 79-80).

From 1874 up until 1950, the juridical discourse complements the medico-scientific discourse, although the juridical discourse has lost ground during this period. However, the medico-scientific discourse dominated how the state controlled 'prostitutes' in Denmark in the period between the 1920s and the 1950s. Despite a decline in a systematic police surveillance of prostitutes in public space from 1906 to

1960, prostitution was understood, during that entire period, as a private matter between buyer and seller within the juridical discourse. According to the medico-scientific discourse in this period, men's sexuality was defined by a so-called natural sexual need. Thus, juridical and medico-scientific discourses justified men's purchase of sex and identified women who sold sex as fallen women (Pedersen, 2002: 161-162; Spanger, 2007). Within the two discourses, between 1874 and the 1950s, prostitution was problematised as a menace to marriage and to the norms of women's appropriate sexual behaviour.

From the 1920s to the 1950s in particular, the authorities' view of 'the prostitute' was dominated by the medico-scientific discourse which took its starting point in eugenics. From the 1920s to the 1950s, 'the prostitute' was categorised into two groups: 'the old guard' and 'the floozy'. Only the last group was in the spotlight of the authorities. They were referred to as young women of a loose manner and explained as pathological deviants (Spanger, 2007). Both within the juridical and the medico-scientific discourse the male client was left unmentioned. Hence, these discourses complemented each other by reproducing a double standard on prostitution.

This overarching hegemonic discourse was contested by others. From 1874 till the 1920s, the women's movement and religious philanthropists, e.g. abolitionists, in Denmark asserted themselves on two issues: the struggle against regulated prostitution (1874-1906) and 'white slavery'.⁴ Both movements campaigned against the legalisation of prostitution and advocated for moral equality between men and women, arguing that both genders should be held accountable for the spreading of venereal diseases. On the basis of a religious discourse, the Evangelical Inner Mission Movement considered prostitution to be immoral for both women and men (Christensen, 1995: 46). Hence, the religious discourse and the feminist discourse overlapped with regard to an articulation of the immoral aspect of the behaviour. Even at this early stage, 'trafficking' provided a discursive opening for feminists, but in this period the women trafficked had to be white ('white slavery').

During the 1920s rescue work was developed within a religious context by the *Young Women's Christian Association* (YWCA). The rescue work was directed at young women migrating from the countryside to Copenhagen to get work. They were problematised as potential victims to the idea of depravation of the city and a promiscuous lifestyle (ibid: 189).

Two historical discursive ruptures: the discourses of medical science and social policy

From the 1920s to the 1950s the policy field of prostitution, solely focussing on the seller, was dominated by the eugenic explanation that the hereditary genes of the women led to prostitution. Thus, prostitution was understood as ultimately genetically determined. Besides, the authorities presumed that the women's social, environmental and hereditary background aggravated the (female) 'prostitute's' 'immoral' lifestyle. From the 1950s to 1960 a new discourse, social policy, evolved and gained ground while eugenics, which dominated the medico-scientific discourse, disappeared. Instead, social measures were established, and the authorities focused solely on the women's social inheritance, social background and psychological condition (Spanger, 2002). The moral element of the discourse which had earlier determined the authorities' view vanished. By contrast, the 'caring' element in terms of 'help', 'guidance' and 'direction' became dominant (Spanger, 2002, 2007).

In 1973 a White Paper on prostitutes, which stands out from former white papers on prostitutes, was launched. 'The prostitute' was now spoken of as a victim suffering individual damages. The socio-psychological aspects were emphasised and written in a more 'neutral' language compared to former documents that were written in a more censorious language (Spanger, 2002). From the 1970s to the end of the 1980s the field of prostitution was rather 'quite'. Derived from a groundbreaking political initiative in 1989 a comprehensive national Report outlines prostitution in Denmark. We see that a social policy discourse solely dominated the policy field of prostitution. The Report resulted in a number of short-term projects focussing on the female prostitutes' social background and problems. These projects that took place during the 1990s were characterised by local autonomous projects initiated by individual activists representing NGOs and semi-public organisations. Stemming from such a tradition human trafficking becomes a political issue in the light of increasing international pressure on the government and a national pressure from NGOs and semi-public organisations.

Despite the women's movements' impact in 1970s and 1980s (Dahlerup, 1998), feminist discourse had not affected the social work or the public debate regarding prostitution in Denmark. In this case social work refers to social and health counselling and social

counselling in finding an alternative source of income. Not until a problematisation of human trafficking in the late 1990s did a feminist discourse play a significant role within prostitution policy. Feminists argued that prostitution was not a natural phenomenon that it is not a coincidence that men buy and women sell. On the contrary, such a pattern is described as a result of a socio-economic gendered inequality (Davidson, 1998). Additionally, some feminists argue that prostitution is violence against women regardless of their reasons for selling sex. On the basis of this problematisation, 'the prostitute' is constructed as a victim regardless of the women's own self-image.

Viewed from an international perspective, this statement, identifying prostitutes as victims, is one representation of feminist discourses. Another feminist statement reacting against this position springs from the sex workers' movement in the 1970s and 1980s primarily in Canada and Holland (Doezema, 2001). In the context of women selling sex, a distinction between 'voluntariness' and 'coercion' is maintained and the rights of the prostitutes play a central role (Doezema, 1998). Within this approach, some consider prostitution to be an expression of sexual liberation, with prohibition of prostitution viewed as a limitation of sexual freedom. Such feminist articulations have been silenced in Denmark until the end of this decade.

The next sections analyse how and from where the problem representation of human trafficking has transformed the prostitution policy field focusing on ways of speaking about prostitution, the production of (new) subject positions and silences.

The problematisation of human trafficking

The birth of the first Action Plan to combat human trafficking in 2002 was a result of increasing international pressure and national pressure from NGOs and semi-public organisations on the Danish government, as well as the Danish authorities' registration of a rise in the number of female migrants selling sex (Danish Government, 2002). This interest in these migrants needs to be seen in the context of growing ethnocentrism in Europe at this time (Mulinari et al., 2009). This development within the policy field of prostitution has produced a new problem representation, human trafficking, with new categorisations grounded in particular feminist and social policy discourses, but also with juridical and medico-scientific discourses at play. At the level of discursive practices and processes the policy field has undergone a number of transformations in

terms of expanding, formalising and centralising the public administration, social, health and juridical efforts. The Action Plan of 2002 reflects the first step of the Danish government in problematising human trafficking followed up by another Action Plan in 2007. These Action Plans reflect particular transformations within the prostitution policy field leading to a feminist discourse breakthrough.

Grounded in primarily feminist, social policy and juridical discourses the problem representation of human trafficking is overall perceived as a displacement of women from 'the Third World' and Eastern Europe ending up in the sex industry primarily selling sex at massage parlours or on the street. Problematising victims of human trafficking as forced or lured away from their home into prostitution in a foreign country has given rise to a proposal to remove the 'victims' from the sex industry by repatriation and reintegration programmes (Danish Government, 2009: 9). Such proposals create the 'problem' to be the presence of 'foreign' prostitutions. Other options and wishes of the victims, e.g. staying in the receiving country, are silenced.

First of all, their opportunities for a successful repatriation in the homeland must be strengthened, so that their chances to get away from human trafficking improve.⁵

Danish Government, 2002: 14

Within this problematisation it is primarily women who are narrated as displaced persons ending up in the sex industry and identified as victims. How such displacements are represented as a problem relies on two arguments that often supplement each other and are embedded in a feminist and a social policy discourse: first, that the victim is forced by physical violence or tricked by criminal organisations or a potential husband from the receiving country; second, that human trafficking is caused by lack of gender equality, poverty, unemployment, poor opportunities for education, corruption or political instability combined with the demand for women in the global sex industry (Danish Government, 2002: 7; Ligestillingsafdelingen, 2006: 8). These arguments (physical violence and global structural inequalities) ground criteria for identifying victims of human trafficking.

From 2002 to 2009 a change within the problematisation occurred. At the beginning of the decade the phenomenon was termed 'trafficking in women for prostitution', whereas five years later it changed into a more gender-neutral term, 'human

trafficking' and for purposes other than prostitution (other unskilled work), signifying that victims also included men, and children of both genders (see Danish Government, 2002, 2007, 2009; Ligestillingsafdelingen, 2005, 2006). In addition, it was solely women who were identified as 'victims', whereas men were identified as 'pimps' or 'criminal organisers'. A clear distinction was made between (female) victim and (male) offender at the beginning of the decade, whereas this distinction became unclear in end of the decade. Experiences demonstrated that women could also be categorised as offenders and that some women could also be categorised as both offender and victim. The emphasis on physical violence, coercion or kidnapping of women at the beginning of the decade receded, and the dominant problem was articulated as the (female) victim's psychological and social conditions, caused by the sex sale, within human trafficking (Danish Government, 2002, 2009).

Based on the Danish legislation on human trafficking, § 262a⁶, different definitions of 'human trafficking' and 'victim' are produced embedded in juridical, feminist and social policy discourses. The subject positions of 'pimp' and 'criminal organisers' are primarily placed within the juridical discourse, while the subject position of 'victim' is primarily defined within a feminist and a social policy discourse.

A juridical discourse focuses on pimping (§ 288 and § 299) and the organisation of the transportation (§ 262a) as well as the residence status of the victims (Danish Government, 2009: 21). The articulation, arguments and practices within a juridical discourse are based on the burden of proof

Grounded in the feminist discourse, human trafficking is understood as violence against women and as a question of lack of gender equality, at a global level referring to feminised poverty, women's access to education, labour and other resources. In addition, the feminist discourse problematises ideas of male sexuality that legitimise purchasing sexual services. It is articulated that men have to take responsibility for the existence of prostitution. Within a social policy discourse human trafficking does not ascribe gender a particular meaning. Rather, personal social and psychological consequences of selling sex, combined with poverty, are emphasised (VFCudsatte, 2005).

One of the main problems of identifying human trafficking is to establish who is a victim. From the very start human trafficking was synonymous with female migrants

selling sex within the policy field of prostitution, resulting in vague criteria for defining a victim. In many cases policy papers refer to potential victims rather than victims (Danish Government, 2007, 2009: 10). The next quotation derives from a description from the Counselling Centre for Foreign Women offering 'migrant prostitutes' health and social counselling.

The majority [of female migrants selling sex] seems to be placed in a vulnerable position, but far from all have been in such a contact to the social workers that there has been an opportunity to identify indications of human trafficking.

Bertram, 2009: 3

Varying degrees of human trafficking are considered by the state, and the criteria for trafficking depend on the individual situation (Maskell, 2006: 25). A number of indicators are developed: ways of recruitment, personal documents of the potential victim, freedom to move, violence and threats, working and life conditions (CMM, 2010). The definition of a victim includes both documented and undocumented migrants (Danish Government, 2009). The Danish Immigration Service, representing a juridical discourse, focuses solely on undocumented migrants defined as potential victims of trafficking (Danish Government, 2009: 21). The broad definition is able to contain a different interpretation of a victim represented by different NGOs, semi-public and public actors that conduct the outreach social work. Often the social work performed by local actors ground their definition of 'victim' and 'potential victim' on rather vague perceptions.

The following quote is an excerpt from a Report documenting the method in outreach social work. It is a typical example of the vague definition of human trafficking:

She has not worked as a prostitute before. She seems sad and frightened...she is very interested in getting as much information as possible regarding advice on safe sex... As we're going through different forms of support, we come across the sentence - support to women in trafficking. The woman is unsure of what this means, and I give her a thorough explanation of what the term means. I try to make it as clear and obvious as possible and I let her know that if she was the one who had been trafficked, she would be able to get help to get away from her

traffickers and the prostitution.... She is staying in Denmark with a tourist visa... and she maintains that her case is not one of trafficking. I do not press her further.

Michaelsen and Nielsen, 2004: 9

Neither debt, coercion or violence, nor the obligation to maintain someone are employed as criteria in the social worker's assessment of whether the woman is a victim of trafficking. Instead, it is how the woman appears in the eyes of the social worker – "seems sad and frightened" – that gives rise to the suspicion that she might be a victim. Moreover, the social worker does not consider whether there might be other reasons as to why she seems sad and frightened, a silence reflecting that the social worker has already categorised the migrant as a victim of trafficking in advance. "Lives a rough and unhappy life" is a similar subjective and vague criterion listed by other actors. Usually such criteria will be a matter of the individual social workers' subjective assessment of the client. According to Järvinen (2002, 13-14), the social services administration constructs their cases by focusing on selected aspects of the client's life that fit the administrations' regimes of truth and administrative categories. The same process takes place in the meeting between the social worker and the migrant.

Having investigated how human trafficking is problematised, the following section analyses how actors, representing different discourses, constitute the policy field of prostitution.

From where and how is the 'problem' of human trafficking produced?

Following Bacchi's (2009) argument that practices and processes allow particular problematisations to dominate, this section examines how actors operate and how practices take place reflecting how the discourses complement each other or struggle in constituting the policy field of prostitution.

A mix of public, semi-public and private actors across a national and a regional level are involved in problematising and conducting practices in relation to combating human trafficking through social work and enforcement of law. Central public actors are the Department of Gender Equality, Tema Prostitution, the police, and semi-public and private actors: Reden International (RI), Pro Vest and Prostitution & Human

trafficking (P&K). Later on the Danish Immigration Service, representing the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, became a central actor.

Grounded in both a social policy and feminist discourse, articulating prostitution as social problem and/or as violence against women, Tema Prostitution, RI, Pro Vest and P&K played an active part placing human trafficking on the political agenda in Denmark by participating in the development of the government's first Action Plan and in the execution of the action plans regarding social and health work. The process of implementing and practising the Action Plans has resulted in a further reorganisation of the policy field of prostitution.

Social professions representing a social policy discourse have dominated the policy initiatives during the 1990s consisting of NGOs and semi-public actors working autonomously with prostitution through various local short-term projects having their own strategies and objectives. Tema Prostitution, RI, Pro Vest and P&K spring from these grass-roots actors that have developed into different directions. In particular, the key actor Tema Prostitution has undergone a transformation. The organisation stems from the previously semi-public organisation Pro-Centre, which was absorbed by the public institution: Danish Centre for Research on Social Vulnerability in 2001, and again in 2007 absorbed by the National Board of Social Services. Thus, Tema Prostitution has changed from being a semi-public grass-roots institution to a public institution providing services to the ministry. From 2000, parallel with the rise of a problematisation of human trafficking, a shift occurred within the Pro-Centre's employment of predominantly social workers and social pedagogues in favour of academics (Pro-Centre, 1997-2001).

With the first Action Plan, Tema Prostitution was assigned by the Department of Equality to co-ordinate and formalise the collaboration between the three other actors and the police, monitoring the implementation of government initiatives (e.g. improve co-operation with international actors). Thus, a systematisation of knowledge collection in close cooperation with the social work was started by Tema Prostitution. The three other actors RI, Pro Vejle and P&K were appointed to perform the social work (outreach work, a hotline, a drop-in centre, repatriation programme) and to develop the collaboration with the police, social and health authorities (Maskell, 2006: 3, 14). The new tasks led to an expansion and professionalisation of administration.

The second Action Plan running from 2007-2010 emphasised a broader perspective in combating human trafficking (Danish Government, 2007) and involved several institutions, including four other Ministries, although Tema Prostitution is the authority that lays down the guidelines for executing the Action Plan. In practice, this takes place at the Danish Anti-Trafficking Centre (CMM) with affiliate local units. The centre was established in 2007 and managed by the National Board of Social Services.

The problematisation of human trafficking has also resulted in Tema Prostitution's collaboration with the police and the Danish Immigration Service. The collaboration between the social administration and these new actors has brought the juridical discourse into play in problematising human trafficking. The rationales behind police practices as well as immigration authorities are very different from the social work rationale. The police focus on building up a burden of proof, and the immigration services administer the government's immigration policy which differs from social work that focuses on the rights of 'the potential victim' and 'the victim'. Despite different approaches to human trafficking, a close cooperation takes place between the actors (RI, 2006; Michaelsen & Nielsen, 2004; Mainz, 2006).

The centralisation and expansion of the administration and the initiatives regarding prostitution primarily embedded in a social policy discourse have strengthened Tema Prostitution's position vis-à-vis the positions of RI and Pro Vest. Today, the latter operate more as local units than autonomous institutions with their own agenda as before. Thus, due to the transformations of the policy field of prostitution, caused by the problematisation of human trafficking, Tema Prostitution has acquired a dominating position in terms of articulating the state's criteria for defining human trafficking, the victim of human trafficking and drafting the efforts of social work. The social policy discourse appears as the most visible and dominating, due to Tema Prostitution's and CMM's representing this discourse. The feminist discourse (articulating prostitution as violence against women and as a sign of gender inequality) is primarily represented by RI, which held a subordinate position within the Action Plans. This is the reason why the feminist discourse seems invisible and at times silenced. On the other hand, the articulation of human trafficking and criteria for identifying a victim, produced by the Action Plans, are able to embrace a feminist discourse. Although a feminist discourse has not been the dominating discourse, due

to the transformations, the following section analyses how a feminist discourse can be identified as a third rupture.

The feminist discourse as a third rupture

Questioning: “what is left unproblematic in this problem representation? and where are the silences?” (Bacchi, 2009: 12) this section investigates which categories are taken for granted and left unsaid as rules of discourse, and which categories are silenced within human trafficking as a problem representation. To do so, I analyse how the feminist discourse gained acceptance within social political initiatives in Denmark leading to a discursive rupture.

The public debate and fight against human trafficking have been initiated by RI and Reden that have an unambiguous perspective on prostitution. They managed to mobilise broadly across political parties, women’s organisations, unions etc. (e.g. Active Women, Soroptimist International-Denmark, Danish Women’s Society and The Women’s Council) representing feminist discourse in Denmark. Despite the organisational and political different backgrounds, this heterogeneous group is able to find common ground in the fight against human trafficking, which resulted in a more formalised corporation, called ‘8 March Initiative’, between 28 NGOs and a number of political movements. Through activities (hosting conferences and campaigns, launching petitions, writing articles for the press) they primarily seek to influence politicians and push for legislation that criminalises the purchase of sexual services.⁷

Female migrants selling sex in Denmark as potential victims or victims has been taken for granted throughout the problematisation of human trafficking grounded in a social policy and feminist discourse. This unclear definition of a victim of human trafficking has within the feminist discourse reproduced the stereotypical notion of ‘The Third World Woman’ associated with passive and weak female migrants who need to be rescued.

Various forms of exploitation are central in the argumentation for the combat against human trafficking. Viewing female migrants as particularly vulnerable within the sex industry they are automatically represented as potential victims or victims of human trafficking.

Aktive Kvinder [Active Women] in Denmark want as many sex slaves as possible to be set free by disclosing the places where they are staying under more or less cruel, but for us in the Nordic countries, always abject conditions....

Chodavarapu, 2007: 5-6

'Victims' are put into discourse as 'sex slaves' and not as 'prostitutes'. Nor do the women 'sell sexual services', but 'women are trafficked into sex', are 'kept in captivity' etc. within this feminist discourse. In relation to human trafficking, the subject position of victim is put into discourse with the themes of violence, sexual, social and economic exploitation, global inequality and poverty. However, the subject position of victim associated with 'Danish female prostitutes' is rooted in a social-psychological understanding.

Both the police and the politicians know that the women are abused and that they're subjected to all kinds of aggressive and offensive sexual behaviour and psychological terror... They don't have a network; they don't know anybody They had been abused systematically by Danish men.

Interview with the leader of RI (Demos, 2008: 8-9)

These very unequivocal representations of women who have no alternatives and who lead a miserable life in poverty are represented as dignified victims without any blame for their prostitution. This picture makes way for the moral stance that prostitution is not to be accepted and at the same time, women selling sex are irreproachable and beyond denunciation. Such a problematisation of human trafficking grounded in the feminist discourse silences other perspectives within the policy field of prostitution that raise issues of doubt: as to whether these women may have migrated on their own initiative or have other reasons for selling sex etc.

The notions of 'female victims of human trafficking' simultaneously produce a legitimisation of the social rescue efforts that leaves the premises of the rescue efforts unquestioned. Nonetheless, the feminist articulation represented by RI, Reden and the 8 March Initiative has mobilised another position within the feminist discourse primarily represented by the Danish Sex Workers' Organisation. This subject position

is similar to the international sex worker position and has slightly gained ground in Denmark in the end of the decade.

Conclusion

The transformation of the Danish prostitution policy field is a process where several competing, overlapping and/or complementary discourses battle for the meanings assigned to human trafficking. The development of this policy field forms the basis of legislative and social initiatives, conducted by an amalgam of semi-public, public and private actors representing a number of discourses. During the century, the field of prostitution has been constituted by five discourses: feminist, religious, social policy, legal policy and medico-scientific. To varying degrees, these discourses have dominated the field, particularly characterised by discursive ruptures reflecting transformations within this policy field. Since 1906, two discursive ruptures have already taken place. The first was in the 1920s with a shift from a juridical to a medico-scientific discourse. The second took place in the 1970s when the medico-scientific discourse lost its hegemony to a social policy discourse.

The Action Plans to combat human trafficking can be viewed as a tool of the government. Constituted by the social policy discourse, represented primarily by Tema Prostitution, the Action Plans led to a centralisation and a professionalization of the policy field. With this transformation a number of NGOs and semi-public actors representing the feminist discourse began to occupy a dominant position within this policy field. Understanding human trafficking as 'sex slavery' and female migrants as needing to be rescued, this problematisation of human trafficking is a lever for the women's movement in the political struggle about prostitution regarding prohibition on buying sex. Thus, the transformations of the Danish policy field of prostitution render the impact of this feminist discourse possible, which in turn leads to this third discursive rupture.

The effects of the Action Plans have resulted in the establishment of a national rescue apparatus and have created a political awareness of the harmful effects of a global sex industry. At the same time, it is only a small group of migrants selling sex in Denmark that benefit from the Action Plans. If they are undocumented female migrants agreeing

on 'being rescued' they are sent back to their country of origin in relation to the juridical restrictions regarding repatriation, reflecting ethnocentric immigration stances. Common to all five discourses is a taken-for-granted about a repatriation of victims trafficking, despite disagreements on the repatriation process. This articulation reflects a racialisation referring to the process of 'othering' based on notions on race and gender.

At the same time, a larger group of documented migrants selling sex in Denmark become invisible and silenced, given that they do not fit into the notion of 'victim of human trafficking' that is produced by the feminist discourse represented by RI and the '8 March Initiative'. Consequently, their social rights are not foregrounded.

At a discursive level, the effects of how human trafficking is problematised produce a subject position of 'the prostitute' that is based on the intersections of gender, race and geographical place and that creates stereotypical notions of the 'Third World Female Sex Slave' rescued by the 'White First World Feminist'.

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Notes

¹ International debates on human trafficking usually refer to prostitution as in the case of Denmark (Anker, 2004: 26).

² Bacchi offers six questions to open up a critical analytical space around specific policies or policy proposals. I draw on questions four, five and six. They are applied, not in the original order, but in relation to the purpose of this article.

³ Racialisation refers to the connection between historical racial biology that legitimised colonialism and contemporary cultural racism that marginalise migrants in e.g. the Nordic countries. Thus Racialisation concerns "processes that differentiat[e] people and stabilis[e] these differences, as well as legitimat[e] power relations based on racialised differences" (Mulinari et al., 2009: 4).

⁴ In the beginning of the twentieth century human trafficking was termed 'white slavery', focusing on trafficking of white European women (Leppänen, 2007).

⁵ All quotations are my translations.

⁶ The Danish penal code § 262a is founded on the UN and the EU policies to combat human trafficking (Danish Government, 2007: 8).

⁷ See web sites: www.soroptimist-danmark.dk/projekter/stop-kvindehandel-2-2.html], July 22, 2008, 8 March Initiative, <http://www.8marts.dk/8814/8.%20marts-initiativet>, August 5, 2008.

The Transnational and Local Motherhood of Sex Workers: Presence and/ or Absence?

Hanne Marlene Dahl & Marlene Spanger

Female migrants from the economically poor countries increasingly work in the more well off countries while leaving children in the sending countries to be cared for by other relatives or paid carers. This backside is often forgotten in the glorious celebration of globalization which neglects the feminization of migration (Koffmann 2003; Yeates 2009), the care drain (Hochschild 2003) and a feminized neo-colonialism (Sarvasy and Longo 2004). The separation of female migrants and their children produces sufferings on both sides (Hochschild 2001, 2003) and migration erodes social solidarities in the sending communities (Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild 2008). One of the pragmatic solutions put forward to reduce this injustice is a changed migration policy which would allow these care givers to bring their children:

‘For social policy, it raises the issue of what we can do to reduce the hidden injuries of global capital. At the very least, we can call for arrangements by which children and perhaps other caregivers can follow mothers to their new place of work’ (Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild 2008: 420).

Granting entry rights to the migrants’ children would seem to reduce the sufferings for both the children and the separated mother (ibid.). It would acknowledge the interdependence of human relations (Tronto 1993) and they are in line with recent developments in feminist theories on care and citizenship (Tronto 2004; Tronto, forthcoming; Longo and Sarvasy 2004) which advocates citizenship rights for migrating workers in relation to care both nationally and globally. EU citizens and migrants from outside the EU married to Danish citizens already have a right to bring their child or children.

Acknowledging the need for rights to give and receive care, we want to relate this policy solution to experiences of single mothers involved in global care chains in Denmark. By focussing upon their experiences, we investigate the different ways of doing motherhood and end with a call for more differentiated policy solutions. Ideally we would like to continue a dialogue on ‘thoughtful public answers’ to the private costs of a global wage gap – a dialogue that started with the publication of *what?* by Isaksen (2007). To this dialogue we want to add knowledge about how, represent the downside of migration, single mothers and their children live in the new country. Bringing a child to a new country is not always an unproblematic solution. A migrant running a sports institute in Denmark with many Thai children describes the difficulties these children frequently face:

‘Mom leaving for long time and just take him [the children]. Take him to here... She got new place, new person. New tradition. Then sometimes... not easy to accept, take time’

We ground our discussion in two stories of female Thai migrants selling sex and living in Denmark: Khem and Nee, so unlike Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild (2008) our focus is not on the children. The two stories represent the downside of the global care chains where women are positioned as low-skilled workers with limited resources¹, however, this does not mean that they have no agency as will be illustrated.

Khem is the story of the absent mother, her two children are taken care of in Thailand by her grandmother and ex-husband. Nee is the story of the present mother having brought her daughter to live with her in Denmark. We analyse these two stories employing three kinds of lenses: one from the literature on transnational motherhood, another from the theory of global care chains and a third from the feminist literature on citizenship. The stories told by Khem and Nee reveal that there are no simple solutions to the problems of global care chains. This chapter investigates the different framings of motherhood both in a situation where the children are left behind and in a situation where the child is brought to the new country. Based upon fieldwork, this chapter analyses how single motherhood and care giving are re-organised within the process of migration constrained by the citizenship rights and obligations of these female migrants. This chapter first introduces our theoretical framework whereafter it describes the Danish migration regime. Then, it outlines the

¹ In contrast to Khem and Nee, the upside of globalization consists of female professionals working in Europe as doctors or nurses (Isaksen 2007; Yeates 2009).

methodology applied and in the next two sections analyses the stories of Khem and Nee. Finally, we conclude and reflect upon issues for further research.

Motherhood, Care Chains and Citizenship in Globalizing Processes

Our theoretical position is inspired by theories of transnational motherhood (Parreñas 2001; Sørensen 2002), global care chains (Hochschild 2001; Yeates 2009) and citizenship (Lister 1997; Yuval-Davis 2006). Our approach stresses simultaneously the agency of the female migrants through the different ways of performing motherhood in a given Danish migration regime and the potentially negative effects of global care chains.

A body of migration literature examines how gender identities and family ties are reconstructed in the process of migration regarding new formations of households, families and/or social networks (Basch et al. 1994; Levitt & Schiller 2004; Sørensen 2002; Sørensen & Guarnizo 2007).² The concept of transnational motherhood was introduced by Avila & Hondagneu-Sotelo (1997) in relation to female labour migration from economically poor to richer countries. It focussed on Latino women who leave children to relatives or local nannies while taking up domestic work in the U.S. They investigated how meanings of motherhood are constructed and how strategies for mothering have changed in transnational families stressing that female migrants construct new definitions of good mothering through transformations of practices of mothering in order to stay in contact with their children. Parreñas (2001) refines the concept of transnational motherhood by seeing it as shaped by global socio-economic inequalities, social mobility and financial security including the perspective of the children left behind. She reminds us that the children ‘suffer from emotional costs of geographical distances’ (ibid.: 375) and that the relationship between the mother and child(ren) is affected by the paradox that the financial security obtained by migration goes hand in hand with emotional insecurity by the absence of the mother. In particular, Parreñas (2001: 387) suggests that feelings of loss and pains in transnational families are social constructions intensified by notions of ideal Philippine motherhood. In many cases, the responsibility and the care giving towards the child(ren) rely solely on the mother.

² Even if it is only one person who goes abroad, the decision affects the remaining family members concerning redistributing the migrants domestic duties, child rearing, care giving etc. (Levitt & Schiller 2004: 1016). Expenses related to migration and settlement in the receiving societies are often met by the family from the same local community in the sending country. Thus, migration becomes a family strategy.

A new concept of skype mothering (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2009) has emerged stressing a new way of doing transnational motherhood using new information technology such as skype telephone calls, SMSs and e-mails. Summing up this literature, it perceives the lives of these female migrants as rather contradictory, complex and as involving agency. Mothering is an ongoing process of doing.

Hochschild, has developed the concept of *global care chains* which is defined as: ‘...a series of personal links between people across the globe based on paid and unpaid work of caring’ (2001: 131). In many ways, the concept of transnational motherhood and global care chains overlap by focussing on how female migration, care work and motherhood are linked together by the dynamics of global processes. The literature on global care chains takes a bottom up perspective with special attention being given to the negative, exploitative effects of the transfer of care on the macro and micro levels. In her investigations of the migration of carers, Hochschild draws upon motherhood performed by Filipino mothers in the US (2001) and in a later article Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild (2008) apply this approach to Indian mothers working in the Gulf and the children left behind. In both places in the South, the locally prevailing discourse of motherhood as presence produces dissatisfaction and unhappiness amongst the migrating mothers and the children left behind (Hochschild, 2001; Isaksen, Devi and Hochschild 2008). Hochschild’s (2001) and Isaksen et al.’s (2008) understanding of doing motherhood highlights the locally produced dominant understandings of motherhood and its complexity. However, they are insufficiently attentive to the agency of transnational mothers in the new context. Here Yeates (2004, 2009) is useful as a supplement enabling us to see female Thai migrant sex workers as carers performing different kinds of motherhood allowing for their potential agency in a particular migration regime by amongst others, including both top-down (state) and bottom-up dimensions that affect the process of migration. Our approach also necessitates discussions of citizenship, which will be unfolded below.

Citizenship is, broadly speaking, membership of a community involving rights and responsibilities. Feminists have reformulated the classical notion of citizenship degendering it (Lister 1997; Lister et al. 2007). Lister (1997) advocates a dynamic and inclusive understanding of citizenship to include care. This cannot only be translated into a right to receive care but must also encompass a right to give care, which is often understood as enabling the carer financially by state transfers (Knijn and Kremer 1997). However, a right for the mother to give care also requires the physical presence of

her child thus introducing social and political rights. People migrate and relate to more than one community creating a more global, multilayered citizenship (Lister 1997; Yuval-Davis 2006). Relating to a community is in our view identical with belonging to it, which refers to an emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home' and 'safe' (Yuval-Davis 2006). Khem and Nee feel at home in various spatial contexts and belonging to both the Thai and Danish community. Emotional attachment is a dynamic process shaping as well as shaped by the politics of belonging prevalent. By a politics of belonging Yuval-Davis refers to:

'...specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by these projects in very particular ways' (2006: 197).

The next section introduces female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark and describes the migration regime and its embedded politics of belonging.

Citizenship in Context: Migration regime

Lutz (2008: 2) defines a migration regime as 'the organisation and corresponding of cultural codes of social policy and practices', but here only the policies of migration in a broad sense including policies on human trafficking and family unification are investigated. This approach fits well with Yeates' (2009) framework for analysing the complexities of global care chains through four dimensions: Preconditions (low skilled/high skilled), the recruitment of care workers through formal (state agencies) or informal (friendship, family or local ties) networks, external regulation (policies, social welfare and citizenship) and the organisation of the work (private/public, agents within the labour network). Inspired by Yeates' dimensions we will briefly introduce how policies about family reunification, prostitution and human trafficking regulate the citizenship of female Thai migrant sex workers related to their care obligations and rights towards their children and afterwards briefly describe the organization of the work.

The Thais in this study are low skilled workers recruited through informal networks consisting of acquaintances, family or local ties. They established contact to Denmark, obtained jobs and/or are introduced to their future Danish husbands through informal networks. Marrying a Danish male citizen is the only way for them to overcome the strict Danish migration policy on residence

permits. All of the migrants who figure in the material have acquired residence permits through such marriages. They have children either from former relations in Thailand and/or with a Danish man. As in the story of Nee, some of the migrants bring their child(ren) to Denmark. In some cases they return to Thailand after staying for a period. Other children remain in Thailand as in the story of Khem.

Global care chains are not only shaped by the family, forms of recruitment and labour opportunities, migration policies also play a major role. Compared to the other Nordic countries, Denmark has the most restrictive policy on residence permits for non-EU citizens. In 2007, the Danish government stipulated a number of demands and obligations (age, the size of the residence, self-supporting of the married couple, language training (Danish Immigration Service 2007: 24) applying to migrants from a non-EU country who apply for residence permit through marriage.³ After seven years of marriage with a Danish citizen, it is possible to gain a permanent residence permit. If the marriage breaks down before the seven years, the residence permit is automatically suspended and the migrant has to apply for a new permit (New to Denmark 2007). According to the Danish legislation on family reunification, the Thais have a right to bring their children, under the age of 15 years old, along from Thailand.⁴ When the child(ren) are granted a residence permit they have a social right to receive care in forms of public crèches and kindergartens as well as free education. In order to bring their child(ren), a number of obligations need to be met by the migrant and their Danish partner.⁵

According to the Danish government (New to Denmark 2010), the purpose of these social and economic obligations of the parent and the Danish partner is in the interests of the child. The obligations encompass, for example, housing requirements (size of the residence) and the migrant or the partner is not allowed to receive public assistance.⁶ In the case of the Thai migrant sex

³ See Law on foreigner §§ 7-9.

⁴ However granting residence permit for their children depend on the connection between the parent(s) and the child(ren) concerning the length of separation and the child's belonging to the sending society. Each application is processed individually.

⁵ None of the interviewees had children over 15 years old when they applied for residence permit for their children.

⁶ In addition the Danish social authorities also "consider whether the child is vulnerable to serious social problems in Denmark by identifying whether the family in Denmark has social problems" (New to Denmark 2010). "...if one of the child's parents continues to reside in the country of origin [...], and if the application for family reunification is submitted more than two years after the parent residing in Denmark meets the requirements for family reunification with a child, a special attachment requirement applies. This requirement stipulates that a residence permit will only be granted if the child has [...] an attachment to Denmark sufficient to form the basis for successful integration in Denmark" (ibid). This means that the other parent, who lives in the sending society, plays a central role regarding the rights of the migrant to bring the child(ren).

workers that one of the authors of this chapter/article (Spanger) has interviewed, the fathers of the children have been absent in nearly all cases. However in Khem's case, one of her children lives with the father

This social group of female Thai migrants sell sexual services at massage parlours or at bars. Besides the sale of sex they hold low skilled jobs as cleaners, kitchen assistants, masseurs or factory workers. The turnover of low skilled temporary jobs among these female migrants is high. Some of them only work in the sex industry whereas others return to the sex industry after having been employed as cleaners or dishwashers. In particular, private forms of loan systems and long shifts define their sex work. In particular, working at night and in the evening characterises their work. This can create problems if the migrants care for the children in Denmark wherefore some of them hire other Thais to take care of their children. Nonetheless, the Thai migrant sex workers Spanger has interviewed give the impression that the massage parlours also function as social meeting points for the sex workers and their friends. Here activities such as eating together, watching television and playing cards take place. The border between working life and spare time is blurred and in many cases such kinds of lifestyles hardly give any space to taking care of children during the day or night. Both Khem and Nee sell sex at massage parlours or clinics that also function as a space where they established social relations to clients and other female Thais.

The legislation concerning the selling sex in Denmark is ambiguous, since it is not forbidden to sell or buy (for persons over 18 years old) sexual services. Since 1970s the Danish authorities perceive sex work as a social problem and a number of social and health programmes offer counselling and help (Spanger 2008). Regardless of whether they are undocumented or documented migrants in Denmark all migrants that sell sex are seen as potential victims of human trafficking (Spanger 2008). The Danish penal code § 262a on human trafficking and the action plan on combating human trafficking of the Danish government are of great importance for the female Thai migrant sex workers that have been granted a temporary residence permit. One of the purposes of the action plan is to implement a repatriation programme and offer health and social counselling to migrant sex workers. Nonetheless, very few migrant sex workers have accepted the repatriation programme. This group of documented migrants are caught between the penal code on human trafficking and the legislation on family reunification, given that the female Thai migrant sex workers are not interested in the repatriation programme and at the same time their residence permit relies solely on

the marriage with their Danish husbands. This places them and their children, who live in Denmark, in a vulnerable position. Before we analyse the two case stories of Khem and Nee with the regard to citizenship, global care chains, motherhood and migration regimes the following section outlines, briefly, the methodology.

Methodology

During the fieldwork material was produced by observations of and interviews (Hasse 2000; Kvale 1994) with Thai female migrant sex workers in Denmark that are caregivers towards children. The purpose of the fieldwork was to identify how they signify care and motherhood within the process of transnational migration. In order to gain access to this highly sensitive field, Spanger conducted fieldwork at a programme targeted at migrant sex workers. The objective of the programme was to inform about safe sex, offer support and counselling about social and health problems and communicate contact to relevant public offices such as housing offices and social services. In particular, Spanger joined a social worker in her work with the migrants for a period of four months. By doing so, Spanger had the opportunity to meet the sex workers in different places and later interview some of them about their everyday lives. Conducting participant observations in a field which is often conditioned by stigmatization, prejudices and various social problems Spanger was not allowed to tape conversations between the social worker and the migrants. Instead she took notes. Consequently, the presentation of two stories of Khem and Nee are different in terms of form. These case stories are representative of the narratives told by these single mothers.

18 in-depth interviews were undertaken, most of them were with female Thais working in the sex industry but also interviews with key persons in the Thai community in Denmark were undertaken. Inspired by Kvale's (1994) interview technique, the interviews were structured according to a thematically semi-structured guide around issues of migration, motherhood and care. Our analytical strategy consists of questions developed on the basis of five dimensions (citizenship, care and (single) motherhood, transnational links and agency) derived from our theoretical framework. In particular, and inspired by Dahl (2000), we focus upon meaning and ambiguity concerning notions on motherhood and practices of the migrants. Now we move to the first story about doing motherhood.

The Story of Khem

Spanger met Khem at her work place: a traditional massage clinic, where she performs traditional massage and a few sexual services. It was through outreach social work at the programme that Spanger got in touch with Khem. She is 36 years old and migrated to Denmark in 1999. It was through her second husband, an Israeli man who already lived in Denmark, that she became familiar with the country. Today, Khem holds a residence permit in Denmark and she has just separated from her Israeli husband. These days she mostly resides at the massage clinic, since she has no home of her own due to her recent divorce. Khem is a single mother and her two daughters age 14 and 15 from her first marriage live in Thailand. After she migrated to Denmark both daughters moved to live with their grandmother. At present, one of the daughters lives with the father. A decision Khem's mother made. Thus, Khem's transnational mothering is defined by a global care chain where her children are cared for by their grandmother and father in Thailand.

Khem *I have my mother and my family and my two daughters that I have to take care of and I decided [to go abroad]. Before, I didn't work with such kind of job [massage]. I choose Denmark because I like a kind of freedom...*

Marlene *How did you began your life in Denmark?*

Khem *I worked. My [second, MS] husband made a contract so I worked for his company. My husband took care of me and I worked. We had a clothing shop. We had import/export. I was lucky because my husband teaches me correct [Danish language], told me how it should be done – I was lucky. He is my family.*

Marlene *How often do you contact your daughters?*

Khem *I call them every day. I buy these cards [prepaid cell phone card]. I call my mother. I have her phone number and my daughter's number. And then I call my other daughter in Bangkok.*

Marlene *What do you talk about when you talk with your daughters?*

Khem *About her life... if she has any problems then we take care of it together. My mother she is little bit difficult because she is just as old people towards the child. I tell my mother that she shouldn't yell or scream at her, but instead she has to listen and talk to my daughters' teacher if something happen. I tell her that she has to listen to what she [her daughter] says and what the teacher says. And then I ask my child what is*

going on. I try to explain so she [her mother] understands. If they hit my child I get sad and cry and the child cries, too.

Marlene Have you considered bringing you children to Denmark?

Khem Of course! But (sigh heavily)... some families [referring to other female Thai migrants] here in the country are lucky because the husband accept that they have the child here. But my husband doesn't want... it is not because he doesn't want to accept them. But he told me that it is better for Thais [she means probably the children] to stay in their country. I think he is selfish because I want my child close to me. My husband I don't think he accept it and he talks in another way because he has two sons. ...they are adults now 30 and 27 years old.

The way she does transnational motherhood has changed during the migration process determined by her former work in her ex-husband's company. Khem migrated as a single mother leaving her children behind. She re-married - an Israeli man residing in Denmark - and visits Thailand and her daughters quite frequently due to the nature of her job. Since she divorced him, she can no longer afford regular trips to Thailand. Thus, her possibilities to exercise face-to-face motherhood are reduced wherefore she performs transnational motherhood by non-local practices into a skype-motherhood. Through the daily telephone contacts Khem tries to get a solid knowledge of their daily life, eventual troubles and discuss solutions to them.

Khem ...my husband, he doesn't want to... it is very hard to ask: can you send money to my children? Can you send money to my mother? Can you send money for my children's schooling? ... he says "no" ... Since I went abroad seven years ago the last time I was home was for three years ago.

Marlene But before?

Khem Every second week together with my husband I went to Thailand. I was helping him buying clothes. Every time I was in Thailand I booked a hotel room to my daughter and my mother. Every day we stayed over together.

Sending remittances has caused problems between her husband and Khem, which is not unusual in marriages between female Thais and Danish men that find it difficult to understand that their wives have economic obligations towards their families in Thailand. As in the case of Khem, the migrant

often disagrees with their spouse regarding the amount of financial remittances. This new form of mothering, skype mothering, allows Khem to understand(s) herself as a caring mother and inscribes herself in a discourse of motherhood stressing emotional closeness. She is, in our understanding, an absent though emotionally present mother, she shares feelings with her children and discusses their problems on the phone and is in this sense present as a mother. She obviously misses them, but she has not brought them to Denmark for different reasons. When still married, her Israeli husband opposed the idea, and her rights to bring the children to Denmark relied on his consent given that both Khem and her children were dependant on him with the regard to housing and economic matters. Both Khem and he would have had obligations towards the children. After she has been granted a permanent residence permit, she is independent of her ex-husband and his consent. However, Khem would have troubles meeting social and financial obligations related to the children due to long working hours, and after the divorce she has not had her own apartment to bring her children to. Thus, she would have difficulties caring for her children in Denmark in the way Danish authorities require.

The mothering of Khem is defined by an economic responsibility, emotional and social presence regarding the form of up-bringing of the children. Being a caring transnational mother, she experiences the clash between two different ideals of care: the traditional one performed by her mother and her ideal of care as based on dialogue and trust. She is ambiguous, though accepting the traditional motherhood position by letting her mother makes one important decision on her behalf concerning the place of living for one of her daughters. Interfering in how her mother brings up the children indicates that she takes an active part in how her children should be educated in Thailand. Despite that, she misses being with her children, she stresses that living in Denmark and being herself has given her a kind of independence for structuring her working life (she is the owner of the massage clinic) and her leisure time. Thus, the transnational mothering of Khem is a complex and contrasting construction determined by loss, some financial security and independency. We suggest that the complexity is also a result of the constraints of the migration regime. The combination of Khem's low skilled position on the labour market, her difficulties in caring for her children due to her working schedule and her former Israeli husband's disapproval regarding bringing the children constitute a very difficult situation. Khem is a physically absent but emotionally present skype mother. She inscribes herself in contradictory ideas of motherhood though stressing the modern, dialogical and freedom oriented form of motherhood determined by her transnational migration.

Care is performed in various ways – not face to face – but through seeing and taking responsibility for needs for care using Tronto's (1993) terminology. Khem does motherhood in a different way than Nee who is the physically present but emotionally absent mother. We will meet Nee below.

The Story of Nee

Spanger followed Nee and, sometimes, her daughter, Sank, through the programme, which involved weekly contact to the social worker from the programme. This meant that Spanger met her, and sometimes the daughter, in different situations and settings. Nee is 35 years old and arrived to Denmark in 2001. A short time after her arrival Nee met a Danish man who she married. The contact was established through her sister, who already lived in Denmark. Having one daughter, Sank, from a former relationship in Thailand, Nee is a single mother. Her aunt and uncle and to an extent her ex-mother-in-law took care of Sank after Nee went abroad. In 2004 Nee brought her daughter to Denmark when she was 12 years old. In 2005 she filed for a divorce from her Danish husband and applied for a residence permit. After Nee moved from her Danish ex-husband in 2005 she, as a single mother, acquired a rented flat for her and Sank from the social programme. Shortly after, Nee met a new Danish man.

Social worker Why did you go to Denmark?

Nee My older sister, who lived in Denmark offered me a job as babysitter. In reality, I could help cleaning.

Nee continues by telling that she missed her daughter and wanted to bring her to Denmark. At the same time, Nee stresses that she did not want to bring her daughter the first time round. Every time she left her daughter after a visit in Thailand her daughter wouldn't let her go. In addition, her ex-mother-in-law did not want to take care of Sank any more. During the three years Nee lived in Denmark and Sank in Thailand, Nee and her new Danish husband visited her daughter once a year.

Bringing Sank to Denmark has not been unproblematic for either Nee or Sank. Living a life in Denmark where Nee works during the day as a kitchen assistant or working at a massage parlour and sometimes keeps her older sister company at her massage parlour at night leaves hardly any time for taking care of her daughter. Besides, Nee got a new boyfriend with whom she often stays

overnight. This means that Sank is alone all night and in the morning. Every afternoon Nee sees Sank and gives her some money for food. Such a turbulent life has caused a troublesome relationship between Nee and Sank. Quite often, Sank bunks off from school together with another Thai girl, who is in similar situation.

The Social worker knows that Nee has got a new boyfriend with whom she often stays overnight. With an insisting voice, the social worker underscores to Nee that it is important she is at home in the morning, afternoon and evening so Sank is not alone. Likewise, the social worker tells Nee that it is important that they eat together, that she talks to her daughter, does things together with her, holds her and gives her a hug. Nee does not say anything, she just nods. The social worker continues, asking: 'Why do you choose living with your boyfriend rather than living with your daughter? You can't just bump her!' Nee's only answer is 'Sank cannot change. She looks like her father too much. She does not behave as I tell her to and she pull faces in front of me'. Nee emphasises to me and the social worker that she just wants her daughter to go to school and get an education so she can take care of herself. Nee continues: 'It is like that I can't focus on the job when I have problems with Sank, when she doesn't listen to me.' At the same time Nee says that she cannot afford to take care of her daughter. This reply is not acceptable to the social worker who says: 'You need to have close contact to your child and you are obliged to pay maintenance for your child. There is no security or love in that kind of institution [24-hour care centre].'

Nee is considering sending Sank back to Thailand to her father. Her younger sister suggested that the state could take responsibility for Sank. To the social worker, Nee stresses that she did a lot for Sank when she brought her to Denmark. This, she repeats several times during the meeting.

Nee's story reveals some of the complications that arise when the migrants bring their children to Denmark. Nee's transnational migration process is based on informal networks consisting of her sisters already living in Denmark. They helped her settle down in Denmark, find a job and established contact to her former Danish husband. Marrying a Danish man, Nee solved a housing problem for her and her daughter until she filed for a divorce. The global care chain involves her mother caring for her daughter in Thailand. This care chain changed when Nee brought her daughter to Denmark, which was possible due to the Danish migration policy on family reunification.

After Nee brought Sank to Denmark, her motherhood changed from one of transnational motherhood to local motherhood; she is no longer part of a global care chain with her child, although she could still be part of a global care chain in regard to her parents. At that time, Nee applied for a residence permit for Sank, she depended on the consent of her former Danish husband with the regard to housing and economy, which placed her in a vulnerable position. Nee no longer depends on her Danish ex-husband regarding her social rights. Now she is able to receive various social benefits enabling her to meet the financial and social obligations with the regard to Sank. However, according to the Danish social authorities, Nee has troubles meeting emotional and social obligations towards Sank. In particular, Nee's story reflects a cultural clash of different ways of doing motherhood. Contrary to Khem, Nee is the physically present mother having brought her child to Denmark, but she is emotionally absent. Nee is confronted with the dominating discourse of motherhood within social work in Denmark that constructs motherhood as a female subject who is emotionally present, takes an active part in the everyday life of the child(ren) and involves herself in it. The social worker explains to Nee how she should behave as a (good) mother which disciplines Nee to a particular ideal of the good mother. This discourse of motherhood is quite different from Nee's way of doing motherhood stressing facilitative aspects such as housing, food and access to education.

During the process from transnational motherhood to local motherhood, her motherhood changes from a skype motherhood to a local, physically present motherhood. Despite the change of motherhood emotional insecurity and financial security is still characteristic of Nee's situation; just in another form. Placing high expectations on their children, the female Thai migrant sex workers lives sometimes make it difficult for them to take care of their children, as in the case of both Nee and Khem. Nee expects a kind of gratitude from Sank given that her daughter has the opportunity to go to school, have an education; by and large they live together with her in Denmark. In practice, however, there is no space for Sank in Nee's everyday life in Denmark. Being a low skilled migrant, Nee finds selling sex as an attractive alternative to jobs as cleaners or kitchen assistant. Nee works late at a massage parlour or helps her sister there. Consequently, her working life conflicts with her care giving to Sank despite her rights to bring Sank to Denmark as in the case story of Khem. Nee brought her daughter to Denmark, but the physically presence has not involved emotional care thus emotional insecurity and financial security still characterise her motherhood. Frustrations dominate their relations.

Conclusion

When female migrants bring their child(ren) to the receiving society - in this case Denmark - the care chain involving the child(ren) disappears. Other care chains relating to parents or parents-in-law might still exist, but they have not been investigated in this study. Despite representing the downside of a global care chain and living in an unequal global world, Khem's and Nee's agency are manifested by their skype and local motherhoods. Organising the ongoing contact to their children through transnational communication, filing for divorce and organising their own lives reflects agency. They have both obtained some sort of financial security concerning themselves and their child(ren). Khem performs emotional presence and physical absence through skype motherhood, whereas Nee is emotionally absent and to a greater or lesser extent also physically absent despite the geographical closeness of her daughter. They do motherhood in different ways. Also at play is the confrontation between Nee's understanding of a good mother and another one represented by the Danish social worker.

How a child responds to a new country depends upon the child's life so far, its relations to other caregivers, its reactions to change and the motherhood performed. For this group of female migrants bringing children also depends on two other crucial factors: housing conditions and the consent of their new husband as shown in a study by Sørensen and Guarnizo (2007). Due to this complexity, policy solutions are not simple. There is a need for more differentiated policy instruments providing more than rights such as concrete help to perform motherhood under their specific conditions of work. Help where the disciplining effects are minimized by not uncritically reproducing naturalized discourses about motherhood.

These two stories make us reflect upon the relationship between rights and obligations. We have not questioned the necessity of a right to bring the migrants child(ren) to the new country. Instead it is our intention to question the often naturalized relationship between rights and obligations through the two stories. Rights are often codifications of obligations such as expectation concerning migrating mothers. Their different ways of doing motherhood seems to be at odds with traditional and local understandings of good motherhood as physical presence, wherefore policy solutions should be cautious not to reproduce or facilitate one form of doing motherhood over another.

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Doing Marriage and Romantic Love in the Borderland of Sex Work: Female Thai Migration to Denmark

Abstract

This article analyses how the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant intersect in the narrative on romantic love of female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark. To a certain extent, the borders between migration, sex work and marriage are fluid. I argue that romantic love is a relevant category within studies on transnational sex work if we want to grasp the complexity of female migrants' sex sale. In this connection, conditions such as the strict Danish migration policy according to which non-EU citizens can only be granted a residence permit through marriage with a Danish citizen become relevant. The article analyses how romantic love is ascribed multiple meanings by the female Thai migrants selling sex.

Keyword

Sex work, Love, Marriage, Thai migration, Danish Policy

Introduction

From the perspective of love this article inquires into marriage, sex work and migration, asking how they intersect in the case of female¹ Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark. Their migration can be defined as both female labour migration and marriage migration given that searching for better work opportunities and marrying a man from a more affluent part of the world become survival strategies. What characterises the narratives of these females is on the one hand that marrying a Danish citizen is the only way to obtain legal residence and a work permit in Denmark. On the other hand, romantic love is predominantly linked to sex work and marriage throughout the narratives. The interviewee statements about self-images regarding love must somehow be taken at face value and not disallowed. Thus, I do not intend to justify their emotions towards the Danish men as 'real' or 'false', or leave out the perspective of love and affection given that the female Thai migrant sex workers very easily appear cynical and calculating in their relationship to the men in question. Rather, addressing the agency and the subject positions² of the females from a poststructuralist feminist perspective I pose the following question that gives rise to a more complex picture of this social group: how is love constructed within the intersection of the subject positions of wife, migrant and sex worker in their narratives?

Predominantly, studies on marriage migration/mail-order brides refer to male migrants who seek wives in their countries of origin (Thai, 2003: 231), or men who seek wives abroad as unequal relationships through e.g. dating sites (Flemmen & Lotherington, 2007). Another body of literature examines how family and identities are reorganised within female labour migration focusing on the impact of the transnational links (e.g. Mahler & Pessar, 2001; Pessar & Mahler, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Sørensen & Guarnizo, 2007). Agustín (2007: 23) stresses

that migrants working in the sex industry are often neglected since this research predominately centres on domestic and care workers. However, a synthesis of the perspectives of female labour migration and marriage migration grounds a third growing body of literature on the transnational sex industry work that inquiring into how migrants selling sex in the more affluent parts of the world or sell sex to tourists (see e.g. Agustín, 2007; Cabezas 2004, 2006; Mix & Piper, 2003; Thorbek & Pattanaik, 2002; Davidson, 2001; Ryan & Hall, 2001; Brennan, 2001, 2003; Kempadoo, 2001, 1999; Davidson & Taylor, 1999; Cohen, 1982).³ Such studies are relevant in the case of Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark although love is a non-unfolded component within the literature on transnational sex work. A number of studies on female Thai migrants selling sex in Germany and Norway pay explicit attention to the ways in which labour migration and marriage are central elements in these migrants' survival strategies, but leave out love (Mix & Piper, 2003; Kristvik, 2005; Ruenkaew, 2002).

Within different current research areas a feminist reading of love is taken up investigating how love is a construct produced by global power relations, economy and gendered social relations (Barriteau, 2008; Padilla et al., 2007; Cabezas, 2004, 2006). Cabezas questions why love, romance and money are separated within sex tourism. In her studies she demonstrates how sexual commerce within transnational tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic are fluid and ambiguous by foregrounding how labour practices (guide jobs, waitresses, cleaners, entertainers, sex work etc.) intertwine smoothly with love and intimate relations in tourism. In particular, Cabezas (2006) suggests that sexuality, affection and emotional labour are an integral component of the transnational tourist resorts in Cuba that become dynamic strategies of the staff in order to improve their lives.

Aware of the tendency of studying love and in particular inspired by Cabeza's studies (2004, 2006) on sex tourism/tourism and love I call for the perspective of how love is a component the sex industry or commodified sexual relations. Bringing in love in combination with labour migration and marriage migration I should like to focus on migrants selling sex.

I intent to provide a more complex picture of female Thai migrants selling sex, by bringing in the Danish migration and prostitution policies as societal conditions for the agency of these female migrants.

Grounding the analysis in two different case stories, namely those of Lek and Lucy respectively, it is my aim to contribute to an extension of the research area of transnational sex work by bringing in the perspective of love. To do so, I revisit Cohen's groundbreaking study from 1982 that brings love into play within sex tourism and addresses a poststructuralist approach to love. This approach focuses on the agency of the subjects and how they negotiate love within transnational marriages (Faier, 2007; Suzuki, 2004; Cheng, 2007). Inspired by this approach, I intend to contribute to a reinforcing of a complex understanding of how sex work, migration and marriage intersect within the research area of transnational sex work. I emphasise how Lek's and Lucy's agency, in terms of performing love, is a premise of how their subject positions of wife, sex worker and migrant intersect. Drawing on Phoenix's (2006) and Brah & Phoenix's (2004) analytical concept of intersectionality the article reveals how a number of subject positions (Butler, 1990) give rise to the complexity of lived experience. In the story of Lek, she is introduced to her future husband in Denmark – well aware of the importance of finding a husband before her tourist visa expires. By contrast, working as a dancer and having no intention to go

abroad, Lucy met her future husband at a tourist resort. In different ways both case stories represent female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark.

I begin by outlining how Cohen's (1982) study on sex tourism and the poststructuralist approach to love (Faier, 2007; Cheng, 2007; Suzuki, 2004) render love relevant to this article. By drawing on Cohen and a poststructuralist understanding of love related to marriage and sex work, the article demonstrates how useful the component of love is in analysing the complexity of female migrant sex workers' agency within the research area of transnational sex work. The next section presents female Thai migrant sex workers and considers how the Danish migration and prostitution policies affect this group. Based on Lek's and Lucy's narratives about their encounters with Danish men, the following sections examine how the subject positions of wife, sex worker and migrant intersect on the basis of love.

The article relies on fieldwork carried out in Copenhagen from September 2005 to April 2006. I interviewed 14 female Thai migrants selling sex, had informal conversations and engaged in participant observations. Inspired by Nencel (2001), my fieldwork was structured into day and night observations. For five months during the daytime I followed a social worker from a counselling programme targeting female Thai migrant sex workers. In particular, I observed four of the interviewees, and I gained insight into some of the obstacles they faced relating to residence permits, marriage and boyfriends, parenthood, income opportunities, selling sex etc. At night, independently of the counselling programme, I conducted participant observations at bars (both ordinary bars and strip bars) and events like Thai concerts, private birthday parties etc.

Approaching romantic love

Romantic love is commonly considered an irrelevant perspective within studies on sex work (Cheng, 2007: 247). Nonetheless, emphasising complexities in analysing how the subject positions of wife, migrant and sex worker intersect in the narratives of the female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark, the analysis benefits from the literature that puts love to the fore. In particular, I find two approaches relevant: Studies that take an actors' point of view and a poststructuralist approach (see e.g. Cabezas, 2004, 2006; Cheng, 2007; Faier, 2007; Suzuki, 2004; Cohen, 1982).

Cohen's (1982) analysis of love relations within sex work focuses on Thai females working as bar girls, masseuses or coffee shop girls and male tourists looking for companionship and sex during their stay in Thailand. Paying attention to the actors' points of view, Cohen (1982: 411) outlines four types of exchange: *Mercenary* (solely services exchanged for money), *Staged* (women feigns emotional attachment, and economic exchange is camouflaged as love), *Mixed* (mixture of love, social and economic exchanges) and *Emotional* (love is solely based on emotional involvement). Although these four typologies derive from a tourist resort setting, the narratives of the female Thai migrant sex workers about their relations to the Danish men reflect identical liaisons. Inspired by Cohen's distinction between emotional, social and mercenary sexual relationships, this article analyses how such components intersect from an actors' perspective, but constrained by immigration and prostitution policies. Thus, I argue that love should be analysed from an actors' perspective. However, sympathising with Cohen's idea of bringing love into a sex work context I question his conceptualisation of love as an "intrinsic gratification" (1982: 414). Such an understanding emanates from a rather monolithic Western

psychological discourse on love. Instead, I bring in a poststructuralist understanding of love and underscore that analysing power relations is still highly relevant. Through the understanding of love as a social construction, a normative interpretation of migrants selling sex, in terms of 'false' or 'real' love for their partners/clients, can be avoided. This would qualify studies on transnational sex work. Instead, love is ascribed different meanings depending on the specific context. Drawing on a poststructuralist approach to love I refer to literature on female migrants working in the entertainment industry, marriage and love (see Faier, 2007; Suzuki, 2004; Cheng, 2007). The entertainment industry exists in the borderland of the sex industry, but this body of literature emphasises only the aspects of marriage, migration and love. Addressing love as a social construction I intend to point out the absence of the perspective of romantic love within research on transnational sex work; an absence that reflects how controversial the issue of love and transnational sex work is.

From a poststructuralist point of view, love is a discourse that sets the conditions through which the migrants articulate forms of agency and subjectivity within the setting of transnational relations of power. Thus, love is a social practice that is negotiated and reproduced (Cheng, 2007: 228; Faier, 2007: 149). Both Cheng and Faier study female Philippine migrants, but in different countries. Cheng focuses on their liaisons with U.S. soldiers that are stationed in Korea, pointing out that love does not erase power differentials between the partners. However, Cheng (2007: 243) demonstrates how women turn romantic love into a source of power, and love becomes what she calls "the weapon of the weak" given that the women draw on the rhetoric and the symbol of love when negotiating with the U.S. soldiers. In my case, love appears as necessarily "the weapon of the weak", but it seems that love can also

be “the weapon of the strong”. Faier (2007) focuses on the liaison between female Philippine migrants, working as hostesses in Japan, and Japanese men. Articulating their jobs in terms of love, Faier (ibid. 154-155) notes how the migrants enabled themselves to identify as “cosmopolitan, modern women”, and how they invoke love for their Japanese husbands as a way to challenge the stigma associated with such transnational marriages and as gratitude towards their husbands for supporting their families in the Philippines.

Applying love as a social construction allows me to develop a complex analysis of female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark, by considering romantic love encounters and relationships as articulated in terms of both emotion, money, gifts, care and notions of “the good husband” and the nuclear family. Practising and negotiating love, the female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark perform the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant. In this process love is ascribed different meanings.

Before analysing the case stories of Lek and Lucy I will present the social group of female Thai migrant sex workers and the Danish policies on migration and prostitution.

Female Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark

Marrying a Danish male citizen

All the female Thai sex workers I met during my fieldwork were single when they migrated.⁴ The majority of the female-born migrants have children from former Thai relationships.

Going abroad is not just a matter of fulfilling individual needs. Rather, being a single mother and having a financial responsibility towards parents are the main reasons for migrating to Denmark. Many of the interviewees also emphasised the economical aspect as a way to legitimate the sex work and respond to the stigma. Some leave their children with family members in Thailand prior to their departure for Denmark while others bring their children with them.⁵ Some Thais also have children with their Danish husbands. Several of the interviewees indicated the desire to live in a Western country as a reason for going abroad.

The interviewees have low-paid jobs as cleaners, kitchen helpers, bartenders, factory and plant workers etc. In addition, they supplement their income with earnings from sex work at massage parlours, massage clinics and bars or as dancers and hostesses at go-go bars. All of the Thai females migrating to Denmark were granted residence and work permit after marrying Danish male citizens, which involves social, emotional and economical relations. This is the only way for them to overcome the strict Danish migration policy on residence permits.

One interviewee has been married for convenience, all other 13 interviewees narrate about relations and marriages that imply emotional affection, economic and social relations. The liaisons between the female Thai migrant sex workers and their husbands or boyfriends are established at tourist resorts in Thailand, or they have been introduced to their husband in Denmark through sisters or female Thai acquaintances already living in Denmark. The tourist industry becomes a stepping-stone to many females from the less affluent parts of the world, and the sexual encounter becomes a potential opportunity to migrate by means of marriage (Brennan, 2003).

Before 2006, non-EU citizens were not able to apply for permanent residence permits before they had been married to a Danish citizen for three years. If the

marriage breaks down before the end of the three years, the temporary residence permit is automatically suspended, and they have to apply for a new permit. This law is valid for the migrants I have talked to (Danish Immigration Service, 2007).⁶ Since 2002, the Danish government has made the law on marriage and family reunification more restrictive for the purpose of limiting the flow of non-EU migrants to Denmark (Danish Government, 2002). The Danish government stipulates a number of demands and obligations (age, the size of the residence, self-support of the married couple, language and 'culture' training etc.) on the married couple (Danish Immigration Service 2007: 24).⁷ In the first period after the migrants arrive to Denmark, the Danish spouses provide for them, and subsequently they apply for work. This legislation places them in a quite vulnerable position due to dependence on their husbands concerning their residence permit, economy and housing.

Confidence is a crucial aspect in these relations that are based on economic and social inequality and where the elements of exploitation and suspiciousness are at the fore. Afraid of losing their residence permits and having poor knowledge of their rights and obligations in Denmark and no confidence in the Danish authorities, they do not acquire help. Also husbands married to female Thai migrants sometimes have the feeling of being exploited; seen as only a source of economic security and an entrance to a Western society. Despite bad experiences with Danish men, some of the Thai sex workers continue employing the strategy of finding a new man when they have housing problems, although they have the right to receive help.

Sex work in Denmark

Viewed from a juridical perspective, selling sex is a contradictory phenomenon in Denmark. Being documented migrants, the earnings from selling sex is not a criminal act if they pay tax of their income or do not receive social security.

However, sex workers cannot be members of unemployment funds or receive unemployment and early retirement benefits, and the opportunity to receive sickness benefit is complicated due to the contrasting rights and obligations in Denmark (Rasmussen, 2007: 109-110). Thus, no working rights are linked to sex work in Denmark. Rather, the state's articulation of selling sex derives from the discourse of social policy (Spanger, 2008). As migrant sex workers they are offered social and health counselling by the state. Some of the migrants that hold permanent residence permits receive welfare payments. However, on an overall level this social group of Thai migrants has difficulties in navigating within the Danish system and knowing their social and civil rights and obligations. The combination of having no working rights regarding selling sex and being dependent on their Danish husbands for seven years places them in a vulnerable position. Even though they have social rights to receive help from the state, their poor language skills and knowledge about the Danish system make it difficult for them to exercise their social rights.

Only a few of the interviewees told me about experiences from the sex industry in Thailand, as in the case of Lucy. The majority were introduced to the sex industry in Denmark through sisters, female Thai acquaintances or husbands. For example Lek was introduced to the sex work by the female Thai migrant who helped her to Denmark.

The majority of the females sell various sexual services at massage parlours, and others work at massage clinics. Besides selling traditional Thai massage, they sell the sexual service of a "handjob" which is a more concealed service. Similar working tasks exist among female Thais who work at massage clinics in Norway (Kristvik, 2005). Working at a massage clinic, Khem tells me that she does not advertise "handjobs". If the client asks, she sells this sexual service for extra

payment. However, the females draw a clear demarcation between “handjobs” and other sexual services, explaining to me that they have their virtues to consider. Other interviewees work as dancers and hostesses at strip bars. Besides a fixed salary, they earn money by selling sex to the patrons. The hostess is allowed to leave the bar together with a patron after he has bought a bottle of champagne. According to Lucy, who has worked as a dancer and a hostess, her main income stems from selling sex.

The massage parlour is not just a work place defined by sexual exchange. It is also a gathering point where the female Thai migrant sex workers frequently stay overnight and hang out both during the day and night, eating and playing cards together. Within this space, marriage and intimate relations between these females and Danish men are established. Predominantly, the Danish husbands and boyfriends are somehow connected to the milieu revolving around the Thai massage parlours or bars as sex clients, bouncers or some kind of helpers. Others do not know that their wives sell sex as in the case of Thram and Daeng. They have just told their husbands that they visit the other female Thais at their massage parlour. Another female, San, conceals her sex work to her husband telling him that she cleans. Contrary to this, other interviewees recount how their husbands or boyfriends help them at the massage parlour by running errands, functioning as security etc. Nearly all the interviewees have divorced their first Danish husband and subsequently met new Danish men with whom they strike up new love affairs. After Lucy divorced her Danish husband, she met a boyfriend at the strip bar where he worked as a bouncer. Thai migrants’ sex sale in Denmark is explicitly commercial. Yet, other relations such as affection and friendship also arise. Kulap had an affair with one of her clients, and also Lek was in love with one of her clients: “I was crazy with a man while I was working here [at the massage clinique]. I liked him. I couldn’t sleep, I couldn’t eat. He was separated from his wife. I was crazy, crazy, crazy with him, but he was not

crazy with me. [I said to him] I give you three free hours!" In this example the distinction between commerce and affection is blurry, Lek's services become a sign of affection and not a service for sale. The articulation of love through sexual service and money is also noticeable in the example of Nee. One of her clients from the massage parlour fell in love with Nee, which became apparent through his offers. Nee tells me that he wanted to help her settle her consumer loan, and she and her daughter were offered to move into his apartment. Some of the men have been acquainted with other female Thais either in Denmark or through journeys to Thailand as in the case of Nee's new boyfriend. Among the men a fetish for the female Thai is quite common. The 'exotic other' is worshipped in terms of images of 'the Thai woman'. Bishop and Robinson (1998: 127 ff.) draw a line from sexualised images reproduced within sex tourism to the late eighteenth century images of the Orient regarding abundance of sexuality, sexual opportunities and available women. Davidson and Taylor identify similar fantasies among male sex tourists, stating that "sex is more "natural" in Third World countries, that prostitution is not really prostitution but a "way of life" ..." (1999: 43).

In the following sections I analyse how romantic love is articulated within the narratives of Lek's and Lucy's agency regarding the intersection of the subject positions of wife, sex worker and migrant.

An awkward seduction

Having two broken relations behind her and two children from the first relationship, Lek holds the breadwinner position alone. This is the reason why she decided to migrate to Denmark. A friend from Lek's village introduced her to Denmark, housed

her when she arrived to Denmark in return for working at the friend's massage parlour, and organised the contact to her Danish husband. According to Lek, the encounter between her and Tage was not a coincidental conjuncture. Presumably, he was a part of the network around the massage parlour. Before they married Tage already planned that she would open a massage parlour. Disagreeing with him and being persistent, she opened a traditional Thai massage clinique.

Lek: Sometimes she gave me 1000 baht... I think she was really nice and thoughtful. She says [to me]: "Really come. Leave. Why should you stay here and be poor?" I borrowed from a monk at a temple. And my friend she helped me to Denmark... In the beginning when I just had arrived [in Denmark], I stayed over at her place for a few days and worked at her place [a massage parlour]. And then I was introduced to Tage. After three days I moved into his place.

Author: What was your first impression of Tage?

Lek: At first sight then I liked him. Then he invited me out for dinner that day.... And then I said: "Now we have eaten and so on, you have to drive me back to my friend's house." And he returned me to the shop [massage parlour], but it was closed. And then he clapped his hands and says: "splendid, the shop has closed I can't return you." And then he drove me to his place. He told me that he had something for me. It was a globe with light in seven different colours. I don't know who had bought it for him...but it was sugar talk. Then I said: is that what you want to show me... a globe in seven different colours... Then I thought: Arhh, you old arsehole...was full of...lies. I didn't realise we were going to be romantic, I didn't understand it...it wasn't like that for me. And I think it was fucking annoying, it was pitch black and these candles and music. Then I turned on the light.

Author: Have you ever felt that he pressured you?

Lek: No matter what, he always spoiled me. So, I said "yes."We went out shopping for shoes ...we went out shopping for blouses [for her]. Several times we went out to dine.

Lek's marriage is not only a gateway to a residence permit, but also associated with romantic love, intimate relations and a nuclear family. Returning to Cheng's (2007: 243) suggestion that love turns into a source of power as "the weapon of the weak", the case of Lek is quite the opposite. Love becomes "the weapon the strong" given that Tage tries to take advantage of staging romantic love through dinners and shopping; a long-term strategy for marrying Lek and earning money on her sex sale. Cohen terms such a kind of romance as *staged*, related to the opportunity to be granted a residence permit or to sexual and economical exchanges. Although Lek easily sees through his awkward seduction by stating that "it was sugar talk" and "you old arsehole...was full of..lies!" and is aware of the premises of the encounter, she is hoping for affection and love. She perceives of the subsequent gifts and dinner invitations as signs of romance and affection. Similarly, her former Japanese boyfriend provided for her and her children, which she understands as a sign of love. Before she migrated to Denmark, she lived in Japan for a short period.

Lek: I was so lucky that I met a Japanese man and he liked me. He was so sweet that he took care of me, like the way I took care of my children. So good was he to me. I lived well. He gave me everything... I needed nothing.

Narrating about her former boyfriend she gives the impression that that affection constructed their relationship. She had the same expectations when marrying Tage. Bringing her daughter later on, she expected them to be a happy family, stating, "It was...this I have hoped I could have together with Tage." In Lek's case, marriage migration and the shaping of the subject position of wife are closely connected to romantic love. Unlike this, the subject position of sex worker is negotiated between Tage and Lek as a premise of their marriage given that they disagree to what extent Lek should sell sexual services. Hence elements of economy, residence permit and

expectations of affection and intimacy form a specific relation that is in this case closely linked to the borderland of sex work. The following case story of Lucy is another example of how love is a social construction implying affection, sex work and finally access to a Western country.

“He was my first love the Dane and I”

The encounter between Lucy and her future husband takes place in a tourist resort in Thailand where liaisons between tourists and locals are often ambiguous and diffuse like Cohen (1982) and other scholars (e.g. Cabezas, 2004; Ryan & Hall, 2001) demonstrate. Payment and sexual services are blurred, and often mixed with other services (companionship, guide and interpreter to the tourist). Besides, the liaison goes from one night over a week or further, and the client and the sex worker do not perceive of the liaison as prostitution given that the encounter takes place in coffee shops, restaurants, on the beach and in bars; spaces that do not signify prostitution.

Lucy: In the beginning when I just arrived at Pattaya [a tourist resort], then I waited at a restaurant. I had a friend who worked as go-go dancer, she said to me: “Lucy, you will get more out of it if you work with me.” In the beginning I didn’t dare. I went to the place [where her friend worked as a go-go dancer] I only served alcohol and beer.

Author: Was it difficult to dance the first time?

Lucy: No, in my heart I love music. You see, I like to perform. I wasn’t shy.

Author: And then you met your former husband?

Lucy: Yes, he was on holiday.

Lucy (*addressed to the interpreter*):

Is she [Marlene] aware of what a “farang”, who goes to Thailand and goes to Pattaya is? Is she aware of what kind of a place Pattaya is?

Lucy: I loved him..... He was my first love, the Dane and I. In the beginning he said to me that I should stop working. He said: “I will send

remittances to you." Yes, then I stopped. I waited at home and he sent remittances. I tell you I got 5,000 baht a month and I agreed to stop working. Can you then see that I loved him! Only 1,000 Danish crowns a month... A Danish woman had just broken his heart and then he went to Thailand, but just for vacation. It wasn't to be intimate with a woman either. It was a coincidence... Well, at home [in Thailand] you don't have to look for love. It comes to you.

Interpreter (*addressed to Lucy*):

So, you had not decided to.... [unclear]...farang?

Lucy: I wasn't, because I had decided finding a...[.....] He invited me [to Denmark]. He loved me!

Drawing on Faier's (2007) interpretation of love, a complex understanding of sex work, love and marriage arises in Lucy's situation. Faier suggests in her study that love enabled the Philippine migrants to claim "a sense of humanity in the face of their work in the hostess bars" (2007: 157), and the women's love stories about how they met their husbands at the bars "stressed their agency in their marriages" (2007: 153). Something similar is seen among the female Thais in Denmark. The way Lucy links her bar job together with love is a way to legitimise her marriage with the Danish patron. Articulating love in relation to the bar life bears witness to the complexity of Lucy's encounter with the Danish man. First, Lucy makes a close connection between love and transaction. She understands the remittances as a sign of commitment from the Danish man. Giving up her job as a dancer because he only sent 1,000 Danish crowns, for her clearly less than she earned as a dancer in Pattaya, is an action that proves her devotion to the Danish man. Second, she narrates the encounter with the Danish man as a romantic encounter. By underscoring that it was a coincidence that they fell in love and not a calculation is probably a way to appear as a 'respectable woman' in front of me. Thus, Lucy is aware of the male tourist's purpose of visiting the nightlife at Pattaya, when saying, "Is she [Marlene] aware of

what a “farang”, who goes to Thailand and goes to Pattaya is? Is she aware of what kind of a place Pattaya is?” Farang is the Thai word for a foreigner of European origin, and it can be used as an insult. Presumably, when Lucy talks about Farang, she is referring to the white ‘First World Man’ looking for female Thais who sell sex. Thus, narrating their encounter at the go-go bar as a romantic love that resulted in marriage is a way for Lucy to challenge the stereotypes of the ‘First World Man’ and the ‘Third World Woman’. Suzuki (2004) demonstrates how the binary stereotypes of ‘First World Man’ and ‘Third World Woman’ are inadequate representations of Philippine-Japanese marriages. Likewise, similar stereotypes cannot represent the relations of the female Thais and the Danish men. Narrating about her job as a dancer in Thailand, love plays a central role in Lucy’s case story. Hence, it breaks with the stereotype of the victimised ‘Third World Woman’. Likewise, another female Thai migrant sex worker, Lee Ann, assures me that she loves her Danish husband whom she met in Thailand, and again she swears that she never worked at a bar in Thailand. Probably, bringing in love as an emotional involvement is a way to state virtuousness, as a counterbalance to the stigma of a ‘fallen woman’, a female who predominantly sells sex.

The sexual encounter between Lucy and the Danish man is determined by the space of sex tourism where elements of sexual services, longer relations and romance are blurred. Thus, love is a premise in the construction of the subject positions of sex worker and female migrant in Lucy’s case story. Falling in love is perceived as a possibility within Lucy’s sex work, and becoming a wife is the result of love. Different from Lek, Lucy does not link her migration to a financial issue, but is solely seen as a consequence of emotional involvement.

Conclusion

Approaching love as a social construction as well as linking the females' narratives and the Danish policies of migration and sex work together within the study of transnational sex work, create the opportunity to conduct a complex analysis of how sex work, marriage and migration intersect in the case of female Thai migrant sex worker in Denmark.

Both in Lek's and Lucy's self-understanding love appears as an important premise for performing the subject positions of wife, sex worker and female migrant. Well aware of the structural constraints (coming from a less affluent part of the world and having financial problems), but emphasising love in their narratives, they do not appear as either victims or cynical, and their marriages do not appear as an instrumental institution.

The female Thais reproduce a social space where marriage functions as an opportunity to acquire a residence permit when migrating to Denmark as a non-European citizen. Simultaneously, romantic love is a category that is negotiated in relation to sex work and marriage. Both Lek and Lucy consider gifts, money and activities such as selling sex to be signs of love. In Lek's case, love is connected to dreams about and hopes for creating a 'Westernised' nuclear family and "the good husband", given that she and Tage negotiated to what extent she should sell sexual services. In Lucy's case, however, love occurs as another form of premise related to sex work. Here love is an emotion related to and a way of legitimising sex work. Love legitimises the subject positions of sex worker and wife to a 'First World' man. However, this sexual encounter also reproduces the stereotyping subject positions that her future husband represents 'the white Western man' going abroad to 'the exotic lure of Pattaya'.

Bringing in the aspect of love from a poststructuralist stance focusing on the subjects' agency and points of view within the research of transnational sex work, I question sex work and sex worker as stable categories. In line with Cabezas (2004), I rather argue that love and intimate relations are unavoidable categories in analysing the complexity of commodified sex and sexual relations.

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¹ Referring to 'female' rather than 'woman' I stress that Thai migrant sex workers contains biologically born women, transgendered persons and cross-dressers; all identifying themselves as female.

² When drawing on a poststructuralist approach to subject position and agency I refer to Butler (1990).

³ The issue of sex tourism stems from the research area of tourism. I argue that this tradition crosses the research area of transnational prostitution (see e.g. Cohen, 1982; Ryan & Hall, 2001).

⁴ The female Thai migrant sex workers form a particular social group within the small Thai community in Denmark. In 2009 the total number of Thai migrants in Denmark was 7,316, consisting of 6,109 females and 1,207 males (*Statistics Denmark*, 2009). The numbers show a gender bias with a clear majority of females. Some of the male Thais are descendants of the females and others are transgendered persons (m-t-f).

⁵ For further details about their single motherhood see Dahl & Spanger (2010).

⁶ After 2006 the law changed. Not until after seven years of marriage is it now possible to gain a permanent residence permit.

⁷ See Law on foreigners §§ 7-9.

Gender performances as spatial acts: (Fe)male Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark

Abstract

Synthesising Butler's theory with space, the objective of this paper is to investigate how female Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark understand normative heterosexuality and femininity/masculinity as these are reproduced in the sex industry in two different settings. I analyse the ways that gender plays a part in sex work. Likewise, the paper analyses the ways in which sex work plays a significant part in how the female Thai migrant sex workers understand their gendered subject positions in the spaces away from their sex work. The analysis of the Thai migrant sex workers becoming intelligible or non-intelligible gendered subjects depends on different spaces. In this paper I focus on the space of domesticity, the space of commercial sex and the quasi-public space of leisure.

Key words: Gender; Heterosexuality; Space; Sex work; Migration

Introduction

This paper analyses how gender performativity among Thai migrants selling sex depends on how they perform and navigate between different spaces in Copenhagen, Denmark.¹ These Thai migrants consist of female-born persons, transgendered persons (Kathoey in Thai) and cross-dressers (all m-t-f).² Such a diversity of femininity within Thais selling sex is not unusual (Brummelhuis, 1999). Drawing on Butler's (1990, 1997) theory on how formations of the gendered subjects are produced through power relations and performativity, I analyse how transformations of the gendered subjects

of Thai migrant sex workers depend on spatial relations by following them in different situations (their encounter with the social authorities, at the bar and here listening to their narratives on selling sex, the Thai migrant community etc.).

Poststructuralist critical human geographers (Massey, 2005, 1994; McDowell, 1999; Green *et al.*, 2008; Murdoch, 2006; Skeggs *et al.*, 2004) offer an approach that provides a nuanced contextual understanding of how gendered subjects are regulated, shaped and reshaped within the nexus of social, economic and cultural conditions. Gregson and Rose (2000, p. 441) provide tools for analysing how Butler's concept of performativity relates to space, arguing "that it is not only social actors that are produced by power, but also the spaces in which they perform." Thus, specific performances bring spaces into being. By analysing where, how and to whom Thai migrants sell sex, gendered subjects can be identified as what Butler terms 'intelligible' (1990). The literature investigating sex work from a space perspective is dominated by studies on street prostitution and red-light districts focusing on how sex work is regulated within the public space (Hubbard & Sanders, 2003; Hubbard, 2001; Sani, 2002). Conversely, I focus on how Nook and Yam Cao perform and navigate between spaces in order to represent 'intelligible' gendered subjects in these spaces. I argue that the transformation of gender depends on the specific spatial acts. Other poststructuralist empirically driven studies on sex work (e.g. Trautner, 2005) draw on Butler's theory focusing solely on the level of subject formations and neglecting materiality (e.g. physical surroundings). Such studies explicitly leave out how the societal context are conditions for the gender performances of the subjects. By contrast, I focus on the nexus of discourse and materiality when analysing how gendered subject positions are constituted within spaces.

The analysis is grounded in two settings. The first, that of Nook, represents the widespread narrative of Thai female-born persons who sell sex, whereas the second, that of Yam Cao, is rather unusual among Thai migrant sex workers because he cross-dresses. From a poststructuralist approach, the

two stories together represent the poles of heterosexuality among the Thai migrant sex workers.³

Three spaces become central: 1) Yam Cao's hairdressing salon which can be seen as a quasi-public space, 2) The space of commercial sex where economic, sexual exchanges and practices are paramount, located at strip bars and massage parlours, 3) The space of domesticity which revolves around the negotiation of motherhood between Nook and representatives from the social work. In different ways, all three spaces are determined by gender hegemonies instituted by a heteronormative discourse; regardless of the way in which bodily and sexual practices and sexual desire and gender interweave. Analysing how Nook's and Yam Cao's sex sale relate to the ways they become intelligible gendered subjects reflects how the migrants transgress the dominant western discourse of heterosexuality constituted by a sex/gender distinction. Previous studies (See Prieur, 1994; Kulick, 1997) have explored how (trans)gendered identities among sex workers in the so-called third world are constructed on the basis of local cultures. In the case of Thai migrants selling sex in Denmark I argue that it is not just within a local limited culture that gender is constructed. A number of studies (Manderson, 1992; Bishop and Robinson, 1998; Davidson, 1998) claim that transnational sex work is defined by a western discourse of heterosexuality through global processes of social, economic, cultural and political relations. This understanding maintains a distinction between 'us and them' that implies a rather fixed monolithic understanding of 'the western'. By contrast, from a poststructuralist perspective, western heterosexuality is ascribed multiple meanings depending on "symbolic systems and localized practices of meaning" (Murdoch, 2006, p. 8). As Walsh *et al.* (2008) have stated, studies on heterosexuality that transgress and de-naturalise heteronormative assumptions have been neglected within migration studies. By analysing how the gendered subject positions of the migrants depend on how they perform and navigate between spaces, I pose the following question: how do Thai migrant sex workers reproduce and subvert heterosexuality through the performance of gender in different spaces?

The article begins by introducing to the fieldwork. Framing the analysis, section three outlines a synthesising of the concept of space and Butler's theory on gender, performativity and subjection. Based on her criticisms of a western sex/gender distinction I investigate how these migrants are positioned as intelligible subjects through a gendered spatial performativity. In particular, I examine how binary categories such as man/woman and hetero-/homosexual are reproduced as regulating norms within the spaces. I refer Gregson and Rose's (2000) approach that refines Butler's concept of performativity by introducing 'performative spaces', i.e. spaces as indiscrete from other spaces, stained and enriched by the latter. The last sections analyse how gendered subject positions are performed through different spatial acts in the stories of Nook and Yam Cao. Thereafter, the article concludes.

Fieldwork among Thai migrants selling sex

Based on Hasse's (2000, 2002) ideas on fieldwork, my fieldwork consists of interviews with 14 Thais selling sex, informal conversations and participant observations.

During the daytime from September 2005 to April 2006 I followed the social worker of a social counselling programme that caters to Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark.⁴ At night during the same period and independently of the municipal programme I conducted participant observation at ordinary bars and strip bars.

Structuring the fieldwork in terms of day and night observations resulted in different entrances to the Thai migrant sex workers. During the fieldwork at the counselling programme a number of struggles occurred due to the combination of language barriers and doing fieldwork within the sensitive field of sex work. The sensitivity is a result of the politics surrounding prostitution, a phenomenon often subject to moral panic and condemnation in Denmark. These premises lead to a

difficult, but also a valuable fieldwork. First, the Danish and English language skills of the female Thai migrant sex workers are poor, and as I cannot speak Thai, I was reliant on an interpreter. Second, due to the sensitive nature of the interview subject, the interviewees did not trust any other Thai interpreter than the social worker, with whom they are very close. This meant that the social worker also functioned as interpreter at the interviews with those interviewees who only spoke Thai and were connected to the programme. I suggested using an interpreter from outside the Thai migrant community, but they rejected. Third, both the social worker and the interviewees had difficulties distinguishing between the interview situations and the social work. This despite the fact that I had from the beginning made my aim and position (as an academic) clear when I introduced myself to the interviewees at the counselling programme. Also, the distinction between the double position of the social worker, as both social worker and my interpreter, became blurred during the fieldwork. Consequently, in some interview situations (see the story of Nook) the social worker took over when I conducted the interviews. Seeing that she had a very clear attitude towards sex work I was uncertain of her translation when she disagreed with the interviewees. Later, a second interpreter has checked and transcribed the taped interviews. The second interpreter, who also assisted me at night, has no connections to the Thai migrant sex worker milieu in Denmark, and I did not experience similar struggles as in the daytimes.⁵

Following the counselling programme I gained insights into the obstacles that the Thai migrants faced relating to marriage and boyfriends, parenthood, sex work etc. Moreover, I had the opportunity to meet them in different places (at their homes, the hairdressing salon, social security offices etc.). Collecting different narratives through interviews and participant observations in different places gave me an insight into their everyday situations and how their gender performances depend on spatial acts. The navigation of the migrants between the spaces reflects how they become intelligible/non-intelligible gendered subjects within the particular space.

I established contact with Nook and Yam Cao through the counselling programme where they are connected in different ways. Nook gets regular help from the programme when she needs to get in contact with the authorities (health visitor, social services department etc.). Sometimes the social worker visits Nook or accompanies her to the authorities. Often the social worker eats lunch together with some of the Thai migrants connected to the programme, including Nook. By contrast, Yam Cao's contact with the counselling programme is rather informal. He never goes to the programme's office or receives concrete help. Instead, now and then, the social worker passes by his salon for a chat and cup of coffee knowing that he has financial worries and sells sex at night

Theoretical framework: performativity, subjection and space

Butler's critical poststructuralist gender theory has become a turning point within a number of disciplines and studies. Primarily within feminist and queer studies her theory gives rise to studying the multiplicity of unstable gender categories for the purpose of questioning naturalised heterosexuality (Eng *et al.*, 2005; Hawkes, 1995). Butler (1990) focuses on how the subject is culturally intelligible within specific western epistemological and philosophical discourses. In contrast, I investigate how the subject becomes culturally intelligible within everyday life discourses through multiple spaces. Thus, drawing on Butler's philosophical discussion I intend to develop it to provide analytical tools for quite another setting. To do so, I find Gregson & Rose's (2000, p. 434) interpretation of Butler (1990, 1993) rather useful. They extend Butler's version of performativity⁶ with space from a critical human geography approach, stating that the close connection between performativity and space can be described as 'performed spaces'. In particular, within human geography Butler's concept of performativity is crucial for understanding social identity, difference and power relations and the way that space articulates these (ibid.). The constitution of the gender category as unstable among Thai migrant sex workers becomes clear when analysing how they

navigate between the different spaces in which they perform. Before elaborating the synthesising of Butler's theory and space, I outline how her (1990, 1993, 1997) concepts of performativity and subjection are relevant when analysing how Thai migrant sex workers understand heterosexuality and femininity/masculinity, how gender plays a part in sex work, and how sex work relates to the migrant sex workers' understanding of their gendered subject positions in spaces away from their sex work.

Butler (1990, 1993) challenges the naturalised heterosexual matrix by questioning how gender, based on a sex/gender distinction, is constituted. According to Butler, the sex/gender distinction relies on the idea that *sex* is pre-discursive and prior to *gender*. Thus, *sex* poses as 'the authentic': "the corporeal ground (the body) upon which *gender* operates as an act of cultural inscription" (Butler, 1990, p. 186). This entails practices, speech, gestures, appearances etc. being construed as signs of two genders, 'woman/femininity' and 'man/masculinity', assumed to result from the sex (Butler, 1990, p. 173). Through the heterosexualisation of desire the two genders and the two bodies are consolidated as binary opposites in a power system where 'woman' is seen as inferior to 'man' (ibid., p. 23). Within the heterosexual matrix, the two genders become intelligible, while other types of gendered subject positions are rendered impossible when gender does not follow body, and when sexual practices and desire do not follow gender (ibid., p. 24).⁷ However, homosexuality and bisexuality that transgress the heterosexual matrix are accepted within this matrix; though positioned in a hierarchical order (Hawkes, 1995, pp. 265-266). Thus, the heterosexual matrix sets a limit to the possible ways of signifying gender. In the case of the Thai migrant sex workers who are transgendered or cross-dress, they subvert this heterosexual matrix and its assumed two genders. The subversion as well as the reproduction of the heterosexual matrix depends on the citational practices of the female Thai migrant sex workers. The transformation of their bodies through hormones and/or surgeries introduces a slippage within the heterosexual matrix. Some keep their penis and have

operated breasts, others have undergone a complete change, and others again do not have any surgical procedure or take hormones, but only cite femininity through dress and gesture.

By deconstructing the heterosexual matrix, Butler analyses how intelligible gender institutes and reproduces the cohesion between the four components: body, gender (how we socially and culturally are raised as female or male), sexual practices and sexual desire (Butler, 1990, p. 23). In this way, ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are established through specific relations between *body* and *gender* as well as *sexual desire* and *gender* that require specific *sexual practices*. In this respect I argue that the limit of gender configurations depends on the particular space that offers possibilities and sets constraints. Focusing on these components as performed within the narratives of Nook and Yam Cao, I investigate how they become intelligible gendered subjects in different spaces through their agency.

Butler (1997) argues that *becoming* a subject is an ambivalent never-ending process termed ‘subjection’ that “consists in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never choose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency” (Butler, 1997, p. 2). Simultaneously, this process of subordination constitutes the subject. Thus, the subject is produced within a process of power relations, compulsion and reproduction conditioned by the heterosexual discourse that constitutes and dissolves the very same subject at once. The ambivalence becomes the premises of the subject’s existence, which is captured by the tension between what Butler (1997, p. 18) calls “already there and the yet-to-come.” Within this process the gender performativity of the subject takes place.⁸ Addressing Butler’s version of performance, Gregson & Rose (2000, p. 441) stress that performances always must be connected to the citational practices (reiterations of norms, bodily practices, gestures, appearance and words) which simultaneously reproduce and subvert discourse; in this case the heterosexual discourse. At the same time, citational practices enable and construct the subjects and their performances. For the subject it is not a question of citation or not, rather it is a question of *how* the subject does citational practices (Butler, 1990, p. 185). These practices are not

mechanical, but “produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence” in terms of the heterosexual discourse (ibid., p. 33). The possibilities for disruption or slippage rely on how the subject cites, and “there is no guarantee [...] that its repetition will be successful” (Gregson & Rose, 2000, p. 437). Subversion of the two genders or of heterosexuality is a consequence of the slippage that is inherent in citation. Thus, gender performativity creates a tension between an institutionalisation of gender and the possibility of disputing gender.

With reference to Gregson & Rose (ibid., p. 437), stating that “the discourse of heterosexuality is always threatened with its own instability”, I analyse how the gender performances of Nook and Yam Cao subvert the heterosexual matrix in different ways. In the case of Nook, it is a matter of doing ‘right’ femininity in various spaces, whereas in the case of Yam Cao, it is a matter of how, when and where he transforms gender. Focusing on how slippages or disruptions take place when Nook and Yam Cao perform gender, I argue that it depends on the spaces. Thus, the heterosexual matrix functions as a mechanism that seeks to discipline the subject; and in the very same process, multiple gendered subject positions are constituted, e.g. female sex worker, single mother, the well-respected male Thai. Not all are intelligible.

Gregson and Rose’s (ibid., p. 325) concept of ‘performed spaces’ refers to the fact that both the gender performances of the subjects and spaces are reproduced by power relations. However, the places in which performances occur (massage parlours, bars, hairdressing salons etc.) cannot be said to pre-exist these performances; merely waiting to be mapped out by them. Places like the massage parlour, the strip bar or the hairdressing salon do not have authenticity or are not just places for commercial sexual or leisure. Rather, specific performances bring spaces into being (Gregson & Rose, 2000, pp. 441-442). Understanding space as multiple, relational, unfinished and always in the process of being made, rather than just a passive backdrop to social relations or identity work, derives from a poststructuralist tradition (see e.g. Green *et al.*, 2008; Murdoch, 2008; Massey, 2005;

Gregson & Rose, 2000; McDowell, 1999). In particular, Gregson & Rose (2000, p. 442) explore “the social relations of performances and the relationality of their spaces” by suggesting that “another source of performative instability is the blurring of clear distinction between positions and spaces” and that “performed spaces are not discrete, bounded stages, but threatened, contaminated, stained, enriched by other spaces; as are the performers.”

Addressing space as performative allows me exactly to analyse how different gender performances within the stories of Nook and Yam Cao constitute various gendered subject positions. Simultaneously, the performativities bring the spaces into being in rather different ways. In the case of Nook I demonstrate how the performance of the subject position of sex worker creates instability in the process of performing the domestic space. Quite the opposite form of performance of spatial acts takes place in the case of Yam Cao. Compartmentalising the spaces by transgressing the sex/gender distinction through his gendered citational practices, Yam Cao is able to maintain a stability of the performed spaces that constitute his everyday life. The following section analyses the story of Nook.

The story of Nook

Navigating between home and the strip bar

The female-born person Nook is 34 years old and has lived in Denmark for more than six years. She works as a dancer and as a hostess in a strip bar. At the moment she is taking a break from the strip bar due to the birth of her child. After Nook got pregnant, she faced housing shortage, and the programme procured a flat for her. Before, when she worked at the bar, Nook rented a room from the bar owner, located in the same building as the bar in a neighbourhood dominated by a mixture of ethnic restaurants, fancy cafés, porn shops, go-go bars, massage parlours, street prostitution and

restored old dwellings. Nook's belonging is connected to this area. Her everyday life revolved around the strip bar. The social worker had difficulties in persuading Nook to accept the suburban flat eight kilometres from the strip bar. Since she moved to the outskirts of Copenhagen, no one passes by or visits Nook anymore. As another Thai migrant from the strip bar noted, "I don't know where the area is located!" After Nook moved to the suburbs, she became isolated and experienced a loss of community. She does not want to live there away from the nightlife and the strip bar that constitute the space of commercial sex. The social worker underlines to Nook that living on the outskirts is good for her and her daughter; a nice flat with a good view, surrounded by small squared lawns! The strip bar situates the space of commercial sex, associating night life, sex work and making money, whereas the new home in the periphery of Copenhagen situates the space of domesticity. The negotiations between the social authorities and Nook about 'proper' motherhood bring this space into being. The two contrasting spaces organise Nook's life: motherhood/sex work, day/night life, and in/out.

The space of domesticity

Having difficulties with the father of her daughter, Nook intends to apply for full custody. At a meeting at Nook's flat, the social worker, a health visitor and a social worker encourage Nook to apply for custody. At such meetings, the function of the social worker is only to support Nook, and, if necessary, translate for her. Self-support, self-discipline and self-help are goals of social work, and Nook is seen as a 'strong client'; a single 'foreign' mother who wants to commence a Danish language course, a good caregiver towards her daughter, and someone who creates a home. In particular, the social worker emphasises to the two social authorities how happy Nook is about the flat, stating how wonderfully she has created a home, pointing at the new furniture and the curtains. All three speak with Nook about being a (single) mother. During the meeting, the health visitor and the social worker praise Nook for doing a good job with her daughter.

Living on the outskirts of Copenhagen, creating a home and devoting her time to her daughter signify practices that constitute Nook's motherhood within the space of domesticity. The way Nook performs motherhood around the social workers makes her gendered subject position intelligible. Applying for custody, she displays to the social authorities the "will" to become a responsible mother. This is important to Nook, seeing that the performance of acceptable and unacceptable femininity is a delicate balance. Within social work in Denmark, selling sex is solely signified as a social problem where the construction of the prostitute relies on the discourse of victimisation (Spanger, 2010). Very keen on helping the Thai migrants to find a job outside the sex industry as cleaners, the social worker has raised the issue of Nook's job situation several times. She wants to discuss Nook's job plans after her maternity leave is over in order to help Nook out of prostitution. The following extracts are from my interview with Nook in which the social worker takes over the interview.

*SW*⁹ Yes we have to be prepared that Nook has to be in employment when she applies for custody. You have to find a job in the daytime.

Nook Do I have to find a job!

SW You have to find a job. If you want to be awarded custody on your own, then they [the social authorities] look at.....

Nook They have written that I have to attend a language course next year.

SW It is good, it is really good. Then you can tell them [the social authorities] that you receive social security, attend school, you are home at night... you take care of your child...

Nook Yes, but in reality.....in my heart I want to work as before [at the strip bar]. But it's just that that it's at night.

SW But who can take care of Stella at night?

Nook That is the problem!

Researcher But can't you find a babysitter? If you make good money you can pay a babysitter.
Other people work at night.

SW Yes, it's a bit of a slippery downward path as it won't work in the long run. And how can she do it [sell sex at night], and when...and when is Stella old enough for somebody else to take care of her...

Nook Yes, I am tired of thinking about the future.....

SW [addressed to me in Danish while Nook was present]

Mmm, if she [Nook] was cleaner at night, then it would be fine, but she is not....

Discourses of motherhood, including ideas of home and having a 'proper' job, dominate the space of domesticity. This space establishes the premises for performing intelligible femininity, such as the subject position of single mother which becomes a counter-construction to the subject position of the female sex worker who prefers to sell sex or does not recognise herself as a victim. Consequently, Nook's femininity becomes non-intelligible in the space of domesticity when she talks about how she sells sex. In this way the space of domesticity is contaminated by the space of commercial sex; the last-mentioned space creates instability within the space of domesticity.

Nook explains her view on selling sex to the social worker:

Nook Phi Bum,¹⁰ when you ask me what I want to work with – but you have to know that it is not necessary to wriggle. It is not necessary just to lie down on the bed with legs apart. It is not like that. All who work have their skills. It depends on how you speak, on your style and charm, how you play up to them. It is what you say that determines the sum of money. It is the words that decide!

The translation of the social worker:

It's not that, it's the way you act, act your role. Then you earn a lot of money.

Nook But Phi Bum the work with the guests... if you want something from them then you have to show consideration for the guests. Not just fool them all the time. Then they notice it.

Through the detailed explanation of how Nook understands her sex work – attitude, flirtation, conversation and the sex practices – she tries to position herself as a gendered intelligible subject within the space of domesticity. Gender is communicated through appearance (Hawkes, 1995). Nook dresses up and performs body language that connects gender, body, sexual desire and practices by way of citational practices constituting a feminine subject position that meets the idealised heterosexually desirable object within the space of commercial sex. With the combination of her (female) body, dress and body language and flirtation with the male clients, her sexual desire and practices addressed to men, Nook lives up to the cultural norms of citing 'right' femininity as a heterosexual sex worker. Moreover, Nook refers to the encounter with the guests as a professional skill.

The simplification of Nook's explanation, within the translation process of the social worker, reflects how she attempts to communicate another picture of Nook. Translating that Nook 'acts a part' when selling sex, the interpretation of the social worker reflects a distinction between a 'real' self and a 'false' self. This distinction made by the social worker is yet another example of how Nook's narrative about performing femininity within the space of commercial sex contaminates the space of domesticity. The way in which Nook performs the subject position of sex worker around the social workers is impossible within the space of domesticity.

The space of commercial sex

After performing a strip show, one of the dancers enters the bar ready for having a flirt with the guests. Very soon one of the men addresses her. Another woman, working as a hostess, has already engaged in small talk with the guests. Wearing tight-fitting and low-necked dresses with large slits, a coat with feathers, high heels and makeup, the women from the strip bar intend to give the impression of exclusive, sexy, femininity. Seduction and attractiveness are important assets in order to perform intelligible femininity that brings the space of commercial sex into being. The dancers, hostesses and bartenders are Thai female migrants, female-born persons and transgendered persons.(m-t-f). Only the bouncers are white Danish men. Those frequenting the strip bar are Danish and tourist males. Missing the place, Nook sometimes visits the strip bar at night to have a chat with the employees. It is not unusual that friends of the hostesses and the dancers pass by in their spare time to have a ‘fun time’ and a drink.

The strip bar is a place where notions of the ‘exotic other’, employed by the categories of race, gender and sexuality, are remade and played out by the female Thai migrants and Danish men through sexual exchange and the profit economy.¹¹ Studies on commercial sex performances (Bott, 2006; Trautner, 2005; Manderson, 1992) point out that desire, lust and imagined sex are constructed within such a space. As Trautner (2005, p.772) argues, a central premise for such bars is a “consumption of women’s bodies and the presence of those bodies in hegemonic male fantasies.” Bott (2006) underscores that physical appearance is directly related to profitability within lap dancing. This condition is present at the Thai strip bar, too. Very rapidly the sex workers estimate whether the guest is interested in buying sex. Not only the choice of clothes and makeup, but also how they address the guests, move or gesticulate are spatial acts that perform intelligible heterosexual femininity. Within the space of sexual exchange this constitutes attractiveness and the perfect seduction.

This space relies on a complex gender hierarchy that exceeds the heterosexual matrix. The hierarchy is instituted by power relations between the transgendered females and female-born subjects who sell sex, and between masculinity and femininity. This relation is determined by profit, consumption and commercial interests. Both female groups vie for the male guest favour. Such relations reproduce an extreme heterosexual gender hierarchy caused by the ways in which femininity evokes through the components of gender, body, sexual desire and practices.

They [Kathoeys] outnumber us and they are much pushier. We women do not dare to do the same. When we sit, we put our legs together. When it is a Kathoey, they have to show off.

There is a clear difference. I sit next to the men, a Kathoey sits on the men's lap.

Making a clear demarcation between 'us and them', the 'normal vs. abnormal' femininity, stating: "we are women" and "they [Kathoeys] can't compete with a woman" demonstrates that the space of commercial sex is performed. Here Nook naturalises female-born subjects by signifying that only they possess an inherent femininity. According to Nook, the two genders depend solely on the genitals the subject is born with (penis, vagina, hormones etc.), or what kind of bodily parts the person has developed (breasts, hips etc.) later on.

Drawing on the idea of 'the original body' when asserting that "...they can't compete with a woman, a real pussy", Nook does not recognise Kathoeys as 'real women', despite the fact that they have undergone medical surgery and take hormones. From Nook's perspective, the gendered citational practices of the Kathoeys reflect slippages that disturb her performance of femininity.

Simultaneously, she is challenged by how the Kathoeys reshape their bodies through medical surgery in combination with their height and build (often tall and slim), since transgendered females perform

ideal femininity as sexual objects in the space of commercial sex. Following Nook, the spatial acts of the Kathoeyes subvert the heterosexual discourse.

Who can compete with silicone? Simply the way they stick out. It has to be in this way! And then their cunt – ooh fuck... “My pussy is giant” something like that they [Kathoey’s] say. The guests like when it [genitalia] is voluminous...

Nook regards their social acts towards the guests as a sign of “...inferiority because they are men.

They have to be more courageous. They have to show off for the guests, so the men want them.”

Nook depicts as overly feminine practice certain social acts and practices that are performed by the Kathoeyes. She is disturbed by the Kathoeyes due to how they perform female bodies that meet the norms of femininity in this space because their performance to a certain extent fits into the hierarchical binary gender system that refers to a sex/gender distinction, even if Nook rejects Kathoey as a gender category that performs ‘real’ femininity.

Being a good mother, a heterosexual desirable object etc. are what Butler (1990, p. 185) terms discursive routes that function as disciplinary mechanisms in the process of constituting intelligible gendered subject positions. Nook performs multiple subject positions of heterosexual femininity which are able to co-exist. However, the subject position of sex worker is not accepted by the social worker, due to the different spaces Nooks navigates between. Despite the intelligibility of the gendered spatial subject positions, Nook’s gender performances do not disrupt the gender ‘woman’ within the discourse of heterosexuality; rather she reproduces the discourse.

The story of Yam Cao: Navigating between the hairdressing salon and the massage parlour

The well-respected male migrant in the quasi-public space of leisure

Yam Cao is a 41-year-old male-born subject from Bangkok and educated as a hairdresser. He is quiet and gives the impression of being respectable and reliable among the customers in his hairdressing salon. He has short black hair and wears fashionable casual clothes. He is married to a Thai who lives in Bangkok. To a large extent, the marriage is an economic arrangement between two friends. According to Yam Cao, living separately is the best way to live, and for the moment he is looking for a boyfriend:

Yes, a part of me is gay. I do not go to bars and look for other gay men. I have a lot of gay friends, but they look like men. We talk together, understand each other and everything. [They are] from different... Thailand, Denmark, Japan....

Yam Cao's hairdressing salon consists of a quite small room loaded with different kinds of furniture. Besides two chairs for hair-cutting, the room is equipped with a refrigerator, two armchairs, a small sofa and a small coffee table. The old-fashioned furniture is slightly worn. The walls are decorated with posters of white male hair models and a photograph of a female Thai celebrity, a calendar from Thai Airways and photographs of members of the Danish and Thai royal families. The hair products and other items like 'Thai' ornamental objects (e.g. the shining waving cat and different statue versions of Buddha) are placed on the shelves and on the windowsill: items, at a material level, that signify the construction of 'Thainess'. The back of the shop is quite messy and small and functions as a storage space and kitchen. Yam Cao's place gives me an impression of a cave, even though it is a quite well-lit hairdressing salon combined with a sitting room in a domestic atmosphere.

The hairdressing salon has multiple functions. Besides being a hairdressing salon, it is also an informal meeting place during the daytime for different Thai migrants: middle-aged female Thais who hang around for a chat and a cup of coffee (Yam Cao describes them as his “housewife friends” who are all married to Danish men), Kathoey, the editor of a Thai diaspora newspaper and other Thai migrants. Yam Cao’s place also functions as a shop where small traders sell their lunch boxes and goods (handbags and jewellery). For Yam Cao, it is important that his salon is situated in the Thai community in the city due to his social life and network. His rented apartment is located in another part of the city where he is not involved in any kind of network. He is often, together with some of the leading owners of the Thai restaurants, in the photos taken during the different public Thai events in Denmark. These pictures are published in the Nordic Thai diaspora newspaper.

Being married to a female Thai, Yam Cao performs a heterosexual practice that meets the norms of the heterosexual matrix, despite desiring men. This citational practice of Yam Cao brings the quasi-space of leisure into being within the limits of the heterosexual matrix, which means that homosexuality is marginalised within the gender hierarchy. Yam Cao’s homosexual masculinity is only performed in the private space and appears as a ‘non-spoken’ subject position at the quasi-public space of leisure.

Performing femininity in the space of commercial sex

Yam Cao has rented a part of a massage parlour situated in a third area of the city. By selling sex to men, and at the same time performing femininity dressed as ‘a Spanish woman’ or as ‘an Asian woman’, he challenges the naturalisation of heterosexuality.

Yam Cao In the night times I have an extra job [*laughs*] at the massage [parlour]. Sometimes I am not directly a man. Sometimes I have a fun life with sex. It’s a freedom for me. So, at night times I advertise in the newspaper. I prefer to [give] massage [to] gay

men. In half of my life 40% I like men, 60% I like women. So, my economy in these four years is really bad. I lose a lot of money. So I don't like to [be off] at the night times. Maybe [while] I sleep I can make money too.

Researcher You did not get any operation, but do you define yourself as a woman?

Yam Cao Sometimes I do like that. I may apply a woman and wear the wigs, a nice wig. Sometimes I live a funny life. Sometimes it's like a woman's.

Researcher Do they [the clients] only fuck you or do you fuck them?

Yam Cao I prefer to fuck them. I don't like somebody touch my ass. But that is not good for me. I cannot make money then [*laughs*]. They [the male client] come and they say: 'fuck me'. Most of them, you know, very good hygiene, nice suits and looking good. They are nice and soft.

Researcher You dress up like a woman when you work in the night times and the men they know that you are a man, dressed up like a woman or they don't?

Yam Cao They know, they know! They call me direct. If you have a big cock very, very good money!

Researcher Could you try to describe your nightlife?

Yam Cao Yeah, last week I went to the massage shop about 8 o'clock in the evening. I put make-up and change the clothes. And then I watch the TV and sleep a little bit, maybe one hour, two hour. After 8 o'clock they call: 'Hey, what are you? What do you look like? Do you have place? Do you have big cock?' I say: 'Bla bla' about myself, my body. Maybe they like me. Maybe they don't like me, that is okay. If they are interested they come. About 7 am I wake up and go back to my apartment. I make food, take a bath and drink coffee. I open the shop [the hairdressing salon] at ten o'clock maybe 10:30 am.

Researcher Do you think it is hard to live this kind of way regarding the day life and nightlife?

Yam Cao I can only see the pleasure in it. I think it is fun, because I [belong to the] new generation... and freedom. It's ok and good for me, too, to help myself with my bad economy. That is the first thing.

Here multiple gendered subject positions are at play subverting the heterosexual matrix. Yam Cao defines himself as a man during the daytime and perform femininity at night. He does not hang out with Kathoeyes at bars, but only cross-dresses at the massage parlour. His descriptions of how, when and where he dresses up give me an impression of spatial practices which are very individual and concealed from other Thai migrants. This is why he does not fit into the social category of Kathoey or the female-born subjects selling sex. The way Yam Cao understands himself and the sex clients is not consistent with his performance of gender (dressing, practices, gestures etc.) that displace the cultural matrix. Even if he stresses to me that he defines himself as a woman, by cross-dressing he categorises the sex clients as gay men. The gender construction of the sex clients as gays emerges from the configuration of body, sexual practices and sexual desire. Thus, Yam Cao's female subject position is related to his gender categorisation of the clients.¹² His femininity relies on a different configuration. The components of the (femininity) gender, sexual desire and practices rather than the body constitute Yam Cao's female subject position. Wearing clothes that signify femininity he underscores to me that his inner femininity arises. It is through appearance (dress, to a lesser extent gestures, body language etc.) that femininity is communicated. This means that the functions of dress and appearances can disrupt the sex/gender distinction (Hawkes, 1995, p. 268). By contrast, Yam Cao's subject position as a heterosexual man is solely defined by the configuration that the gender follows the body. The sexual practices and the sexual desires do not enter into this configuration. The homosexual subject position, on the other hand, emerges from the configuration of gender following body and sexual desire and sexual practices addressing the same gender.

Compartmentalising the gendered subject positions through spaces

Due to various debts, the income from the hairdressing salon is not enough to cover Yam Cao's expenses. The nexus of his financial troubles and gender transformation becomes a significant reason for organising his everyday life into the three spaces: the quasi-public space of leisure, the private space and the space of commercial sex. Navigating between these spaces ensures that Yam Cao maintains the subject position as a well-respected male citizen within the Thai migrant community, and at the same time gives him the opportunity to supplement his income through sex work. This is why Yam Cao sells sexual services at night. Thirdly, selling sex to men gives him the opportunity to become a 'heterosexual' woman.

Somehow the fixed subject positions of hetero-, homo- and bisexuality become fluid, in the case of Yam Cao through his spatial activities and social relations. Through his gendered spatial acts he is 'compelled' to become an intelligible gendered subject within the discourse of heterosexuality, and at the same time there are slippages in his citational practices of heterosexual femininity regarding his sex work. Navigating between the apartment, hairdressing salon and the massage parlour lends Yam Cao the opportunity to constitute multiple spatial gendered subject positions that structure his everyday rhythm and social practices and give him an opportunity to both perform an intelligible heterosexual masculinity and marginalised homosexual masculinity within the quasi-public space of leisure. His performances of femininity, however, are not possible within this space. By contrast, at night, he performs femininity as a sex worker within the space of commercial sex. Within this space his gendered subject position is marginalised.

Positioned as a cross-dresser, Yam Cao becomes vulnerable within the space of commercial sex. Dressed as a woman (he is not slim or tall as are the Kathoey, and he is more dark-skinned) he does not represent the 'authentic Thai Prostitute'. So to say, he does not fit into the heterosexual two-gender system and Kathoey that structure the Thai migrant community. Moreover, he does not fit

into the categories of ‘a prostitute’ or ‘trafficking victim’ that are reproduced within Danish social work (Spanger, 2010). Being a border character has had its consequences. For instance, Yam Cao did not report a homicidal assault at the massage parlour to the police because he feared having to explain to them why he was selling sexual services dressed as a woman. Thus, the ways that Yam Cao performs gendered spatial acts and navigates between the hairdressing salon, his home and the massage parlour position him as both accepted and marginalised at the same time.

Conclusion

Combined, the stories of Nook and Yam Cao demonstrate how the discourse of heterosexuality is threatened by its own instability in rather different ways given that the subject positions of the female Thai migrant sex workers simultaneously reproduce and subvert idealised heterosexuality, determined by the notion of the binary system of two genders through the performances of gendered spatial acts. Thus gender is not merely a question of masculinity vs. femininity, heterosexuality vs. homosexuality. I argue that space is closely linked to this reproduction of the discourse of heterosexuality. Following Butler’s theory on gender, the reproduction of the heterosexual discourse is an ambivalent process described as citational practices of the subjects in terms of how they create coherence between the components of gender, body, sexual desire and sexual practices. Within the stories of Nook and Yam Cao a number of subject positions: sex worker, mother, well-respected male citizen and gay derive from various combinations of the components.

Performing intelligible motherhood in the face of the social authorities brings the space of domesticity into being. At the same time, this space is contaminated by the space of commercial sex when Nook cites the subject position of female sex worker through speech when talking to the social worker who in the end subverts this specific reproduction of heterosexuality. Thus, Nook’s sex work

becomes a threat to her motherhood within the space of domesticity. Differently, in the space of commercial sex, the discourse of heterosexuality is reproduced and subverted in other ways viewed from Nook's perspective. As a female-born subject she cites the idealised heterosexuality based on the two-gender system that is determined by sex prior to gender. Here the heterosexual matrix is challenged by the ways in which the Kathoey's bring the space of commercial sex into being by their gender performance. On the one hand, the Kathoey's are not intelligible according to Nook, due to how they transgress the idea of sex prior to gender. On the other hand, they are intelligible in terms of their looks and how they create their bodies (as the idealised female body) with the purpose of becoming heterosexually desirable sexual objects for male sexual consumption. In a rather different manner, reproduction and subversion of the heterosexual discourse take place in the story of Yam Cao.

Married to a female Thai in Bangkok and perceived as a respectable heterosexual male Thai migrant in the Thai migrant community in Denmark, Yam Cao brings the quasi-public space of leisure into being. Simultaneously his homosexuality is a concealed spatial act in the Thai migrant community in Denmark, which subvert the heterosexual matrix. Bringing the space of commercial sex into being by his citational practices of dressing up in feminine clothes, he on the one hand subverts the heterosexual notion of sex prior to gender. On the other hand, dressing up as a female sex worker he follows the idea of the female subject as a sexual object of masculine desire. Within the quasi-public space of leisure, Yam Cao's subject position as female is not possible and would threaten his public position as a well-respected male citizen. Thus, performing the subject position of a female sex worker is a spatial act that neither enriches nor contaminates other spaces like the quasi-public space of leisure or the public space of social work; rather, cross-dressing female sex worker is not possible. This is why he compartmentalises his gendered spatial acts in such a manner, and hence he is still able to reproduce the discourse of heterosexuality.

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¹ Sex work refers to both selling sex at the massage parlours, the ordinary bars and the strip bars. Some of the migrants work at the bars as dancers and as hostesses where sale of sex is a part of their task. Other women sell sexual services from ordinary bars. This kind of transaction takes place as a more concealed act.

² M-t-f is short for male-to-female.

³ Kathoeyes is a third group which is part of the gender hierarchy among female Thai migrant sex workers. They are not explored in this paper.

⁴ The objective of the social counselling programme is to inform about safe sex and offer support and counselling regarding social and health problems. A female social worker held the daily contact to the sex workers. A part of her job was also to translate from Thai to Danish/Danish to Thai when the Thai migrants contacted the Danish authorities.

⁵ For an elaborated discussion and reflections upon my fieldwork see my PhD dissertation (in prep.) (2010).

⁶ Performance is subsumed within and is also connected to performativity (Gregson & Rose, 2000, p. 441).

⁷ By “follow”, Butler (1990, p. 24) refers to cultural law and norms that establish and regulate the meaning of sexuality.

⁸ Butler denies that any active human non-discursive agency takes place (Gregson & Rose, 2000, p. 437). Instead, gender performativity underscores that gender is a *doing* without a *being* behind.

⁹ SW is short for Social Worker.

¹⁰ Phi Bum is an *older sister* in Thai. It is a Thai form of address that reflects a hierarchical structure.

¹¹ The category of race is not explored in this paper due to the question of the how many categories can be brought into play. I have prioritised the categories of gender, sexual desire, heterosexuality, body and to a certain extent nationality, whereas I deselected race. Nonetheless, I do not reject the relevance of race regarding how femininity/masculinity and heterosexuality are understood in the case of Thai migrant sex workers in Denmark.

¹² According to Kulick (1997, p. 577), Prieur (1994) and transgendered sex workers within non-western societies, the boyfriends and/or clients of the transgendered are not necessarily defined as homosexuals. Their sexual identity depends on the sexual practice (whom is being penetrated) rather than the body of the transgendered person.