Sexuality and Translation in World Politics



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When terms such as LGBT and queer cross borders they evolve and adjust to different political thinking. Queer became kvir in Kyrgyzstan and cuir in Ecuador, neither of which hold the English meaning. Translation is about crossing borders, but some languages travel more than others. Sexualities are usually translated from the core to the periphery, imposing Western LGBT identities onto the rest of the world. Many sexual identities are not translatable into English, and markers of modernity override native terminologies. All this matters beyond words. Translating sexuality in world politics forces us to confront issues of emancipation, colonisation, and sovereignty, in which global frameworks are locally embraced and/or resisted. Translating sexualities is a political act entangled in power politics, imperialism and foreign intervention. This book explores the entanglements of sex and tongue in international relations from Kyrgyzstan to Nepal, Japan to Tajikistan, Kurdistan to Amazonia.

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