

Sexual Partnering among College Students: Challenge against Traditional Sexual Control?

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Introduction

This paper explores present day issues of youth sexuality among Thai college students in terms of sexual companionships or *chii wit khul*¹ in order to understand how such relationships challenge existing social controls. Globalization and industrial development in Thailand has brought high economic development and increasing migration of youth from rural areas to cities, particularly for education and employment participation. These rapid socio-economic and mobility changes have greatly affected patterns of social and sexual behavior of Thai youth (Thaweesit, 2000; Ngamprapasom, 2001; Chamrattrithirong et al., 2007). Thailand's population growth rate has been low in recent decades due to a number of factors including people remaining single or delaying marriage for longer periods, a higher rate of divorce and couples cohabitating without marrying or having children (Chamrattrithirong, 1979; Limanonda, 1983; Xenos and Gultiano, 1992). The phenomenon of unmarried sexual companionship among youth is happening as Thailand starts its second demographic transition² which shows the sexual patterns and sexual values, norms, practices and behavior among adolescents and youth are constantly in transition.

The traditional sexual relationship within the context of marriage is widely validated by social norms and values which view this as a “good” sexual relationship (Songsamphan, 2004). The changes in sexual relationships among young people have been emerging for several decades in western societies, where patterns of cohabitation are widely accepted (Manning, 1993; Nevid, Fisher-Rathus and Rathus, 1995). This has raised a new discourse on cohabitation and youth's sexual relationships/ companionship which challenges the traditional norm. With time the new norms have diffused more broadly with less resistance from society (Foucault, 1979). In the developing countries,

where traditional social norms governing sexual relationships are often more strict, cohabitation and/or sexual companionship among young people are new and still challenge the traditional norms and values.

In the Thai traditional context, sexual relationships are accepted within wedlock. During the past few decades, many studies have found that sexual relationships among young adults have been changing rapidly in Thai society (Chamratrithirong et al., 2007; Prasartkul et al., 1987; Sittitrai et al., 1992; Danthamrongkul et al., 2004; Boonmongkol, et al., 2000).

Research Objectives

This paper is conceptualized using Rubin's (1984) theory of sex hierarchy and Foucault's (1978) theory. Focus on how power controls student's sexual behavior and role of social institutions towards sexual behavior and how youth resist such controls. Also the meaning of their relationship during their study without marriage.

The Study Setting

In Thailand, as in many countries, patterns of sexuality among youth, irrespective of gender, are in transition. Traditionally, sexual norms and values in Thai society have been very strictly defined and rigidly controlled (Aeusrivongse, 2004). Premarital sex is still frowned upon in Thailand, particularly among unemployed youth. College students engaging in sexual companionships have also not traditionally been accepted by society, with particularly strong social norms applying to young women engaging in sexual activity. (Podhisita and Pattaranavich, 1995; Ford and Kittisusathit, 1995).

In Thailand's contemporary transitional society, there are many young unmarried college age students to have sexual relationships. These relationships may involve living together in the same domicile or spending time together as a couple

(Mookhaew, 2001; Yamarat, 2007). *Chii wit khu* in Thai refers to two people, usually heterosexuals, who live together and have a sexual relationship. *Chii wit khu* includes couples who are married and couples who live together but are not married. In recent years *chii wit khu* has become a normal practice in college student sexual life. In this study *chii wit khu* is not limited to only heterosexual relationships. It refers to any unmarried students of either sex who identify themselves as *chii wit khu*, including couples where the partners are of the same sex or the opposite sex. The phenomenon of *chii wit khu*, or unmarried sexual companionship among youth, is happening as Thailand starts its second demographic transition with increasing levels of premarital sex and a distressing trend of low levels of practicing safe sex (Ford and Kittisusathit, 1994; Podhisita and Pattaravanich, 1995; Isarabhakdi, 1997; Chamratrithirong et al., 2007).

Theoretical Considerations

Gender and sexuality have been explored from different perspectives in different contexts. This paper takes a feminist perspective to examine youth sexuality and gender issues, drawing on the Gayle Rubin's (1984) theory of sex hierarchy and Foucault's (1978) concept of power, knowledge and discourse in sexual control.

The feminist perspective defines most societies as being patriarchal with men dominating (Pongsapich, 1997, Archavanitkul and Tharawan, 2003). The difference in social roles and status between men and women is not a consequence of biology, but rather the meaning that society has placed on being male or female. Both male and female identities are socially constructed as a product of male-designed social indoctrination and bias (Butler, 1990; De Beauvoir, 1984). In traditional Thai sexuality, power relations between men and women have been determined in a similar way to that highlighted in Rubin's (1984) theory of sex hierarchy which focused on sexual relationships between men and women through marriage and for the purpose of reproduction. This is the social definition of good/ normal/ natural sexual practices - heterosexual, within marriage, for the purpose of reproduction - while other types of sexual behavior - unmarried sex, sex between women, sex between men, commercial

sex or sex for pleasure rather than reproduction - are perceived as bad, abnormal or unnatural. Students' sexuality, sexual behavior and the social controls regarding sexuality are determined by the connection between knowledge and power that exist at different levels of social organizations. Foucault (1988) articulated important questions about power, how power works and controls the human body, as well as about sexual practices and behavior. These power centers are related closely with discourse and knowledge. Power produces knowledge and vice versa as they directly impact one another.

Social controls operate through power and knowledge in determining the sexuality discourse. This social control has been regimented and institutionalized by rules, policies and regulations for controlling power centers such as schools, hospitals, military institutions and prisons, etc. (Foucault, 1988). The type of knowledge that represents power depends on the prevailing ideology of a particular society. How power takes over and consumes sexuality and sexual desire is illustrated by the Victorian era's attitudes toward sex, defining it as a forbidden issue. Under repressive social control mechanisms, individuals suppressed their sexuality, many people got sick and depressed (Foucault, 1978). Foucault believed that discourse is combined with power and the technology of power, such as religion, family and medical institutions in producing an individual's sexual subjectivity. Power is related to resistance, he believed that wherever there is power, resistance is there also, existing side by side. Its forms and occasions are many (Foucault, 1978). Foucault's work *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1979), discusses "docile bodies" and "bio-power" as the result of power – knowledge in disciplinary practices. This takes place in institutions such as the military, education, hospitals and prisons using the discourse in the discursive systems of sciences, to train and correct individuals both as objects and instruments. The discursive practices are the medium or the means of putting the concepts into operation through training (Foucault, 1979).

According to Foucault (1979), "governmentality" is organized techniques through which peoples lives are regulated. It is a complex art of regulations which goes beyond self-control, control by family, society and finally by the state. Self governance

is one of the aspects of sexual control of individual; it uses the technique to control the soul, body and way of life of human beings of the discourse (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000: XII). It consists of three qualities: freedom, enterprise and autonomy. If a person is self-sufficient and has liberty and choice to do his/her work, s/he can regulate the activities. This is a prescribed way for people to achieve happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality (Foucault, 1988). At the micro level, the technologies of the self allow individuals to learn and monitor themselves against institutionalized discourses that control them. In short, power and knowledge can be very powerful tools to examine subjects. Regarding sexuality issues, governing or regulating sex means to govern a population both at the individual and group level by various technologies and strategies employed through the governmentality.

Methods

The findings discuss in this paper are based on data and experience that I gathered during my eight months stay at student community in doing ethnographic research on youth sexuality dynamics in one province of Thailand. Living with student community made me developed a close understanding of how present day youth deal with sexual issues, desires and patterns of sexual companionships, the significance of sexual relationships and how sexual behavior in student sub-cultures challenges traditional Thai values and norms. Gathering in-depth information from students and their partners and key informants I could feel and explore the reality of different kind of sexuality groups in college student community. During March 2006 to January 2007 in field work, I conducted 72 in-depth interviews and five group discussions apart from nonparticipant observation. The research assistants who are undergraduate students and local youth approached the informants to arrange an interview and ensured verbal consent was given prior to participation in the study. Each interview included discussion regarding the participant's sexual relationships/ companionships, the prevalence and acceptability of student sexual companionships, why they participate in these relationships and the social circumstances of sexual companionship. Also discussion on how they deal with the social institution that control sexual behavior.

The resulting transcripts were then systematically coded and analyzed using text and content analysis. The analysis of qualitative data particularly consists of rich information to examine patterns of youth sexuality, behavior, functions and mechanisms of sexual companionships and role of social institutions towards sexual behavior and resistant behavior against such controls.

Findings

Meaning of Sexual Relationship/Companionship

The meaning of sexual relationships among college/university students varies depending on their beliefs, circumstances and experiences such as love and intimacy; sexual pleasure and desire; finances, shared activities and living arrangements; sexual identity and orientation; and alternative ways of being single, having pre-marital sexual relationships or cohabitating outside of marriage.

“Starting new life, I wanted to have someone taking care of me. I am always think about the one I love and that he loves me. I feel I am ready and have decided to spend my life with him. He loves me and I love him, I can feel it. I do not want to be alone anymore. I was lonely before.”

Twenty three year old homosexual male.

“He is good for taking care of my emotions and many things such as, one day I was crying and depressed. He makes me laugh by acting like a baby and buys me many things. If my niece has some problems, he will help solve the problem and will not ignore it.”

Twenty three year old heterosexual female.

"We share sexual feelings, and also good friends. We share everything..., I sometimes I bring my dirty clothes she will do all the washing and ironing."

Twenty one year old heterosexual male

"We don't want to marry...we are still too young...I don't want to marry her....I want to finish college study first.. then want to get good job...."

Twenty one year old heterosexual male.

The first expression male is in a same sex relationship and looks for mutual love and caring in his relationship. The psychological and emotional needs for companionships were shown from 23 year female student's expressions. The last male spends most of his time with his girlfriend as they study in the same class, work, live and have every meal together. His girlfriend handles all the financial matters. He talks about his relationship. Thus it is clear those sexual companionships, relationships, or *chii wit khu* among student community were determined under different meanings. It has meaning beyond sexual satisfaction. Sometimes it seems their psychological needs are primarily to share love and sexual desires. Some students have companionships for sharing economic and social activities. Thus the phenomena of premarital sex, cohabitation and companionship have become more practice and acceptable behavior among university and college students. Modernization, economic and social transformation causes many young students not to accept or conform to the same ideology as in previous generations. Students are adapting their behavior to modern sexual practices instead of following the traditional norms that society wants them to follow.

There are many cases showing they started and continue their relationship, connectedness as it goes on the way from situation such as modernization, peer pressure or their own feeling of sexual desire. There are two female cases who were raped and many students were falling in the situation or willing to have sexual intercourse with the current partner and accept them as partner/boy/girlfriend. Another word means the traditional value of virginity/ monogamous or keep the relationship with the one you

have sex with as your partner are still playing a major role. Anyway these situation appearances there are some cases especially females express they do not want to continue the relationship or feel sorry for these relationships and want to get out of it. It is not so clear the sexual relationship being the cause of resist of the social norms and value or the situation they are falling to as it goes on. However it is shown that the present Thai social institutions are weakening and not intervening as much as in the past which may mean that they are beginning to accept the current generation's sexual values and norms.

Social Control

Social institutions such as family, school and state have controlled youth's sexual behavior in the past. This study describes contemporary patterns of youth sexuality in Thailand, a developing sub-culture that has emerged as a norm among the students. Peer association influences students' behavior as they often follow their friend's practices. Access to modern information and peer behavior among youth influence them to resist prevailing societal controls. Study findings show that while some Thai families are tolerant of their children's choices, accepting their premarital sexual behavior (both heterosexual and homosexual), other families are unwilling to accept the choices their children are making, especially their daughters' sexual companionships.

"My mother did not want me to have sexual experiences while I am a student. ...but I had sex with my boy friend ...so, I feel I am a bad girl. I am sorry about my mother that I am not honest to her."

Twenty year old heterosexual female.

"I cannot let my father knows that I have a boyfriend. He is very strict to me and does not want me to have boy friends when I am studying... If I go out late even with my female friends , he will call me and I will be blamed."

Sixteen year old heterosexual female.

"My close friends, who are in the same gang, had sexual experience while they were in secondary school .. I was told by them that they ever had sexual experience, I too, don't see any wrong of students having sexual partners ... it is normal .. almost all of our college friends have sexual companionships .."

Twenty year old heterosexual female.

Family Control: Family is the first important social institution that socializes and shapes human behavior. Most parents in Thailand expect that their children will not become sexually engaged until they finish their studies. Thai college students are financially dependent on their parents and many parents use this financial dependency to stop their children participating in unacceptable behaviors. Unacceptable behaviors are also controlled through family rules. Some parents exert control or try to make leaving home difficult by not allowing their children to live independently in a college dormitory. Many students do not live far from their educational institution. They want to live on their own but their parents, especially their fathers, will not allow. The social discourse operates through family, with parents educating and refining their children and family members. This form of social control can be effective in limiting students' expressions of sexual behavior that counters social norms. However, for some college students, family is not a strong enough control mechanism to stop this emerging pattern of sexual companionship within the youth culture. In contemporary society, many students resist these social controls and allow themselves to experience sexual relationships. Sexual companionship or living with a sexual partner has become regular practice among adolescents and youth. This seems to be a first stage of recognizing the changing phenomenon which may become more wide spread within the sub-culture in the future.

In the past in Thailand, a couple who breached social values or family norms could conduct a ceremony termed '*kho kama*'³ asking their parents to forgive them, especially members of their family who opposed their decision. For example a couple who ran away from home to live in a de facto relationship in another place where their

family could not find them could seek forgiveness through *kho kama*. In the past this ceremony would be arranged when the couple was sure that their parents had calmed down and were ready to forgive them and accept them as husband and wife.

Today in this province, some students live with their partners, some do not and some bring their partners to live in the same house with their parents. A major factor contributing to the weakening of family control has been college students living in dormitories. For some students this is a practical arrangement as the college is far from home. For others it is a convenient way to avoid parental supervision.

"I am only one child in my family. My parents let me stay in a dormitory in my third year at university. Before that I was not allowed to stay over night outside the home and to go out alone anywhere. If I go out late, my father will drive to pick me up."

Twenty one year old heterosexual female.

The extent to which family control is weakening in this student community is illustrated by the following comment by a college teacher;

"I believe parents nowadays spoil their children; they do not stop or correct children's behaviour. Young female students bring boyfriends to their parent's home. Parents are accepting this behavior and allow the relationships to continue. Some female students ran away from home to stay with their boyfriends. Parents of male students did not send that female back home, but accepted them as a couple. Anyway, some families cannot change and accept this new trend. I believe 80 % of college or secondary school students above are having sexual experiences."

College teacher, male.⁴

“My parents trust me...they want me to be a very good student and concentrate only on my studies. I have never shown to them that I am having intimate relationship.”

Twenty two year old heterosexual female.

School and State Control: School (college and university) is another important social institution that controls student sexual behavior. Colleges have a number of rules that affect the students sexual behaviour including dormitory guidelines. In 1964, the Government enacted a law called the Dormitory Act B.E. 2507 (1964) that is administered by the Department of Public Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The purpose of this law is to protect and accommodate students who live in dormitories. The main requirement of this law is for any dormitory with five students or more to register. Two kinds of dormitories are stipulated, one for female students and the other for male students. Dormitories are required to have written documentation showing that they meet the intent of the regulations including the rate of rent, times for entering and exiting the dormitory, visitors, health care (primary care/emergency care), overnight stay outside the dormitory, noise and other annoyances, etc. The law holds the dormitory manager responsible for maintaining students' records. This law authorizes the government to inspect any dormitory between sunrise and sunset. The authorized government official from the Department of Public Welfare can close down or reject the registration paper if the dormitory does not comply with the law or does any thing that is “not peaceful, harmonious, moral or is dangerous to the state.”

The punishment for dormitory owners/operators found to be violating the regulations can be a six month jail sentence, or a fine of not more than 2,000 baht or both in cases regarding the dormitory's registration. In cases where the dormitory registration is lost, damaged, changed or is not presented to the government representative, the fine is 500 baht. The manager will face jail for one month or a fine of not more than 1,000 baht or both in cases of non-cooperation with students involving their education and behavior. Female dormitory is required to have all female staff.

At a basic level this law was issued to control student's sexual behavior by prohibiting them from living together and by establishing dormitory rules and regulations that do not allow males and females to reside in the same building. Any dormitory where more than five students reside is required to register as a student dormitory. Government officers from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security inspect these dorms every semester especially during the time when politicians or leaders are attempting to promote their image and work. In addition to student dormitories these inspections include clubs, bars and discotheques. This is considered to be good public relations and shows that the government and the politicians are interested in youth's health, security and their sexual behavior.

Dormitory inspections are conducted by a team that includes the police, a teacher, a tax collector, and someone from the social security department. Whenever a couple is found staying in the same room or if there is evidence of persons of the opposite sex living in the same room, such as clothing, or drugs or any other illegal objects, these findings violate the regulations. The findings are reported to school officials, the students' parents, and also the dormitory owner. Any students who have violated the regulations who have received a government loan will lose their financial assistance.

Some students mentioned during the interviews that they did not stay with their boyfriends/girlfriends because they do not want to face the inspection and any consequences. They do not want to lose their financial aid including scholarships and education loans, and do not want to be reported to their parents. Many other students however decide to take a risk and disregard the rules. These students run away or lock the door and pretend that nobody is home during an inspection. Also, sometimes the owner is given advance notice of the inspection and announces this to the students before the inspection. Some students avoid inspections altogether by staying in a rented house. Every landlord/lady accepted and allowed both male and female students to stay together because they want the business. If rules and regulations are implemented, these young students will move out and stay somewhere else. Now most of dormitories allow

both male and female students to reside in the same building as university and government officials are unable to stop young students from evading their requirements.

In Thailand today, students prefer to live in accommodation where they have the freedom to walk in and out any time, and where they can live independently including inviting friends to their room. If a landlady/landlord is too strict, the student will move out and this will affect their business. In the end, most of these businesses have to adjust to the needs of their young clients. The area around the university has more than 200 places for students to live, but there are only a few dormitories that are designated as women's dormitories where men can not enter, not even the female student's father. These dormitories serve the needs of the parents who check how their daughters live. The reality is that some women living in women's dormitories still sneak men into the building as well as stay over night outside the dormitory.

"There are some students becoming pregnant every year – some are known to us and others are not. We try to help them if the baby is not grown up. They are lucky if the pregnancy is close to the delivery time, especially when they are on the long summer school holidays. If not, they have to end school to deliver the baby, then they come back to school. But some students feel ashamed to carry her pregnancy while at school, then they decide to leave school. In some cases the school has to terminate their education because it is against the rules, except when they show their marital registration.⁵"

College teacher, female.⁶

"When I was in grade 7-9, whoever got pregnant left school without telling anybody, even for close friends. They feel ashamed; it means that having a sexual relationship with male is very shameful."

Twenty one year old heterosexual female.

“Many students do not like to stay in university dormitories as they don’t have more freedom and adhere to given rules and regulations.... So students choose to stay outside university dormitory.”

University dormitory officer, male.⁷

For decades Thailand’s traditional sexual norms and values have powerfully and strongly dictated and controlled the sexual behavior of the Thai people. How can these students resist the existing state of affairs while the overwhelming majority of conventional society wishes things to remain as they are? Why, then, do present-day students have relationships, sometimes sharing their life with another or living with a boyfriend or girlfriend? First, students have more freedom to live independently, especially those who move far from home. This is a new phenomenon for young Thais, especially young single females. Living and taking care of themselves reinforces the idea that they have grown up enough to be responsible for themselves. Many students insist that it is their right to do what they like with their own lives, and that they have the right to have sexual intercourse if they so desire.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper examined how the patterns of sexual companionships, relationships, and *chii wit khu* are determined in the student context. Findings highlight the fact that students choose alternative ways of being single, having pre-marital sexual relationships and cohabitating outside of marriage. These new patterns of relationships have become acceptable norms among students in their community. The sexual patterns and sexual values, norms, practices and behaviors among adolescents and youth are constantly in transition thereby challenging the traditional norms. These findings are consistent with the sexual transformation that had been taking place in Western societies in the 19th century which started from a small group of young adult students (Landale and Forste, 1991; Rubin, 1984).

However, cohabitation among young adults in the Thai context and in Western societies is different in terms of meanings and practices. The literature divides the meaning of cohabitation into three groups, namely, a trial marriage, means of having a sexual relationship while being single, and alternative forms of marriage (Landale and Forste, 1991; Rindfuss and Heuvel, 1992, Axinn and Thernton, 1993; Bumpass, 1990; Wu, 1999). This study found that the meaning of cohabitation or sexual companionship among these Thai students was viewed as a means of having a sexual relationship. In addition, cohabitation or sexual companionships, in Western societies is often motivated by economic factors as a way of reducing the cost of living. However, in present day society, students are economically and financially dependent on their parents or government loans. The patterns of sexual companionship among young adult in this province seems to be consistent, to some extent, with the pattern which has been occurred in Western society. However, in this society young adults seem to be less responsible and also do not appear as concerned about the consequences of having unsafe sex. In addition, sexual companionship with multiple partners sometimes creates psychological conflicts among youth, especially females.

Second, I explored how social institutions control youth's sexual behavior and found that youth's sexual behavior is challenged by the existing social institutions namely, family, school and state. Additionally these institutions are not exerting enough control to stop this emerging pattern of sexual companionship within the youth culture. In present day Thai society, many students resist these social controls and allow themselves to experience sexual relationships. Having sexual companionship or living with a sexual partner has become common practice among adolescents and youth in Thailand. A sub-culture has emerged among Thai youth that accepts this behavior as the norm. Peer association influences students' behavior as they often follow their friend's practices. Access to modern information and peer behavior among youth influence them to resist prevailing societal controls. Study findings demonstrate that some families were tolerant of their children's choices by accepting their children's partners while still many did not accept, especially their daughters' partners. This seems to be a first stage of recognizing the changing phenomenon which may become more wide spread within the sub-culture in the future.

Regarding the roles of school and government in controlling sexual relationships of youth, both school administrators and government officials formulate and implement the rules and regulations for students who stay in the dormitories. As discussed previously, the law requires student dormitories to separate men and women, when, in fact, most private dormitories do not follow the rules because of student's demands. This allows students to resist the existing social controls. It seems students' resistance to the social controls has weakened the enforcement of existing rules and regulations of social institutions. This issue brings about new knowledge and power to resist social control. In this sense, the findings are consistent with Foucault's (1978). On the other hand, this study, seems to reflect the collective behaviors of youth rather than the power relationship between youth and social institutions.

Third, I wanted to discover youth's sexual identity in terms of sexual hierarchy. This study revealed that sexual hierarchy among youth has been weakened both among partners of the same sex and the opposite sex. "Bad" categories of sexual relationship/companionship have already become acceptable in the youth culture. The existing mainstream values and norms regarding sexual issues are not treated as important as once they were. It is interesting to note that in the old days virginity was considered to be an important aspect of female sexuality before marriage (Aeusrivongse, 2004). This norm can suppress the sex drive of many females in a society (Pongsapich, 1997). This study found that youth are not as concerned about maintaining virginity now. Therefore, it can be theorized that virginity and sexual hierarchy are not as important among college and university students in the contemporary student context. Due to changing societal attitudes toward virginity, women appear to have more sexual freedom than ever.

At the individual level health consequences are important as youth practice unsafe sex and are exposed to STI/HIV, as well as psychological complications. Young women especially have more health risks in terms of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, as well as experiencing violence in the form of rape or other types of physical/sexual abuse. On the other hand, it can be argued that young women have become more independent and have more freedom and opportunities to experience and

make decisions regarding their sexuality than in the past. The paradox within the changing discourse is that gender roles are still dominant in homosexual and heterosexual relationships. Even though young people enjoy more freedom to experiment in terms of their sexuality, sometimes one partner wants to maintain a dominant role while making the other partner be subservient and submit to their preferences, particularly during intimacy. Consequently, the young people may be faced with engaging in more risky sexual behavior.

At the family level, if parents do not accept their children's new behaviors, the entire family may be negatively affected. Both parents and students may become overwhelmed or depressed as they may feel they are unprepared to address these diverse issues of sexuality. However at the societal or macro level youth's sexual patterns challenge the existing sexual values, norms and social controls. Thus it is clear that the sexual norms, values and practices prevailing among youth in Thailand have been changing. Cohabitation and sexual companionship have become an integral part of student life and have created a new discourse and sub-culture among youth in society. The conventional social controls formerly exerted through institutions have weakened and do not exert the same power to control sexual behavior as in the past. Therefore, existing social institutions need to understand and adapt to the changing discourse. Furthermore, the attitude regarding virginity which controlled sexual behavior in past centuries has been diminishing. Both male and female students believe that the virginity is not an important value to be honored. In this sense, females have more opportunities and freedom in terms of exercising their sexuality.

However in this study showing there are many students start and continue the relationship as it go all the way from the situation, peer pressure and etc. They felt sorry and some of them want to finish the relationship. These cases are difficult to conclude that their sexual practice resists or challenges the social control.

Considering the above findings, it is important to highlight that present day issues of sexuality within the wider context of sexual companionship. The changing scenarios demonstrate that a new discourse needs to be considered and accepted by

social institutions. Future interventions should be more focused on addressing consequences that could enhance the sexual health of students, quality of life and their relationships. This requires that this new discourse is brought to the attention of the public and policy makers. Also the female youth situation, environment and social activities should be more considerable for their safety, security and healthy.

Acknowledgement

I am very grateful to the Wellcome Trust, UK/IPSР for financially supported this study. Special thanks also go to all the staff of the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University for their kind supports. While completing the manuscript, I appreciated the encouragement and great improvement from Sunethra Perera, Malee Sunpuwan Dr. Kwanchit Sasiwongsaroj and Dr. Wanippol Mahaarcha.

Notes

- 1 *Chii wit khu* in Thai ชีวคู่ means couple, sexual companionship, lover, sweetheart, husband and wife.
- 2 Demographic Transition is the model that explains demographic changes from the high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates as part of social, economic and health development especially accepting new innovations of contraception and medical science. At the end of the Demographic Transition period, population growth rates are usually very stable low because birth rates have been low for many years. The Second Demographic Transition has been occurring only in some Western countries where control birth rates have been low for a long time and the fertility behaviors have changed due to people delaying marriage, more people remaining single, high divorce rates and cohabitation including high rates of childlessness and births out of wedlock.
- 3 *Kho kama* in Thai ขอ嫁 means ceremony for forgiveness from run away for the unaccepted marriage.
- 4 Interviewed on July 8, 2006.

- 5 Thai colleges and universities have no rules or regulations regarding students' marital status. Student who are married can study in the universities. However, it is not common for Thai youth to continue their student status after they are married.
- 6 Interviewed on June 6, 2006.
- 7 Interviewed on June 6, 2006.

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