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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

Much of the behavioral research related to AIDS in Thailand has concentrated on commercial sex workers and soldiers; much less emphasis has been given to more typical populations. However, the epidemic is now moving into more mainstream groups and the clients of commercial sex workers are the major vehicle of this spread. The present study is an effort to understand some of the social dynamics underlying this emerging phase of the Thai AIDS epidemic. We focus specifically on male extramarital sexual behavior and how it is influenced by wives and male peers. These two groups represent the persons with whom married men typically have their closest social bonds and, in often opposing manners, are most likely to influence decisions regarding extramarital sexual activity. Understanding how these influences work has direct implications for intervention programs that seek to foster behavioral change.

METHODS

The study is based on qualitative rather than quantitative or survey techniques because of the need to build extensive rapport with the participants and because of the complexities of the social dynamics we are investigating. We collected data using two formats: focus group discussions (FGDs) and indepth interviews (IDIs). A total of 14 focus group discussions (7 with men and 7 with women) and 47 indepth interviews (21 with men and 26 with women) were held during the period between September 1993 and February 1994. These FGDs and IDIs were held in Bangkok, two provincial towns in the central region, and two rural communities that were within an hour's commute of the towns. Most of the participants were currently married (a few were divorced), and were mostly in the age range of 25-40. The discussions and interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed. The data analysis is based upon the complete Thai and English transcripts, and is facilitated by the use of computer software (The Ethnograph program) specifically designed for qualitative data analysis.

FINDINGS

General Social Context of Extramarital Sex

1) Commercial sex patronage by men is almost always undertaken as a social activity in the company of friends or acquaintances.

   Married (and unmarried) men who patronize brothels or other places where commercial sex is available rarely go alone. Rather they go with other male friends or acquaintances as part of an evening's activities.

2) Commercial sex is seen primarily as a common form of entertainment and is morally unproblematic for many of our participants when undertaken in moderation.
Commercial sex is a widely available form of male entertainment in Thailand, and may be offered as the sole service (such as at a brothel) or as part of a broader package of activities for men (e.g., getting a massage or drinking at a cafe or night club with hostesses). Commercial sex patronage enjoys wide social acceptance in Thailand, especially among unmarried men, and so it is done relatively openly among peers.

3) Commercial sex patronage is generally viewed by both men and women as a normal activity for single men.

Both men and women perceive men to have a strong natural sexual urge that requires periodic release. Commercial sex is seen as a legitimate means of accomplishing this for men who do not have a wife or regular partner who would otherwise meet this need. Wives rarely disapprove of their husbands having patronized prostitutes before marriage.

4) The degree of social acceptance for commercial sex patronage by married men is quite varied and often conditional on it occurring only occasionally; frequent patronage by married men is generally viewed negatively by both men and women.

Most men and women generally disapprove of habitual commercial sex patronage by married men. Nevertheless, many men and some women view men as having a natural need for sexual variety, and thus are tolerant of occasional patronage provided precautions are taken against infection. As stated above, many see commercial sex patronage as a form of entertainment and not as a serious breech of marital trust. Others, however, especially among women, view even occasional commercial sex patronage by married men as totally unacceptable.

5) Extramarital noncommercial sexual relationships are seen in a completely different light than commercial sex relationships.

Nearly all of the men and women participants take noncommercial sexual relations very seriously. In contrast to commercial sex, noncommercial sex is not viewed as mere entertainment, nor is it considered to be closely related to male socializing. While not rare, it is thought to occur much less frequently than commercial sex. Noncommercial relationships range from the relatively casual to far more enduring affairs. The most serious noncommercial sexual relationship involves one with a minor wife. While this is a familiar concept to participants from all socioeconomic backgrounds, it is generally viewed as a practice limited to the well-to-do since it involves a substantial financial commitment.
Peer Group Influences on Male Extramarital Sexual Activity

6) There is much diversity both among and within male peer groups regarding views of and participation in extramarital commercial sex.

Not only do individual married men have differing views regarding the propriety of extramarital commercial sex, but peer groups will differ as well in their tendencies to incorporate commercial sex in their social activities. Some groups consist entirely of men who are uninterested in commercial sex under any circumstances, while other groups are made up of habitual philanderers. Most groups, however, probably include a number of men who are ambivalent and will participate under some circumstances but not on a regular basis.

7) The peer group encourages commercial sex patronage for many married men.

Male peer groups have both positive and negative influences on extramarital commercial sex patronage. Men warn each other to take precautions not to infect their families and not to squander excessive financial resources on commercial sex. Nevertheless, both focus group participants and indepth respondents are much more likely to emphasize the ways men encourage each other to engage in commercial sex than on the ways they discourage participation. When asked why some married men visit prostitutes, by far the most common responses are that the men are asked to go out by friends and/or that they are drinking.

8) Drinking in the peer group is closely linked with commercial sex patronage.

Drinking facilitates commercial sex patronage both for men who are generally inclined to participate and for men who otherwise are reluctant to engage in commercial sex. A drinking group is seen by many to sometimes naturally progress to a brothel visit for men who find commercial sex unproblematic. For men who are ambivalent or who may see commercial sex as problematic, drinking is believed to cloud judgement and reduce inhibitions.

9) Peer group gatherings provide a convenient cover for extramarital sexual activity.

In most cases, a drinking party of married men does not progress to a brothel visit. Thus drinking with friends provides an acceptable reason for a married man to leave the house alone for the evening. Moreover, it can provide a plausible alibi if he chooses to engage in occasional commercial sex or even a casual affair without his wife's knowledge.

10) Mechanisms of peer group influence may be direct or subtle.

A common direct peer group tactic is to badger reluctant members to join in a commercial sex excursion. One approach is to accuse a reluctant member of being afraid of his wife. A more indirect mechanism occurs when a nonparticipant is left behind, thus feeling excluded from a major peer group activity.
11) Married men are particularly vulnerable to peer group invitations or encouragement to participate in commercial sex on special occasions.

   Since frequent and habitual commercial sex patronage ends at marriage for many men, commercial sex then becomes a way to celebrate special occasions, e.g., a rare meeting with an old friend, a holiday, or a financial windfall.

12) Not all men who accompany friends to a commercial sex establishment actually engage in sexual relations.

   Some men accompany friends to a brothel, massage parlor or other commercial sex establishment simply to continue socializing and/or out of concern for their friends' welfare. Nonparticipants may go along to help should trouble arise or should the friend be too drunk to make it home alone safely.

13) Men who do not join in with friends for commercial sex tend to explain their behavior by specifying practical concerns for their family's welfare rather than by citing moral conventions.

   Most married men who forgo commercial sex say they do so in order to prevent the risk of spreading venereal diseases to their wives and to avoid wasting money that could be used for family expenses. Only rarely are abstract ethical arguments or emotional attachment to wives mentioned as reasons for not participating.

14) Peer group dynamics are largely irrelevant for noncommercial sex relations.

   Affairs with mistresses and other noncommercial sex partners are considered to be private matters and outside of the domain of the peer group. Although close friends may advise each other regarding such matters, especially if the extramarital relationship appears to threaten family stability, encouragement or discouragement by friends is rare.

15) In all types of extramarital sexual relations, ultimately the man himself, not his friends, is generally seen to have the final say in whether or not he will participate.

   Men in particular stressed that peer influence on extramarital relations is far from absolute. Many stressed that in most cases the peer group would certainly take no for an answer.
Wives' Influences on Male Extramarital Sexual Activity

16) There is a wide range in the level of tolerance among wives regarding the acceptability of commercial sex patronage on the part of their husbands.

Some women are unwilling to tolerate any commercial sex patronage by their husbands, a few are indifferent to his behavior, and a large proportion seem willing to tolerate it if it is infrequent, not wasteful of family resources, and precautions are taken to avoid infecting them with STDs.

17) Wives are often unaware of whether or not their husbands engage in extramarital sexual relations; this is especially true for commercial sex relations.

Some of the women suspect that their husbands may participate in commercial sex outings with friends but are either unable or unwilling to verify it. Several explained that it is difficult to distinguish whether the husband merely went out drinking with friends (a common male pastime) or if he also participated in commercial sex. Some women appear willing not to pursue the matter so long as the husband's participation is neither blatant nor frequent.

18) Women are generally much more concerned about the consequences of extramarital noncommercial sexual relations than commercial sexual relations.

There is very little tolerance for husbands' noncommercial sex relations since these relations involve an emotional and financial bond; commercial sex relations, on the other hand, imply no such commitment. Many women recognize a serious risk of HIV infection from their husbands' commercial sex partners, but only a minority feel that this makes commercial sex patronage as serious an issue as noncommercial extramarital affairs.

19) Some women see occasional commercial sex patronage by the husband as an alternative to more threatening noncommercial affairs and thus are willing to tolerate occasional commercial sex outings.

Some wives see a need for variety in sexual partners as an integral aspect of male nature and thus are willing to tolerate occasional commercial sex patronage so that the husband will not seek out a noncommercial partner who might ultimately compete for the long term financial support of the husband or otherwise undermine the marital relationship.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Several of the study findings have clear policy implications. First, the risks of HIV infection from husbands' commercial sex contacts should be made more salient for married women. Women's fear of noncommercial sex partners because of the potentially great financial impact is understandable, but the traditional tolerance of commercial sex partners as a means of discouraging noncommercial sex partners has become obsolete in the AIDS era.

Second, the risks of unprotected intercourse with noncommercial (or quasi-commercial) partners should also be emphasized. Most Thais are aware of the risks of unprotected commercial sex, but as the AIDS epidemic moves into more mainstream groups in the Thai population, the risks of infection from extramarital (and premarital) partners outside of the main commercial sex industry should be stressed.

Third, the potentially devastating impact of HIV infection on the family should be stressed to married Thai men. The welfare of the family and particularly the couple's children is one of the most frequently mentioned concerns by both the male and female participants. Reminding the husband about the difficulties ahead for the family's children if one or both parents become infected by HIV may make the potential consequences of extramarital sex in modern Thailand more concrete. Several men who completely abstain from commercial sex after marriage stress that the short term pleasure of a commercial sex encounter is hardly worth the potential long term damage to the family's well-being. This could be a worthwhile theme to stress.

Fourth, the strong role of friends in male extramarital commercial sex visitation provides an avenue for intervention at the peer group level. Since many of the men express concern about the potential negative consequences of commercial sex visitation for families, messages should encourage peers to make explicit to each other the risk of spreading HIV and other STDs to one's spouse, which can lead to family disharmony and disruption. Media messages could publicly raise the question of who is really the true friend: someone who encourages behavior that may lead to mutual destruction or someone who reminds you that commercial sex patronage and unprotected extramarital sex of any kind can create serious health and family problems? Steering peer influence in a more useful direction should be an effective strategy to speed behavioral change.

Finally, the common invocation of intoxication as an excuse for irresponsible behavior should be challenged. Since so many of the male participants believe that the final responsibility for commercial sex patronage rests with the individual vis a vis the peer group, emphasizing the final responsibility of the individual vis a vis alcohol may be a useful strategy.

In conclusion, the government and nongovernment agencies have done a remarkable job in educating the Thai public about the basic facts of HIV/AIDS, and this educational effort has undoubtedly led to significant behavioral change. Further progress will be facilitated by a better understanding of peer group and spousal dynamics, and Thai conceptions of male sexuality. We identify several components of these social features that can be addressed to further slow the progression of this fatal but preventable disease.
INTRODUCTION

Non-marital sexual relations have been a prerogative of both single and married Thai men who could afford them since historical times, but extramarital liaisons have recently become more problematic for the Thai family (Bamber et al. 1993; Knodel 1993a; Boonchalaksi and Guest 1994). In addition to the social, economic, and psychological consequences male extramarital relations might present for family members, the recent HIV epidemic engulfing Thailand now adds a serious health risk for the wife and the children she might bear.

The AIDS virus is spreading among Thai men and women, to all regions of the country, and to rural and urban areas. As recent assessments of the epidemic have concluded, HIV infection has rapidly progressed beyond the more narrowly defined risk groups of intravenous drug users and commercial sex workers to the patrons of commercial sex and now to their noncommercial sexual partners including married women who are exposed through their husbands' past or current visits to prostitutes. Indeed there is evidence that the next wave of the epidemic, namely pediatric HIV and AIDS, is already underway (Brown and Sittitrai 1993; Brown et al. 1994). As public awareness of the causes and consequences of AIDS is becoming virtually universal, both men's and women's perceptions of these long-standing and widespread sexual practices are undoubtedly being transformed and these changes in attitudes will have important implications for patterns of sexual behavior as well.

Much of the behavioral research related to AIDS in Thailand to date has centered on commercial sex workers and some client groups; most of the research on clients has focused on the unmarried, especially soldier clients. These studies of unmarried men are important since a large proportion of Thai men (73% in a study by Nopkesorn et al. 1991) have their first sexual experience with a prostitute. But sex with multiple partners continues for many men even after marriage (Sittitrai et al. 1992; Deemar Corporation 1990). Given the recency of the HIV epidemic and thus of the radical change in the stakes of extramarital behavior, very little is known about how the epidemic is affecting Thai married couples from more mainstream population groups.

The present study focuses on male extramarital sexual behavior and how it is influenced by wives and male peers. These two groups represent the persons with whom married males typically have the most intimate social bonds and, in often opposing manners, are most likely to impact on decisions regarding extramarital sexual activity. Yet prior to our present study, there has been virtually no systematic research on the underlying social dynamics that shape the way peers and wives influence male extramarital sexual behavior in Thailand.

As in many societies, relations among same sex friends are often the most personal and important among the Thai (Mulder 1990) and, as our results clearly show, peer groups play a key role in encouraging Thai male extramarital (and premarital) sexual experience. In discussing peer influences we include both situations in which a man interacts with a group of friends and acquaintances as well as one-on-one interactions. A man's wife is also seen to play a role in his propensity for extramarital sexual behavior. Her influence is likely to be in the opposite direction than that of his peers, since his activities have serious implications for her emotional and physical health and the family's financial well being. Our aim in this paper is to describe the ways in which
these two sets of intimate relations, i.e., men's relations with their peers and with their wives, affect Thai male extramarital sexual activity, as well as the consequences of this activity for these relationships.

To understand the context of the HIV epidemic in Thailand it is important to recognize the high availability and patronage of commercial sex services. While most popular accounts of prostitution in Thailand grossly exaggerate the number of commercial sex workers and establishments, this should not mask the fact that commercial sex is pervasive in most urban areas and that the magnitude is substantial (Boonchalaksi and Guest 1994). Moreover, there is an enormous range of venues through which commercial sex is offered, including straightforward brothels that sell only sex, restaurants and bars where the waitresses sell sex as well as food and beverages, massage parlors where sex is either included in the price of a massage or can be purchased for an extra payment, and nightclubs and cafes where singers and hostesses are routinely available for sex after closing hours. More informal commercial sex relations involving situations where money is exchanged for sexual relations but is considered to be a gift or gratuity rather than a purchase of sexual services are also widespread. For convenience we will use the terms commercial sex and prostitution interchangeably; it should be recognized that these terms encompass a wide range of workers at a variety of establishments.

For purposes of discussion, we further categorize the extramarital partners of married men into two broad groups: women who sell sex for money (commercial sex workers) and noncommercial sex partners. Commercial sex involves an explicit monetary transaction between the client and commercial sex worker while noncommercial sex does not. In practice, the distinction is not always so clear. Noncommercial sex partners may expect some type of compensation for their consent to engage in a sexual relationship, but financial exchange is less explicit than in the commercial sex arena. We discuss the differences between commercial sex workers and noncommercial sex partners in more detail in the Results section.

**STUDY DESIGN AND DATA**

To collect qualitative information on attitudes and behavior in relation to extramarital sex, we conducted 14 focus groups and 47 indepth interviews with both married men and married women. The focus groups concentrated on prevailing norms, attitudes and general observations regarding this topic while the indepth interviews explored personal behavioral patterns and their cognitive justifications. The present report draws primarily on the focus group data although results from the indepth interviews are incorporated to supplement and complement the analysis where appropriate.

Six focus groups were held in Bangkok: two with factory workers, two with residents of organized slums, and two middle class occupational groups. The remaining eight groups were held in two provinces in the Central Region (Lopburi and Kanchanaburi). In each province, separate groups were held among provincial town residents and among rural villager residing within 30 kilometers of the towns. In each residential and occupational category we conducted separate sessions with male and female groups. The groups had an average of about 8 participants each with some minor variation. Table 1 indicates the various categories of groups and the actual number of participants in each group.
Respondents for the indepth interviews were recruited from Bangkok and the same rural and urban sites in the two provinces. In the case of Bangkok, however, the indepth respondents were drawn from different sites than the focus group participants and primarily came from one lower middle class and one middle class neighborhood. Occupationally, the indepth respondents represented a fairly diverse group including farmers and agricultural workers in the rural areas and both blue-collar and white-collar persons in Bangkok and other urban areas. Table 2 shows the number of indepth respondents by place of interview.

All focus group participants and indepth respondents had been married with the vast majority still currently living with their spouse. A small number were currently divorced (or permanently separated) or had been divorced previous to their current marriage. We aimed at restricting recruitment to persons between ages 25 and 40, but a few men in their early 40s were included. This range encompasses ages where we expect married persons to be sexually active (within and, in the case of men, perhaps outside of marriage). Moreover, limiting the range of ages for persons recruited for the focus groups was intended to facilitate free flowing discussion given a potential sensitivity to age seniority that could lead younger participants to defer to older ones. We purposely avoided recruiting the spouse of anyone who we had already selected for a focus group or indepth interview, but we did discover afterwards that two pairs of participants were married.

No attempt was made to screen focus group participants or indepth respondents for extramarital patronage of commercial sex or extramarital affairs (of the men themselves or the husbands of the women). Nevertheless, male indepth respondents were almost evenly divided with respect to having patronized commercial sex since being married and slightly over a third of the women interviewed believed their husbands had done so. In the case of focus groups, it did not seem that mixing participants in the same sessions with differing histories (or husbands' histories) of commercial sex patronage hampered discussion. Both in recruitment and in conducting the focus groups we took into account the potential sensitivity of the subject matter, explaining the nature of the topics to be discussed. We were impressed, even surprised, how easily and eagerly most participants in all focus groups were willing to discuss sexual issues (VanLandingham et al. 1994).

When recruiting indepth respondents, we informed them at the start that we would ask about personal matters and assured them that they could decline to answer any questions with which they might feel uncomfortable. In cases where the potential respondent seemed in doubt about the content of the interview we sometimes showed them the guidelines with the questions we would ask. We also reminded them during the interview that they need not answer any question they deemed too personal. We believe that this procedure helped put most respondents at relative ease. Also, almost all indepth interviews were conducted in privacy. The exceptions were a few cases where the respondent desired that a close friend sit in as well. Only rarely did an indepth respondent appear to avoid answering our questions although several
According to the 1990 partner Relations Survey, 22% of urban compared to 9% of rural married men living with spouse reported having commercial sex during the prior year (Sittitrai et al. 1992).

| Table 1: Number of Participants in the 14 Focus Group Discussions |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
|                       | Men    | Women  |
| Bangkok               |        |        |
| Slum residents        | 8      | 8      |
| Factory workers       | 9      | 9      |
| Middle class persons  | 9      | 7      |
| Province 1 (Lopburi)  |        |        |
| Rural                 | 9      | 8      |
| Urban                 | 7      | 7      |
| Province 2 (Kanchanaburi) |      |        |
| Rural                 | 10     | 8      |
| Urban                 | 7      | 7      |
| Total                 | 59     | 55     |

| Table 2: Number of Respondents in the Indepth Interviews |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
|                       | Men    | Women  | Total |
| Bangkok               |        |        |       |
|                       | 4      | 6      | 10    |
| Province 1 (Lopburi)  |        |        |       |
| Rural                 | 3      | 6      | 9     |
| Urban                 | 6      | 5      | 11    |
| Province 2 (Kanchanaburi) |      |        |       |
| Rural                 | 4      | 4      | 8     |
| Urban                 | 4      | 5      | 9     |
| Total                 | 21     | 26     | 47    |

interviews were terminated before completion of the guidelines because of interruption caused by other persons arriving on the scene and impairing the privacy of the interview.

The heavy emphasis on urban sites in our study reflected our assumption that opportunities for commercial sex encounters were substantially higher in Bangkok and provincial towns where commercial sex establishments are concentrated. Indeed, survey data clearly indicate that commercial sex patronage is more common among urban than rural married men. In addition, we suspected that opportunities for extramarital affairs with noncommercial partners were also likely to be greater for urban men. But we also felt that it was important to include rural residents as well as several different social class milieus in Bangkok, since we were interested both in

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1 According to the 1990 partner Relations Survey, 22% of urban compared to 9% of rural married men living with spouse reported having commercial sex during the prior year (Sittitrai et al. 1992).
potential rural-urban and class differences regarding our topics and in determining the extent to which various attitudes and behavior patterns transcended major social divisions in Thai society.

Various strategies were used to recruit focus group participants and indepth respondents. Recruitment was greatly facilitated by enlisting intermediaries who knew and were known by the community or target group. In some cases we directly recruited participants and respondents unaided by intermediaries. More commonly, intermediaries helped us identify potential candidates, introduced us to them, and sometimes encouraged them to cooperate. In so doing they made the recruitment process far more efficient. For example, the intermediaries knew the community under study well and could readily identify candidates who met our selection criteria (married men and women, aged 25-40). In addition, their encouragement of the potential candidates to cooperate was important. In the case of the focus groups, not only were participants required to give considerable time but they were also required to go to an external location at a time not necessarily convenient to their own circumstances. For both the focus groups and indepth interviews, intermediaries also helped reassure potential participants and respondents about the legitimacy of our research, a potentially important contribution given that participants were told in advance that they would be asked to discuss sexual topics. In Table 3 we list the types of intermediaries who assisted us in the recruitment process.

We did not feel that the use of intermediaries substantially biased our selection of either focus group participants or indepth respondents in ways that meaningfully affected the discussions or the overall typicality of the views that emerged from the focus groups. Many common themes emerged across groups and individual interviews despite the variation in type of intermediary who assisted us and the degree to which they were involved in the recruitment process. One exception appears to be the female Bangkok factory worker focus group in which the discussion of condom use seems to be particularly well informed. This probably reflected the training related to AIDS that had gone on in the factory; also, the field workers who helped us recruit were also responsible for the AIDS training received by the participants.
Table 3: Use of Intermediaries in Recruiting Participants

**Bangkok**
Focus groups
- Factory workers
  - AIDS intervention field workers at 2 factories
    (one male and one female)
- Slum residents
  - Members of slum community committee
- Middle class
  - Acquaintances of the investigators
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators
Indepth interviews
- All sites
  - Acquaintances of the investigators

**Lopburi Province**
Focus groups
- Rural site
  - Assistant headman
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators
- Urban site
  - Community chairmen
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators
Indepth interviews
- Both rural and urban sites
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators

**Kanchanaburi Province**
Focus groups
- Rural site
  - Community health center worker
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators
- Urban site
  - Provincial health workers
  - Acquaintance of the investigators
  - Municipal health workers
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators
Indepth interviews
- Rural site
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators
- Urban site
  - Acquaintance of the investigators
  - Unaided recruitment by investigators

Most of the focus groups were co-moderated (i.e., had two moderators). The two Thai principal investigators in the project acted as the major moderators in the focus groups (the male investigator for the men and the female investigator for the women). In most cases they were assisted by co-moderators, in the case of the male groups, one of the Western co-investigators served this function while for the women's groups the co-moderator was a Thai female assistant with prior experience in qualitative data collection. Both Thai investigators had extensive experience in conducting focus groups as well as in other qualitative data collection approaches. All moderators were the same sex as the participants and no observers of the opposite sex were permitted to be present during the focus group sessions. A uniform set of discussion guidelines were used in both the men's and women's focus groups (see Appendix A).

The indepth interviews were all conducted either by one of the co-investigators or the Thai female assistant who helped with the focus group moderation. Some interviews were conducted by two interviewers together while others involved only one interviewer. Interviewers and respondents
were of the same sex. Parallel but somewhat different interview guidelines were followed in the male and female interviews (see Appendices B and C).

All focus groups and indepth interviews were recorded, fully transcribed, and word processed in the original Thai language. In addition, the complete set of full transcripts were translated and word processed in English. For analysis, the Thai investigators used the Thai version and the foreign investigators used the English version. The Thai version also served as a source to clarify the translations when it appeared that nuances and meanings of the original Thai statements were not fully captured in the English language. These transcripts were then formatted for use with the Ethnograph software program which is designed to assist with the analysis of qualitative data.

Our general analytical approach is to systematically review all relevant sections of the transcripts on each topic of interest. The use of computer processing greatly expedites this process (see Knodel 1993b, for a discussion of transcript analysis). We employ overview grids to summarize the information for each relevant subgroup (i.e., for each FGD and IDI) and report and interpret our central findings in the Results Section that follows. We aim to portray both the predominant opinion (if there is one) as well as the diversity of views expressed. Each topic covered in the analysis is assessed independently by at least two of the principal researchers. When differences of judgement arise, they are resolved by reexamining the transcripts together. In this way we ensure that our analysis is fully accountable to the original data.

While our analytical approach is both empirical and interpretive, we generally try to avoid speculation that is not substantiated by the discourse in the transcripts. We also try to present or describe the data that contradict our generalizations. Our approach does not preclude drawing on data from other sources to support, complement or even to contradict our findings, nor does it preclude some speculation when interpreting the content of the focus group discussions and indepth interviews. It does require, however, that we alert the reader of this when we do so.

In the following sections we summarize the data and provide illustrative verbatim quotations from the focus groups and indepth interviews to substantiate the most important points. Quotes from the focus group interviews are indicated by three letters. The first letter in the abbreviation is the first letter of the location (Bangkok, Kanchanaburi, or Lopburi). The second letter represents whether it is an urban or rural group or respondent and the third letter indicates whether the group is comprised of men or women. Indepth interviews are identified by case number and sex. The last letter (M or W) indicates whether the respondent is a man or a woman. The line numbers of the transcript from which the quote is extracted is also reported (a "t" preceding the line numbers indicates that the line number refers to the Thai transcript; otherwise it refers to the English transcript).

Sometimes the quotations are extracted from longer comments, leaving out the intervening statements for the sake of brevity, provided doing so does not alter the contextual meaning of the quotations presented. We also add implied words in brackets to facilitate the readability of the quote. Although the quotations are in English, the translation of each has been verified against the original Thai transcripts. In the case of the focus groups, speakers are identified only by first or nicknames and moderators are signified by M (or M1 and M2 when the group was co-moderated); for indepth interviews, the respondent is identified by R and the interviewer by I.
We sometimes report how often certain views or behaviors are discussed in the IDIs and/or FGDs in order to give an idea of the extent of empirical support for our interpretations and generalizations. These 'quantitative' type statements should not be confused with population estimates based upon random sample surveys. Our sample, while large by qualitative standards, is neither random nor large enough to base precise claims about the extent of certain behaviors or ideas in a population. Nevertheless, such information should give the reader some idea of whether the topic under discussion has much or only a little empirical support in the transcripts. Moreover, these counts can also serve to establish that our sample is fairly typical of our population of interest on the major topics we investigate. Of course, any quantitative assessment of our results is quite incidental to the main purpose of our project, which is help explain why, rather than how often, these phenomena occur.
RESULTS

COMMERCIAL SEX PATRONAGE

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF COMMERCIAL SEX PATRONAGE

The focus group discussions and indepth interviews make abundantly clear two very important features of the social nature of commercial sex patronage among married men in Thailand. First, patronizing commercial sex establishments is normally undertaken in the company of friends or acquaintances. Some Thai men do visit commercial sex establishments by themselves, although this is clearly not the norm. In a survey of young northern Thai men, for example, only about 5% of the respondents said that they usually go alone when they visit commercial sex workers (VanLandingham et. al. in press). Second, on the occasions prostitute visitation occurs, it is usually only part of an evening's entertainment that typically starts with the consumption of food and alcoholic beverages and which culminates with a commercial sex encounter for some or all of the original party.

These two features are best understood in the more general context of social activity among married men and in conjunction with Thai views about the normalcy and appropriateness of commercial sex. More specifically, it is considered both normal and appropriate in Thailand for married men to gather in all-male groups to socialize together as a form of recreation and entertainment. Drinking alcohol is a central feature of these gatherings and helps reinforce the male-exclusiveness of the groups given the common, if not universal, abstention from drinking by women. Moreover, commercial sex patronage is considered acceptable and ordinary behavior for single males by almost all segments of Thai society, including most women, while patronage among married men on at least an occasional basis is considered ordinary if not entirely appropriate by many men.

For example, among our indepth interview respondents, over 90% of both the men and the women considered commercial sex patronage by unmarried men to be an ordinary practice. This tolerance for single men patronizing commercial sex establishments is longstanding in Thailand. Sexual desire is an integral feature of Thai conceptions of maleness (Keyes 1986), though not everyone accepts these practices as entirely appropriate, especially in light of increasing concerns

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2 Going out to have sex with commercial sex workers is usually expressed by the Thai phrase "bai tiew," literally, "to go out." The meaning of "bai tiew" in the transcripts is sometimes ambiguous since it can refer to visiting commercial sex establishments, going out for a walk, going out to drink, visiting friends, or any combination of the above. In the report, we translate "bai tiew" as "to go out," and include in brackets [to visit commercial sex establishments] where the implication is clear.

3 In Thai, the terms for "ordinary" (tamada) and "appropriate" (mohsom) overlap somewhat. Some respondents expressed that some sexual practices (e.g., commercial sex visitation) may be tamada (in the sense of being unremarkable) but not mohsom; others implied that some practices were mohsom by virtue of being so tamada (in the sense of being widespread).
Comparisons of survey estimates of premarital sexual behavior are difficult since most of these surveys do not control for age. However, the unmarried military recruits in the VanLandingham et al. (1993) study are all around 20 years old, and 87% of them report having had sex with a prostitute before. In the current study, 85% of the men with whom we conducted indepth interviews (excluding one case whose situation is unknown) report having patronized commercial sex establishments before marriage. The proportion of men whose first sex partner was a prostitute ranges from 44% to 73%, depending upon the survey (Nopkesorn et al. 1991; Deemar 1990); the proportion of our respondents is 83%.

This is reflected by the decline in commercial sex patronage after marriage. For example, according to the 1990 survey of urban adults conducted by Deemar (1990), 9% of married men had sex with a prostitute in the prior 12 months compared to 27% of single men. Likewise the 1990 Partner Relations Survey reports that 24% of currently married urban men compared to 40% of urban never married had sex with a commercial sex partner during the last 12 months; for rural men, 10% of those currently married and 38% of those never married reported commercial sex in prior 12 months (Sittitrai et al. 1992, pp. 2).

Views regarding the acceptability of commercial sex patronage for married men are much more qualified. About two-thirds of the men but less than one half of the women indepth respondents felt that commercial sex patronage after marriage was ordinary, and only one male respondent said that he would disapprove of it if it came to his knowledge. Indeed, the women's perceptions of the near universality of prostitute visitation by single men is borne out by survey evidence on the topic and by the sexual experience of the married men in our study, the vast majority of whom had sex with a commercial sex worker before marriage. 4

Tri: There are very few virgin men [at marriage]... I think there is one out of a hundred... Mostly they visit prostitutes.
Charoen: [Single] men must do that occasionally. There is none who never did it. (LRM: 657; 897)

Tu: [Single men] need experience so that when they get married they know what to do.
Nit: They are practicing, training themselves.
Tu: So they can do it correctly. Most women are not aggressive for this sort of stuff, they are embarrassed. The man has to be the one who takes the lead. So they need to have experience. (KUW: 2725)

M1: Do you think it is right [that single men go to prostitutes]?
Somwang: How can we judge? They think it's right. We don't have the right to bar them since we're not married to them. (LRW: 676)

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(and no women) felt that it was completely appropriate. In our focus groups, and undoubtedly in the general public, the vast majority of married Thai women clearly prefer that their husbands do not engage in extramarital commercial sex patronage.

Siriwan: Hundred percent, women don't like it [married men engaging in commercial sex].
Several: We don't like it.
Siriwan: But sometimes we can't forbid it since men think it's ordinary (BMW: 927).

Even though most of the women participants detested the practice, commercial sex visitation was still seen by many to be ordinary for Thai men, either because of more general views regarding the nature of male sexuality (i.e., men naturally desire multiple partners) or general views that stress the importance of a man's individual character.

Jaew: Whatever we do, if they are philanderers, they will remain so (LUW: 113).

These views of male nature and the importance of individual character in turn lead some women to tolerate commercial sex visitation by their husbands so long as the visits are discreet and infrequent.

I: You can stand it sometimes?
R: Once or twice is O.K. for me. Mine is home 1-2 a.m. and says he goes to eat out with friend. I don't question him...
I: You don't agree with [married] men taking prostitutes?
R: Not as a habit. They are allowed to do it once in a while... if we are not financially troubled. (Case02W: 70; 277)

This tolerance of some married women for occasional commercial sex forays by their husbands also stems from the fact that commercial sex is seen by many married women to be a relatively less threatening form of extramarital contact than the alternative noncommercial sex partners married men might take (e.g., a ku kaa or "sparring partner" or, even worse, a mia noi or "minor wife"). Women might also accept commercial sex patronage by their husbands if their own marriage has broken down and they no longer have a sexual or emotional involvement with their spouse. But in only very rare instances do wives in an intact marriage appear to accept their husbands' commercial sex patronage in a completely neutral manner.

Many married men, on the other hand, consider occasional excursions for commercial sex to be ordinary and even acceptable under certain circumstances. Indeed, just over half of our male in-depth respondents indicated that they have had sex with a commercial sex worker since marriage, and 35% say that they still engage in this practice. However, the vast majority of those

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6 The reasons married women see noncommercial sex partners as more threatening than commercial sex partners are discussed in the section on noncommercial sex partners.

7 Estimates for the proportion of married men who recently (in the last 6 or 12 months) visited a commercial sex worker range from 7% to 49% (Deemar 1990; Sittitrai et al. 1992; VanLandingham et al. 1991).
Yoddumnern-Attig (1992) correctly points out that the division of labor between husband and wife is more complementary than hierarchical. For whom we could assess frequency of patronage indicate that they go only occasionally. Both the focus group discussions and the indepth interviews illustrate that a substantial proportion of our male participants view frequent commercial sex patronage by a married man to be excessive behavior and express disapproval, especially if it leads to a failure to provide adequately for his family. But very few of our focus group participants would condemn a married man who, when getting together with an out-of-town friend whom he had not seen for some time, celebrated the occasion by going out for an evening’s entertainment that included commercial sex. Thus, male social approval and acceptance of commercial sex activity among married men is more complex and qualified than for single men. However, our qualitative data clearly indicate that male social acceptance of commercial sex visitation is fairly widespread, at least in urban areas, provided the activity is undertaken in moderation.

M1: Would [a married man's friends] find it acceptable [if they knew he visited prostitutes]? Would they say anything?
Many: It's no problem among friends.
Piak: Friends wouldn't say anything. (LUM: 1743)

Sak: Most Thais don't consider the habit of going out at night to entertain themselves to be a bad habit. (KUM: 848)

M: Do you think it's a ordinary practice for married men to take prostitutes?
Reed: It might be if they do it once in a while...
Niwon: It should be ordinary.
Niveh: For men, there must be times like that occasionally. (BFM: 918)

The focus group discussions of both the men's and the women's groups clearly underscore that normal socializing for many married men occurs within their group of male friends; only a limited amount of a married man's leisure activity is undertaken with his wife or family. These patterns may be changing, especially among the urban middle class, but a widespread shift to a more companionate mode of marriage has yet to materialize. Husbands and wives still maintain rather distinct roles, obligations, and groups of friends. Thai men are generally considered to be responsible for providing the household's main income, while women typically assume control of the household's finances; again, these traditional divisions may be starting to change in some sectors of Thai society (Yoddumnern-Attig 1992). Our data show that this separation of social duties and responsibilities by gender extends to patterns of informal social interaction as well.

M1: Do the men and the women go together or do they go different ways when they go out?
Sak: They go different ways.
Chaew: Women go with the women's groups and men go with the men's.

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Yoddumnern-Attig (1992) correctly points out that the division of labor between husband and wife is more complementary than hierarchical.
This peer group context is important for commercial sex visitation among both single and married men, but surreptitious visits for commercial sex by married men, while not the norm, are more common than for single men. Unpublished data collected in Chiang Mai by one of us (VanLandingham et al. 1991) indicate that nearly twice as many married men report they usually visit commercial sex workers alone compared to single men, but the percentage of recent commercial sex patrons who usually go alone was less than 10% for both married and single men.

The relatively permissive attitude among Thai males regarding at least occasional commercial sex encounters by married men, the fact that most male socializing occurs among an exclusively male circle, and the frequency with which drinking alcohol is a part of normal social activities combine together to establish the basis through which commercial sex patronage can be readily incorporated as part of routine peer group activities. For many men, there appears to be little if any shame to be felt in front of one's peers for an occasional outing involving commercial sex and little reason to expect social disapproval from them. Moreover, whatever inhibitions or reservations might have existed when in a sober state are reduced through alcohol consumption and the encouragement or support of those companions who join the activity.9

In all of the focus group discussions, there is spontaneous mention that commercial sex patronage involves going together with friends. Indeed, some women's groups vigorously blame husbands' friends on this account. Moreover, almost all the indepth respondents mention the association of men going together with friends when patronizing commercial sex.

The focus group discussions and indepth interviews bring out either explicitly or implicitly four important points about the process through which some married men might end an evening by

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having intercourse with a commercial sex worker. First, most male get-togethers do not involve commercial sex outings. Rather, in rural settings and to some extent among slum dwellers or laborers in the cities, gatherings among male friends are often limited to sitting around drinking whiskey and chatting in one of their homes. This form of social interaction is so common among Thai men that it warrants a special name: wong lao or alcohol circle. When friends gather together at commercial entertainment places, nothing more may be involved beyond listening to music and talking about a whole range of topics including sex; these meetings do not necessarily involve or lead to any actual sexual contact. An important consequence of this is that it is often difficult for a wife to distinguish occasions when prostitute visitation occurs from those when it does not. Moreover, it is easy for a man to 'get away' for commercial sex if this is his intent since he has an acceptable reason for going out in the evening.

Chin: They never tell wives that they are going out [to take prostitutes]. They tell us they go out to drink. (KRW: 851)

Second, often on occasions that do result in a commercial sex visit for some or all members of the group, the decision to visit a commercial sex establishment or to 'take out' a commercial sex worker was made only after the outing got underway and was not an explicit part of the initial plan. Thus even the husband himself may not have known at the outset that he would end up engaging in commercial sex. To the contrary, many commercial sex excursions commence with drinking and eating and only if the mood and circumstances permit do they evolve into an outing that includes paid-for sex. This feature was explicitly mentioned in about half of the men's and women's focus groups. Thus, while almost all group excursions to a commercial sex establishment begin with a drinking (and sometimes eating) party, going out with one's friend and acquaintances to drink together by no means necessarily results in commercial sex, at least not for most married men.

Sak: Yes, when we go out we don't intend to go to brothels but the atmosphere, the opportunity (sometimes) makes us go. If the opportunity does not arise, we just eat. (LUM: 2031)

Third, some peer groups are more prone to commercial sex patronage than others. Indeed, many circles of married male friends will completely shun such activities. At the other extreme, some groups will be made up of habitual patronizers. It is likely that a self-selection process operates in such a way that men who like such activities will form a friendship group and those who are not interested will do the same. Thus there would be considerable variation in the extent different groups go for commercial sex even within the same locality. While this point was made only implicitly by the male participants, it is a reasonable assumption and an important one to bear in mind when interpreting the discussions about peer influence on extramarital commercial sex.

Lam: [Before I got married I] took prostitutes and drank every night... In one night, I roamed all restaurants in Kanchanaburi. I had my group and we did it together...
Tor: Friends who take or ask each other to brothels are close friends and have good understanding between them.
Sak: They have the same opinion. (KUM: 588; 751).

I: What about your friends in Bangkok?... None enjoy taking prostitutes?
R: Most share my opinion. I look for friends who are like myself. (Case16M: 371)

Fourth, besides variance among groups regarding the proclivity to patronize commercial sex establishments, there is also substantial variation within groups. Individuals may drop out of the group if it moves from the eating and drinking establishment to the commercial sex establishment, and not everyone who goes to the commercial sex establishment will engage in commercial sex.

Noi: No, it's not a must thing that you have to go [to visit prostitutes] but it's like when you finish a meal, that's not enough, we have to go someplace else too. It should be continued, like the Ramayana Epic.
Nid: Yes. But people are different. Some want just to eat and drink and some want the entertainment [prostitute visitation], too. (BSM: 912)

Dech: Some may just accompany friends [to the brothel]. Some just sit and have a drink and some go into rooms for such activities. (LRM: 1432)

From our observations, the drinking group normally ranges from two to eight individuals, but men typically come to the brothel in groups of two or three, making it clear that the men extending the drinking circle gathering to the brothel does not always include all members of the original party. We have also observed individuals sitting alone or in small groups in the brothel as they wait for their friends to complete their activities in the back rooms.

It is important to emphasize the large degree of variance in both the perceptions of and degree of participation in extramarital commercial sex among married men. Some men enthusiastically support and encourage these activities under some circumstances, others feel that they are always inappropriate, and still others are ambivalent.

I: Do you think it's suitable for married men to take prostitutes?
R: It's normal for men to have outlets.
I: Is it? Even after the marriage?
R: Yes... Sometimes, men want to do it but women don't... It's a good way out, better than being depressed with the family and causing family problems. (Case07M: 173)

R: Going frequently is not proper... But if they [married men] go only once in a while and protect themselves from diseases by using condoms, it is all right. (Case18M: 89)

I: Do you think it's suitable for married men to take prostitutes?
R: Not appropriate, not appropriate for sure. Visiting prostitutes for married men, it is certainly not appropriate. It's another matter for single men since they are still curious and want the experience. (Case25M: 204)

I: Is it suitable [for married men to take prostitutes]?
R: I can't answer for them because.. [doesn't finish sentence].
I: ... What would your wife say if you did it?
R: ... These things can be explained. I give her my reasons and she could accept.
I: What would be your good excuse?
R: I don't know what to say. (Case36M: 367)
While a substantial proportion of our married male indepth respondents continue to patronize commercial sex establishments after marriage, the majority no longer do. Survey data cited above suggest that our sample of men is typical of larger populations on this point. Our discussions and interviews also make clear that men must respond to this broad range of opinions and behavior among their friends and colleagues. The next section explores some of the social dynamics of peer influence on male extramarital commercial sex patronage.

COMMERCIAL SEX PATRONAGE: PEER INFLUENCES

Peer Group Influences Supporting Commercial Sex Patronage

Having established the clear link between peer group socializing and commercial sex patronage, we turn next to the specific mechanisms of peer group influence on individual commercial sex patronage. While by no means its primary function, peer group dynamics can support or encourage commercial sex visitation in a number of ways. Many of these dynamics are the same or similar for single and married men, but we focus on the latter group because of our primary goal of examining male extramarital sexual behavior. For discussion purposes, we group these mechanisms of peer influence into 7 categories; although there is overlap among them, each has distinctive features that help explicate the overall process.

1) Peer group socializing provides opportunities for commercial sex visitation

As explained above, visiting prostitutes by oneself is fairly rare, and if there were no get-togethers with friends for drinking or other leisure activities, many men would probably not contemplate going. Being presented with an opportunity to go (as opposed to deliberately planning a commercial sex visit) is seen by many male participants to be an essential prerequisite for a visit to a commercial sex establishment. Going off to socialize with friends presents one of the most ideal opportunities for a married man to partake in commercial sex. This is probably much more typical, however, in urban than in rural settings for at least two reasons. First, as stated above, commercial sex establishments are far more readily available in towns than in villages. Second, urban peer groups are more likely to meet at a local restaurant and hence away from members' homes and the watchful eyes of wives than rural friendship groups, given that restaurants are less common in villages.

When asked why men go to visit prostitutes, most groups mention either friends getting together and/or drinking as primary factors. Such occasions provide a comfortable and relaxed context to be oneself, in which formal conventions of behavioral etiquette and restraint are temporarily suspended. In several of our male focus groups and indepth interviews, the participants and respondents make clear that they often have no prior intention to visit commercial sex workers when they meet to drink with their friends, but rather the opportunity simply presents itself quite spontaneously in the course of the evening.

Prateep: For people our age, they would do it [go for commercial sex] if there is time or opportunity...
M2: When are good opportunities?
Prateep: When we meet either in a small or big group, we may ask each other to go [to brothels].

Lam: Opportunities may mean parties among close friends. I may invite you; you may invite me, we may invite each other. They think the same thing so they go. (KUM: 517, 539)

I: Was there any chance that you set a plan that today you must have it, like I must do it?
R: No. Mostly we were out together for some drinks before I induced my friends to go or they induced me. We didn't set a plan beforehand that we would go. (Case28M: 656)

Jake: Usually, [our friends] would ask us to drink. They won't ask us to brothels right away. (KRM: 1827)

We suspect that for some peer groups of married men, concluding an evening of drinking with some form of commercial sex is routine and taken for granted and thus more or less expected before-hand. In addition there may be times when groups that do not routinely go for such activities, plan in advance for them. However, such statements did not arise in the focus group discussions or in the indepth interviews, both of which emphasized the spontaneous emergence of plans for an evening's commercial sex outing.

2) Peer group get-togethers provide a venue for treating and being treated to entertainment

Another way in which male participants saw the peer group as providing an opportunity for commercial sex was through the common practice of one member treating others to the night's entertainment. Generally in Thailand, when a group goes out for entertainment such as eating out or drinking, one member will foot the bill (Cooper and Cooper 1986, p. 43). This can extend to prostitute visitation as well, but may occur less regularly due to the high costs of providing commercial sex workers for an entire retinue. Nevertheless, both focus group participants and indepth respondents made clear that offers by one group member to pay for others provided an opportunity for commercial sex patronage that otherwise would not have taken place. In some cases it was clear that having someone else pay made the difference between whether the person being treated would or would not partake in the commercial sex activity.

Chai: If it’s paid by someone, I will go anywhere. (Laughed)
Duan: If we have to pay for it ourselves, we may have second thoughts and go our separate ways. (BSM: 1612).

I: How did your friends induce you to go to a brothel?
R: Mostly we just talked first and then somebody made a suggestion. If I did not have the money, my friend would say he would pay for me first and I would pay him back later. So we went when we knew that we had the money. (Case17M: 542)

R: When we arrive [at a brothel], [my friends] take one and pay for me to take another. It costs them money; I don't want to waste it so I take her. (Case29M: 211)

The peer group is also frequently the venue for celebrating special events, e.g., unanticipated income, a reunion of former members, or a holiday. Many men who don't visit commercial sex
workers on a regular basis seem to feel entitled to an occasional visit under such special circumstances. The recipient of a windfall may invite others to join him as a means of celebration. For friends, this can be an opportunity to engage in behavior they normally would avoid if they had to pay themselves or if they had to go alone.

Sak: Sometimes my friends come and say let's go out to eat at Anodrat [a local massage parlor and restaurant complex], I've got a bonus, I'll treat you. We don't intend to go to brothels. But after we've eaten, the atmosphere, getting drunk, we feel like going. (LUM: 2036)

Sawang: They're friends, we've not met for a long time, we will certainly say yes [if they ask us out to a brothel].
Jake: We may drink and then go on to a brothel.
Kayai: But not if they ask us every day.
Jake: If they ask us out without reason, we won't go with them. (KRM: 1630).

Lam: Usually, it happens when friends get together at a home-coming night. They are all old friends. (KUM 1352).

The drinking group provides a venue for reciprocating social favors. In many cases it is expected that these treats will be repaid when the invited ones have the extra cash or reason to celebrate. Thus accepting an invitation to visit prostitutes from a member of your group often creates an informal obligation to repay at a later time.

A somewhat special variant of reciprocal commercial sex treats occurs among business associates. Those who do business with each other often provide or expect commercial sex visits as part of the negotiation process. This was considered to be an unremarkable aspect of male professional life for several of the men and women participants.

M2: How do [colleagues] come into the scene?
Noi: I think it's both because sometimes I take them out and sometimes they take me out so it kind of expands.
M2: Can't you say no to them?
Noi: I will lose my customers and can't sell my things. (BSM: 869).

3) Peer group socializing fosters heavy drinking

The focus group discussions and indepth interviews make obvious the central role of alcohol as a major predisposing factor for participation in a commercial sex outing. This point is made repeatedly by men and women alike. Declaring alcohol as a major cause of commercial sex visits is more difficult given its central role in nearly all male social activities. Still, several men explained that even when there was no initial intention to visit a prostitute on the part of a group member, one's mind often changes under the influence of alcohol. Heavy drinking lowers inhibitions, and this effect is compounded by the fact that men are often not held accountable for their actions if they are intoxicated (Klausner 1978). Actions that otherwise might be unacceptable become excusable (among friends at least) when the person is drunk.
Yord: Sometimes you don't intend to go but after you are drunk you persuade one another. (LRM: 1414).

Paisarn: We take [prostitutes] because we're drunk.
Sawang: Drinks can change our habits...
Piti: Those serious minded people can become talkative. They will be brave enough to go visiting brothels. (KRM: 897)

Lom: Drinks can change people's habits. We can do what we dare not if not drunk. (KUM: 1330)

Dech: If I get drunk and my friends persuade me, I'll forget about my wife. (LRM: 1761)

Pu: Like Mu said, we didn't mean to go there but when we're drunk somebody in the group would suggest the place. We all agreed to go, just looked around first. As you know, we were drunk, we couldn't control ourselves so we ended up sleeping with a girl there. (BMM: 208).

As one focus group participant explained, intoxication makes it difficult to decline an invitation to visit a commercial sex establishment, not only because the individual's will to resist may falter, but sometimes group leaders become drunk and insist that everyone participates.

Lam: If two leaders in the group of five are very drunk, they won't let any out. All must go there together... It's up to how drunk we all are. If very drunk and the leader says we have to, we all do. (KUM: 1333).

4) Peer groups foster the participation of ambivalent or reluctant members

Some married men need little encouragement to visit commercial sex establishments while others would not visit under any circumstances after marriage. But a third and potentially large category of men is ambivalent and thus particularly susceptible to the urging of peers to visit a commercial sex establishment. During the course of an evening out, male friends and acquaintances can provide the necessary encouragement or pressure needed for these men to engage in commercial sex.

Lam: Those who are indecisive won't do it if they are not urged... If friends don't nag them, they won't do it. (KUM: 1106).

Deu: Sometimes there are friends who persuade you, like, if we don't go and everyone else goes, then they'll say "Hey how come you're the only black sheep," something like that. (BSM: 889).

I: Do you think friends influence each other to take prostitutes?
R: Yes, because we would induce each other. Even some who didn't feel like going would go, just to keep others company. They might change their minds later and get girls for themselves when they arrived at a brothel. (Case28M: 675)
One common and apparently very effective method by which the drinking group pressures its members into a commercial sex visit is by accusing the reluctant member of being afraid of his wife (*glua mia*). This tactic was brought up spontaneously by several of the men's groups and by every women's group. We presume that it is usually said in a semi-joking way and is a standard strategy to try to persuade a reluctant married man to join in a group commercial sex outing.

Lam: Men feel the strongest insult if accused of fearing wives. To prove they are not afraid of the wife they will go. Particularly for the ones who are indecisive, if accused of being afraid of wives they will join in. (KUM: 1143).

M1: Will men say no if asked to do it (go to a brothel) by friends?  
Rumpuey: Never...  
Chin: Friends would accuse them of fearing wives... They will be nagged until the end of the harvesting. (KRW: 823, 860).

It is unclear how serious these accusations of "being afraid of the wife" are taken or just what they imply. One interpretation is that they illustrate the necessity of demonstrating primary allegiance to the peer group rather than the family. This, in fact, seems to be the interpretation of several of the women respondents. Men, however, did not state this as a general point. Rather many indicated that once one is married the situation changes and the family, especially the children, are of primary concern. This does not preclude socializing with friends, however, and even on occasions giving precedence to peer gatherings as long as the family is sufficiently supplied with their basic needs.

Lek: At the moment, the wife is more important than friends. Before you are married, friends are important. But with a wife, friends go down in importance. The wife, the family, comes first. Friends have less important roles. But once in a long while, that's OK, [going out to visit commercial sex workers] is no problem. (LUM: 1991).

M2: Can you say no right away if you don't want to do it [go for commercial sex]?  
Lom: Yes, if friends understand each other. If they don't like doing it or if it can cause family problems, friends had better let them go home. (KUM: 1309).

An accusation of being "afraid of the wife" implies domination, though the man might simply be dedicated to his family. We interpret being "afraid of the wife" as a tactic for manipulating group members who do not want to participate in questionable group activities. Since married life provides fewer opportunities for group activities, including commercial sex visits, declining an occasional opportunity to visit a commercial sex establishment may be difficult for both the individual married group member, as well as for the rest of the peer group.

Another way that peer groups influence reluctant members to join is by appealing to a sense of group solidarity. Being a member of a friendship group often requires at least a nominal demonstration of commitment to the group. Thais have a long-standing reputation for avoiding conflict (Hanks 1962) and this characteristic is especially important in the peer group context (Mulder 1990). Reluctant group members are unlikely to criticize the excursion.
R: If we drink together, we have to do as most want to. We are there together and have to go everywhere together. (Case29: 200)

Lom: Thai manners are like that. They won't fight the point [of going for commercial sex]. They respect each other's opinion. Especially if they are married, others will take them as adults. If five in seven want to do it, the two who do not will not want to argue. (KUM: 778).

The two remaining men have several options: go home, go along but wait outside, go with a girl in the room but not have sex, or actively participate. Some men may accompany the group because of concern for the welfare of their friends, or to demonstrate their unity with the group. In some cases, a nonparticipating group member will make it clear that he is simply accompanying the group and not actively participating; in others, the man feels compelled to give his friends the impression that he had intercourse even though he did not. The possibility of accompanying but not participating arose in most of the men's focus groups and was mentioned by several in-depth respondents. Although it is difficult to assess how common this strategy is, clearly it is not unusual.

Deu: It [an invitation to go for commercial sex] can't be easily declined. We have to say yes. It's hard to say no so we simply go with them. We may take a girl into a room and just talk with her. We do it to maintain goodwill within the group (BSM: 1617).

I: Did your friends mind your staying outside [the brothel], not going in?
R: No. Those who wanted to go inside, went. Those who didn't want to stayed outside, had some drinks while waiting. No problem at all. (Case35M: 406)

Some groups appear tolerant towards men who do not wish to participate and others do not. Moreover the level of tolerance may depend on the occasion and the level of intoxication of other group members. Ambivalent men who do end up actively participating sometimes do so because they fear alienation from the group and that they might not otherwise be invited to subsequent gatherings.

Piak: ... Some men are reluctant. If they say no to friends, the friends might not come back and ask again... (LUM: 2101).

Among some men employed in bureaucratic organizations, social obligations to participate in evening outings to commercial sex establishments go along with their position. As pointed out in the following focus group discussion among middle class Bangkok women, even wives may tolerate this practice because they recognize what is expected by colleagues and subordinates.

Nong: After my husband received a better position, it required more social life... He could refuse before. Our family is his excuse. But when he went to a high position, being a chief, he can't refuse it...
Jim: Always parties and parties.
Nong: It doesn't look good if he wants to go to the monastery... He can't not feel well. (BMW: 2952).

5) Peer groups provide secrecy for group members' commercial sex patronage
The provision of mutual secrecy or even cover for these illicit activities demonstrates the strong bonds of the male friendship group. Many of the men felt a sense of obligation to help each other hide their commercial sex visits from their wives' probes.

Deu: Men won't talk, if they go out together that's the end of it... [Our wives] will ask where we went... If we go visit prostitutes we have to make the story clear among us... A wife would ask her husband first and then friends who went with him would be asked later. We have to make the same answer or else she would come back to question the husband. (BSM: 1935, 2088).

One variant of this occurs when men travel together, often for work purposes. This is sometimes seen as a special opportunity to indulge in behaviors that may be more difficult to hide in one's home town or village.

I: Did you go see prostitutes after you were married?
R: Yes. You know, when my friends and I had to work in other provinces for many months, or when we went to other provinces for seminars, we would do it sometimes. Not very often -- once a month or once every few months. (Case28M: 840)

6) Peer groups provide a venue for showing off

From some of the women's perspectives, the male drinking group provides an avenue for showing off in front of friends, and this includes for some commercial sex activity.

M1: How do men feel about men taking prostitutes?
Chin: Men take it as something fashionable. Something fashionable if one dares to.
Montha: That he is able, isn't he?
Runthip: If he has already had a wife, they think he is good at finding more girls (KRW: 722).

This interpretation does not arise in the male groups although one indepth male respondent mentioned that men are proud when they can coax a woman (such as a waitress) who is not a usual sex worker to go with them even if they have to pay. Generally the male focus group participants did not seem to view the prostitute visiting group as a venue for competition, but it is possible that men are reluctant to admit that they show off to each other, or perhaps they fail to recognize showing off as part of their motivation. Pride and face are certainly invoked to pressure reluctant members to conform with group norms, but is unclear whether these values lead to intragroup competition. Moreover, the issue of demonstrating sexual prowess never arose in the discussions.

A final point is that several of the male participants who acknowledge that peers can influence commercial sex patronage of married men (and not all acknowledge this) emphasize that this influence is limited. One indepth respondent (Case28M), for example, discusses above that the peer group may help 'induce' a man to patronize a commercial sex establishment by simply presenting him with the opportunity. However, he later makes clear that the final decision rests with the individual himself.
I: Can your friends talk you into going out with them?
R: No. We are grown-ups. If we don't want to go, it's okay. They don't mind. (Case28M: 912)

Peer Group Influences Discouraging HIV Risk Behavior Associated with Commercial Sex

Not all peer groups necessarily serve to encourage members to patronize commercial sex establishments. In interpreting our focus group discussions and indepth interviews, it is useful to bear in mind that considerably less attention was devoted to the ways peers may act to discourage each other to go than the reverse. Although the focus group moderators tried to raise the issue of peer influence in a neutral manner, the participants stressed peer group encouragement rather than discouragement. This emphasis probably reflects the actual relative importance of encouraging versus discouraging peer effects on commercial sex patronage. However, this emphasis on peer encouragement of commercial sex patronage probably also reflects the fact that actual and potential discouraging influences are less interesting for both the male and female participants to discuss, especially within a group context such as ours.

There are at least two possible reasons for this. First, there is typically more of a story to tell about going to prostitutes than about not going; for both the married men and the wives, the times that men go to visit prostitutes are undoubtedly more memorable than the times they do not. Second, we find that friends might warn each other not to engage in commercial sex activities but then typically refrain from any further interference; thus, there is not much to tell about regarding discouraging peer influence in the focus group discussions. Also, warnings about commercial sex patronage may usually occur in more intimate private conversations between two friends rather than in the course of the group socializing, which typically was the emphasis of the focus group discussions.

We believe that the general infrequency with which married peers actively discourage each other's commercial sex patronage derives from two principal sources. First, most Thais men have been conditioned to view commercial as both a form of entertainment and as a legitimate way to meet sexual needs when single. Thus having sex with a prostitute is not seen automatically as a deviant act as it might be in societies where commercial sex is generally seen as abnormal or morally inappropriate. Second, noninterference in others' affairs is a broad social value in Thai society (Mole 1973: 66-67; Knodel, Chamratrithirong and Debaalya 1987: 169). Focusing on one's own affairs, self contemplation on one's own faults and being mindful of one's own actions are major teachings of the Buddhist religion and are embedded Thai cultural values. Being told to mind your own business (yaa suek) is among the very strongest admonishments in the Thai language (Bennett 1994).

Despite these qualifications, negative peer group influences on commercial sex patronage do exist. In the following section we analyze participants' views of how peer groups can discourage risk behavior related to commercial sex patronage by married men. We include both influences that
may discourage visiting prostitutes at all as well as influences that encourage condom use when engaging in sex with a prostitute.\textsuperscript{10}

1) Peer group members remind each other about AIDS and STDs

It is clear from the married men participants that male friendship groups discuss the connection between commercial sex visits and the possibility of contracting the AIDS virus. This is not surprising considering the widespread AIDS awareness campaigns in the mass-media and direct Information, Education, and Communication (IE&C) programs in almost all low priced brothels in Thailand by public health offices (Brown et al. 1994; Hanenberg et al. 1994). Concern sometimes encompasses other STDs in addition to AIDS but it is clear that the AIDS issue is quite salient in the participants' minds. The issue of AIDS and STDs associated with commercial sexual visits is probably a less sensitive topic of discussion among peers than the relation between prostitute visitation and financial and family responsibility. Peer discussion on fear of AIDS and brothel visits avoids any direct interference with friends' personal and familial affairs. Two men's groups and numerous indepth respondents mentioned their general fear of contracting STDs; four men's groups discussed reducing commercial sex visits in response to their fear of AIDS; and all groups and virtually all indepth respondents demonstrate widespread awareness of the AIDS virus.

\begin{quote}
Jek: Most of the time we would tell [friends] not to go.
Kayai: That is, married men with wives most of the time would restrain each other from going. ...
Rahuey: We would say don't go to [prostitutes], you will get a disease, it is not good. 
(tKRM: 1926)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Samrong: Everyone talks about this [AIDS] nowadays. Who would want to go? They are so afraid [of AIDS].
Niwate: Nowadays people visit brothels less.
Samrong: Most would just drink and go home.
Reed: Most of those who want to eat will eat at home [Eat here means have sex] (tBFM: 462)
\end{quote}

2) Promoting condom use

The widespread awareness of both AIDS and the risks of unprotected intercourse with commercial sex workers found in all the focus groups undoubtedly results in part from government and private mass media campaigns promoting AIDS awareness. A major focus in these campaigns is the encouragement of condom use during commercial sex encounters. While there was a general consensus in all groups that the frequency of commercial sex visitation has decreased in Thai society since the advent of AIDS, condom use was mentioned much more frequently as a means of avoiding the AIDS virus than was avoiding commercial sex

\textsuperscript{10} The issue of peers discouraging condom use never arose in the focus group discussions.
establishments. The importance of using condoms with commercial sex workers as a strategy for avoiding AIDS was brought up by three women's groups and two men's groups.

Laem: Most of the time I would remind my friends if they go to visit brothels to be careful... Nowadays, when going out to brothels in a group there is talk about reminding each other...
Chai: If we talk about the present time, we would remind each other...
Suk: We would say 'hey don't forget your rubber'. I think it is something normal (tKUM: 1696).

Sawang: We always talk about it [condoms], of course... We say to use it, be careful not to get a disease, like this, to wear a rubber, a condom. (tKRM: 2102)

3) Showing concern for the welfare of a friend's family

For many male participants, one's primary peer group is formed before marriage. Interaction continues with the group after marriage, but there is widespread agreement that the increased responsibilities of married life usually precludes a continuation of the premarital status quo. Opportunities for peer group gatherings become limited by both time and resource constraints and, given the importance of the peer group context for commercial sex visitation, this reduced opportunity for peer group interaction helps explain the reduced frequency of commercial sex patronage by married men compared to single men (Deemar 1990; Sittitrai et al. 1992). Perhaps more importantly, marriage provides a man with a regular sexual partner and should reduce his need (as perceived by both himself and his peers) to patronize prostitutes for sexual release. There was general consensus among both the men's and women's groups and most indepth respondents that commercial sex visitation should and does decline after marriage. There was a range of opinion, however, regarding whether commercial sex visitation should cease completely after marriage. Some men feel that married friends are entitled to occasional 'changes of taste' (a common justification cited by the male participants), while others believe that commercial sex patronage should end after marriage.

M2: Why do some men still take prostitutes even when they are married?
Kayai: To try something new. If we ate one thing all the time, we might want a change. (KRM: 1153)

M1: Can you say it's alright for men to take prostitutes? ...
Noi: Now I have a family and so I think it's not proper for married men to do that. (BSM: 948).

I: For those who used to go out [to prostitutes] before they got married, what do you think the wife feels if they still go after that?
R: After they are married, they shouldn't. I won't. Because you're not by yourself. If you get any disease, it could pass on to your wife and your kids. That will cause problems. (Case34M: 73)

I: In your opinion, is it proper for married men to go see prostitutes?
R: No... They must be responsible for their families. If they want to do it, they must be careful not to get diseases. They have to think about their wives and children. (Case35M: 152)

But even those men who feel that an occasional visit to a commercial sex establishment remains appropriate after marriage usually condition their approval on whether the man adequately provides for his family. Close friendships among men in Thailand as elsewhere often encompass concern about each other's welfare in a broad sense that extends to the well-being of the friend's family. Thus when frequent prostitute visitation by a married man is viewed by friends as excessive and as posing a threat to the stability of his marriage and the well-being of his wife and children, friends may worry about the consequences for both him and his family. However, taking the step beyond private disapproval and outspoken admonition is further conditioned by the closeness of the relationship between the friends. There were no instances cited in the male groups or in the indepth interviews in which men told their friends' wives about commercial sex visitation. To do so would likely have been seen as direct and intrusive interference. But if the men are close, dissuasion of excessive commercial sex visitation can occur. If someone perceives his close friend to be in a potentially damaging position, he may consider the circumstances sufficiently severe to attempt to intervene.

Kayai: Sometimes friends will support [each other's commercial sex visits] but sometimes they may not allow it. It depends on the circumstance. If one goes often, everyday, usually the group will try to restrain them.
M2: If (the group) tries to restrain them, will the men [who visit brothels too often] listen? Rahuey/Sawang: If they love each other a lot they will listen. Close friends will listen. (tKRM: 1130)

M2: If someone in the village knew that [a woman's] husband visited a brothel would they go and tell? [the wife].
Deau: No, they will not tell, it is the man's own business. Their friends will not [tell]...
Noi: We would talk to the men first.
Deau: Men would have to remind each other.
Duan: To feel sorry for his family.
Noi: We may tease him, 'hey, its too often, tone down. Oh!,' Something like that... Nai: We are friends and our friend has a family right? If he goes to brothels I would have to consider what his family would think. (tBSM: 1602)

These reminders to close friends regarding excessive commercial sex visitation have their limitations. If the excessive behavior continues after one or two reminders, even close friends may not persist. There was no mention of situations where peers took steps to prevent or otherwise forcibly persuade their friends to reduce excessive commercial sex visitation. This disinclination to persist after warning their friend once or twice is consistent with the general view expressed by both male and female participants that ultimately, commercial sex visitation is a personal decision and depends upon a man's individual character.

Rahuey: Sometimes friends who love each other, sit and drink together, will say 'hey stop this, to go [commercial sex] is not good at all.'
M2: They don't get upset?
Rahuey: No.
Sawang: They are close friends.
Rahuey: That is, this bottle of whisky I buy for his wife; friends have to believe each other.
Sawang: That is, close friends must listen to each other ...
Klin: Right. When I would go, I would tell them to not come along but whether they followed my advice or not is their choice. (tKRM: 1140)

Finally, if a Thai man feels that his friend is visiting commercial sex workers excessively and the friend does not respond to admonitions to moderate his behavior, the man may distance himself from his philandering friend since the friend chooses to disregard his advice.

M1: Do we not think of advising each other?
Lek: We advise hey, don't go [to commercial sex visits] too often.
Jaew: [Don't you care for] your wife and children, you bastard... Like our friends may feel that we go [visit commercial sex] too much, right? Like we are not responsible for our family. Our friend may advise us once or twice. If they advise and we don't believe [them] then they won't advise us anymore and soon they will distance themselves from us (tLUM: 2350...).

Rahuey: Usually friends will remind each other and they will listen to each other.
Sawang: If we warn them and they don't listen, then we won't go places with each other.
M1: Are there cases where we love this person even though he doesn't listen to us?
Rahuey: Being like that is not considered to be a friendship.
Piti: That then is just a normal acquaintance.
Rahuey: If he is a friend then he must listen to me. (tKRM: 2148)

To summarize, acquaintances usually avoid interference with each other's private affairs. Friends might be concerned about each other's welfare and tease each other about frequent brothel visits but generally prefer to avoid conflict. Close friends may feel compelled to comment on excessive commercial sex visitation if it appears to be affecting the man's family obligations. But there was widespread agreement that even close friends cannot press advice to reduce commercial sex visitation beyond a certain point. Instead, the decision to engage in commercial sex visitation is viewed as ultimately up to the individual himself.

COMMERCIAL SEX PATRONAGE: SPOUSE INFLUENCES

Wives' Perceptions of Commercial Sex Patronage

In the women's groups as well as in the men's groups, there was considerably more discussion of the way male peers support commercial sex patronage than there was of the ways peers discourage the activity. Perceptions of the spouse's influence on male extramarital sexual activity was decisively weighted in the opposite direction: men and women discussants were much more likely to emphasize how wives detest the activity and sometimes try to prevent it than features of the husband/wife relationship that tend to support or at least tolerate the husband's infidelity. There was widespread recognition that a wife's options are limited in this area, since ultimately the men are seen to be the ones who determine their own behavior. Compounding the problem for
the wives is the fact that they are often uncertain if their husband engages in extramarital relations with commercial sex workers, though many have suspicions.

Most men who visit commercial sex workers indicate that they take many precautions to hide these activities from their wives, and discussions of various techniques to cover up transgressions emerged in the male focus groups. Male peers will not reveal the commercial sex activities of their friends to their friends' wives. As we pointed out in the first section, peer group activities can even be used as a cover for outings involving commercial sex patronage, with collusion among the men preventing the wives from finding out about these illicit activities.

M: Do wives know that husbands go on taking prostitutes after marriage?
Sak: I don't think they do unless they are told.
Niveh: Those who go together will keep it a secret.
Niwon: [Wives] may suspect.
Niveh: But they can't be sure whether husbands do it or not.
Pai: We have to do our best to keep it a secret. (Laughed) (BFM: 1058)

M1: Will your wives find out about [visiting prostitutes]?
Deu: It's difficult for them to find out.
Noi: We may be in trouble if they do... We must have valid excuses. It's OK if it's a white lie that can comfort the wives. It's not a sin. (Laughed) (BSM: 1640)
Kayai: If husbands do it once in a while, [wives] will never know about it.... How can they?
I would say I go to watch a movie.
Piti: They won't suspect [if we go occasionally]. But if we do it as a habit, they will find out
and there will be a violent fight. (KRM: 1407)

M1: Do wives know if husbands take prostitutes?
Lom and Sak: They have few opportunities to know. Few know.
Lom: I never told the truth if I went. It was dangerous to do so...
Prateep: They might feel suspicious.
Lom: Still, they don't know.
Lam: They may suspect, but if we say no, they will never have evidence (KUM: 851).

Women's groups also discussed this topic extensively. While the men had rather elaborate plans
to cover their activities, the women exchanged information regarding various clues that could
implicate the men. Still, there was general agreement among the women as well as the men that it
is difficult for a wife to know for sure if her husband participates in occasional commercial sex.
This absence of clear information makes it difficult for a wife to confront a husband whom she
suspects visits prostitutes.

M2: When your husband goes with friends can you tell afterwards if he's been with a
woman?
Cheep: If they don't tell we won't know.
Cholada: If they go during the day we wouldn't know but if they go at night then they'll
come home late.
Cheep: We know only that he's been out but we don't know if he's slept with anybody.
Cholada: You can tell from the clothes.
Kanika: They smell different.
Sanga: You won't know if he doesn't tell you. Who's going to keep smelling clothes?
(BFW: 1189)

M1: Do you always know if your husbands took prostitutes?
Noi: We probably wouldn't know. Maybe in a few cases...
Lamai: I have never found the evidence. Friends told me to search and examine his pants. I
did but have never found anything.
Noi: I won't know when he has to work overtime. I can't catch his mistake. I don't know
how to catch him since he told me that he went to work. (BSW: 877)

M2: Do wives know if husbands took prostitutes?
Rumpuey: We know he went out but we don't know where he went.
Chin: Usually, we don't know. We will if he tells us. But even then we won't know
whether he's kidding or serious.
Rungthip: We assume that he goes to drink.
Rumpuey: If he drinks regularly, we will never know when he goes out...
Chin: Yes, we won't be able to trap him. (KRW: 758)
The vast majority of our women focus group participants and indepth interview respondents viewed extramarital sex between their husbands and commercial sex workers negatively and as a fairly serious matter. But a minority of women seemed to feel that it is not a serious issue, so long as it is not flaunted, not excessive, and the husband is careful to not contract a venereal disease. Among the majority who expressed disapproval, there were three major themes regarding the reasons wives were against commercial sex patronage by their husbands. Most common was a fear of contracting AIDS and other STDs from her husband's commercial sex contacts.

Khai: But I don't want him to visit prostitutes. I'm afraid that he'll contract AIDS and spread it to me...
Tu: Yes, we shouldn't ignore this matter.
Nit: He must know how to protect himself.
Tu: He must know himself, know how to protect himself and me.
Khai: I'm very afraid of it. (KUW: 704).

As discussed in the introductory section, awareness of HIV and its consequences is widespread in Thailand, and the focus group discussions and indepth interviews indicate that concerns about AIDS is becoming a salient feature in current views about commercial sex patronage by married men.

A second theme that arose occasionally in the reasons women give for opposing commercial sex patronage by their husbands is that some women felt hurt and/or insulted when they discover that their husbands have been unfaithful, though there was much variance on this and the degree of hurt appears much less for commercial sex workers than for noncommercial sex partners (this comparison is addressed more explicitly in a subsequent section).

I: Suppose that a married man has sex with a commercial sex worker. If the wife should find out, what would she do?
R: I feel that the wife would be angry. If the husband took a good woman, we would feel that we are not as good as her. But if he took a prostitute, does this mean that I can't even compete with her? (Case01W: 197)

I: But if [husbands] ask to take prostitutes. Will wives let them do it? ...
R: For me, I will be really hurt and wonder what I do wrong. (Case19W: 244)

The third theme was also mentioned sporadically but may be important: some women regretted the household resources that were spent on commercial sex patronage. Some wives see this as a wasteful expenditure, especially for the non-wealthy, and feel that those funds detract from being able to meet the costs of maintaining a family and raising children. This concern was usually brought up in the context of frequent commercial sex visitation.

Chiraporn: Poor people don't do it [go to prostitutes].
TaeW: Not after the marriage.
Tawin: The poor don't earn enough money to do it. They have to provide for the family.
Chiraporn: At least, money must be spent on it. Why do they want to spend money like this when they have a wife at home. Besides that they will get some disease. (LUW: 1217)
Nit: It's not good [to visit prostitutes] if he has to spend money... Instead of giving such money to children. (KUW: 1427)

Somwang: Money is wasted and wives are betrayed. Nothing good comes out of it. (LRW: 1024)

While most women disapproved of male commercial sex patronage, the above quotes demonstrate that there is a fairly broad range in the degree of disapproval. Some were unwilling to tolerate it at all, but more felt that an occasional transgression was not a serious threat to the couple's relationship. Virtually none of the women, however, were indifferent to the practice, and most made some degree of effort to discourage it. Next we summarize the strategies used by wives to discourage their husbands from commercial sex patronage by employing four categories that vary with the strength of the wife's reaction; again the categories are not mutually exclusive.

**Mechanisms of Negative Spousal Influence on Commercial Sex Patronage**

1) By trying to be a good and pleasing wife

Several of the participants seemed to feel that the ability of the wife to satisfy the husband, both sexually and in other areas, is a major determinant of male commercial sex patronage after marriage. They also seemed to believe that this was one area of action they had which could affect the husband's propensity to visit prostitutes. One respondent suggested trying to do more things together with one's spouse.

M1: What should wives do to prevent husbands from taking prostitutes? ...
Chin: Don't complain when they are home and treat them well... If we talk to them nicely, they may do it less... If we don't complain when he is back home, he won't go out. We have to be nice to him and talk to him gently... In bed, we must let them have it their way. Do whatever he wants.
Runghip: Then, we won't fight...
Suthip: Be nice to him in bed.
Many: (Laughed). (KRW: 976, 995).

Ratana: You shall invite him to go out dining, listening to the music, visiting upcountry, any way that you can go together. Wherever he would like to go, you just go together. You ask him to go with you...
Maew: But if he is married and is still dissatisfied, he might 'go out and have fun' again. That's what he said. When we are together, whatever he likes, for example, a T.V. program that he prefers, I'll watch that program with him. He won't feel lonely...
Tu: You must be there to greet him, to please him. (KUW: 1122, 1181).

2) Confront husband with the situation

While several of the women participants seemed willing to ignore their husband's commercial sex patronage as long as it was occasional and he was discreet, once they learned of their husband's infidelity, several women confronted their husbands directly or recommended doing so. Some felt
that frank talks about the situation were the best way to effect a change or at least clarify what the issues and options are. Some would remind the husband of his responsibilities to his family, using reason as a tool to persuade the wayward husband to stop his philandering.

M: But if he goes [to take a prostitute] often...
Nong: Then you must have a talk.
Several: (laugh) (BMW: 1449).

Tune: I ask him to avoid it because he may get infected. The infected diseases might affect me and my child, I tell him that he wastes the money on drinks, women and tips and also risks infection. The solution is not to take prostitutes. (LRW: 1422).

3) Get tough and threaten

Implicit in the discussion above is the belief that some men may simply need to be reminded of the negative effects of commercial sex patronage to convince them to stop. But if a frank talk doesn't work, or if the issue raises emotions past the point of controlled discussion, some women are willing to raise the level of the confrontation and challenge their husbands' behavior more directly.

Tune: If he didn't [listen to me when I talked to him], I would get angry and we would quarrel... If we have a quarrel men will give up the idea. They are not in the mood anymore. (LRW: 1433).

Tu: If I've been talking to him nicely and he still didn't listen sometimes I have to make an attack, don't I? If I talked and he understood, stopped doing such things according to what I said, then I wouldn't complain. But if he doesn't stop, I won't accept it either. Sometimes you have to get tough with him, a man is just like that (laugh). Sometimes being too gentle isn't that good. (KUW: 1453).

4) Separation

One last resort is to threaten separation and indeed to keep this option open as a possible final response to a husband's infidelity.

Cheep: I'll threaten him not to do this again and if he doesn't stop we might have to live apart. (BFW: 1254).

There was mixed opinion as to whether separation or divorce was truly an appropriate or viable solution to the problem. Several of the participants stressed the potential difficulties that would result from what many perceived to be a drastic response. Whether to pursue this ultimate course of action seems to depend upon a number of conditioning factors, e.g., the frequency of commercial sex patronage, the financial hardships imposed, the welfare of the children, and the degree of love in the relationship.

M1: Will women stand for it if husbands enjoy taking prostitutes?
Rungthip: We have to talk with him and if he doesn't listen to us, we'll divorce him.
Rumpuey: If he does it regularly, I will divorce him.
M1: What about if he does it occasionally?
Rungthip: Let me think about it.
Many: (Laughed).
Rumpuey: If taking prostitutes doesn't result in getting infected, it might be O.K. We have to take care of ourselves and our children.
Suthip: If she still loves him, she'll let him do it. ...
Pranee: No, I won't stay with him. I love my children very much. How can he waste the money that we have earned together? I'd prefer to leave him and be with my children. (KRW: 1050).

M1: How long can women stand it if husbands always go to prostitutes?
Lamai: Women are very patient, much more patient than men are.
Noi: Women must stand whatever it is since they think first of their children. They are afraid that they might not be able to raise their children all by themselves.
M2: Does it mean that they won't be divorced?
Several: No, we won't. (BSW: 1018)

Pen: If it's too much, I won't tolerate it either... [If he goes] very often that means he doesn't care about me.
Maew: But some women can tolerate that.
Khai: [Some] can tolerate just for the sake of children...
Nit: It's alright if [the wife] still gets money continuously. (KUW: 1244).

Wives' tolerance of or resignation to commercial sex patronage

Very few of the women participants felt genuinely tolerant of commercial sex worker patronage by their husbands, but we identify several features of the husband-wife relationship that may serve to maintain commercial sex visitation by married men.

1) Commercial sex visitation is seen as ordinary for men

There was widespread opinion among both the men and the women participants that commercial sex patronage is unremarkable for men since men tire of one partner eventually. Men need not only a regular sexual outlet but occasional variety as well. This appears to be a widespread attitude in Thailand reluctantly acknowledged if not accepted by women.

M2: Why do married men visit prostitutes?
Nit: To change his taste...
Tu: He wants to change the taste.
Ratana: [He] wants to eat something sweet.
Nit: It maybe spicy and hot at home. So he wants to get some sweet taste outside.
Tu: Yes, outsider may be sweeter than us. (Laugh) (KUW: 735).

Udom: I can understand him since it's a ordinary practice. (Laughed) He might need a change. (Laughed) (LRW: 2099).

Supranee: I agree to let him do it from time to time...
Nai: If they are single, we have to allow him to do it. It's a ordinary practice. You can not find one who doesn't visit prostitutes. (BSW: 426).

Some women also acknowledge that these behavior patterns are formed before marriage and may be resistant to change.

Neng: He must change himself [after he becomes married]... But he still enjoys it since he used to go when he was a teenager...
Puang: He should decrease these activities and it shouldn't be the same, right? ... At least decrease to a half of it. (BMW: 718).

2) Recognition of importance of husbands joining friends

The prevailing pattern of gender-segregated socializing is generally recognized and accepted through most strata of Thai society. In the focus groups, there was widespread acknowledgement among the wives that maintaining social contacts with other men was very important for their husbands. The reasons given for the importance of social contacts varied by group, e.g., for their husband's sense of pride and face, for his enjoyment, or for his career advancement.

Maew: You have to accept it because most men work and they have their social lives.
Nit: They follow one another.
Pen: Some don't want to do it but they feel embarrassed in front of their friends. Friends will ask "are you afraid of your wife?"
Tu: For his dignity. (KUW: 766).

Nong: The advantages of his job also depend on society, social group, if he won't take part in his social group, it's just like he closes himself off, right?
Jim: It's quite uncommon if he doesn't go at all. It's really uncommon, abnormal if he won't participate in the social group...
Siriwan: Well, he goes with his group. They go together. Suppose he secludes himself, that might cause some problems. He told me that. I can't forbid him to do so because it is his social life... (BMW: 154, 447).

3) Commercial sex patronage is seen as the lesser of two evils

Several women were willing to put up with their husband's commercial sex patronage because they saw it as an alternative to his taking a minor wife or mistress, which is viewed as a much more serious threat to the financial and emotional security of the marriage.

Nong: I can accept when my husband visits commercial sex workers but he must protect himself. It's better to let him go and pay his money, better than having other women, regular partners. I accept it when he goes out, I told him to pay in return and don't do it for free. Because free of charge might cause a constant attachment. Thus he can visit commercial sex workers. (BMW: 784).
Suthip: Women can stand prostitutes but they can't stand other women partners. (KRW: 604).

Women in three focus groups and some in-depth respondents stated that contacts with noncommercial sex workers were preferable, since they are less likely to be infected with HIV or other STDs. While this was not the prevailing view it may be increasing given both the widespread publicity of AIDS and its association with commercial sex patronage and the fact that the fatal nature of AIDS adds considerably to the serious of the risk of getting STDs from the husband.

Jaew: At second thought, mistresses are better than prostitutes who might give them AIDS.

Maratee: Since there are many diseases nowadays, to have mistresses is better. Prostitutes tend to be disease carriers.
Many: We prefer mistresses. (Laughed) (LUW: 2472).

R: Actually, I told him that if he has another woman, it's better to get a girl who is not a prostitute. I don't want to hear that he goes see prostitutes... It's okay if he's involved with a good girl.
I: Why so? Isn't it better if he's involved with service girls? There's no bond between them.
R: No. I'm afraid of getting diseases. (Case38W: 78, 281)

If aversion to a husband's commercial sex patronage becomes as strong or stronger than aversion to noncommercial sex relations because of a high perceived risk of STDs and AIDS, this could reduce the tolerance of married women for both types of partners. Alternatively, it could also lessen wives' resistance to husbands' noncommercial sex partners.

4) Some wives are ready to give in easily

Perhaps because of the widespread acceptance of male commercial sex patronage in general, many of the women appear to put up only token resistance to their husbands' extramarital sexual activity. This may serve to make the stakes of commercial sex patronage insufficiently high for their husbands.

Kanika: If it happens to me I would stop sleeping with him.
Sanga: Even when you let them sleep with you they still go.
Cholada: You get mad for the moment and then you let them go to bed with you again. Guaranteed 100 percent.
Yoong: They say women seem to be strong with their words but give in easily when men want to take them. (BFW: 1237).

5) Some wives feel powerless to prevent it

Many of the women felt that they had to finally accept the situation since it was ultimately out of their hands. Both the men and women seemed to agree that in the final analysis, the man's character determines whether he will be able to resist extramarital commercial sex relations. If some women believe they are ultimately powerless to prevent their husbands' extramarital activity
unless he himself decides to stop, it is not surprising that these wives would choose to ignore the practice unless they are forced to confront it.

Puang: You can't make him stop completely, hundred percent if he wants to go. (BMW: 969).

Tuan: I feel that he is very smart to keep his secret if he goes out... Each of us keeps quiet. I'm not interested in his personal matters... I let him go free. (BMW: 1328).

Talub: When he goes out, I guess where to. I've never known for sure and he may not tell me the truth. He may go to do it. Most are like that. (LRW: 1356).

Pen: If he had gone and I knew it afterward...
Maew: Just accept it.
Tu: Accept it. (KUW: 2167).

Many of the men are happy to go along with this "don't ask, don't tell" policy and in fact may use it as an excuse to justify their behavior to themselves.

Lom: Still, she won't mind if she doesn't catch me red-handed. (KUM: 894).

Other women may detest the activity but are willing to tolerate it so long as it remains an only occasional activity and the husband fulfills his financial responsibilities.

Supranee: I let him go if he wants to. It's his happiness. After the work, I'm with my child. I've done my best.
Noi: Since I'm well provided for, I let him go wherever he wants to if I'm to be with him. I do it for my children.
M2: So if he provides enough for you?
Many: We'll stand it. (BSW: 1051).

NONCOMMERCIAL SEX PARTNERS

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF NONCOMMERCIAL SEX

Our conceptual distinction between commercial and noncommercial sexual partners blurs some important overlap between these two categories. As pointed out above, some forms of commercial sex in Thailand are difficult to distinguish from noncommercial forms since in some cases financial compensation may be indirect or only part of a more complex relationship that involves obligations beyond payment for sexual services. In addition, some women have primary jobs that are not directly connected to providing sexual services, such as a waitress, singer in a nightclub, or traditional masseuse, but on occasion they may be willing to have sex with customers without any explicit agreement that they would be compensated; conventionally they receive a substantial tip or a gift, rather than a fee.
However, key distinguishing features between what we call commercial sex and noncommercial sex include the explicitness of the financial exchange as well as the duration and degree of commitment in the relationship. Commercial sex workers generally require payment for each sexual transaction, but all obligations of the client are considered to be fulfilled after payment. Noncommercial sex partners, while not compensated for each sexual encounter, usually require a greater investment in time and resources on the part of the man and involve a greater emotional investment from both parties. It is for these two reasons (extended obligation and emotional involvement) that wives typically find noncommercial sex partners more worrisome than commercial sex workers.

Ooy: To visit commercial sex workers is ordinary for men. But a woman can't bear it if her husband has another woman [a minor wife]. In such a case we can't stand it (KUW: 1006).

M2: So how would the wife feel if she knew that the husband has a minor wife? Kanika: She would feel hurt. Cholada: She feels hurt and sad. Yoong: What did we do wrong to make them want to love another woman (BFW: 1767)?

Nong: From our perspective, prostitute visitation is common... But if he has sexual relations with persons at the same level, i.e., colleagues, I consider that to be both uncommon and improper (BMW: 1583).

Generally the tone of the women's comments on extramarital noncommercial sex partners is more serious when compared to the discussion about commercial sex partners. There is relatively little laughter and joking from the participants during discussions of noncommercial sex relations, reflecting the greater perceived consequences of these relationships.

Noncommercial sexual relations are quite varied. Differences among the types of noncommercial sex partners is not a central focus of our study, but some distinctions are relevant to an understanding of the stakes of noncommercial sex partners for the married man's family. According to our focus group participants, potential noncommercial sex partners include women who are met through work, girlfriends from before marriage, divorcees, or workers or customers at restaurants and other places where men congregate in groups. Some noncommercial partners of married Thai men will have sex for their own pleasure (ku kaa) but many others expect some financial or material benefit for their participation in the sexual liaison. Compensation may be in the form of expensive gifts, occasional loans, help with the rent, or total support, depending upon the nature of her relationship with the married man. Married men who enter into these relationships understand these expectations as well.

Noncommercial sex partners who are supported in full by married men are referred to as minor wives (mia noi). Given the greater significance of minor wives for the husband-wife relationship, this category of noncommercial sex received much more attention in the focus group discussions than did other types of noncommercial sex partners. A minor wife typically requires the greatest financial outlay from a married man (and his family) of all the various types of noncommercial sex partners since she is entitled to long-term support from the man. For the married man a minor wife has the advantage of sexual exclusiveness.
Reliable estimates of the prevalence of extramarital noncommercial sexual relations are lacking for Thailand and most likely would be very difficult to ascertain in a broad based survey. Available estimates of men recently (in the last six or twelve months) having sex with noncommercial sexual partners range from 5% to 28% (Sittitrai et al. 1992; VanLandingham et al. 1991).

Both the focus group discussions and indepth interviews we conducted for the present project and other qualitative research (Havanon, Bennett and Knodel 1993) suggests that noncommercial sex relations for married men are not unusual, although probably substantially less common than commercial sex relations. Among our male indepth respondents, 21% stated that they have had sex with a noncommercial sex partner since marriage. Our results show that noncommercial extramarital sexual relations are clearly associated with very different peer and spouse dynamics than are commercial sex relations.

NONCOMMERCIAL SEX: PEER INFLUENCES

In contrast to commercial sex patronage, encounters with noncommercial partners, with the exception of perhaps the most casual kind, are not ordinarily embedded in social activities undertaken with male friends. Thai men who visit commercial sex establishments usually do so in the company of friends. A noncommercial sex contact on the other hand, is more likely to be a private affair between the man and the woman with the peer group playing a much less important role in the encounter and in some cases even being kept in the dark about it. Overall, there was far less discussion in the male focus groups and indepth interviews about peer influence on extramarital noncommercial sex than on extramarital commercial sex. When discussion of the issue did arise, a common response was that such liaisons were personal affairs and not the business of one's friends. This is quite consistent with the more general Thai tendency to avoid expressing judgement or interfering with other peoples' (nonsexual) personal affairs (Hanks 1962, p 1255; Girling 1981, p 19).

I: Suppose you have another women [not commercial sex workers] although you are married, would your friends say anything?
R: They wouldn't say anything. It's up to what the individual wants to do. You just have to take care of yourself if you are going to quarrel with your wife.
I: Would they think it improper? They would think it was acceptable?
R: They would not care. It's your business. You created the problems, you've got to solve them yourself. (Case20M: 601)

Long: Partners won't reach the problem of whether they are accepted or not [by friends]. You meet, you go out together, it's not relevant to other people... Our friends find it

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ordinary if we have partners. They are not interested. If they're interested, it's about the minor wives. The partners we meet from time to time and have sex with, that's personal. (LUM: 2481)

Minor wives are more relevant than casual noncommercial sex partners for the male social group. But the balance of encouragement/discouragement from the peer group is much more ambiguous than it is for commercial sex partners. Our parallel focus group guidelines for the male and female groups provide an interesting contrast on this point. The women's groups tended to see the influence of male peers as mainly supportive of extramarital noncommercial sexual activity. Some perceived that male peers have a significant role in the development of affairs between married men and noncommercial sex partners.

Moo: [The men] begin by asking each other to wander out and then end up taking mistresses. (LRW: 1819)

Other women participants perceive that men boast among each other about these matters, gain their peers' admiration for their ability to have affairs or to maintain a minor wife, and actively encourage each other to do so.

Cholada: [Men] admire their friends for having two wives.
Cheep: I've heard men praising their friends about this. They are proud that they can take care of two wives ... (BFW: 1683)

Somwang: Most [men] persuade friends to do it. If friends don't take a minor wife, husbands won't do it either. They will boast that they are more handsome so they can take a minor wife. (LRW: 1806)

Among the men's groups, on the other hand, there was far less consensus with respect to the direction of influence that male peers have on a married man's extramarital noncommercial sexual relationships. Some participants did acknowledge that friends may help each other hide the activity from their wives. Perhaps most importantly, peers may accept or even encourage noncommercial sex contacts in some circumstances but not others.

Deu: If women know, they will help each other. Some may tell on husbands. For men, they will try to help each other hide it from their wives. (BSM: 1927)

Rahoey: Suppose married men get attracted to some married women, friends won't be pleased with their behavior... We have a close society. If someone does wrong, no one will encourage him.
Sawang: If we can warn them, we will...
Jake: I'm married and he's married. Suppose you went to court his wife, I would hate you doing so.
Sawang: It's not right to do. She is my friend's wife.
M2: What if they are unmarried women?
Sawang: We will not interfere...
Paisarn: If they are unmarried, we will even encourage our friends to take them. (KRM: 2418)
The last quote illustrates some of the potential complexities involved in noncommercial sex contacts from the peer group perspective. There were numerous instances of negative peer influence and even disapproval for noncommercial sex contacts if the relationship involved a married woman and worst of all the wife of another friend, since this could very well serve to break up both families. However, if an affair with a single woman was involved this at least eliminated the threat to another man's family. Thus this is seen as more acceptable, sometimes even admirable. One focus group participant stated that friends would warn each other if the noncommercial sexual partner was known to be promiscuous. But the most typical view was that it was no one's business so long as the man fulfills his own family obligations.

M: So if it's not a prostitute but another woman, what will happen?
Ea: We have to take responsibility.
Pu: Like I said... it can be either a girlfriend or a minor wife. In any case if our relationship doesn't upset the family, it's okay. But if it does... (BMM: 1319)

The unfinished comment by the last speaker leaves implicit a second important conditional aspect of peer influence on noncommercial sex. If a friend's noncommercial sexual relationship does cause problems for his family, the relationship becomes more of an issue for the peer group and the community at large. Imposing a financial burden on his family certainly eliminates much of the tacit support or acceptance, if not encouragement, that a married man would receive from his friends. Desertion and/or neglect of one's family is seen as a serious matter by several male focus group participants.

Some men may try to head off family disasters by warning their friends about the potential difficulties that can accompany noncommercial sex relations, especially with a minor wife. But such intervention depends upon a third conditional feature of peer influence: the closeness of the relation between friends.

I: How do your friends feel about your having had many wives?
R: They scolded me, saying it was a waste.
I: Isn't there one who praised your manhood? [Saying] he changes wives every year, every month?
R: Those who were not friends encouraged me to waste more money.
I: Aren't they friends?
R: No. Friends must discourage me from such a bad habit or warn me against it...
(Case36M: 1099)

M: What is you reaction if one of your friends is going to have a minor wife? Will you support or blame him? Or don't you care about this?
Ea: I think it's a personal problem.
Buk: I agree. But if he's my very best friend and I feel close to his family, I have to talk it over with him.
Thawatchai: We have to help him.
Buk: Right. I'll discuss it with him... If he is just a [regular] friend [i.e., not close], I won't bother. (BMM: 1336)
This last passage again emphasizes the general respect that men have for each others' personal affairs. Meddling is seen to be intrusive and will be avoided unless a close personal relationship makes it feel less intrusive and/or more warranted.

To summarize, the role of the male peer group in noncommercial sexual affairs is distinct from its role in commercial sex patronage. It appears both to be far less significant and less unidirectional. Unlike commercial sex patronage, noncommercial sex contacts are not typically instigated within a peer group context, with the exception perhaps of very casual affairs that verge on commercial sex contacts. If a married man becomes involved in a noncommercial sex relationship, whether a peer will attempt to intervene in the relationship strongly depends upon the type of noncommercial sex partner involved, the perceived consequences for the married man's family, and the relationship between the peer and the married man involved.

NONCOMMERCIAL SEX: SPOUSE INFLUENCES

Wives' Views of Men's Noncommercial Sex Relationships

For commercial sex patronage, the peer group plays a key role, primarily serving to support the activity; wives are generally opposed but some are willing to ignore or tolerate it if infrequent. For noncommercial sex partners, however, the roles of these two influential groups are reversed: peer interest is relatively weak and ambivalent while wives take a keen interest in noncommercial sex partners and almost all are strongly opposed to their husband's involvement in such relationships.

As in the male groups, a minor wife relationship is a much more salient topic for discussion for the women's focus groups than are other types of noncommercial sex partners. This clearly stems from the greater implications for the marital relationship. Because of these greater implications and the long term nature of these relationships, minor wives are much more difficult to conceal from the wife than are commercial sex relationships.

Tu: She will definitely know about this...
Buk: The wife will know about this. It can be a secret only for a short while. She knows about this because of some clues. In general, women are careful and inquisitive. Men sometimes look over some minor things but women don't. That's why she knows about this. (BMM: 1390).

In fact, some men complain that their wives are overly concerned about the possibility of them taking a mistress, again indicating the seriousness with which married women take this practice.

Lam: Everyday my wife is suspicious because nothing is certain. Nowadays if I tell people I do not fool around no one will believe me because I have many opportunities. For example when I deliver goods to the floating restaurants, both the young waitresses and the cashier approach me. I don't believe they really like me but I am financially well off. Some invite me, I don't say no but I don't go with them... For example, they say "Lam, if
you will support me, I will quit from work."... Some don't say it so straightforwardly but indirectly, I get the message. (KUM: 645).

The exchanges that the participant describes above are probably made in a joking manner. But such bantering could also serve as an opening to more serious negotiations if the man was interested and possibly to an actual long term relationship which may result in a minor wife arrangement. This kind of jesting is common in restaurants that draw better off males out for a night's entertainment and are staffed by young women from modest economic backgrounds. Establishing a relationship with an older, well-heeled patron is one avenue of social mobility available to young Thai women of low socioeconomic status. Wives are undoubtedly aware of the opportunities for noncommercial (or quasi-commercial) sexual relations available to men who are financially secure and hence may feel a potential threat exists whenever their husband goes out for an evening with their colleagues and friends.

While there are exceptions (discussed below), most of the women participants viewed minor wives as either intolerable or as an extremely difficult burden to bear, especially in comparison with a husband's occasional commercial sex outings.

M1: What will you do if you know your husband takes some other woman? ...
Supranee: He has to choose between me and the woman. ...
Nonglak: I won't stand it. We must quarrel. (BSW: 1412).

Siriwan: There is no happiness [if the husband has an affair].
Jim: Of course not, if this situation occurred... He can go out [for commercial sex] but he has to protect himself. But no regular sexual partner is allowed. (BMW: 1886, 1940)

Oy: I think to go out [for commercial sex] is ordinary for men but what women [wives] can not tolerate is when the man has another woman. This type of situation is something we really can not tolerate. (tKUW: 845-849)

Most of the wives' concerns appear directed at minor wife types of extramarital noncommercial sex relationships, as opposed to relationships with other types of noncommercial sex partners. Wives' concerns regarding more casual noncommercial sex partners seems to be largely based upon the fear that one might develop into a more serious noncommercial sex relationship, i.e., a minor wife.

M2: And if he doesn't support her but goes to see her from time to time?
Nonglak: We have to talk to each other.
Noi: We, as women, have to be aware of the situation. We're afraid he might take it seriously. We must be worried since we'll be in trouble if he means to take her seriously. (BSW: 1484)

This general abhorrence of noncommercial sex seems based upon two features that make these relations (especially minor wife relations) more serious than commercial sex relations. The first implication is practical: the legal wife fears having to share her husband's financial support with the minor wife. Two wives usually means the husband must maintain two households and perhaps
even two sets of children. The husband's financial contributions to the legal wife's household can be seriously eroded under such circumstances. Of course, if the husband deserts his first family the situation is even worse.

Somwang: He can't help himself. Moreover, he spends all the money. We'll surely quarrel. Don't let him do it at all. (LRW: 2083)

The second implication is that two wives also means two attachments, and the comments of several women make clear the emotional blow that accompanies a husband's noncommercial sexual affair.

Udom: He doesn't feel I'm worthwhile.
Somwang: If he can take others, it's useless to go on living with him. He doesn't love me anymore... (LRW: 1947)

These two components of married women's reactions to minor wife relationships illustrate that, in comparison with commercial sexual partners, minor wives have much more serious implications for the husband-wife relationship. The men's groups are keenly aware of the more serious implications of noncommercial sex partners as well.

Lam: If they are ordinary girls, it is worse.
Lom: Prostitutes leave men when paid.
Wath: Wives are afraid that husbands may share things earned with other girls.
Lom: It is the worst for women. They can't stand it if husbands love other girls.
Wath: It means not a sum of money wasted but a regular sum of money paid regularly.
Sak: Things must be shared. (KUM: 1775)

Wives' Responses to Men Having Noncommercial Sex Partners

Even though nearly all of our female respondents were strongly against noncommercial sex contacts involving married men, wives' responses to husbands' noncommercial sex activity are diverse. Most take some action upon discovering their husband's infidelity. There are others, however, who despite the strong feelings expressed against noncommercial sex partners, feel constrained in how they can react for various reasons such as lack of concrete evidence or concern for continued support for children. Thus they chose non-intervention or only an indirect approach. The following types of responses are categorized by the level or strength of the wife's intervention.

1) Encourage more involvement in the marital and family relationship

Both male and female focus group participants asserted that the quality of the husband-wife relationship can influence the husband's decision to have a noncommercial sex partner. We believe that this factor is more important in noncommercial sex relationships than in commercial sex contacts, though our data do not address this point explicitly. Pleasing the husband to increase his satisfaction with his marriage was viewed as a means of preventing noncommercial sex contacts before they start.
M2: As a whole, do you have any techniques to prevent him from having another woman?
What will you do?
Khai: You treat him the best. ...
Maew: For someone; if he drinks heavily, his wife must drink with him. You must get
drunk with him and you can be together. Sometimes a woman has to get drunk with her
husband. (KUW: 1972)

Fostering a close relationship between the husband and his children was also seen as an important
technique for avoiding trouble in one of the groups.

Neng: Someone taught me that I’d better let children attach to their father. Just let them
stay together. They'll feel very glad when their father comes home. They'll play together.
Let the father look after children (laugh). (BMW: 3041)

Maew: Yes, your children are the most important factors, try to keep children with him.
Mummy [wife] can come later. (KUW: 1159)

2) Ignore the issue or take no action

A number of women choose to ignore their husband's possible noncommercial sex relationships,
preferring to be left in the dark if possible.

Talub: I don't mind any if I don't know about it [commercial sex or noncommercial sex
partners]...
Somwang: Only if I didn't know about it [noncommercial sex partners]. If I do, I can't
stand it. (Laughed) I would say no. (LRW: 2062, 2110)

Sanga: We shouldn't know about it [a minor wife].
Cholada: It's better not to know about it. (BFW: 2048)

There are several reasons why women might chose to ignore the issue although these were not
necessarily explicitly brought out in the discussions. For example the wife may assume that there
is little she can do stop the extramarital relationship and that raising the issue would put her
relationship with the husband, either emotionally or in terms of material support, in even greater
jeopardy. Another reason why some wives may not take action with respect to their husbands'
extramarital affair is that they only suspect it. Without certain evidence they not wish to risk a
confrontation and its repercussions when it could turn out the husband is in fact not involved with
another woman. Wives may fear serious marital strife which might result if the husband feels
falsely accused.

M: Would wives scold husbands if they suspect something is occurring?
Deau: If they just suspect then it is not too bad.
Nit: That means they [the wives] are at the stage of catching any mistakes. Like it is not so
bad. (tBSM: 1933-1936)

Ignoring the issue, along with being non-confrontational as discussed above, are quite consistent
with the general Thai proclivity for noninterference. Given a choice, many Thai prefer to deal
with conflict indirectly since direct challenges always involve a potential loss of face for the party who gives in. Of course, many women who do not actively investigate their husband's extramarital partners may simply have no reason for suspicion.

3) Win back the husband

Closely related to the first option, a number of women advocated taking action in a non-confrontational manner if they discovered or suspected that their husband was engaging in noncommercial sex. The quality of the marriage is seen to be one important factor believed to cause or predispose men to take noncommercial sex partners, and may be one area where women feel they have some leverage. Several participants felt that the wife would be well served by being especially nice and conciliatory, hoping that the husband will eventually come to his senses.

Somwang: If women make it easy for them to come back, men will come back. (LRW: 1931)

4) Discuss the situation with the husband

Given the seriousness with which wives view the threat of a noncommercial sex relationship on the part of their husband, many will choose to directly bring the matter up, even if it is based on suspicions without conclusive proof. Confronting the husband with the situation, or at least the wife's suspicions of it, can take various forms ranging from a sincere and rational discussion in which the wife dispassionately presents her case against it to much more combative arguments that can even end in physical violence. It may be difficult for many wives to discuss the matter with no show of emotion, but the degree of emotion invested in these discussions does appear to vary over a fairly wide range.

In any event, some women advocate taking a direct approach of confronting a possibly wayward husband about their suspicions or knowledge of his activities and indicate that they would try to rationally discuss the issue with their spouses, emphasizing their past history together, their children's welfare, etc. One approach is to try to make the husband come to recognize more fully what is at stake and/or to make him feel guilty about his behavior.

Puang: I will ask him why does he do that?... What did I do wrong? (BMW: 1804)

Piak: In some cases, the wives may want to talk. They may remind the husbands of the past, their long relationship. How can the husbands have other women after meeting them only a few days? The wives may tell the husbands to make a choice. They may also threaten the husbands. Most of the wives like to make threats.

Sak: Mostly they like to threaten or force the husbands; or they may have a fit sometimes. (LUM: 2593)

5) Argumentive Confrontation

As the end of the previous quote indicates, it may be difficult for some women to keep discussions with their husbands about their noncommercial sex contacts dispassionate. Either because wives may believe it is more effective or because of the emotionally charged nature of the issue, they
may become confrontational and argumentative in their discussion, and pressure the husband to give the noncommercial sex partner up.

M1: What is wives' reaction if they know that their husbands have a new woman?
Rumpuey: We won't be pleased. We must have a word with them.
Pranee: We might question them and there will be fights.
Rungthip: We have to make it clear.
Chin: We must make it very clear.
Pranee: We may fight if we can't make it clear enough. We may beat them if they don't answer us straightforwardly. If we question them about money and women, they will say it's none of our business. Then, there will be a fight. He may not come back home. No one will let it be. (KRW: 1346)

These confrontations can be quite risky for the wife, since a direct challenge may force the husband to choose between the two women. They may be risky for the husband as well. There were numerous references to violence occurring over minor wives, sometimes in a joking manner but often with a very serious undertone. We suspect violent responses are most likely to stem from a heated argument between spouses, but violent outcomes may sometimes be spiteful and premeditated. Many women perceive a minor wife to be an extremely serious matter.

Tu: It's up to each person. If the wife can't accept it, she will rave against the minor wife until they'll almost kill each other. (KUW: 1682)

Sanga: If he has [a minor wife], he'll get a hacking knife. (BFW: 1670)

6) Resignation to or acceptance of the situation

Some women do not fight the situation for a variety of reasons. Some simply appear to have resigned themselves to it, having given up after exhausting all efforts to convince the husband to terminate his extramarital relationships. Resignation can take at least two forms. First, a woman may leave the husband or allow him to divorce her, i.e., the relationship would be terminated.

Udom: I would let her have him.
Kimhieng: Yes, I would. When I decided to marry him, I had also decided to face whatever happened. If he preferred it that way, it would be alright. ...
Somwang: We may fight seriously before one is ready to do the other's way. If we can't stop him, we'd have to let him go. (LRW: 1856)

A second option would be to remain in the marriage relationship by either withdrawing emotionally and accepting a marriage that is only nominal, or by reconciling herself to the new situation and sharing her husband with the other woman. Indeed, some women did not continue to resist but instead appeared genuinely able to accept the situation; but this was reported in only one firsthand case and a few secondhand accounts. Of course, acceptance here might result from a lack of viable alternatives. Because of the financial dependence of many of the women focus group participants on their husbands, it may be that they did not press the issue of their husband's noncommercial sex partners beyond a certain point in order to avoid completely alienating the husband.
Noi: I let him do it whenever he wants. Still, he goes out for others. If I say no, he will never be back. (BSW: 1512).

Some women may choose to avoid confrontation simply because they feel that there is nothing they can realistically do to remedy the situation. Or the woman may feel that her husband's noncommercial sex patronage has nothing to do with her. As we discussed above, several participants indicated that a man might engage in noncommercial sex because of an unhappy home situation, but many of the respondents also stressed the important mediating role of the husband's individual characteristics. Several male and female participants viewed noncommercial sex patronage as essentially opportunistic: a man with the chance to have sex outside of marriage often will.

Tum: Sometimes it depends on opportunities, chances and timing... (BMW: 1654)

Lam: It's up to time and opportunity. I might do it one day although my wife is good and I know that it's wrong, I may feel lustful enough to do but I'm aware that it's wrong to do. (KUM: 1610)

A related point is that the opportunity to engage in noncommercial sex is seen as closely linked with the man's socioeconomic status.

Moo: If they are not rich enough, there won't be a problem. But if they are rich enough to do it, they will do it as others do. (LRW: 1813)

Level of socioeconomic status also appears to determine the type of noncommercial sex partner the man can afford.

Sak: For our level, it's partners (ku kaa) because we can't afford minor wives. We don't earn enough. You have to take responsibility for the minor wife. That's a minor wife but for partners, you don't have to. You go out with each other from time to time...

Long: For my level, I didn't have partners, I had a minor wife.

Sak: His level can afford it. (LUM: 2414)

However, some men are able to resist the opportunities that circumstances or financial well-being may present to them. As pointed out in the discussion on commercial sex, character is seen as an extremely important mediating force in men's decisions to engage in extramarital sex. Three of the women's focus groups explicitly addressed this point regarding noncommercial sex patronage as well.

M1: What kind of men like to have minor wife?

Sanga: Flirtatious men.


Character and money may predispose a man to engage in noncommercial sex but are not viewed to be deterministic. In fact, under the right circumstances, a wife may be able to promote the husband's commitment to his family as a defense against his taking another woman. Strengthening commitment to the couple's children is usually the centerpiece of such a strategy. The importance
of the children's welfare was emphasized in every focus group and some women participants advocated fostering the husband's attachments to his children not only as a strategy to prevent noncommercial sex (discussed in the first option) but also to bring a wayward husband back home.

Tuan: But for some families, children play a very important part. Children can pull their fathers back.
Neng: That's why I said that a family should have some children.
Tuan: So you should try to let children pull their fathers back... Try to give a heavy burden to your husband. (BMW: 2974)

But attachment to children can work in two directions. If the husband has children with the noncommercial sex partner, it was seen as especially worrisome since this tended to cement his link with her.

7) Separation

For many women in the focus groups, if their husband takes a minor wife or establishes a serious relationship with another woman that implies commitment of emotional and material resources, serious thought will be given to terminating the marriage, especially if pleas to cease the relationship with the other woman are unheeded. Separation is clearly much more likely in cases where the husband gets involved with a noncommercial sex partner than when he visits prostitutes for entertainment. For some women, separation is a straightforward matter. The husband must make a choice between his wife or the other women.

Wanna: Near my residence there is a husband, the first wife and a minor wife. They all live together in the same house.
Cholada: How can the first wife accept that?
Kanika: If it was me I would have already decided not to stay in that situation. I would have left him.
Yoong: I couldn't take it. I used to tell my husband that if he loves me he has to stay with me. If he wants to have a minor wife, then we have to be separated. (BFW: 1565)

For most women, however, if the husband becomes involved with a noncommercial sex partner, separation is not undertaken without considerable reluctance. There are a number of conditioning factors that are relevant. One of the most important involves the couple's children. For many women in the focus groups, children would be the determining factor in a decision to leave the husband.

Chin: If without children, they will be divorced. With children, wives will try their best. (KRW: 1200)

Cholada: Not many allow the husband to live with another woman as well as herself...
M1: And does the major wife think about leaving the husband?
Cholada: Some do.
Cheep: If they have children then they stay together for the children. (BFW: 1828)
The extent of the husband's involvement with the other woman is another important conditioning factor. If the husband enters into a relationship where he commits himself to fully support the other woman, as is typical in a minor wife relationship, this will be far more serious than a more casual affair since casual partners present less of a financial threat to the married man's wife and family. In one group, a woman explains that she tolerates her husband's open affair but would not endure the situation if it evolved into a minor wife relationship.

M1: What can make you ask husbands for a divorce, Nonglak?
Nonglak: If he provides fully for her financially.
Noi: If I know about it, I will ask him to choose one of us...
Supranee: And if he wants both?
Noi: I will go away myself, then. He must choose one. (BSW: 1438)

The discussions also make clear that if separation means a loss of financial and material support from the husband, many women would rather put up with the situation than forfeit this support.

M1: What will you do if you know your husband takes some other women? ...
Lamai: I won't let him go. Money is the most important matter. (BSW: 1408)

In contrast, in situations where the woman has greater economic independence or the ability to support herself she will feel less dependent on her husband and less reluctant to end the relationship regardless of the loss of support from the husband that terminating the marriage would entail.

Lek: I think sometimes women won't plead with men. They feel that they have a job and income... Women may want to leave the husband if they have a job. (tLUM: 3495)

Of course in some cases the woman has little to say: the husband may simply desert her. But if the marriage is legally registered, the wife can at least refuse to grant her husband a divorce.

Tuan: If it is me, I won't get a divorce... If he is attracted to another woman, I'm not going to get divorced (BMW: 1879).

In some cases, a refusal to divorce may result from spite. But in most, we believe that it is done to impede the withdrawal of material support from her and her children.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

COMMERCIAL SEX CONTACTS

The focus group and indepth interview transcripts provide clear evidence that male peers have a strong influence on commercial sex visitation among married men. The male (and female) participants' stress on the importance of personal character helps to explain this complicated social interaction. While Thais judge themselves to be ultimately responsible for their own behavior, the peer group provides the opportunity for the commercial sex visit, and can weaken possible resistance through encouragement, alcohol, and financial support for the commercial sex visit.
More subtle forms of peer support also emerge in the discussions. If friends come to call on rare occasions, it is clearly difficult for many men to resist their solicitation to celebrate a special event, share his friend's good fortune, or relive old times. On many of these celebratory occasions (as in more typical peer group gatherings) the group may not gather with the intent of participating in commercial sex visitation but the idea emerges spontaneously as the night draws to a close.

That influences of peers serving to encourage commercial sex visitation receive more attention than negative influences is partly due to the fact that this is an easier and more interesting dynamic for participants to discuss. However, it also undoubtedly reflects a relative lopsidedness to the actual balance of positive and negative peer influences on prostitute visitation. The relatively lesser role of peers in discouraging commercial sex patronage probably also reflects an underlying reluctance to interfere in each others' personal affairs; such restraint is a highly valued trait in Thai culture. Even so, concern about friends' welfare regarding the risks of AIDS is widespread, as the male participants needed little prompting to recall instances in which they reminded their friends to avoid unprotected intercourse with commercial sex workers, both for their own sake as well as their families' sake. But trying to alter friends' participation in commercial sex overall because of the damaging consequences it would have for his family's well-being was a less prominent topic of discussion and appears to be limited to advice given by close friends. Even in such cases, the impact of such advice was recognized to be limited, highlighting again the view that ultimately such behavior is largely a matter for the individual to determine for himself.

The influence of spouses on male extramarital commercial sex behavior appears to be less than that of male peers, but this may be due in part to the higher salience of male peers in the activity, since it is they who accompany the husband to the commercial sex establishment while the wife stays at home. While no women actively supported commercial sex visitation and few women were indifferent, there was still much diversity in the degree to which the women loath the activity, and in the degree to which they would combat it. Few seem willing to ignore commercial sex patronage if they are confronted with it, but many seem willing to accept it so long as it is neither too frequent nor blatant, though several expressed anxiety about the potential for HIV infection.

In evaluating women's attitudes regarding male extramarital commercial sex patronage there are three important points to keep in mind. First, many women won't know whether their husband participates or not, unless he chooses to tell her, she contracts an STD, or he is a habitual participant. This may decrease the salience of the activity for many women. Second, given the ubiquity of commercial sex establishments and widespread acceptance of commercial sex visitation for men, some women may feel resigned to the practice. Third, among the majority who express disapproval for the practice, the tone of the disapproval is generally much less severe than for noncommercial sex partners. Resignation appears to be an underlying theme, since many women recognize that they cannot force their husbands to completely forgo commercial sex visitation; in the final analysis a man's character is the main determinant of his sexual behavior outside of marriage. Few women appeared willing to separate from their husbands for commercial sex patronage.

NONCOMMERCIAL SEX CONTACTS
While the peer group has a stronger interest and role in a member's commercial sex contacts, the spouse has a much stronger interest and influence in her husband's noncommercial sex partners. Her stronger interest here stems in large part from the high material stakes of her husband's involvement with noncommercial sex. Commercial sex will be a serious drain on family financial resources for only the habitual prostitute patron, but a relationship with a noncommercial sex partner is very often seen to be a serious threat to family financial well-being. Many of the women respondents stated that they would be willing to ultimately separate from a husband who maintained a noncommercial sex partner. Of course, the husband may also initiate the separation if he engages in a serious relationship with a partner to whom he becomes more committed that to his wife.

Peers have relatively little influence on friends' noncommercial sex contacts because of the vastly different natures of commercial sex and noncommercial sex activity. While commercial sex patronage is primarily a form of social entertainment to be undertaken lightly in the company of friends, noncommercial sex affairs are viewed as a private matter between the man and woman. Peers are not necessarily involved in any of the meetings between the married man and his noncommercial sex partner. Nevertheless, a peer might warn his friend of the potential dangers of a liaison with a minor wife if the married man begins to neglect his family and if the two men are very close friends.

Mediating features exist for both commercial sex and noncommercial sex partners, but it appears that financial well-being is more important for noncommercial sex since these partners are a relatively expensive form of extramarital contact and thus can have much larger financial consequences for the married man's family. Children are also an important conditioning factor: they can help strengthen the link between the married man and his legal wife or at least may be a barrier to their separation, but children can also cement the relationship with the noncommercial sex partner, especially if he does not have children with his legal wife.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE THAI AIDS EPIDEMIC

Our participants in this project were not randomly selected because we needed the assistance of intermediaries to successfully recruit individuals who were willing to participate in a lengthy discussion of sensitive issues. We believe that our participants represent typical married individuals from Bangkok, medium sized provincial towns, and surrounding areas, and that our results are relevant to understanding extramarital sexual behavior in these populations. Our data are heavily weighted towards urban areas and thus our findings are more applicable to Bangkok and provincial towns than to rural areas. However, we did collect data in two rural sites and plan to systematically explore rural/urban differences in a subsequent paper.

Many of the patterns of extramarital sexual relationships we discovered and the peer and the spousal relations associated with them have important implications for the continuation and spread of the AIDS epidemic in Thailand. In this section, we focus on the social dynamics that we believe facilitate the spread of the AIDS virus and discuss possible avenues for intervention.
Two features of the cultural context of extramarital sex in Thailand work against efforts to contain the epidemic. First, sex outside of marriage for men has long historical roots in Thailand and is considered by many Thai men and women to be a rather unremarkable aspect of male life. Second, Thai concepts of maleness are closely intertwined with sexuality and are consistent with multiple partners for Thai men. Obviously, history and culture do not make change impossible, but should provide some sobering perspective to those who seek rapid behavioral change.

The peer group context of commercial sex visitation also works to foster sexual risk taking and the spread of AIDS. The drinking circle sometimes encourages heavy consumption of alcohol, making both a commercial sex visit and unprotected intercourse with commercial sex workers more likely. Drinking provides an acceptable excuse for the individual who engages in behavior that is becoming increasingly difficult to justify. Heavy drinking probably also makes a susceptible individual less able to make rational judgements of risk. Another feature of the peer group context that fosters sexual risk taking is the need to demonstrate group affiliation. This may operate via an individual member's desire to participate in enjoyable activities (including the commercial sex visit), by the group expecting that group activities will be attended by all group members, and through more explicit teasing of members who are hesitant to participate in the group commercial sex visit.

Spouse dynamics also contribute to the spread. Many wives are willing to ignore commercial sex visitation by their husbands so long as it does not become too frequent or expensive. On the other hand, many women are concerned about contracting AIDS or other STDs through their husband's prior sexual contacts. The fact that husbands and wives lead relatively independent social lives and that wives readily accept their husbands needs to consort with male peers facilitates if not fosters at least occasional male patronage of some form of commercial sex entertainment.

There is already evidence that male sexual behavior is changing in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Thailand (Hanenberg, et al. 1994). However it is clear that considerable commercial sex patronage continues and, although much more difficult to track, noncommercial extramarital sex persists and may even be on the rise. Thus the question arises, why have patterns of male sexual behavior not changed even more dramatically in the face of this fatal disease, especially since the consequences of married men's extramarital sexual behavior now extend to their families?

The level of AIDS knowledge does not seem to be a major factor since most of the men we interviewed (and the results of other studies) indicate that most men are aware of the basic facts of the disease. Nor do the men we interviewed seem indifferent to the fate of their friends and family. To the contrary, when asked, most seemed to be genuinely concerned about the consequences of the AIDS epidemic for individuals close to them. The answer seems to involve the Thai view of sexual desire as a central feature of masculinity, and of commercial sex visitation as a form of light entertainment. Until recently, these conceptions have resulted in few consequences to either the participants in extramarital sex or their families. The centrality of the activity for male social life, including commercial sex patronage as a way to entertain friends, celebrate special occasions, and demonstrate group affiliation, has undoubtedly prolonged its existence.
One must also consider why spouses have not offered stronger resistance to these practices, given the increasing consequences. A comprehensive explanation must also include the Thai conceptual linkages of maleness and sexuality, Thai views of social hierarchy and status, and the Thai penchant for avoiding confrontation. Status of women in Thailand is considered by most observers to be quite high, but men are still considered to be the nominal heads of the households; it is undoubtedly difficult for a wife to directly challenge her husband's personal behavior. Many women in our focus groups choose to ignore occasional visits to commercial sex establishments so long as it does not become either too blatant or expensive. Thai spouses generally have separate groups of friends, and while a woman may sometimes disapprove of her husband's peer group, she is unlikely to take a strong stand against his associating with them. Women as well as men accept or at least tolerate the male need for multiple sexual outlets, and many of our women participants appear willing to tolerate occasional commercial sex visits, perhaps due in part to a fear that if they attempt to forbid it their husband may instead take a noncommercial sex partner, who is seen to be far more threatening to the wife's well-being.

Behavioral change is undoubtedly occurring in Thailand in response to increasing HIV infection. Reported condom use in commercial sex establishments is way up, and STD infection rates appear to have fallen substantially in recent years. But we were impressed by the extent of occasional commercial sex visitation among our male indepth interview respondents, focus group participants, and people they know, the extent of noncommercial sex partners, and the apparent infrequency of condom use with noncommercial sex partners. There was speculation in some of the groups that noncommercial sex partners may be increasing in response to the AIDS epidemic, since they are seen to be at less risk for HIV. If this is true, this trend along with longstanding distaste for condom use in Thailand could also serve to exacerbate the spread of HIV in the general population.

Interventions seeking to foster behavioral change to mitigate the effects of the AIDS epidemic could profitably focus on the influences of peers and spouses on extramarital male sexual behavior for three reasons. First, married men are now playing a significant role in the spread of HIV infection into mainstream population groups. Second, peers and spouses have strong influences on male extramarital sexual behavior. Third, both groups, especially the spouses, will suffer the consequences of continued sexual risk taking. Programs targeting peers should attempt to directly address the effects of peer pressure and alcohol. It must be made clear that encouraging or succumbing to peer pressure to engage in risky sexual practices may result in disastrous consequences, both for the participant and his family. Attempts should also be made to discredit drunkenness as an acceptable excuse for irresponsible behavior and should encourage peer pressure that fosters drinking in moderation.

Married women must be encouraged to confront the danger that male extramarital sex poses for their own future well-being and that of their families. The economic dangers of noncommercial sex partners are already well known and should not be minimized, but less salient is the fact that noncommercial sex partners most likely pose an increasing risk of HIV infection since condom use is so uncommon with noncommercial sex partners. The health risks of occasional extramarital commercial sex patronage for the participant's wife and family also need to be stressed. While the dangers of contracting HIV from commercial sex workers were easily elicited from our participants, few among either the men's or women's groups took a strong stand against an occasional outing involving commercial sex, perhaps because of the longstanding nature of the
practice in the pre-AIDS era. The long term financial implications for the family, should HIV infection strike the parents, was not an obvious point for our participants and needs to be emphasized. Since both men and women participants expressed great concern for their children's welfare if financial resources should be diminished by support of an noncommercial sex partner, the disastrous implications for children's future financial well-being if HIV infection should strike the parents (from either commercial sex or noncommercial sex partners) should also be stressed.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A:
Focus group Guidelines

Introductory statement of study objectives. Stress interest is in general views and not in participant's own behavior.

I. Characteristics of ideal spouse re sexual behavior.
   1. What are the characteristics of a good spouse?
      (Ask women about a husband and men about a wife)
      Prompt if necessary: Is being a good sex partner important?
   2. How important is sex to a marriage for a man?
      For a woman?
   3. Is it better for a woman to be a virgin or to have some experience at time of marriage?
      (Distinguish between experience with husband-to-be and other men)
      How about for the man?

II. Attitudes towards extramarital sex.
   1. Men having extramarital sex with CSWs
      a) In general, how common it for married men to have sex with CSWs?
         (Probe reasons for CS patronage.)
      b) Is it viewed as proper/acceptable generally?
         (Probes: Whose opinions are important?
         Do men and women think alike about this?)
      c) In your opinion, do married men go to CSWs more or less than 4-5 years ago?
      d) How do a married man's male friends view him patronizing CSWs?
         Do they have any influence on his behavior?
      e) Do wives usually know if husbands patronize CSWs?
         (Probe: How do they know?)
      f) How do wives view husbands patronizing CSWs (if they find out)?
         (Probe if the type of CSW matters, e.g. brothel prostitute vs. cafe hostess?)
      g) What can a wife do to dissuade her husband from patronizing CSWs?
      h) Is a wife likely to leave a husband who patronizes CSWs? Under what circumstances?
         Probe: Frequency of patronage (e.g. weekly vs. yearly)
         Financial impact on family
         Whether husband uses condoms with CSW
   2. Non CS extramarital relations
      a) Besides having sex with CSWs, do married men have other types of extramarital sexual relationships?
         Probe if participants distinguish different types of extramarital relationships; if so, ask them to explain their distinguishing characteristics.

[Note: In questions b) through g), refer to these different types of relations if such a differentiation was made.]

b) In general, how common it for married men to have extramarital noncommercial sexual relationships?
   (Probe: Why do some men engage in such relationships?)
c) Is it viewed as proper/acceptable generally?
   (Probes: Whose opinions are important?
   Do men and women think alike about this?)
d) How do a married man's male friends view him having extramarital relationships? Do they influence his behavior? How so?
e) How do wives react if husbands have extramarital relationships?
f) What can a wife do to dissuade her husband from having extramarital relationships?
g) Is a wife likely to leave a husband who has extramarital relationships? Under what circumstances?

3. General issues of male extramarital sexual activity
   a) When it is not possible for a married man to have sex with his wife for several months, like just before and after she gives birth, is it acceptable for the man to visit CSWs?
   b) How about during periods of temporary separations, like when the man is working in Bangkok and the wife remains in the home town or village?
   c) Do wives consider all types of husband's extramarital sex equally bad or do they tolerate some types more than others? (i.e. CSWs vs. noncommercial relations)

4. Women having extramarital affairs
   a) In general, how common it for married women to have an affair?
   b) Is it viewed as proper/acceptable generally?
      (Probes: Whose opinions are important?
      Do men and women think alike about this?)
   c) How would a husband react if he knew his wife was having an affair with another man?

III. Attitudes towards premarital sex.
1. Men having premarital sex with CSWs
   a) In general, is it common for men to have sex with CSWs before marriage?
      (Probe why they go for CS)
   b) Is it viewed as proper/acceptable generally?
      (Probes: Whose opinions are important?
      Do men and women think alike about this?)
   c) Do single men go to CSWs more or less than 4-5 years ago?
   d) Do wives care if their husbands had experience with CSWs before marriage? Why or why not?
      Do they view it positively or negatively?
      (Probes: Do wives explicitly ask husbands about this?
      If so, before or after marriage?)
   e) Would most men object to marrying a woman who had engaged in CS?

2. Premarital sex between boyfriends and girlfriends.
   a) In general, is it common for unmarried boyfriends and girlfriends to have sex relations?
      (Probe: Does it depend on if the couple is engaged?)
   b) Is it viewed as proper/acceptable generally?
      (Probes: Are men and woman judged differently?
      Whose opinions are important?
      Do men and women think alike about this?)
   c) Do wives care if their husbands had experience with girlfriends before marriage? Why or why not?
d) Do husbands care if their wives had experience with boyfriends before marriage? Why or why not?

IV. Condom use and AIDS
1. Are married men likely to use condoms when they
   -- patronize CSWs? Why or why not?
   -- have extramarital relationships?
     (distinguish types if appropriate) Why or why not?
   -- with their wife? Why or why not?
     (Probe change over time)
2. If a wife suspects her husband has been having sex with CSWs, can she influence if he use a condom with them?
   Should she insist that he use a condom with herself?
   Why or why not?
3. [Ask only men groups] When male friends go for CS, do they discuss condom use with each other?
   What do they say? Does it matter?
4. Has the advent of AIDS affected the attitudes of married men about patronizing CSWs?
   Having extramarital relations with noncommercial partners? (distinguish types if appropriate)
5. Suppose that there were no AIDS today, would married men think differently about visiting CSWs? How so?
   Would married women think differently about their husbands visiting CSWs if there were no AIDS today?

V. Closing Questions:
1. What can a man's friends do to help reduce his risk of catching/spreading HIV/AIDS?
2. Suppose your daughter or younger sister is about to get married, what would you advise her to do to discourage her husband from patronizing CSWs? How about discouraging him from getting involved sexually with other women (non-CSWs)?
APPENDIX B:  
Indepth Interview Guidelines for Married Men

Note: Several questions prefaced by 'opt' are optional and left to the discretion of the interviewer to ask.

BACKGROUND:

1. How long have you been living in ____?
2. What is your education?
3. What sort of work do you do?
4. How long have you been married?
5. How many children do you have? Ages?

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6. In general, is it common for men to have sex with CSWs before marriage?
7. Why do men visit CSWs before marriage?
8. What do you think this is proper behavior?

Men Having Extramarital Sex with CSWs

9. How about for married men? In general, how common is it for married men to have sex with CSWs?
10. Why do married men have sex with CSWs?
11. What do you think of this?
   Is this proper behavior in your opinion?
   Probe: Are there circumstances that might affect whether this is proper or not? What are they?
   Probe:
   a) Frequency of patronage
   b) Whether CS patronage affects family financial well-being)
   c) Use of condom with CSW
12. What is your wife's attitude towards men visiting CSWs?

Non-CS Extramarital Relations

13. In general, how common is it for married men to have extramarital noncommercial sexual partners (NCS Partners)?
14. What do you think of this?
   Is this proper behavior in your opinion?
   Probe: Are there circumstances that might affect whether this is proper or not? What are they?
15. Would your wife consider all types of husband's extramarital sex equally bad or would she tolerate some types more than others? For example, CSWs vs. NCS Partners
CONDOM USE AND AIDS

16. Are married men likely to use condoms when they --
   a. patronize CSWs? Why or why not?
   b. have extramarital relationships? (distinguish types if appropriate) Why or why not?
   c. with their wife? Why or why not?
   d. How would the wife feel if the husband wanted to use a condom with her?
   e. How would the husband feel if the wife suggested condom use when they have sex?

R's SEXUAL EXPERIENCE (Before marriage)

Now I would like to ask you about some of your own personal experiences. Is this ok? Remember I will not record your name. If you do not feel comfortable answering any of the questions just say so.

CSW Partners

17. Did you ever have sex with a CSW before you got married?
   If no:
   18. Why not? (Skip to section on NCS Partners).
   If yes:
   19. How old were you when you first had sex with a CSW?
   20. Was this the first time you had sex with any woman?
   21. Could you tell me a bit about the first time you had sex with a CSW? I mean, where did it occur, what did you do before and after, things like that.
   22. Why did you decide to visit the CSW that first time?
       Probes:
       a. Who did you go with?
          opt b. Did you visit her more than once?
          opt c. Do you still know her? Still have sex with her?
   opt 23. Did you ever develop a relationship with a particular CSW before? I mean, one that you would go to see on a regular basis?
       a. What was the relationship like?
       b. Did you go out together or did you only stay in and have sex?
       c. Do you still know her? Still have sex with her?
   24. Before you were married, how often did you go to visit CSWs?
   25. Did you usually go alone? With whom?
   26. What was the usual routine?
       Prompt for alcohol use if it doesn't come up spontaneously.
   27. Did anyone in your group ever invite you to go along?
       Pressure you to go?
       Tease you if you did not want to go?
       If yes, probe:
       a. How did this make you feel?
       b. Did it affect your behavior?
   28. What about condom use? How often would you use condoms during your visits before you got married? Why did you (didn't you) use them consistently?
29. Did your friends use condoms when they slept with CSWs? Was there a group opinion on this? What was it? How do you know?  
[If there was a group opinion, probe: How important was it to go along with the group opinion on condom use?]

NCS Partners

30. Before you married, did you ever have sex with a woman who was NOT a CSW?  
If no, skip to (After marriage) section.  
31. Could you tell me a bit about your first NCS partner?  
   Probe:  
   a. How did you meet her?  
   opt b. Would you go to visit her by yourself?  
   opt c. What were the circumstances of the visits? That is,  
      where would you meet her, what would you do besides  
      sex, etc.?  
   opt d. Why was she willing to have sex with you?  
   opt e. Do you still know/have sex with her?  
32. Did you have other NCS partners before marriage?  
opt 33. Do you still know/have sex with any of these other NCS partners (other than the first one  
       discussed above)?  
34. Have you ever discussed your premarital sexual activity with your wife?  
   If yes, Probe:  
   a. What did you talk about?  
   b. Why did the two of you discuss it?  
   c. Did you talk about it before or after you got married?  
   d. Both CSW and NCS partners?  
   e. What was your wife's reaction to the discussion?

R'S SEXUAL EXPERIENCE (After marriage)  
Remind R that he need not answer if he feels uncomfortable with a question.

With CSWs

35. What about after marriage? Have you ever had sex with a CSW?  
If no:  
36. Why not?  
37. What would your wife do if you did go and she found out?  
(Skip to section on NCS partners after marriage).  
If yes:  
38. How often?  
39. How many times in the last year?  
40. What are your main reasons for going?  
41. Do you have a particular CSW whom you visit regularly?  
   What is the relationship like?  
42. Does your wife know that you go out for commercial sex?  
   Probe:
a. How would she react if she did?
b. Would/does it affect your behavior?

43. Do your friends know?
   a. What is (would be) their reaction?
   b. Does it (would it) have an impact on your behavior?

44. Do you use a condom with CSWs? Every time or sometimes?
   Why or why not?
   Probe:
   a. Ever discussed with/been influenced by peers
   b. Ever discussed with/been influenced by wife

With NCS Partners
45. Have you ever had sex with a NCS Partner since being married?
If no:
46. Why not?
47. What would your wife do if you did and she found out?
(Skip to Marital Relationship Section).
If yes:
48. Approximately how many women?
49. How did you meet them?
50. What was your relationship with the last one?
   Did you consider her a mia noi? Why or why not?
51. Would you go to visit them by yourself? What were the circumstances of the visits?
52. Are you still having a relationship with a NCS Partner?
   If not, when did your last relationship end?
53. Does your wife know that you have NCS partners?
   Probe:
   a. How would she react if she did?
   b. Would/does it affect your behavior?
54. Do your friends know?
   Probe:
   a. What is (would be) their reaction?
   b. Would/does it have an impact?
55. Did you use condoms with these partners? Why or why not?
   Probe:
   a. Ever discussed with/been influenced by peers
   b. Ever discussed with/been influenced by wife

MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

56. Do you and your wife talk a lot about household decisions?
   Probe:
   a. Like what? E.g., financial matters, child-care issues?
   b. What about sexual matters? (Why or why not?)

PERCEIVED RISK OF SEXUAL PRACTICES, FATALISM, & SELF-EFFICACY
57. Have you ever heard of the AIDS virus?
58. Do you know how one contracts it?
59. Do you know what happens if you contract it?
60. Do you know how to avoid it?
61. What are the chances that you will get AIDS virus? Why?
   Probe:
   a. Why do some men get it and others don't?
   b. Up to chance or up to the individual's behavior?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

62. How can a wife discourage her husband from having sex with other women?
   Probe:
   a. Does the type of partner matter?
   b. What can she do to encourage condom use if he does
      have sex with other women?
63. Do the husband's friends influence his sexual behavior outside of the marriage?
   Probe:
   a. How about his condom use with extramarital partners?
   b. Is there anything a man's friends can do to reduce
      the chances of his contracting AIDS?
APPENDIX C:
Indepth Interview Guidelines for Married Women

BACKGROUND:

1. How long have you been living in ____?
2. What is your education?
3. What sort of work do you do?
4. How long have you been married?
5. How many children do you have? Ages?

SEXUAL ATTITUDES (Premarital)
Men having Premarital Sex with CSWs

6. In general, is it common for men to visit CSWs before marriage?
7. Why do men go to CSWs before marriage?
8. What do you think of this?
   Is it proper behavior?

Men Having Extramarital Sex with CSWs

9. How about for married men? In general, how common is it for married men to have sex with CSWs?
10. Why do married men have sex with CSWs?
11. What do you think of this?
    Is this proper behavior in your opinion?
    Probe: Are there circumstances that might affect whether this is proper or not? What are they?
    Probe:
    a) Frequency of patronage
    b) Whether CS patronage affects family financial well-being)
    c) Use of condom with CSW

Non CS Extramarital Relations

13. In general, how common is it for married men to have extramarital noncommercial sexual partners (NCS partners)?
14. What do you think of this?
    Is this proper behavior in your opinion?
    Probe: Are there circumstances that might affect whether this is proper or not? What are they?

CONDOM USE AND AIDS

16. Are married men likely to use condoms when they --
    a. patronize CSWs? Why or why not?
c. have sex with their wife? Why or why not?
d. How would the wife feel if the husband suggested condom use with her?
e. How would the husband feel if the wife suggested using a condom when they have sex?

16F Suppose that there were no AIDS today, would married women think differently about their husbands visiting CSWs? How so? How about for other types of partners (NCS partners)?

R's SEXUAL EXPERIENCE (Husband's premarital sexual behavior)

Now I would like to ask you about some of your own personal experiences. Is this ok? Remember I will not record your name. You need not answer a question if it makes you uncomfortable.

34. Did you ever discuss your husband's premarital sexual behavior with him?
   If yes, probe:
   a. What did you talk about?
   b. Why did the two of you discuss it?
   c. Did you talk about it before or after you got married?
   d. Did you talk about both CSW and NCS partners?
   e. What was your reaction to this discussion?
   If no, probe:
   f. Were you ever concerned about this? Why/why not?

Husband's extramarital sexual behavior:

With CSWs

35. Has your husband ever been to a CSW since you married?
   If yes or think so:
   38. How often?
   39. Do you think he has been to one in the last year?
   40. Why do you think he goes to visit CSWs?
   42a. How did you feel about his going?
   42a. What did you do/say?
   42b. Can you do anything to keep him from going?
   42d. Do you worry about catching diseases from his CSW partners?
   44. Does he use condoms with CSWs?
   44b. Do you have any influence over his condom use with CSWs?
       How?
   If no:
   36. Why do you think your husband has not?
   37,42a. What would you do if he did have sex with a CSW?
   If don't know:
   37,42a. What would you do if he did have sex with a CSW?

   With NCS partners

45. Has your husband ever had extramarital sex with a NCS partner since you have been married?
If yes or think so:
48. How many women?
52. When was the last time?
50. What was his relationship(s) with this woman?
49. How did this come about?
53a. How did you feel about this?
53b. What did you do/say?
53c. Can you do anything to keep him from having sex with NCS partners?
53d. Do you worry about catching a disease from these NCS partners? Have you talked to him about this?

If no:
46. Why do you think your husband has not?
If no or don't know:
47. What would you do if he had sex with another woman (non-CS)?

MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

56. Do you and your husband talk a lot about household decisions?
   Probe:
   a. Like what? E.g., financial matters, child-care issues?
   b. What about sexual matters? Why (why not)?

PERCEIVED RISK OF SEXUAL PRACTICES, FATALISM, & SELF-EFFICACY

57. Have you ever heard of the AIDS virus?
58. Do you know how one contracts it?
59. Do you know what happens if you contract it?
60. Do you know how to avoid it?
61. What are the chances that you will get AIDS virus? Why?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

62. How can a wife discourage her husband from having sex with other women?
   Probe:
   a. Does the type of partner matter?
   b. What can she do to encourage condom use if he does have sex with other women?
   c. Suppose you have a daughter or younger sister and she is about to get married. What would you advise her to do to discourage her husband from patronizing CSWs?
   How about discouraging him from getting involved sexually with other women (NCS partners)?
63. Do the husband's friends have a part in his sexual behavior outside of the marriage?
   Probe:
   a. How about his condom use with extramarital partners?
   b. Is there anything a man's friends can do to reduce the chances of his contracting AIDS?