

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF YOUNG MALE  
SEXUALITY IN RELATION TO (THEIR PARTNERS')  
UNWANTED PREGNANCY AND INDUCED ABORTION  
IN VIENTIANE, LAOS**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
(HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCE)  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**

**2007**

**COPYRIGHT OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**

**Thesis  
Entitled**

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF YOUNG MALE  
SEXUALITY IN RELATION TO (THEIR PARTNERS')  
UNWANTED PREGNANCY AND INDUCED ABORTION  
IN VIENTIANE, LAOS**



.....

Mr. Ounxham Souksavanh  
Candidate



.....

Asst. Prof. Vanawipha Pasandhanatorn,  
Ph.D.  
Major Advisor



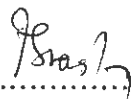
.....

Assoc. Prof. Luechai Sringernyuang,  
Ph.D.  
Co-Advisor



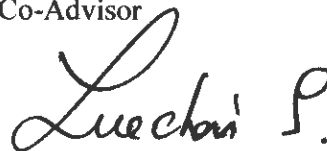
.....

Assoc. Prof. Pimpawun Boonmongkon,  
Ph.D.  
Co-Advisor



.....

Prof. Dr. M.R. Jisnuson Svasti,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
Faculty of Graduate Studies




.....


Assoc. Prof. Luechai Sringernyuang,  
Ph.D.  
Chair  
Master of Arts Programme in Health Social  
Science  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities


**Thesis  
Entitled**


**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF YOUNG MALE  
SEXUALITY IN RELATION TO (THEIR PARTNERS')  
UNWANTED PREGNANCY AND INDUCED ABORTION  
IN VIENTIANE, LAOS**


Was submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University for the degree  
of Master of Arts (Health Social Science)  
on  
March 30, 2007


  
.....  
Mr. Ounksam Souksavanh  
Candidate


  
.....  
Assoc. Prof. Suree Kanjanawong,  
Ph.D.  
Chair


  
.....  
Mr. Anthony Pramualratana  
Ph.D.  
Member

  
.....  
Asst. Prof. Vanawipha Pasandhanatom,  
Ph.D.  
Member

  
.....  
Assoc. Prof. Pimpawun Boonmongkon,  
Ph.D.  
Member

  
.....  
Assoc. Prof. Luechai Sringernyuang,  
Ph.D.  
Member

  
.....  
Prof. Dr. M.R. Jisnuson Svasti,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Mahidol University

  
.....  
Assoc. Prof. Suree Kanjanawong,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Mahidol University

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, my thanks go to my informants whose names are concealed by pseudonyms. Without their cooperation and generosity to share with me very personal accounts, my research would not have been possible. Thanks to youth workers and volunteers from the Vientiane Youth Center, and all key informants for sharing experiences and perspectives with me. Their experiences are very useful in addition to data I have gathered from the primary source. The combination of data from both my informants and key informants made my argument stronger. My thanks also go to my colleagues working in UNFPA, CARE, the Vientiane Youth Center, Burnet Institute (BI), and Mother and Child Health (MCH) Hospital, for their willingness to support and share with me reports and all kinds of materials I requested.

I would like to express my sincere and special thanks to my advisors, Dr. Vanawipha Pasandhanatorn, Dr. Pimpawun Boonmongkon, and especially to Dr. Luechai Sringernyuang. Dr. Luechai was extremely busy, but he managed his time very well to meet and give me advice and feedback on a weekly basis. I would also like to thank Baker Iljas for his critical comments as my previous co-advisor. Thanks to all Ajarns/professors at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, who provided me with knowledge during my coursework and my thesis proposal development. Thanks to Dr. Suree Kanjanavong and Dr. Anthony Pramualratana for being the chair and the committee member for my thesis defense. Both also gave me good comments on my thesis.

Thanks to all HSSIP staff members for their support and assistance. They helped me make sure that I could get things done and submitted on time following requirements from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This logistical and administrative support is very much appreciated throughout the HSSIP course.

My gratefulness goes to Rockefeller Foundation for providing me with a scholarship that allows me to complete my Master's degree. This opportunity is very appreciative because it helps advance my academic knowledge as well as my career. I will bring home with me social scientific knowledge and skills that I have learned for further development and improvement in the area of health. This opportunity provided me not only with knowledge from the course, but also with the extended network of friends in the region. I have been in Salaya almost 2 years together with 16 friends (in my batch) from 8 different countries. We all left our families behind to study. We have shared, learned, and experienced together feelings, happiness, and anxiety throughout the course. I am very glad that I have very good friends, namely Agus, Lo, Ying, Uni, Thanda, Litdavone, Sysavanh, Oliver, Bon, Rui, Vuthy, KoKo, Nasrin, Son, Ola, and YiYi.

Last but not least, my thanks go to Sally Sakulku for her English editing and comments. She is both my friend and sister. She just came straight back from the UK and is busy with her baby, but she never refused to help me when I asked. Thanks to Simonetta Cengarle for her support and advice during her work with the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. And the most important person I should thank is my wife. She worked very hard not only in the office but also in the home looking after two daughters in the absence of me. Without her support, I would not be able to complete my Master's degree.

Ounkham Souksavanh

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF YOUNG MALE SEXUALITY IN  
RELATION TO (THEIR PARTNERS') UNWANTED PREGNANCY AND  
INDUCED ABORTION  
IN VIENTIANE, LAOS

OUNKHAM SOUKSAVANH 4838036 SHHS / M

M.A. (HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCE)

THESIS ADVISORS: VANAWIPHA PASANDHANATORN, Ph.D., LUECHAI  
SRINGERNYUANG, Ph.D., PIMPAWUN BOONMONGKON, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Induced abortion due to unwanted pregnancy is recognized as a major cause of sexual and reproductive health problems, but very little is known about this phenomenon. This problem occurs repeatedly despite availability of contraceptive methods. This problem happens not only to married women but also to unmarried women. Unwanted pregnancy followed by unsafe abortion often results in complications such as bleeding and serious infection. However, dialogue on this issue is often limited to contraceptive use; young females are blamed as being bad when male sexuality is, in fact, an important determinant of this issue that has not been explored.

This study was designed to look into young male sexuality and its construction in relation to unwanted pregnancy. The concept of socio-cultural construction from postmodern social theories was adopted for the conceptual framework. Fieldwork was carried out through an ethnographic approach. Several data collection methods—*Participant Observation, In-Depth Interview, Informal Discussion, Key Informant Interview, Non-participant Observation, Viewing Mass Media and Discussion, and Mapping Out* (entertainment venues)—were applied.

Research results suggest that there are multiple contextual factors contributing to and governing young male sexuality in regard to unwanted pregnancy. Young male sexuality is shaped and governed by both long-established discourses (from language use) and by recently-established discourses (from mass media, especially porn movies). Under the domination of these discourses, young males are allowed and encouraged to experiment with sex freely without responsibility, and their belief in and valuing of virginity remain strong. It means that they do not use condoms if girls are judged to be virgin. One of the young male informants in this study took photos of the blood ensuing from the loss of virginity, saved the photos on his mobile phone, and shared among their peers. This practice reinforces and sustains the value of virginity in their peer network. In the era of high technology, young males access porn movies. They start watching these materials at an early age, thereby leading to early sexual experiment. That is, they initiated sexual activities when they were 8, 12, and 14 years old. With this socio-cultural construction, young males develop themselves into a "hunting group". However, the young male informants' hunting of girls was not possible without entertainment venues and beer as a lubricant. Entertainment venues and beer together creates a *space* for the young males to hunt girls.

This research recommends that further studies should look at *female experience in unwanted pregnancy/induced abortion*. For interventions, underlying causes, for example, the socio-cultural construction between men and women in terms of gender and sexuality has to be discussed and redressed. Gender and rights should be introduced through the formal education system as early as kindergarten or primary school. And at the same time, the discourses that encourage boys to experiment with sex without responsibility have to be deconstructed and reconstructed with new discourses that promote and produce good health for both males and females.

KEY WORDS: SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION / YOUNG MALE  
SEXUALITY / UNWANTED PREGNANCY / INDUCED  
ABORTION / LAOS

114 pp.

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Laos and Vientiane Capital.....	1
2. Problem Statement.....	2
2.1 Situation of Unsafe Abortion Worldwide.....	2
2.2 Situation of Unsafe Abortion in Neighboring Countries.....	3
2.3 Situation of Unsafe Abortion in Laos.....	4
3. Rationale.....	7
4. Research Questions.....	9
5. Objectives.....	9
5.1 General Objective.....	9
5.2 Specific Objectives.....	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK...10	
1. Theoretical Concepts.....	10
2. Related Literature Review.....	12
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	18
1. Research Design.....	18
2. Study Site.....	19
3. Entry to the Field.....	19
4. Sampling.....	23
5. Methods of Data Collection.....	26
5.1 Participant Observation.....	26
5.2 In-Depth Interview.....	27

## CONTENTS (Cont.)

5.3 Informal Discussion.....	27
5.4 Key Informant Interview.....	27
5.5 Viewing Media and Discussion.....	28
5.6 Non-Participant Observation.....	28
5.7 Mapping out entertainment establishments.....	29
6. Reflexivity.....	30
7. Research’s Identity.....	31
8. Researcher’s Emotional Involvement.....	31
9. Field Notes, Data Processing, and Data Analysis.....	32
10. Validity of Data.....	33
11. Ethical Consideration.....	33
11.1 Confidentiality.....	33
11.2 Informed Consent.....	34
11.3 Privacy.....	34
11.4 Benefits and Reciprocity.....	34
12. Research Limitations.....	35
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	36
1. Case Report.....	37
1.1 Case 1: Seng (a Sexual veteran).....	37
1.1.1 A Great Hunter.....	38
1.1.2 Hunting Field.....	40
1.1.3 <i>Kha lom pen to</i> (Speaking is more powerful than being handsome).....	42
1.1.4 <i>Pai pai kin bee to</i> (Let’s go to have more beer).....	44
1.1.5 “I used to use <i>ya puk sex</i> (dope) for hunting”.....	45
1.1.6 <i>Peud sod</i> (sex with the virgin) is the pride of himself....	45
1.1.7 “Sex is <i>tham ma da</i> (common) to men.”.....	46
1.1.8 “I still have <i>ee naow</i> if I don’t get a girl.”.....	47
1.1.9 Great hunter becomes brokenhearted.....	47
1.2 Case 2: Do (Seng’s running mate for hunting).....	49

## CONTENTS (Cont.)

1.2.1 Beer, a Lubricant for Hunting.....	49
1.2.2 “I never use condom with virgins.”.....	51
1.2.3 Porn Movies, a School for Learning about Sex.....	52
1.3 Case 3: Kop (a quiet hunter).....	53
1.3.1 Approaching girls for sex is the nature of men.....	54
1.3.2 “My Imagination and Porn Movies”.....	55
1.3.3 Porn Movies Reproduced by Young People.....	56
1.3.4 “Good” and “Bad” Girls by Parents’ Language.....	58
1.4 Case 4: Tom (a virgin boy).....	59
1.4.1 Thinking about Hunting When Being Brokenhearted....	61
1.4.2 “Friends are very important to me.”.....	61
2. Conclusion of Case Report.....	62
3. Social and Cultural Context.....	63
3.1 Contextual Factors.....	64
3.1.1 Entertainment Venues.....	64
3.1.2 “Hunting and Being Hunted”.....	67
3.1.3 Beer (Lubricant for Hunting).....	68
3.2 Socio-cultural Construction of Sexuality.....	70
3.2.1 Acting on and Reproducing Porn Movies.....	70
3.2.2 Language Use.....	72
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	76
1. Entertainment Industry & Beer and Change in Family Institution.....	78
2. Technology Discourses: Porn Movies and Other Mass Media.....	80
3. Masculinity Discourses on Sexuality through Language Use.....	82
3.1 Language Use by Peers.....	82
3.2 Language Use by Parents and the Elderly Men.....	83
4. Young Male Sexuality: Beliefs, Values, and Meanings of Virginity.....	85
5. Multiple Sexual Partners.....	86
6. Individualized Discourse.....	87
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	89
1. Conclusion.....	89

## CONTENTS (Cont.)

2. Recommendations.....	91
2.1 For Further Research.....	92
2.2 For Intervention and Policy Development.....	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	95
APPENDIX.....	100
BIOGRAPHY.....	114



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Complications of unsafe abortions reported by MCH Hospital.....	6
2. Gender Double Standard in Sexuality.....	85



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Map of Laos.....	1
2. “Initial” Conceptual Frame.....	17
3. Discotheques and bars popular among young people in Vientiane.....	30
4. Blood ensuing from the loss of virginity photographed by mobile phone.....	45
5. Porn video clip 2.....	57
6. Porn video clip 3.....	57
7. Beer bar.....	65
8. Advertisement by discotheque.....	65
9. Discotheque in Vientiane.....	66
10. Analytical Framework.....	77
11. Discourse of Female Virginity Sustained.....	90
12. Beer Lao advertising along with signs of school and college.....	106
13. Beer Lao advertising through restaurants.....	107
14. “Speed limit” with Beer Lao’s logo.....	107
15. “Speed limit” sign with no Beer Lao’s logo.....	108

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

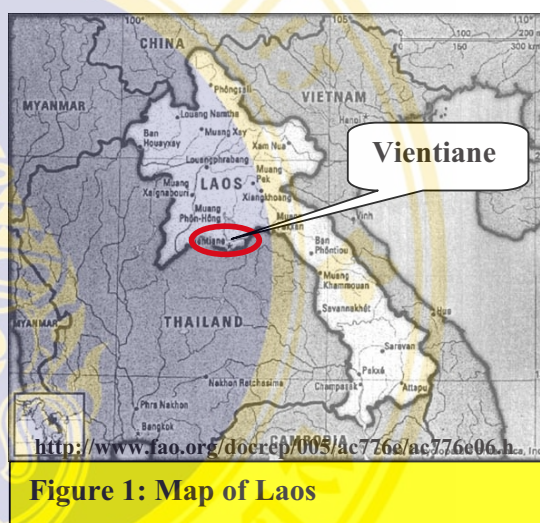
Abbreviation or symbol	
ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
BI	Burnet Institute
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
EU	European Union
GO	Government Organization
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
IT	Informal Technology
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSC	National Statistical Center
RTIs	Reproductive Tract Infections
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Laos and Vientiane Capital

Laos is one of the countries in the Southeast Asian region, surrounded by neighboring countries, namely China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Laos or Lao PDR has a population of 5.6 millions; sex ratio is well balanced (99.3 males/100 females) (NSC, 2006). Young people under 25 years of age made up of 60% of the national population, of which 34% are 10 – 24 years of age (NSC, 2006). Vientiane is the capital of Laos with population of 698,318 inhabitants (NSC, 2006). Nowadays, infrastructures including roads and telecommunication are much more improved in Vientiane, compared to that of the past decade. In terms of telecommunication, for example, internet access has improved tremendously. There are a lot of high speed internet café services and even a free internet through mobile telephone provided by a telecommunication company. Ten years ago, internet access was very restricted by the Lao Government. It was available only in international organization offices. However, access is now open to all.



**Figure 1: Map of Laos**

Vientiane is the capital of Laos with population of 698,318 inhabitants (NSC, 2006). Nowadays, infrastructures including roads and telecommunication are much more improved in Vientiane, compared to that of the past decade. In terms of telecommunication, for example, internet access has improved tremendously. There are a lot of high speed internet café services and even a free internet through mobile telephone provided by a telecommunication company. Ten years ago, internet access was very restricted by the Lao Government. It was available only in international organization offices. However, access is now open to all.

The number of vehicles, especially cars is increasing day by day. During rush hours (8.00 – 9.00 am and 16.00 – 17.50 pm), there are traffic jams in many major roads in Vientiane. Hence, more road constructions are being done to accommodate the increased number of vehicles.

Most people working outside the homes and students at high schools, colleges,

and university, all have mobile phones. This is quite a big change within only one decade. At the same time, hospitality service business, such as tourism, entertainment, and hotel, are growing. There are more and more tourists both Asian and Western people visiting Vientiane and Laos as a whole. Consequently, Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge, the international checkpoint, extends its service time until 22.00 pm. Entertainment establishments are springing up in Vientiane to cater for both local people and foreign visitors.

Since 1986, the Lao Government opens the country to outside world to allow international investments, assistance, cooperation, and trading in order to develop the national economy. Vientiane is at forefront of the country has seen changes and a variety of influences as a result of economic development and modernization. As a result, people, especially young people flock to the city and some even cross over borders in search of employment opportunities.

Vientiane has become the place in which people are exposed to new things and technology, including popular cultures, more than others in country. Due to similarity between Thai language and Lao language, people can access all kinds of media, such as songs, movies, magazines like *Spicy*, *Gossip*, *TV Pool*, cartoon books, love story books from Thailand. Beer bars and discotheques also emulate Thai style in terms of design and services; for example JD even speaks in Thai.

## **2. Problem Statement**

### **2.1 Situation of Unsafe Abortion Worldwide**

Although unsafe abortion nowadays can be prevented, it continues to occur and is a critical cause of maternal morbidity and mortality in almost all developing countries. WHO (2004) estimates that the incidences of 19 million unsafe abortions around the year 2000, of which 2.7 millions are in Southeastern Asia. An estimated 68,000 women died from consequences of unsafe abortions. Consequences on women's health are broad both in the short and long terms, such as *severe sepsis, haemorrhage, genital and abdominal trauma, perforated uterus and poisoning due to ingestion of harmful substances, RTIs, and infertility, an increased risk of ectopic*

*pregnancy, premature delivery, or spontaneous abortion in subsequent pregnancies, etc.* (Ahman & Shah, 2004, p. 3)

According to Ahman & Shah (2004), the evidence of unsafe abortions among female adolescents is not complete, but it appears to have increasing indications in relation to the incidence of death due to unsafe abortion. Unmarried female youth who live in urban areas (in which abortion is not legalized, and ASRH information and services are not accessible to unmarried youth) are most at risk. In the rapidly changing world, young people face a variety of contextual influences on, for example premarital sex practices and rising age at marriage. Yet, all these factors contribute to increased risk of unwanted pregnancies, especially when abortion is chosen as a solution.

## **2.2 Situation of Unsafe Abortion in Neighboring Countries**

In Myanmar, induced abortion is illegal and recognized as a critical cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. Although maternal mortality ratio has dramatically fallen (from 380/100,000 live births in 1961 to 190/100,000 live births in 1971) in relation to pregnancies and childbirth, it is still very high for induced abortion complications. Induced abortion is not only illegal but also considered as being against religious beliefs. Thus, the penalty for those who provide induced abortion will be either a 3-year sentence or a fine, or both. In fact, women (the majority are married women) are aware of the illegality and dangers of abortion, but they do not seek preventive measures, and yet contraceptive prevalence rate is very low (only 34% in urban areas and 10% in rural areas). (Ba-Thike, 1997)

In Thailand, abortion is also illegal. It is only allowed to be performed for saving mothers' lives and for cases of pregnancy as a result of rape under the Criminal Code (Population Council 1981: 101 – 102, cited by Whittaker, 2000, p. 154). "The current law on abortion in Thailand has existed since 1957 under the Penal Code, without amendment" (Whittaker, 2000, p. 154). In the last two decades, several attempts in lobbying had been made for passing the Abortion Bill, but these efforts failed because they were not able to resist pressure from anti-abortion group or religious coalition (Whittaker, 2000). Whittaker (2000) stated an important point in

researching abortion in Northeast Thailand that illustrates the relationship between structured power and women's agency (Whittaker, 2000): Power from social and legal structures, such as political, religious institutions, and media, humiliates women who terminated their pregnancies. Blame and responsibility are put solely on women who have unwanted pregnancies and abortions due to failure to use contraceptive methods and because of viewing deviant acts as moral evils. A comparative study of female students and female factory workers in Bangkok showed that women who aborted should be blamed, apart from men, because abortion is considered as a sinful practice (Soonthorndhada, 1996, p. 62). [Both female students and female factory workers are different in many aspects, such as their lives and environments], but the commonality is that they had friends who experienced induced abortions, and they expressed that if they were their friends, they might choose abortion as a solution as well (Soonthorndhada, 1996, p. 63). A study of Thai adolescent sexuality and reproductive health showed that unwanted pregnancy was recognized as a very important issue because many girls resorted to clandestine abortions from illegal clinics (performed by non-medical doctor) in Bangkok, and many of them had severe sepsis and even died due to unsafe abortion (Boonmongkon, Jaranasri, Limsumphan, & Thanaisawanyangkoon, 2000, p. 26).

However, in China (where abortion is legal) the contraceptive prevalence rate increased over 90% in the last two decades; at the same time the induced abortion rate also increased rather than decreased. The study shows that women have limited knowledge of how to use contraceptives correctly, and/or the available contraceptives had low efficacy. Another key factor was that their male partners refused to take responsibility for contraception. Therefore, it claims that Family Planning Program fails to take into consideration informed choice and male responsibility, yet women have to suffer from unwanted pregnancies and repeated abortions. (Yang, Yukun, Lijun, & Xiuhua, 1995)

### **2.3 Situation of Unsafe Abortion in Laos**

In Laos, induced abortion is illegal and is allowed to be performed only to save the mothers' lives under the Penal Code, and/or when diagnosed, her child will

be born with very serious diseases or deformation. However, illegal abortion is widely practiced in Vientiane. More and more cases of complications due to unsafe abortion are identified at hospitals. Very recently, Mother and Child Health hospital, during the fourth week of May and the first week of June 2006, has recorded 40 cases of complications due to induced abortions according to Khamsay Vysouk (a medical doctor working in MCH Hospital) (personal communication, June 9, 2006). The incidences are relatively high; however induced abortion-related issues are still masked or ignored.

Pharmaceutical abortifacents (so called *ya chine*) are the method of terminating unwanted pregnancies, and cause most complications, such as excess bleeding, often follow by hospitalization. One survey showed that a high percentage of females (60%), aged 20 – 35, resorted to induced abortion, and 11% of them were unmarried females (Mother and Child Health Institute/UNFPA, 1995). Pharmaceutical abortifacents accounts for 71% out of the total number of complication cases, of which 17% are unmarried females (Sacdpraseuth, Soukhaphone, Kommanivong, & Banechith, 2003). And another (baseline) survey, in Vientiane, also illuminates a high percentage (75%) of young females aged 15 – 24, who have unintended pregnancies for the last time of their pregnancies (EU/UNFPA, 2005). Ten-year difference (1995 – 2005), the incidences of unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions remain very high.

Unmarried young people lack access to SRH information and services, partly because they are embarrassed to obtain services, and partly because they are unsure of confidentiality and privacy, although health providers reported providing services to unmarried women equally to married women (Sychareun et al., 2005). Under a final evaluation of Regional-Model – Factory Workers Reproductive Health Awareness and Services Project (ReM – WRAHP), implemented by CARE, in Vientiane, “Better knowledge has increased in informed contraception use, but unwanted pregnancies still occur and are usually terminated with the use of pharmaceutical abortifacents” (Lyttleton, 2004, p. 18).

According to the first six month report (2006) of MCH Hospital, 130 females visited due to having complications after induced abortion using abortifacents. It is thought to be a conservative number because of the fact that women who have

abortion will not come into hospitals unless complications are seriously developed. This figure only shows some evidence that I have found when I discussed with one doctor from the MCH Hospital. (MCH, 2006). The following table will show complication cases due to unsafe abortions by month in the first 6 months of 2006 reported by MCH Hospital.

**Table 1: Complications of unsafe abortions reported by MCH Hospital**

Month/2006	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Number	28	26	19	14	23	20	130

Given the figure above, the MCH Hospital has on average 21 females per month who visit with complications due to induced abortion. At least, one person has been found every two days. However, this figure has very limited explanation toward the problem because we lack qualitative data to explain why such problems occur repeatedly without protection and prevention, although contraceptive methods are available. Often, dialogue on this problem is focused only on contraceptive use issues. Due to lack of knowledge and awareness, females have unwanted pregnancies.

According to the National Reproductive Health Policy (2005), Laos is one of 179 countries from all over the world was signatory to the Program of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo, 1994 (MoH, 2005). This conference resulted in a significant change in population policy from “human numbers” to “human lives” and “human rights” (UNFPA, 2004). One of the ICPD goals is “Access to reproductive and sexual health services [,] including family planning”. A comprehensive service package, including prevention and management of complications of abortion, needs to be available to meet the needs (UNFPA, 2002). Following this, Ministry of Health as well as the Lao Government is committed to implementing the ICPD Program of Action. In 2005, the National Reproductive Health Policy was approved; one “Prevention and management of complications of abortion” of the sections in the policy emphasizes that abortion is a major cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. To address this issue, health care professionals have to be well trained in “the effective management of abortion and its complications”. However, data on induced abortion is still very limited. (MoH, 2005,

pp. 10 - 11). In this sense, as long as explanation of the underlying causes of induced abortion from the social and cultural perspective is not clear, irrespective of health care services available, induced abortion among females will occur frequently and repeatedly because the root cause is not tackled.

### 3. Rationale

Unwanted pregnancy is a very complex phenomenon. This complexity is far beyond the explanation of availability or unavailability of contraceptive methods. For example, the contraceptive prevalence rate, in China, is very high, and abortion is legal. But, the induced abortion incidences are still high, partly because of lack of male partners' sexual responsibility (Yang, Yukun, Lijun, & Xiuhua, 1995). Given that the legality of abortion does not influence the number of induced abortions.

Changing unsafe abortion to safe abortion or illegal to legal practice of abortion may not help achieve improved reproductive health status of females if abortion still occurs repeatedly. Although legal abortion is practiced within medical systems, it does not guarantee the safety for females. It is likely that women who have repeated "even safe" abortion will remain at risk of, for example placenta previa and hemorrhage during pregnancy which can cause premature childbirth and death of unborn baby. Some studies also show that abortion will not only cause severe problems, such as "uterine perforation, cervical laceration, and placenta previa but also lead to problems in future pregnancies, such as miscarriages, premature births, fetal deaths and children born with handicaps, because any problem or change with a woman's reproductive organs may affect the development of her children." (<http://www.straight-talk.net/abortion/consequences.shtml>).

Debate on abortion issues is often over women's bodies and focuses on women's responsibility and do not take into account male sexuality, power over the body of women. Contextual factors are often missing from the picture or from analysis of induced abortion. Richardson (2000) pointed out that most of our conceptual frameworks to theorize on human relations do not take into account power behind heterosexuality which is simply concealed and/or ignored without questioning about it (Richardson, 2000). When unwanted pregnancy occurs, this burden is always put on

females who are pregnant. Pregnant females are considered as *mae ying bo dee* (not good women) because they misbehave, or do not respect customs, and bring a big shame in their parents' families. This sanction is fully placed on the female side in addition to undesired experience in unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion that females have to face. In this matter, males are always missing from the picture, even though male sexuality is an important determinant to create the occurrence of unwanted pregnancy.

Phyakeo (2006), for his M.A. thesis, draws on an ethnographic approach to study sexual behavior of young male college students living in the dormitory in Vientiane. He found that male students prefer to have multiple sexual partners because this practice among them means *more power, real man, and modern youth*. In terms of sexuality, to show male power, men have to have sex with women, otherwise they will be seen as homosexual [homosexual is looked down on in Lao society]. He also pointed out that pornographic magazines and movies contribute to shaping young males' sexuality because young male students tend to act on porn materials shared among friends. At the same time, peers play an important role in supporting to make decision in terms of viewing porn materials, visiting sex workers, and engaging in multiple sexual partnerships. In addition, he suggested that beer and entertainment establishments can possibly lead young male students to being at risk of contracting STIs and HIV. (Phyakeo, 2006). His explanation of young male sexuality is very interesting. For example, young males practice multiple sexual partnerships because this kind of practice has meaning of "power" and "real man" to them. If they do not follow the masculinity standard, they will be thought to be deviant. However, his study has not explained masculine sexuality that may put young males' partners more at risk not only of STI but also of unwanted pregnancy.

It is time to look into the social and cultural construction of young male sexuality which contributes to unwanted pregnancy beyond contraception use and sanctions on the female side. In Laos, apart from the basic report on the figures of complication cases due to induced abortion, we have very little knowledge about unwanted pregnancies. None of qualitative research explains specific links of male sexuality with unwanted pregnancy in Laos. In other words, we have not yet shed light on male sexuality in relation to unwanted pregnancy issues. However, we recognize

that the problem of induced abortion is currently threatening Lao women's health as well as their lives. Accordingly, my study seeks to explain further this issue by looking specifically into young male sexuality and its socio-cultural construction which underlie and sustain the phenomenon of unwanted pregnancy followed by induced abortion in Vientiane.

#### **4. Research Questions**

- What is young male sexuality that contributes to their partners' unwanted pregnancies?
- How do discourses and everyday use of language shape and govern young male sexuality in relation to their partners' unwanted pregnancies?

#### **5. Objectives**

##### **5.1 General Objective:**

This study is to examine young male sexuality and its socio-cultural construction process through discourses and everyday use of language which contribute to unwanted pregnancy in the Lao context.

##### **5.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To describe young male sexuality, such as unprotected, unsafe sex, sexual beliefs, values, meanings, and practices which potentially put females at risk of unwanted pregnancies.
2. To describe the dominant discourses and their sources, such as mass media (sexual arousal materials like pornographic movies, magazines, etc) and language use which are strong influences on young male sexuality in relation to unwanted pregnancies.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1. Theoretical Concepts

The socio-cultural construction concept from postmodern social theories was employed as my theoretical tool to examine and explain links between young male sexuality and unwanted pregnancy/induced abortion in the Lao context. Discourses (from *media technology* and *everyday use of language, including words and texts*), and gender sexuality will be analyzed and deconstructed in response to male sexuality and unwanted pregnancy. Following, I will discuss postmodern theories on sexuality and develop my research conceptual framework based on this discussion for the Lao context.

Michel Foucault, French Philosopher, is a very important thinker having influence on philosophy, history, and social theory (Gutting, 1994). Foucault is not interested in hermeneutics that intends to discover meanings behind written words or texts (Delaney, 2005, p. 283). But, Foucault's interest is "discursive practice"—The discursive practices are distinguished from the speech acts of everyday life. Foucault is interested only in what we will call serious speech acts; what experts say when they are speaking as experts.

Social institutions or organizations conceive of power knowledge to manipulate people in order to sustain the "status quo" in respect of "norms, values, and expectation" (Delaney, 2005, p. 284). Foucault (1983) pointed out that power "applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes that individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches himself to his identity, imposes a law of truth on him which we must recognize and which others have to recognize in him." (Foucault, 1983: P212, quoted in Delaney, 2005, pp. 284 - 285).

Foucault's discourse of sexuality: First, Foucault pointed out that power discourses are emerged from and used in a disciplinary society, such as military,

churches, hospitals, factories, and schools, a type of social institution or organization. These social rules are to manage and control our bodies through time and space. Accordingly, sexuality is considered as a means to control people. For example, in the old days marriage was a social rule and control; extramarital sex was prohibited, and the value of marriage was for reproduction. [Sex, apart from reproductive purposes, is deviant and sinful.] But, today the focus of control has changed not only to pay attention to sex within marriage but also to a variation of sexual behaviors, such as youth sexuality, homosexuality, and heterosexual relations outside marriage. In the past, the state and family play a crucial role in controlling people, but at present medical/scientific institutions, laws, and media have a lot of power in shaping sexual practices of people. (Seidman, 2003a)

However, Foucault did not address a diversity of sexual identities by gender, race, class, and age. Sexual identities are simply brought into social and cultural structures, which construct individual sexual identities and sexualities in turn. He did not analyze how sexual identities are constituted and perpetuated in daily life. (Seidman, 2003a). In addition, Foucault did not give the explanation of the connection between male domination of sexual encounters and male power (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 2003). Nor did he provide explanation of the differentiation between male and female bodily experience in sexuality, and why male domination is constructed and sustained (Bartky, 1990; Ramazanoglu, 1993, cited by Holland, et al., 2003).

Another discourse analyst, Jacques Derrida, a French Philosopher and an essayist uses a deconstructive approach to discourse analysis. It is acknowledged that the discourse concept is originated from his work (Delaney, 2005, p. 263). "Derrida and other postmodernists mean to emphasize the primacy of the words we use, the concepts they embody, and the rules that develop within a group about what are appropriate ways of talking about things. They mediate between us and reality." (Wallace and Wolf, 1999: 407, quoted in Delaney, 2005, p. 263). Derrida does not believe in logocentrism. "Logocentrism, the primacy of the spoken word, a belief in definitive truth or reality of transcendental signifier (God) which provides foundation of all language, thought and experience (Humm, 1999, p. 154, cited by Kholifah, 2005, p. 13).

## 2. Related Literature Review

Male and female sexualities are the products of social and cultural constructs. Society and culture play a very important role in shaping sexuality among youth through time and space. “We are born with bodies, but it is society that determines which parts of the body and which pleasures and acts are sexual” (Seidman, 2003a, p. 39). Socio-culture norms contribute to the construction of the ways in which “young” people think, believe, view the world, practice, and give meanings to what they do. For example, meanings of sex and love, an anthropological study of premarital abortion in Hanoi shows the increased incidence of premarital abortion. Unmarried youth who have premarital sex in love relations claim non-use of “modern” contraceptive methods for proving “true” love and serious commitment to their relationships. Accordingly, non-contraception turns out to be a sexual strategy to prove their commitment to love. In addition, the contraception use among youth becomes discouraged by moral attitudes of sexuality. That is, the moral belief is that premarital sex is wrongdoing, so it should not be practiced, and sex should not take place except for lasting love relations. Finally, the study raises gender inequality in consequences of premarital sex on males and females: Unwanted pregnancy and abortion cost enormously to female health, apart from payment for abortion, and women who have experienced abortion will face shameful and gossiping by society, whereas the male partners are treated differently in this situation. (Gammeltoft, 1999). This study reflects gender inequality in sexuality between young males and females.

Gender is considered as a very important facet of shaping male and female sexuality. Gender identities are socially and culturally constructed through a process of learning, praising, and sometimes punishing (Weeks, Holland, & Waites, 2003). “Feminists believe that our sexual desires, feelings, and preferences are deeply imprinted by our gender status.” (Seidman, 2003b, pp. 18 - 19). Gender is constructed and reinforced through existing social systems of heterosexuality. “The structures and meanings of gender are extremely powerful in relation to the constitution of sexuality” (Weeks, Holland, & Waites, 2003, p. 43).

“Sex-role identity” always refers to the notions of masculinity and femininity as social generic guidelines for men and women to act upon in a particular culture;

these socio-culture rules operate and sustain through social interactions and different expectations for men and women in society (Soonthorndhada, 1996, p. 23). Gender double standard in sexuality does exist and is sustained in our society. A qualitative study on Gender and Sexual Health of Adolescent Females in Northern Thailand, asserted that gender double standard is applied to young males and females differently; if premarital sex occurs, it will bring shamefulness to females and their parents, but does not affect males (Tangmunkongvorakul & Bhuttarowas, 2005). “A woman is expected to be virtuous and a virgin until marriage; if she has sex before marriage she is said to ‘*sia tua*’, literally, ‘spoil’ or ‘ruin’ her body” (Lyttleton, 2004, p. 137). Gender inequality between men and women is fundamental to differentiate male and female sexual lives; for example, “Good” women [discourse] are supposed to hide sexual desire, feelings, and pleasure; otherwise, they are thought to be whores who have sexual skills (Fongkaew, 1996, p. 6).

Society gives power to men rather than to women in heterosexuality, and this power is exercised through the interactions and social regulations of being masculine and feminine. For example, “I believe that my heterosexuality is constructed by the complex of everyday life interactions and institutions, and that my own, as well as most, masculinist identity is overdetermined by the social and cultural codes into which one is interpellated; if there is blame to pass around, I can always finger my family (I was an only male child)” (Aronowitz, 1995, p. 308). Masculinity is socially constructed to support young males to exercise male power over women, whereas femininity is socially constructed to encourage females to subordinate to males in sexuality. Accordingly, the success of the social and cultural construction of male domination and female subordination requires women to uphold the exercise of male power. However, it does not mean that men will control every encounter, or women are only dominated. Femininity plays more or less a role in contributing to hegemony of masculinity dominance embedded in young people’s bodies. In this sense, it is very challenging to young females to protect themselves from unsafe or protected sex in heterosexuality when the body is used as a site for men to exercise male power. (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 2003)

Paiva (1995) takes into consideration a broader analysis of sexual hegemony in subculture, such as patriarchal gender ideology, religious and medical discourses

governing people to interpret or reinterpret in various ways. For example, condom use threatens the basic notion of manhood; if they wear a condom following the need of the female partner, they are betraying their masculinity because being a man is supposed to be stronger and have more power than women. (Paiva, 1995). If condom use has an attached meaning of lessening masculinity, it is unlikely to be used. Yet, for young females to have unwanted pregnancies and undergo unsafe abortions endangering their health and lives, it is acceptable.

Thaweessit (2005) adopted “discourse analysis” as her theoretical framework to understand gender and sexuality in the group of girls working in factories in Thailand. There are two types of discourses shaping people’s social lives: First, institutionalized discourses are conceived from *social values, norms* and *social ideologies*. Second, individualized discourses are produced based on personal desires, judgments, and notions that may be conflicted with institutionalized discourses. She points out that discourses have a combination of power and technologies of power from existing institutions, such as family, religion, medical institutions in constructing people’s sexualities. With discourse analysis we understand how knowledge from social institutions transfers its power to shape Thai women’s gender and sexuality in the way that is ambiguous. For example, analysis of one case shows that premarital sex is prohibited (under dominant discourse), but if the girl resisted sexual relation with her boyfriend, he would leave her. Accordingly, individualized discourse from the girl is that if the girl is sure that her boyfriend will marry her; she will then allow sexual intimacy or even intercourse. (Thaweessit, 2005). Thus, on the one hand it reflects the autonomy of the girls because the girls make decision on their sexuality. Similarly, an M.A. thesis on unmarried Muslim women found that conflicting/individualized discourses women have and act on create space for their own autonomy for their bodies and sexuality through negotiation with and/or conflict with religious rules/beliefs [in which dominant discourses are produced] (Kholifah, 2005). On the other hand, girls or women may get into the trap by exercising this agency because male sexual responsibility and commitment are not guaranteed.

Vance (1995) stated that a social construction approach to sexuality will help shed light on a wide range of sexual practices, ideologies and subjective meanings among people, “view the body, its functions, and sensations as potentials (and limits)

which are incorporated and mediated by culture” (Vance, 1995, p. 47). Partly, she stated that feminists conducted the project of deconstructing gender in the years 1970s, thus having a revolutionary impact on notions of naturalization. Feminist attempts were to pay attention to a critical review of knowledge to link gender with sexuality, thus explaining the unavoidable naturalness of women’s subordination. (Vance, 1995)

Kendall (1995) explains through the construction of risk in AIDS control programs, that the construction of sexuality is full of the rich historical and social dimensions. Sexuality is inscribed both implicitly and explicitly in “literary, moral, religious and even architectural writings”. Author covers not only the sexual, but also points out the ways in which sexuality is constructed and transformed by social and cultural institutions. (Kendall, 1995, p. 249). One study pointed out that women’s ability to negotiate for condom use and faithfulness very much depends on their male partners because socio-cultural norms give power and control to men over heterosexual relationships. For example, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, some women working in factories pointed out that they engaged in anal sex not because they like it, but because they wanted to satisfy their husbands. (Kendall, 1995). If women did not agree to engage in anal sex, their partners would find what they want on the street (Goldstein, 1993, cited by Kendall, 1995, p. 265). This is an indication of male primacy in sexuality and power over the body of women.

In line with discourse, mass media can produce discourses to shape notions of people regarding sex. For example, unmarried man (in Hanoi, Vietnam) said “I usually watch the program Animal World on TV. I’ve noticed similarities between human and animal societies; it’s especially clear with instincts. Male animals often have sex with many females but a female only selects one male from the group fighting for her.” (FHI, 2006, p. 27). Baudrillard (1983) stated that power produced by mass media is very dominant and influential in shaping and representing a culture which is more real than reality per se (Baudrillard, 1983b, cited by Delaney, 2005, p. 278). Nowadays, men are constructed, not innate; masculinity is created through social and cultural discourses, such as from “music video, poetry, and rap lyrics to sports, beer commercials, and psychotherapy” (Fausto-Sterling, 1995, p. 127).

Based on my review above (2.1) & (2.2.), I incorporated discourses in terms of media technology (of Foucault) and discourses from *language use*, words and texts (of

Derrida) into my conceptual framework (see Figure 2). We come to know the world by knowledge provided by our discourses, so in order to understand human practice in a particular place and time, we need to find out the dominant discourses in that setting (Jones, 2003, pp.125 – 126). Discourse analysis will be to specifically explain which shape young male sexuality putting females at risk of unwanted pregnancies in the Lao context. There are two major domains that will constitute my conceptual framework:

- *The socio-cultural domain:* Institutionalized/dominant discourses from mass media, teaching materials, language use by peers and adults to encourage young males to engage in unprotect and unsafe sex will be taken into account for my analyses. In addition, individualized discourses that are in conflict or negotiation with dominant discourses will also be considered.
- *The sexuality domain:* that will be looked at as a product produced and reproduced by power discourses. Sexuality domain herein will include sexual beliefs, values, meanings, and practices (sexual relationship, partnership, duration, and gender role in sexual orientation/act/relation relation) which lead to unwanted pregnancies among females.

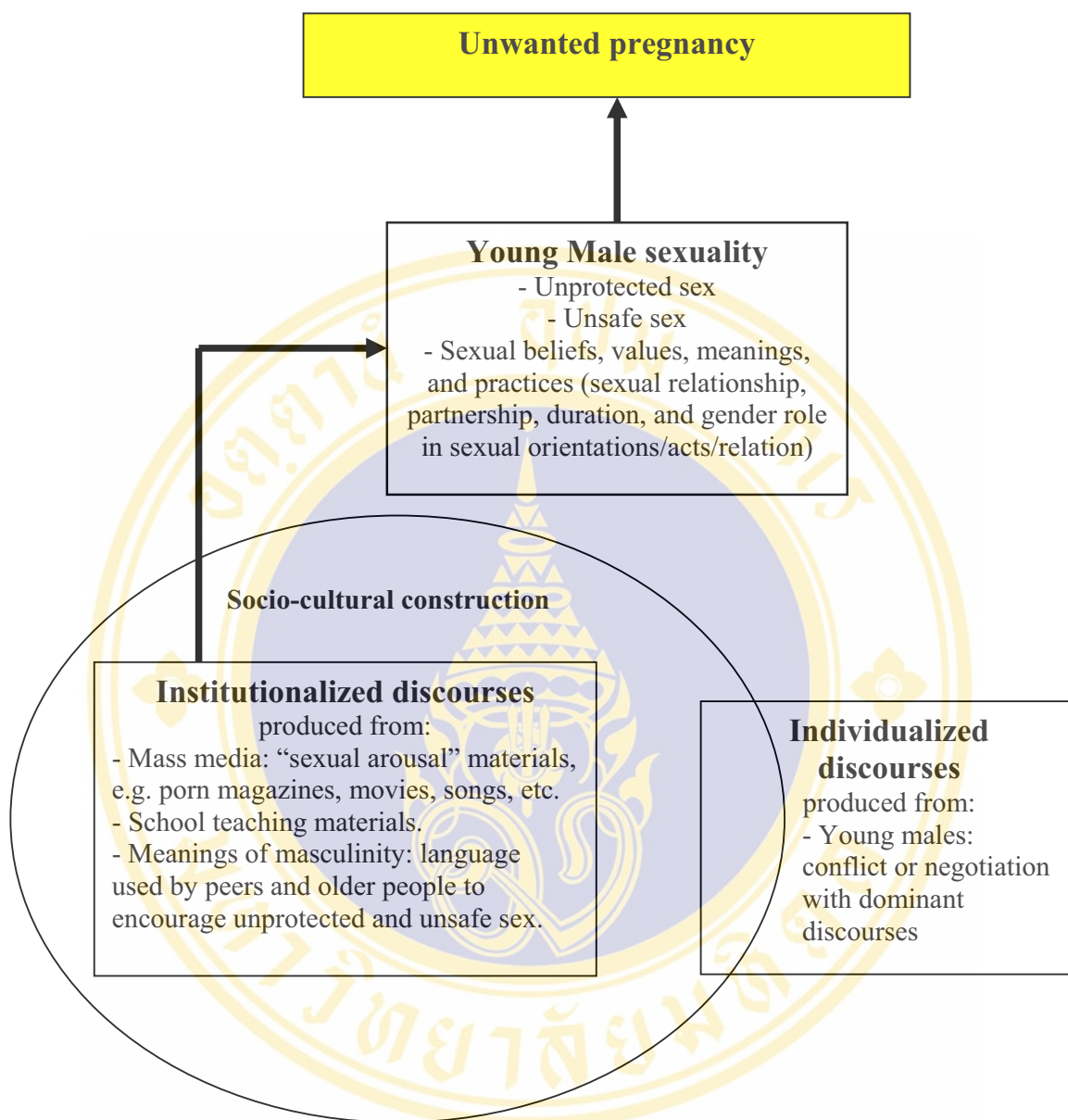


Figure 2: “Initial” Conceptual Framework

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 1. Research Design

This is a qualitative research drawing on an ethnographic approach to studying young male sexuality which is conducive to unwanted pregnancy. The reason for choosing the ethnographic approach to my study is that I realize that my research is a very sensitive topic in the area of sexuality and unwanted pregnancy. Without being with informants through a sufficient period of time, I would not be able to understand their sexuality and discourses shaping and governing their sexuality in relation to unwanted pregnancy. By adopting the ethnographic approach, I had more time in building trust with my informants and cross-check through *methodological triangulation and data triangulation* throughout the course of data collection.

During the fieldwork of over four months, multiple methods—*participant observation, in-depth interview, informal discussion, key informant interview, viewing media (recommended porn movies) & discussion, non-participant observation, and mapping out entertainment venues* (where young people hang out) were applied for data collection in order to understand young male sexuality and its social and cultural construction that cause unwanted pregnancy. Apart from data collection from the young male informants, I conducted interviews with key informants (who have experience working with young people in SRH and AIDS), one man (who is very respected by the young male informants), and two girls (who frequent night entertainment venues). Data from different sources and different data collection methods provide a broader explanation of the phenomenon.

## 2. Study Site

Vientiane is the capital of Laos with a population of 698,318 inhabitants. Vientiane is a setting in which incidence of complications of induced abortion is high. For example, MCH Hospital reported, for the first six months of 2006, meeting at least one case (per 2 days) of complication of abortion came in for care. Most complications of abortion are due to unwanted pregnancy that uses pharmaceutical abortifacents (so called *ya chine*).

Young people in Vientiane face a variety of influences as a result of modernization. Popular culture is considered very important that young people tend to imitate. The media Vientiane people, including young people, consume are Thai songs, movies (via VCD/DVD and TV), Thai magazines (Spicy, Gossip, TV Pool, etc), Thai cartoon books, and Thai love story books. However, local media are not popular among young people.

At the same time entertainment venues, such as beer bars and discotheques for young people are springing up. Young people use a lot of their free time to go and hang out drinking beer. These entertainment settings entertain their young customers with Thai pop songs and DJs (speaking in Thai sometimes).

## 3. Entry to the Field

Almost one month (in July 2006), at the beginning of my fieldwork, my first attempt was to find the appropriate way to enter the world of young males who have experience in getting girls or women pregnant. Firstly, I decided to go meeting with key informants from NGOs and GOs, such as CARE, BI, UNFPA, Vientiane Youth Center/Lao Women Union Vientiane Capital, who work with young people in sexual and reproductive health, including HIV. These meetings were primarily to find out about who “informative” young males are and how I could approach them. Through informal discussions, I have had valuable ideas from those key informants. However, “how to” enter the world of young males remained unclear to me.

Secondly, I went to the Vientiane Youth Center to find out about young peer

educators' contact numbers. I chose to contact one peer educator and met with him. In fact, to some extent I knew him before because I went in and out the Vientiane Youth Center quite often when I worked as ASRH Technical Officer for the EU/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Asia (RHIYA) Program (2003 - 2005). I asked the young peer educator to help lead me to university dormitories. Then, we visited 5 private dormitories and 2 university-provided dormitories. Unfortunately, July – August was a period of school vacation, and yet I had met very few students remaining in the dormitories. Then, I realized that the challenge now was not only about “how to” enter the world of informants but also about “who” informative cases would be for my study.

Thirdly, I came back to the Vientiane Youth Center again to find anyone who could give me some suggestion to cope with this challenge that I faced. I then met with a youth worker who is an ASRH trainer (working more than 4 years for the Vientiane Youth Center). He suggested that I should meet with another youth worker who is responsible for community outreach activities with vulnerable youth, including “speed pill” addicts in villages. Accordingly, I arranged to meet with the recommended youth worker and discussed with him the following day. He then understood what I was looking for (young males who are “informative” cases for my studies). He then told me a brief story of a group of young males of hunting girls from bars and discotheques. From what he told, he knew this group by chance when he hung out in a beer bar with friends. One of his friends knew this group, and this group moved to join the same table. Since then he has known this group and has contacts with them from time to time. He wishes this group to be trained in ASRH as well. The training may help them change in their behavior. I was interested in this group and asked him to help introduce me to them.

Fourthly, the youth worker arranged time and place for me to meet with this group. One beer bar was arranged as the venue to meet up. When I arrived at the place, I was very surprised by a big crowd of young males and females (more than 200). All tables were occupied by young people. Thai pop music was played very loudly through speakers hanging inside from each corner of the place for entertaining young customers. I arrived at the venue by 20.30 and met with 3 peer educators and the youth worker from the Vientiane Youth Center without the presence of potential young

males at the time. One hour later, two young males came to join our table. Then, the youth worker introduced me to them. I introduced myself briefly to them who I am “My name is Ounkham. I am a Master’s Degree student from Mahidol University. I am doing my thesis on young male sexuality related to unwanted pregnancy. I am now seeking young males who have experience in this matter...” Afterward, we were chatting about a lot of general topics. I found that these two young males are students who have just passed to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade high school. Now, they were on holiday for three months (June – August 2006).

I and the group of young males and the youth worker kept chatting about many different topics. Spontaneously, despite a big disturbance of very loud music in the beer bar, we happened to talk about sexuality. The topic of sexuality started off by young males teasing with each other about girls. And it sort of went on and on. The young males began sharing their sexual experiences, pictures of the blood ensuing from the loss of virginity (of the girls). Porn movies were also brought up a lot in terms of special sexual positions and big penis of male actors from the porn movies, and so on. At the time, I felt that I had fallen behind about what these young males were talking about their sexual experiences. One young male shared his experience he has made girls pregnant...Because this was the first meeting with them, I listened and observed the dynamics of conversation in the group rather than ask questions. In the end, I asked for contact numbers from the two high school students and 3 peer volunteers (from the Vientiane Youth Center).

Given the first meeting with the two young male students in the beer bar, they would be interesting for my study. Two days later, I made an appointment to meet with one of them (I met in the bar). In the informal conversation, I found that what he told me this time was very consistent with one that he shared with the group in the first place (in the beer bar 2 days ago). He revealed that he has had a lot of sexual experience. He has 3 friends in his group. Most of them have similar sexual experience in hunting girls. Then, I asked him to participate in my study. He showed his pleasure to do so. He asked me one important question “you do not tell my name in your report, right?” With this question, I had to explain my research purpose and myself again in order to make it clear to him. I said to him that my study will be carried out under confidentiality; in my notes and my report I will not write names of informants, but

use pseudonyms. School and village will not be named in my field notes and my thesis. In the end of informal talk, I asked for contact numbers of 2 other friends of his. Also he would talk to his friends if they wanted to participate in my research.

Since then, I started my contact with four high school students. I arranged to meet with them to get to know each other. I tried to build trust step by step without too much interference in their lives. After about two weeks, I approached the young male informants if I could stay in the home with any of them. But, the answer was “no”; they could not allow me to do so because they were not comfortable having me observing in the home. And it would not be acceptable to their parents if I lived in the home with them. So, being in the home with them is not acceptable. Then, I tried to think of any alternative way, for example renting a house nearby, so that I could more observe their daily lives. I was about to proceed by this way. But, choosing this way I have to identify myself to village authorities in the village. In this way, village authorities may be involved in my work. The second way was not practical either.

Finally, the acceptable way was that they were comfortable meeting with me outside their homes. That is, they allowed me to conduct my study with them when they go and hang out in entertainment venues in which they hunt the girls from time to time. Then I went out and met with them from late afternoon to late night in beer bars and discotheques almost everyday, especially during school holiday (June – August). Hanging out with them, I continued observing what and how they actually do about approaching and hunting girls to have sex with them. We used mobile phone to communicate and arrange to meet. Some nights we did not go out, we called each other. During the four months, I had met and talked with them on a regular basis (almost every day). I tried to be with them as long as possible in order to understand their sexuality and the socio-cultural factors that govern their sexuality in a particular way. Some nights I had to stay up as late as 3.00 am with them. The number of times going and hanging out with them reduced when the school resumes in September. From July to August, I went out with them almost every night. Since September, we just went out about 2 or 3 times a week.

#### 4. Sampling

I drew on *intensity sampling* (Patton, 2002). This is one of the purposive sampling techniques because my study is qualitative and focuses on in-depth understanding of young male sexuality linking with unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion. Patton suggested that purposive sampling is to choose *information-rich cases* for in-depth inquiry. Information-rich cases will yield insight into, rather than generalize a phenomenon (Patton, 1990, p. 230).

After the youth worker introduced me to two young male high school students in the beer bar. Later, I initiated my contact with one of them. Then, I chose him and his friends after I had follow-up informal meetings with him because he has sexual experience in hunting girls and making some girls pregnant. This group of young male students should be an “informative” source for my research. Since then, my research target changed from young male university students to young male high school students. The other reason for choosing this group was related to their age. They are still in between mid adolescent and late adolescence. During adolescence<sup>1</sup>, young people have many different challenges and influences. Although they are very young, they have a lot of sexual experience. And they should be able to remember sources that influence their sexuality. My assumption before I went to the field was that “informative” cases should be at least young male university students that may be possible to be found. In fact, when I reached the field, the reality was different from my initial assumption.

I decided to study with only the group of 4 young male high school students. Considering the number that is relatively small; however, I know that my study is not to generalize the phenomenon, but try to understand a particular group that is very relevant to the phenomenon. Following, I will talk briefly about the background of the four informants (They belong to a group. They are friends from the same school and in the same grade, and of the same age. They have experience in nightlight together):

---

<sup>1</sup> Adolescence divides into three phases (WHO, 2002): Early adolescence from 10 – 13; mid adolescence from 14 – 15, and late adolescence from 16 – 19.

*Informants*

- Seng: He is a six-teen year old boy from high school year 6. He is from a middle class family. His father is a retired government officer having four wives. His mother is as a housewife. He has one elder sister...He initiated sex since he was 12 years old. He has experience making two girls pregnant.
- Do: He is a six-teen year old boy from high school year 6. He is from a middle class family. He is a closer friend of Seng. Do and Seng have experience in sharing and exchanging sexual partners. His parents are separated. His father remarried. But, his mother remained single after the divorce. He has one elder brother...He initiated sex (non-penetrative sex) at a very early age (when he was 7 or 8 years old). He never makes a girl pregnant because he uses condom every time when he has sex. He does not want himself to be like his father. His father had to divorce because his father made his "current" wife pregnant.
- Kop 3: He is a seven-teen year old boy student from a middle class family. He studies at high school year 6. His father and mother are government officers. He has two elder brothers...He was addicted to methamphetamine (speed pill) from high school years 4 and 5. But, now he stopped using drug already. He initiated sex when he was 14 years old with a girl who he approached from a discotheque. He got one girl pregnant.
- Tom: He is a six-teen year old boy. He is also from a middle class family. He is a 6<sup>th</sup> year high school student. He has one elder brother and an elder sister. His father and mother live together. His father is a private organization officer, and his mother is as a housewife. He claims that he is still a virgin. He just hangs out to drink beer for fun with friends, but does not do as his friends do.

In addition to the four young male informants, I also had conducted key informant interviews with the following people:

*Seven key informants*

- One technical officer on ASRH from UNFPA. He works in ASRH more than six years. He has hands on experience working with young people and he is also a trainer in ASRH.
- One technical officer on ASRH and HIV from CARE. He works in ASRH and HIV more than 3 years.
- Manager of Vientiane Youth Center. She is a very energetic manager having worked for 4 years for the Vientiane Youth Center. She understands ASRH and needs of young people. She is a strong advocate who organized a number of meetings to advocate government officials at the village to central level for ASRH.
- Two youth worker from Vientiane Youth Center. They work with young people in the field of ASRH over 4 years.
- Female doctor from Vientiane Youth Center Clinic. She provides anonymous SRH services to young people more than 2 years in the youth-friendly clinic. She found a number of cases of unwanted pregnancies and STIs among young people.
- Male doctor from MCH hospital: He is a doctor who has hands-on experience in dealing with “complication” cases due to induced abortion. He has worked at MCH hospital more than 10 years.

In addition, I interviewed a man who is respected by the four young male informants. He is a 38 years old man who is very respected by the informants. He used to be a Taekwondo instructor. He has experience going and hanging out with the informants. He observes the young male informants, and sometimes he gets a girl by hanging out together with them. I also interviewed with two girls. One is six-teen years old studying at high school year 6. The other is eight-teen years old; she finished high school 2 years ago, but she now just helps her mother sell food in her home. Both girls frequent entertainment venues. They are relatively confident in talking about the issues concerning sexuality and young people.

## 5. Methods of Data Collection

### 5.1 Participant Observation

I went out with the young male informants to observe their group's interactions and dynamics in regard to sexuality. My observation focus placed on what, how, and why they act in such a way. This technique helped me crosscheck data gathered through other methods, such as in-depth interview and informal discussion.

I spent much of my time being with the informants in beer bars and discotheques in order to see what and how they talked among friends and how they approached girls for sex. Actually, the informants started their nights from beer bars and continued to discotheques that are specifically popular among young people. These places are packed with young males and females; the majority of them are from high schools. They are aged between 13 and 17 years. All entertainment establishments close by 23.30 pm. But, young people do not actually stop their night at the closure time. They go out of the discotheques heading up to a place with a discotheque and karaoke in one big hotel, which closes as late as 3.00 am. This place is actually full of people, not only young people but also adults and/middle age people.

For the informants, they sometimes visit the entertainment place (in the big hotel) that remains open beyond midnight. The informants bring girls to continue drinking more beer in this place (when girls are not ready to go straight to guesthouses). I noticed that the informants, especially Seng and Do were very skillful in approaching and cheating girls for sex...First what they do, they will look for girls whom they are interested in, and they will ask the girls to have beer together using sweet tongue. I noticed that it was so quick in developing sexual intimacy between them and the girls. They can start touching the bodies, arms, and hair within a couple of hours.

I went and hung out with the informants. This way allowed me to see and understand what and how young people actually do before they end up having sex. Beer seems to play a very important role as an entry point for young people, which lead them to go further for sexual intimacy and intercourse from the discotheques to the guesthouses. In addition, this method enabled me to see the nightlife of young

people and differentiate between the contemporary youth and my generation. I realized that what I was trying to explore was very complex because there are so many factors underlying young male sexuality in terms of “hunting”. Entertainment industry and beer are also important contextual factors that allow the young male informants to behave in this way.

### **5.2 In-Depth Interview (IDI)**

This method was used when I met or arranged to meet with the informants privately. IDI is a very important tool to gather data in response to the research questions. This method enabled me to get in-depth accounts from individual informants because it took place in private. Twenty IDI sessions were conducted during my fieldwork with the individual informants; each IDI session took around half an hour or an hour...Some points from other methods were not clear, and this method allowed me to elicit from the informants.

### **5.3 Informal Discussion**

This method was very convenient because it could take place in anytime either on face-to-face or on the phone. Also it could be conducted either with a group or one individual. Through this method, I was also able to check and ask the informants for clarifications on some points that are not so clear through other methods that I used. A big advantage of this method, is that, for example, when I observed in a discotheque I saw young males were about to fight with each other, but for a while they became calm under control. Right after that I asked the informants, I found out that a fine to people fighting in the entertainment place is very high. Yet, young people do not dare to do fight inside the place.

### **5.4 Key Informant Interview**

Key Informant Interview (KII) was used to collect data from people who have experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health and HIV. Data on

unwanted pregnancies, induced abortions, male sexuality, and contextual factors I gathered from the key informants are useful in support of data from primary sources.

### **5.5 Viewing Media and Discussion**

As I tried to capture what really shape young male sexuality. I attempted to learn and identify discourses from media and language use that govern male sexuality, such as sexual beliefs, values, meanings, and practices. When pornographic materials were cited as the important source by both the informants and key informants, I asked the informants to bring their porn materials to view and discuss in an informal manner. Then, I arranged to view this kind of material, so that they could explain to me more about what they have learned from these media and how they have applied knowledge to sexual practices.

While viewing the porn movies, I paused some scenes and discussed when they talked they were interested in the particular scenes. I asked them more why they liked those scenes. This method allowed me to understand what my informants learn from those sources and interpret their acquired knowledge into sexual practice. It is a very helpful method in examining young male sexuality and its construction (in the form of discourse).

### **5.6 Non-Participant Observation**

Sometimes I went out alone to observe beer bars, discotheques, surrounding places like common shops, guesthouses and hotels at night. What strikes me is Beer Lao because its logo attaches to so many places and objects: sings of guesthouses, hotels, snooker clubs, some restaurants in addition to beer bars and discotheques. I noticed that signs offered by Beer Lao Company to restaurants, bars, and discotheques, lay in this way: Middle parts of the signs are spaces for the premise owners to put their names, and left & right parts of the signs are spaces for Beer Lao and Carlsberg logos (Beer Lao and Carlsberg have been recently equal partners in order to produce more products).

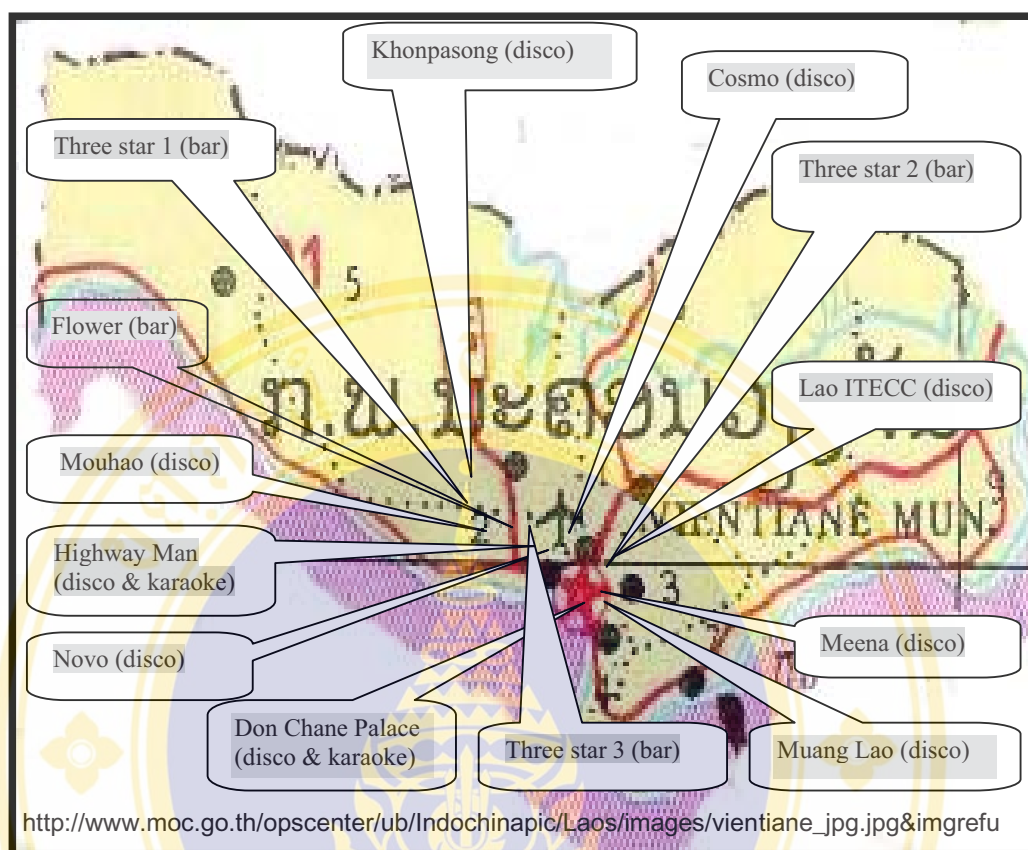
I noticed that drinking beer is very common. It appears in all events, such as sports, football, badminton, patenque, and bowling. Beer is counted as the very key factor that cannot be absent from any social events. In October 2006, the tournament of foot ball to celebrate the National day, it was called “the prime minister’s cup or Beer Lao’s cup”. In the stadium, it was full of Beer Lao advertisement. Beer advertising is every where. I realized that Beer Lao is very important because it links with many social activities in Lao society. Logo of Beer Lao is very widely seen from tissue boxes, umbrellas, t-shirts, signs, and even the sign of speed-limit in school areas.

Most importantly, it seems that no one really questions about Beer Lao and its impact on young people as well as the Lao people as a whole because no specific study has been conducted to look at beer impact, for example road accidents, gender violence and rape. I noticed young people under 18 drink a lot of beer. Even though some entertainment establishments wrote “under 18 year old children are not allowed to enter”. But, in fact almost all young clients are under 18 years. They are just high school students.

This method helps link the macro-level (social) with the micro-level (individual). Yet, it allowed me to understand important contextual factors that mediate the phenomenon and explain it in the broader sense.

### **5.7 Mapping out entertainment establishments**

I went out with the informants and tried to map out places (see Figure 3) where young people actually go and hang out. This helped me grasp the places that are popular among young people. This method also provides me with the picture in terms of numbers and locations. And sometimes, those places link to one another. For example, I found that there were some advertising of *beer drinking and dance competitions* to be taken place in a discotheque in order to encourage young people from one place to another.



**Figure 3: Discotheques and bars popular among young people in Vientiane**

## 6. Reflexivity

- I could be perceived to be very different from my informants. Not only am I older than them, but also I do not drink beer/alcohol (I used to drink alcohol, but stopped it about 5 years ago), whereas my informants drink a lot of beer. However, I reminded myself that I should keep resisting “I cannot drink” rather than drink a little bit for spirit or for data from them. In the end, I found that “I cannot drink” is not the barrier to my study because my informants accepted my limitation. Finally, they do not insist me on drinking anymore when I go with them.

- I wonder whether or not being observed encourages my informants to hunt more girls. I noticed that they were so proud of having shared with me their experience in cheating the girls for sex.
- I am a married man with 2 daughters. Sometimes, I felt uncomfortable listening to my informants talking or calling girls: *ee naow* (rotten women represents women who have multiple sexual partners); pick-up truck can get inside *ee naow*'s vagina, and "Maybe I will try this girl tonight".
- I am 20 years older than the young male informants. However, I found that it was not an obstacle to my study because I tried not to use "parents" language when I communicate with them. I did not intimidate them when I met and talked with them. I did not use any language that makes them feel that I was teaching or correcting them, although sometimes I felt uncomfortable with what they said and/or expressed. On the other hand, I was sometimes treated as naïve because I kept asking them. Partly I acknowledge that my experience in working with adolescents in the field of sexual and reproductive health helped me a lot in the sense of understanding young people because they are in the important period of transition from childhood to adulthood in which they need to be provided with guidance to become responsible adults.

## 7. Researcher's Identities

I identified myself to my informants as a Master's degree student from Mahidol University. I am a married man having two daughters. I also informed my informants about my work experience in sexual and reproductive health...My informants call me "brother".

## 8. Researcher's Emotional Involvement

At first, it was quite difficult. I felt uncomfortable when the informants talked about hunting this girl and that girl. And they use language that looks down on women like *ee naow* (rotten woman). In one sense, I really wanted to guide them. So, I sent email to consult with my advisors in this regard. My advisors suggested that I should

not interfere in the reality; just let it be. What I could do was reminding the informants to have protected and safe sex.

When I noticed a number of young male and female high school students escaped from schools, and winded up drinking beer at bars, I really felt upset with adults who are owners of the entertainment venues...why do they exploit young people in this way? However, I realized that I had to deal with this issue strategically. I reminded myself of what I was doing was to gather as rich data as possible. If I had good data, I would be able to convince action to address this issue later on. Thinking this way helped me minimize my emotion during my fieldwork.

## 9. Field Note, Data Processing, and Data Analysis

After I came back from hanging out with the young male informants, I managed to jot down what I had seen and got from that night. Following in the daytime, I wrote my field notes as detailed as possible, including description and memos and further questions. I reviewed field notes and identify what kind of data is missing out that I needed to ask the informants more. Once I got more data from my informants, I added them to my field notes. I also sent some of my field notes to my advisors for comments.

Two of my advisors also made a field visit during my data collection. Their visit was very helpful. I presented my field notes and got comments from both. On the visit trip, I and my advisors went to visit a discotheque, one of the places my informants actually hang out for hunting girls. I obtained a lot of useful comments as a result of their visit.

In fact, data analysis started from when I was in the field. On my return to University, I had a chance to present methodology and some key findings and I was given useful comments from advisors and other commentators, my classmates and other students from the faculty. However, I felt that my data needed to be reorganized and then I used ATLAS *ti* software for assign *coding* for my data in order to categorize my data into group and identify patterns. Then, I used codes as the basis for developing case report.

For discourse analysis, I used the conceptual framework as structure of analysis. Potential dominant discourses, such as from language use and mass media are drawn from the findings part and further analyzed and interpreted in the discussion part of my thesis.

Again, in late February 2007, the Health Social Science International Program organized another workshop for my batch to present draft thesis. Six commentators were present in my presentation session. This workshop provided me with useful comments in terms of different perspectives on data analysis.

I consulted with my advisor on a weekly basis throughout the analysis and writing of my thesis.

## 10. Validity of Data

- *Data triangulation*: I conducted key informant interviews with 7 key informants, a man (associated with the group of informants), and 2 girls (who frequent entertainment venues).
- *Methodological triangulation*: I drew on several different types of methods, *participant observation, in-depth interview, informal discussion, key informant interview, non-participant observation, and viewing porn materials & discussion.*
- A period of over four months allowed me to verify and check data back and forth with the informants. For example, I brought field notes and explained in summary to the informants when I conducted in-depth interview, and yet I could make sure that I wrote on my field notes are accurate.

## 11. Ethical Consideration

### 11.1 Confidentiality

I did not write down the names, school, and villages of my informants. Instead, I use pseudonyms in my thesis. Notes on my notebooks were destroyed after I

expanded them into field notes (in English).

### **11.2 Informed Consent**

Once I met with the informants, I informed of the purpose of my study and how data would be used for my thesis and publication for others to learn. When the informants decided to participate in my research, they were informed again of the purpose of my study and use of data. I allowed them to ask questions anytime if they had any doubts.

I asked them to be aware that they have the right to change their minds to withdraw from my research anytime if they were not comfortable. They could choose to answer or refuse to answer questions I asked.

I will not judge the informants by language or words that stigmatize and discriminate them, such as “bad behavior” or “deviant behavior” except for “quotes” from the informants and key informants that I may refer to in my dissertation.

### **11.3 Privacy**

I am aware that sexuality is a very sensitive topic. When I arranged to conduct in-depth interviews with my informants, I asked them to choose where they were comfortable. Normally, the informants chose beer bars as venues to meet up because they were comfortable in these places.

### **11.4 Benefits and Reciprocity**

I am still in contact with my informants and thinking about what I can do to help them in terms of improving their behavior in the way that does not harm their health and other people’s health. I have contacted with youth workers (at the Vientiane Youth Center) in order to find out about when they will organize ASRH training. I will then encourage my informants to attend this training.

On my return, I will work with my informants and try to guide them to improve their behavior in an informal manner. I will meet and encourage them to

participate in training and activities with regard to ASRH, Gender, Rights, HIV, harm reduction, and other recreational activities that may help them bring about changes in their beliefs, values, and practices of hunting and cheating girls for sex.

## 12. Research Limitations

Part of everyday life of the male informants in the homes could not be incorporated into my research because what I was studying was too sensitive to open up with their parents. Episode of school life of them was also missing because it was not possible to observe the informants in school.

I could discuss with a lot of key informants and some girls, but they had no direct experiences in terms of being hunted and having unwanted pregnancies/abortions. In other words, my study still misses perspectives from females who experienced being hunted and/or had unwanted pregnancies.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Since 1986, Laos has opened its door to the outside world. “The discourse of struggle [for national independence] is replaced by a discourse of lack [needs to develop the nation toward modernity]”, and yet the propagation of “anti-capitalist and anti-Western” is not valid anymore (Pholsena, 2006, p. 218). The market economy is adopted as important for the national socio-economic development.

Vientiane today faces a lot of changes that are influenced by the socio-economic development and modernization. Vientiane people are now entering the world of high technology. Compared to Vientiane ten years ago, not many people had access to mobile phone and internet. Nowadays, demand of mobile phones is very high among people. People at all level have to make efforts to own mobile phones; no matter, who they are and what they do. In the last decade, mobile phones were used mostly by businesspeople who needed instant communication with their customers for business purposes. But now, it is quite a big change; students (11 – 13 years of age or grades 6 – 8) at junior high schools start demanding mobile phones and parents tend to provide them accordingly. Materials play a very important role in raising children these days. For examples, many parents use mobile phones and motorcycles as incentives for their children to study.

Entertainment venues for young people are springing up all over Vientiane. I have found that many young students from high schools wind up drinking beer and hanging out in entertainment venues until very late night. I noticed that a couple of hundreds of high school students even escape from schools to drink beer from Monday to Friday (They are more concentrated on Wednesday and Friday). One of the bars is even open in the daytime to accommodate students who still in school uniform. It begs a question why such entertainment establishments are allowed to open without restriction. Such entertainment venues are normally packed with young people from high schools. Young customers are entertained with Thai pop music and by Thai

speaking DJs. This reflects the reality in which power of popular culture is dominating young people in Vientiane nowadays.

A number of VCD/DVD shops in Vientiane lend and sell X-rated and R-rated (porn) movies. All materials of this kind turn out to be important sources of learning about sexuality according to the young male informants. However, young people's sexuality is not only influenced by high technology media but also by social and culture norms (that have existed long before the existence of modern mass media). In this sense, young people in terms of sexuality are shaped in between the recently-established discourses (from mass media) and long-established discourses (from social values, norms, and ideologies) through language use.

## 1. Case Report

Case report includes four cases of Seng, Do, Kop, and Tom who are young male students from one high school in Vientiane. They are from the same group and of the same age. They call themselves *kum nak la* (hunting group). The four of them are friends who have nightlife experience together.

### 1.1 Case 1: Seng (a sexual veteran)

Seng is a sixteen-year-old boy from a middle class family in Vientiane. He studies at high school. He is the youngest child of the family. He does not look different from other young people of his age who still live with their parents. His parents have two children, Seng and his elder sister. His father was one of the retired senior government officers. According to him, his father has four wives, and his mother is the fourth one.

Even though Seng is the youngest in the family, he has power to point a finger and tell his elder sister what to do and not in terms of domestic work and how to behave. For example, if the house is not clean, he will remind his sister: "You are a single woman; you should learn to be a good housekeeper. If a man comes to your home and see a dirty house like this, the man will be no longer interested in you". He added "My sister is very understanding. She realizes that I know a lot of things more

than she does because I have a chance to go out and see many different things outside the home. So I feel like I am the elder brother”.

When I conducted my research, Seng was still on school holiday (June – August). This period was very important to him to do whatever he wanted. He was very free to go out and enjoy his nightlife with friends without any expectations from his parents in terms of work. Despite school holiday, he was still given the same amount of money by his parents. He got from 350,000 – 400,000 Kip (about US\$ 35 – 40) per month. This amount of cash is equivalent to general government officers’ salary, and yet Seng could fairly afford his nightlife together with friends almost every night (one bottle of beer costs around US\$ 1 – 1.5). He had late nights and got up very late around 11.00 am – 12.00 am. When he finished taking a bath, food was already prepared for him either by his mother or sister. After eating breakfast, he just went out to meet with his friends and hang out in beer bars and discotheques. This was the actual activity that Seng did everyday during school holiday.

However, Seng thinks that his father is still partial; when he asks for money, his father gives him very little, compared to what his father gives to his sister. When his sister asks to buy things his father just offers as requested. However, he does not want to say much about that; he said “I cannot complain much because I do not want to destroy my rice pot (source of money)”. He told me that his father challenged him “If you want money, you have to earn by yourself. If you want a new motorcycle, you have to be top one in your class. If you can do so, I will buy you a new motorcycle”.

### **1.1.1 A Great Hunter**

Seng is powerful among friends. He practices hunting girls from entertainment venues. He has a lot of experience about sex. He initiated sex with girls since he was 12 years old. He learned about sex from movies, especially R-rated movies. He began watching movies of this kind together with friends since he was in primary school year 3 or when he was 8 years old. Since then he continues experimenting with sex according to what he has seen from the porn movies. He likes watching R-rated movies rather than X-rated movies because he is interested in not

only sexual acts but also in dialogues among characters from the movies. He has been learning about tricks from language that men use in movies to lure girls for sex. The way he learns is trying to capture words from movies that can *aow sana chai* (overcome resistance) of the girls for sex. In addition to learning of words, he has been learning about sexual positions and foreplays since he believes that he is supposed to be *keng* (super) like a man.

One example Seng referred to as a result of learning from the porn movies was that he exchanged sexual partners with his friend Do (case 2) when they were having sex in the same room. He called the practice of exchanging sexual partners “swinging”. He also added “I like to learn from movies, but not limited to R-rated and X-rated VCD/DVD. I have been learning tricks and styles of male characters who have skills to approach and cheat girls for sex.”

One day, I asked Seng to bring all movies that he had. He brought with him 8 porn movies. I and he viewed those movies and discussed scenes that he was interested. He pointed out that he likes Asian porn movies, especially Thai movies, much more than Western ones because he could understand the language, and sexual acts are not so different. He said “among all scenes, I like one scene most from the Thai porn movie that shows a man has just finished sexual intercourse with one woman. Right after that the man tried to have sex with another woman. The man tries to peep at the woman who is topless wearing only underwear sleeping in her bed”. He reasoned why he liked this scene because the man shows ability to have sex with many girls. This was considered *keng* (super).

Seng said “we always dare each other among friends when we watch porn movies. When we see new sexual positions, one might ask ‘do you think you can do like that? I don’t think you can do that’...” When viewing one Western porn movie, Seng said he wanted to try that position like the Western man was doing (in the movie) by holding and penetrating penis at the same time. He revealed that he tried this position once, but could not succeed because he was having sex in the bathroom, and the floor of the bathroom was too slippery. And the second time, I and he arranged to view the porn movies again in his friend’s room. Once I entered, I saw 3 porn DVDs that belong to his friends.

At the time, Seng brought with him 4 porn VCDs for discussion. I asked him which movie he wanted to watch first. Then, he chose the one, which has its cover showing a bleeding vagina, as he thought that it was about virginity. [In fact, it was not about virginity, but because of menstruation]. In the end, he said these 4 movies were not so interesting because they did not give him new knowledge.

In Vientiane, VCD/DVD shops do not display porn movies, but they lend all movies of this kind if customers ask. The rental price is affordable; three VCDs cost 5,000 Kip (about US\$ 0.5). Seng said that he is a regular customer of one VCD/DVD shop. If the shop has new porn movies, the shop owner will call him. Normally, he will buy, rather than rent and sell it to other friends after he watches it.

Not only do porn movies contribute to Seng's experiment with sex, but also his parents teach him through language that is very suggestive to him to experiment. He cited what his father taught him about sex "don't take a girl to the bush, but a guesthouse (acceptable)". The implication is that if he will have sex with a girl, he has to bring the girl to a private place; otherwise he can be caught by the police. He also cited what his mother suggested him about sex "If you sleep (have sex) with a girl, be careful she will catch you for marriage (*la vang khaw khum*). You can do, but don't have commitment". He sometimes brings a girl to sleep in his house. His mother knows about it, but does not say anything. In this sense, he is fully allowed to experiment with sex, but not to take any responsibilities for his action.

### 1.1.2 Hunting Field

I went with Seng to many different entertainment venues that are very popular among young people. Actually there are 3 places (beer bars, discotheques, and guesthouses) associated with the hunting of girls. Beer bars and discotheques are full of young people, especially on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Right after the beer bars, Seng and his friends often move on to discotheques for hunting the girls. The discotheques are cited to be the places for him to find and hunt girls. Each discotheque I have been to can accommodate several hundred people. I observed that there are numerous motorcycles parking in front of the discotheques. The number of motorcycles must be between 200 and 500 different from one place to another. In the

discotheques, I saw a number of young people both male and female lining up to buy entry tickets. One entry ticket costs 15,000 Kip approximately US\$1.5 per person; it can be exchanged for one bottle of beer or one can of soft drink, depending on individual choices. But, very rarely I saw young people drinking soft drink in the discotheques.

The discotheques that are popular among young people will have a big crowd of young people (about 300 – 500) especially on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Because of these three nights the discotheque owners have some promotion; for example girls might enter the venues free of charge. Hence, these three nights have become popular and some sort of culture for more many young people.

I went with Seng to one discotheque that he referred to as the place he got several girls for having sex. When I arrived at the venue, I noticed a big crowd of young males and females dancing and drinking beer. The discotheque about 25 x 25 meters was packed with young people. It was very crowded and smoky. During my observation, I saw 3 couples hugging and kissing among their friends dancing and drinking beer. On my right hand side, I saw a group of six young males trying to touch and slap the girls' bottoms as they walked past. But, whatever happened there, it did not seem to be a big deal because if fight occurs, concerned persons have to be fined at a very high cost. Thus, young customers have to control themselves and refrain from fighting in the discotheque. But, if they could not resist, they would go out far from this area to fight.

In the meantime, Seng and his friend approached two girls going past. Then, the girls just stopped by, talked and, drank beer with them. They enjoyed chatting, drinking beer, and dancing together. About one hour later, Seng and his friend started touching the bodies and the hair of the girls. [It was such a short period of time from talking to touching the body in this place]. Seng told me that if he wanted to have sex, he just made a little more effort by asking the girls to go out and drink more beer, and he will get it. [It is interesting in seeing how boys approach girls in this venue; even though they do not know each other before, they could build up (sexual) intimacy very fast. Inside the discotheque, the very loud music is a contributing factor that facilitates (sexual) intimacy between young males and females; for example if a boy and a girl want to talk to each other, they have to be very close to whisper. And

boys have to protect the girls/girlfriends when they come as a group. Often the boys show their protection by hugging and protecting the girls from sexual harassment when they walk through other groups of boys.] In the discotheques, I noticed that boys and girls quite openly express their (sexual) intimacy. They can be seen hugging and kissing. This kind of practice would not be seen in the past 10 years; nor were there many places of this kind existing. This is an important change in young people's sexuality in terms of sexual intimacy that is more open with support from night entertainment environment.

Through my data collection of 4 months, I spent my time hanging out with Seng and his friends in the discotheques. I have seen him and his friends picking up girls from discotheques to go to guesthouses three times. Afterward, he revealed that he had sex with the girls and used condom "every time". He said "I keep condom under the seat of my motorcycle because condom in the guesthouses is very expensive at night". Often, I heard him and his friends teasing with each other, especially after the night they got the girls. For example, I heard him teasing with his friend: "You have no passion; you are useless; you just observed me having sex; you are a bad boy...". His friend just responded "I was very drunk and tired, and the girl I got was not so attractive, so that I just looked without doing anything".

### **1.1.3 *Kha lom pen to* (speaking is more powerful than being handsome)**

Seng has been learning dialogues from movies (but not limited to porn movies) and applying to cheating girls for sex. He said "Techniques from movies can be adapted a little bit depending on the situation". Techniques he has learned from the movies work effectively. He said "I always win the game (by getting girls for sex) if I make efforts and use words learned from movies, for example "Of course, I do respect your decision because I love you...". The girls are likely to trust him when he uses this kind of language in the right situation.

In hunting girls, mobile phone also plays an important role in contributing to Seng's hunting of girls. One night, I met up with Seng. When talking with him, he had received three telephone calls from three different girls. He said the

first call is from his sexual partner (when he wants or she wants to have [sex], either he or she just calls”. The second call is from a 4<sup>th</sup> year high school girl. He said “I like this girl; she is considered as my girlfriend”. And the last call is from the 6<sup>th</sup> year high school girl, who kept calling him twice and sent one message asking him to pick her up because she wanted to see a movie at the cinema. And he said “maybe I will try this girl tonight. When he talked with the girls on the phone, his voice is very sweet and articulate. He showed that he really cared about the girls. The language he uses can possibly lure the girls to fall in love with him. When he stopped talking on the phone, he turned to me and said *kha lom pen to* (speaking is more powerful than being handsome). He said “I am very proud of myself because I can defeat many men; for example, many girls had their boyfriends. But, in the end they leave their boyfriends and choose me”.

It was at midnight already, but I was still hanging out with Seng and his friend. I saw him taking his mobile phone from his pocket and dialing his girlfriend’s number. He talked with his girlfriend for about 15 minutes. I heard only from what he said: “Now, I came to you first, and if there is another man coming to you, what will you do?...I have a very important thing to tell you, but I am not sure if you are ready to hear....I want to tell you that...I love you very much, and for love I can do everything...But, I am not sure if you love me. I hope you do not have another man in mind. Do you know I love you too much? I am afraid a dog [a man] will take you away; I will be very sad if that thing happens. I want you to love me more, and I will overcome all barriers to my life”. After talk with his girlfriend on the phone, he told me that another man has shown interest in his girlfriend, and she has not discouraged that man, and he was worried about that. He told me that he used mobile phone to talk with his girlfriend several hours per day, especially at night because his girlfriend’s father did not allow them to meet at home. Therefore, mobile phone is a good choice for him and his girlfriend. One night he and his girlfriend kept talking long until his girlfriend’s mobile phone was burned, as it was plugged in for charging.

#### 1.1.4 *Pai pai kin beer to (let's go to have more beer)*

Beer is a very important factor that can lead young people to astray. Beer is as an entry point that facilitates the process of hunting girls. Seng uses three venues (beer bar, discotheque, and guesthouse) to complete the hunting of girls with beer as a lubricant to move the process. He starts off by hanging out and drinking beer in beer bars and moves on to discotheques. If he gets a girl, he will proceed to a guesthouse for sex. From the beginning to the end of hunting, beer is involved in the whole process. For example, after entertainment places close 23.30 pm, he will ask girls to have more beer in a guesthouse. He persuades using words *pai pai kin beer to* (let's go to have more beer) instead of (let's go to guesthouse). This is "indirect pursuance". If a girl answered "*pai ka pai*" (literally meant "go"), he has hope to hook the girl.

Once the process moves on to the guesthouses, sex is very likely to happen. He said "I have never seen any girls resisting me to have sex when they get on my motorcycle to the guesthouses". In a sense, beer plays a very important role in creating a *space* for them to "hunt" the girls. Likewise, entertainment venues and beer together are a potent combination that allows the hunting to happen.

Seng explained that beer becomes very important to everyday life of young people. Young people use beer as a prize for a dare "I'll give you half or one carton of beer if you can win this game and that game, for example football game". Beer has become a very popular drink along with all kinds of sports like badminton, football, bowling, and patenque. Often, competition will be in "how many bottles or cartons of beer". [Sometimes, I go and play badminton. I notice that middle age men waiting for turns to play badminton buy beer and drink quite a lot along with the game, or they will continue drinking after the game until late night. This kind of practice is very common in Vientiane.] Seng said "I always see young people persuading each other to go out and drink beer. I would say that very rarely young people persuade each other to do recreational activities". He claimed that young people wind up drinking beer and persuade friends to drink beer when they have free time, partly because there are lack of recreational activities interesting to young people.

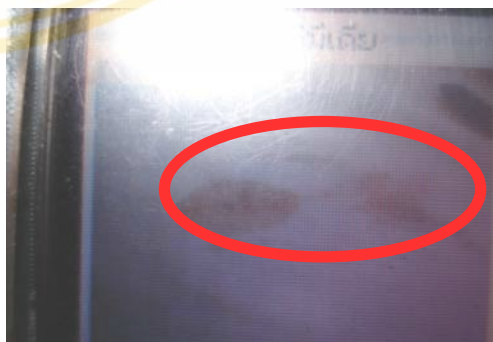
### 1.1.5 “I used to use *ya puk sex* (dope) for hunting.”

Seng revealed that he used to use *ya puk sex* (drug for stimulating sexual desire). He bought from a pharmacy. One cachet was 15,000 Kip. Then I asked him to lead me to the pharmacy where he bought this kind of drug. When we reached that pharmacy, he asked to buy *ya puk sex very straight forward*. Immediately, the pharmacist simply handed the drug to him (in fact, this drug is illegal). This drug was still at the same price as he told me. He told me that this kind of drug was imported from China. There are only two words written in roman script “Xibanya and Cangyingfen” (Spain and powder of fly) on the cachet. He explained based on his experience of using this drug; it would not make a girl unconscious. It was just a stimulating drug that helped reduce resistance as it arouses sexual desire in girls as a result of this drug. He said “when I used this drug, I felt that the girl was easily approached, so I think this kind of drug is effective”. However, he prefers to use beer for hunting because beer just makes the girls carry over because of lack of self-control.

### 1.1.6 *Peud sod* (sex with the virgin) is the pride of himself.

Seng never uses condom with girls who are virgins. He believes that *peud sod* means *keng* (“super”), ability, power to him. Moreover, if he has *peud sod*, he will prolong his life (Seng heard of this from the elderly, but he could not remember who he is). When he *peud sod*, he is very proud because not many men can do like he does. He believed that *peud sod* also could bring “good luck”. He referred to his friends who has *peud sod* and always wins the gamble of football. In terms of sex to control, he added “If we get virginity of girls, the girls will never leave us”.

He pointed out that friends are the important influence on him to make efforts to *peud sod*. Friends always show off, for example “last night I had *peud sod*;



**Figure 4: Blood ensuing from the loss of virginity photographed by mobile phone**

it was so great...”. This thing is very encouraging and challenging to him. But, he said “I want to be more *keng* than the friends. The friends just say in words, but I want to show them more than words, so I took photos of the blood on the bed sheet from *peud sod* or breaking hymen, using my mobile phone”. He also showed me the picture of condom with blood from breaking the hymen. But, he did not look proud with this picture; when he showed the condom picture with blood of virginity his friends teased and laughed at him because he used condom with the virgin. He realized that then condom was only for AIDS prevention. He asked “do you think a new thing [girl] has AIDS?”

In addition, he showed me a picture of sexual organ of a girl, and over that part of the girl, he tried to point at the drops of lubricant that he used in order to insert his penis. He said “this girl was very fresh and pure”. I noticed that he was so proud of showing me this picture. During this time, I heard him repeating “I am very happy to get virginity because not many men can do as I do”.

#### **1.1.7 “Sex is *tham ma da* (common) to men.”**

Seng revealed that he had sex with over 20 girls, of which 2 girls were pregnant. For the first pregnant girl, he paid 3,000 Baht (about US\$ 75 from his savings collected from his parents) to her for abortion. Afterward, he tried not to meet with the girl anymore. He said “once I have sex with the girl, I can control the girl, and abuse sometimes. I don’t allow the girl to play freely, whatever she does and wherever she goes, she has to be controlled by me. If not, I will abuse her. Finally, she cannot stand me, and then we break up”. But, for the second pregnant girl, he did not pay at all for abortion; he just left to be the girl’s responsibility to seek solution. His relationship with the two girls who were pregnant broke up because he tricked them by strictly controlling and abuse until they could not stand him.

Seng said “Sex is *tham ma da* (common) to men”. He plays a trick in having more than one girlfriend at the same time. That is, he tells the girls that he has many female friends (instead of girlfriends). He suggests his girlfriends: “Whenever you see me accompanying other girls, you just come and say hello, but of course I know most of the girls do not dare to do so. They sometimes ring me up to find out

more about when they see me going with one of the girls. I deal with this situation by saying to the girls if you don't trust me you can call that girl, her name is.....and her number is.....Most of the time, the girls do not dare to call. Rather, they trust me because they think that I am honest. I know how to play my game with the girls”.

### 1.1.8 “I still have *ee naow* if I don't get a girl.”

Seng said “Sometimes, if I don't get a girl from the discotheques, I go to have sex with *ee naow* (a rotten woman who has multiple sexual partners). But, now I feel bored with her because she keeps calling me all the time. Do you know? TOYOTA tiger-pick-up truck can get inside the vagina of *ee naow*”. I asked him “*ee naow*” is a sex worker; he answered “No. *ee naow* is a girl who does not work in bars or nightclubs, but she is just a common girl who is [economically] supported by *thaow kea* (older businessmen), so that she can afford a nice mobile phone and expensive clothes”. He added “*Thaow kea* just comes to visit the girl occasionally. That is why the girl needs me. With this girl, he uses condom every time when he has sex with her because he is afraid of AIDS”.

During informal discussion with Seng and his friend one night, his mobile phone kept ringing again and again over 10 times. He said “*ee naow* is calling me; I don't want to answer”. But, his phone carried on ringing nonstop. Finally, he asked his friend to answer the phone. He asked his friend to lie to the girl. His friend then told the girl “Seng left his mobile phone with me, and he took my mobile phone. Here is my number you can call him”. For a little while, the girl called back one more time because she could not reach Seng. He added “not only do I hunt the girls, but the girls, especially the older women also want to hunt me. When I have sex with the older women, I just pretended to be naïve, and I just let them do to me”.

### 1.1.9 Great hunter becomes brokenhearted

Seng was very worried now because he did not know how to deal with his girlfriend's demand for sex. That is, his girlfriend (4<sup>th</sup> year high school student) demands to have sex with him. But, he does not want to do so because he loves her

[*hak thae bo tham lay* (if a man really loves with a woman, he will never have sex with her before marriage)]. He is afraid that he will leave her after he had sex with her. He said that he understood his nature very well. If he has got (sex with) the girl, he is very likely to leave the girl afterward. Therefore, he does not want to have sex with his girlfriend. His girlfriend's demand was induced by him unexpectedly. He said "I and my girlfriend always talk through mobile phone; one night I asked her if she wanted to have a baby; if yes, she can have a baby boy because I know how to make a baby boy. But, I was not so serious about that; I was sort of joking with her. Immediately, she asked me 'do you want to try?' I was surprised about her question". Afterward, his girlfriend was seriously insisting to have sex. He realized that it may be because he gave his girlfriend porn movies. Now, she wants to have sex. At first, he gave his girlfriend one porn VCD, and afterward she asked for more and more porn movies. It seems that the more porn movies she watches the more she wants to try. Seng also showed me his girlfriend's message "*khao tong karn haeng*" (I very strongly want it [sex]). In the end he even suggested his girlfriend to help [masturbate] herself. But, it did not work in this way because the more he suggested the more she demanded.

About two months later, Seng became brokenhearted. He was very sad and wanted to talk. He started telling me about what happened to him. He said "I am stupid; I *thim chai* (gave all my heart) to her. It is too difficult to accept the reality. I always think of when I am with her and when we kiss". He also admitted that it is his fault because he tried to control his girlfriend too much. He wanted to keep an eye on every activity that his girlfriend does. For example, he would wait nearby for his girlfriend to return home from evening English class; if she was late, he would show his anger with her. Thus his girlfriend left him because she could not cope with his jealousy. After a little while, he resigned himself to accept the reality and asked his friend (Do) to go ahead for the plan on hunting this girl. According to Seng, the girl showed interest in Do. He said to Do "I should support you to get [hunt] her; instead I let other man get her". Then, his friend said "you know; I will never *ching chai* (be honest) with any girls; I just hunt for fun. Don't worry I will revenge her for you".

## 1.2 Case 2: Do (Seng's running mate for hunting)

Do is a sixteen-year-old boy dropped out of high school when he was in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. He has his dream to be an expert on computer. Therefore, he decided to leave the formal education system at 6<sup>th</sup> year high school and attend physics and mathematics classes only at a private school. He believes that these two major subjects will help him with stronger basic knowledge to pursue his further education abroad on computer and Information Technology. He will apply for a scholarship to study computing in India and may go to work in USA afterward. He said "I know what I want to do and I choose to be. So that I do not waste my time waiting until I finished high school (grade 11)".

Do was born in a middle class family in Vientiane. He lives with his mother because his parents are divorced. He lives with mother, elder brother, grandmother, and kin's families in the same compound. He is a very close friend of Seng (reported in case 1). Both have been close friends for 6 years and shared a lot of sexual experience together, including hunting girls from entertainment venues and exchanging sexual partners.

He claims that now he is already an adult because he is responsible for his life. He can earn money (from repairing computers, installing computer program, selling computer spare parts). He can take care of himself without support from his mother despite his 16 years of age. He said "my mother is not involved much in my life. My life is very independent, compared to that of the past 2 years. In the past years, my mother took care and paid attention to me in many aspects, such as my study and company with friends. But, she does not do this kind of thing to me anymore because she thinks I can take care of myself". With this condition, he can afford nightlife with his friends very frequently.

### 1.2.1 Beer, a Lubricant of Hunting

Do said "beer is very important in leading young people to ending up having sex when they are drunk. When I go out and drink beer in a discotheque, I always think of hunting girls". He acknowledged that without beer, hunting would not be possible. Beer is involved in the process from the beginning to the end. For

example, he starts off by hanging out drinking beer with friends and finds the girls. Once he finds potential girls, he will initiate hunting by asking the girls to drink beer with him. After the entertainment venue is close, he will ask the girls to go with him to drink more beer somewhere else.

He claimed that nowadays boys and girls drink a lot of beer because they have no other activities. So, young people just wind up drinking beer. He tried to convince me by saying “If one is crazy with, for example video games, he will not go out and drink beer”. This claim can be strong in the case of video game players. However, he admitted that although some young people go and play sports, such as football, badminton, etc, they still drink a lot of beer during or after the games. It seems that young people cannot escape from drinking beer, no matter there are recreational activities or not because beer seems to penetrate into, if not every, all social events, including all kinds of sports.

Beer bars, discotheques, and guesthouses were cited to be the places in which Do uses to hunt girls. He always goes and hangs out with his friends, especially Seng in beer bars and discotheques for hunting the girls. Both Do and Seng trust each other and share a lot of experience regarding their private matters. For example, they had experience in “swinging” exchanging sexual partners when they brought two girls into a guesthouse and stayed together in one room.

I noticed that Do and Seng often discussed how to hunt girls from the discotheques. One night, I went with them in one popular discotheque. He and Seng approached the girls. They enjoyed drinking and dancing together. For a while, both started touching the bodies of the girls...Then he turned to me and whispered “I will have a girl tonight”. After the discotheque, both went out with the girls and proceeded to a guesthouse. Given that he was very skillful in terms of approaching and cheating girls to have sex with him; he could build his relation and sexual intimacy with the girls in the discotheques in a very fast manner. It was such a short period of time from approaching the girls to drink beer to touching their bodies. He explained that once a girl did not refuse to drink beer with him, he has hope of hooking her. If he cannot get a girl for a one-night stand, he will arrange to meet up again with her, especially if she is pretty girl, more efforts are put in the hunt for a pretty girl.

The other night, he got a girl, and she was persuaded to go on to the other discotheque that remained open until very late night. I accompanied them to this place. I noticed that the girl was very young. I found out that she was also in high school. I left them about 2.00 am when he and the girl went out in their own way. A day later, I met with Do, and he said he had sex with the girl very late last night. I tried to find out more why the girl agreed easily with him to have sex with him. He explained that the girl, in fact, also wanted to experiment with sex when she went out with him alone; she was more or less ready to have sex. He added that he has not experienced any girls who resisted him when the process moves on to the last stage (guesthouse). He said “maybe the girl is also prepared for sex”. He meant that the girl also wants to have sex, but wait for him to approach.

### **1.2.2 “I never use condom with virgins.”**

Do said “If the girl is a virgin, I will never use condom. Nobody will use a condom with this kind of girl because she is pure without any diseases”. This quote is contradictory with some point that he said he uses condom every time because he did not want to be like his father. According to him, his father made a woman (his father’s current wife) pregnant and broke up with his mother. [In this sense, virginity has more value than concern about pregnancy or diseases. The belief of virginity as purity can lead to unprotected sex, thereby resulting in unwanted pregnancy, which is a threat on women’s health.]

I had an informal discussion with Do and Seng. Do confessed his mistake to Seng that he has never told this secret before because he did not want to hurt Seng. That is, he was sort of guilty because he hunted one girl about one year ago while his friend, Seng was very interested in this girl (her name is Lee (pseudonym)). While opening up the secret, Seng smiled and said “it is Ok; it was over; we are friends”. Right after, Seng asked “*sod bo?* (Is she virgin?)” and Do answered “yes, she was definitely virgin”. Do said he did not use condom, but luckily nothing [no pregnancy] happened. He also added “If I am sure that the girl is virgin, I will do oral sex to her”. [Virginity determines the forms of sexual acts (oral or non-oral sex) and use or non-use of condom because it ties up with the belief of purity].

### 1.2.3 Porn Movie, a School for Learning about Sex

Do acknowledged that porn movies are major sources of learning about sex for him, as well as other young people both boys and girls. Nowadays, it becomes very common that boys and girls share porn materials, especially porn movies. He said “When we watch it, we want to try and imitate the act”. He started seeking porn movies from grade 5 (primary school). Subsequently, he was sort of curious to experiment with sex; he claimed that it was because of porn movies. He said “It was such a shame. I initiated sex at a very earlier age with my aunt’s adopted daughter. At the time I was either 7 or 8 years old only, and the girl was about the same age. I could not insert my penis, but I just kissed and hugged her. I did that with her in the bed room, and for a while my elder brother opened the door and saw us doing that thing. I felt very scared and stopped it immediately. But, my brother asked me and the girl to do more to show him”. He explained that he saw a love scene from a movie. That movie must be the R-rated movie. Since then, I am very curious, trying to learn more about sex from movies”.

When I viewed and discussed porn movies with Do, he said “I have learned about sexual positions and how to do foreplay from the movies”. He likes missionary and doggy positions. He said “I do the same as the movie when I have sex”. He likes Western porn movies because Western girls are white. He has more feeling with white girls. Also he likes the man in the movies performing oral sex; it looks very natural and the girl from the movie is also so sexy. He said “I like porn movies that show a little sadistic sexual act, using some toys and so on”. Following this act, one time he tried to use a “vibrator for massage” (he bought from Chinese outlet) to stimulate the girl as he had seen from the movie. But, the girl did not accept because she was scared of it.

Most of the porn movies I and Do viewed together rarely showed men using condom. But, there was one movie showing a man using condom. Do said “I like this man because he uses condom. Condom use is safer”. Do acknowledged that he knows about how to make love from the porn movies in terms of stimulating sensitive parts of his partners. In other words, he pays more attention to techniques

from the porn movies. He found a technique that help delay ejaculation from the movies. He said “When I have sex, changing one position to another quite frequently, I can delay ejaculation. My partners also like it”.

However, not only do porn movies guide Do to experiment with sex and seek to hunt girls, but also adults encourage him to try out sex. For example, his step-mother told him: “*pai lin saw ya siay huaw mou hai khaow dai!* (When you go and have sex with a girl, don’t let her catch or fine you)”. But, his mother never talks about this kind of thing with him. And his grandmother said “*kin beer laew ya aow kan pai tae baan phak* (don’t go too often to guesthouses after you drink beer); be careful you will die from AIDS. You should wait until you can earn money for yourself, you can do whatever you want”. The language use totally allows and accepts him to experiment with sex, but he is just reminded that he should not be responsible for their action and he has to be aware of diseases like AIDS. [Here I do not mean all parents teach their children using “discourse” or language that encourage boys to experiment with sex freely without responsibilities. But, my point is that language use supporting males to dominate females and encouraging females to subordinate to males in heterosexuality remains powerful despite “time” change.]

### **1.3 Case 3: Kop (a quiet hunter)**

Kop is a seventeen-year-old boy born in a middle class family in Vientiane. He is the youngest son of the family. He has two elder brothers. But, both are already married and moved to live separately from their parents. Now, he is the only person living with his parents. Both his father and mother are government employees. He is now in the 6<sup>th</sup> year high school, which is the last year.

Among friends, Kop seems to be a quiet person. After I have been in contact with him about 3 months, he revealed that he used to be a drug addict. He used to sell methamphetamine (speed pill). He had customers who are aged between 15 and 16 both in-school and out-of-school youth. In fact, he could earn a lot of money from selling drug, but he had nothing left because he just spent it all on beer when he went out with friends. However, Kop has recently quitted drug (last year) after having been to drug for about 2 years. He claimed that quitting drug relied very much on support

from surrounding people. He said “Support and understanding from parents and friends are very important because I have got motivation and encouragement from them to overcome myself (temptation)”. He added that beer was a very important factor that brought him into the world of drug use. From one day to the next, he went out and drank beer with friends. Firstly, friends persuaded him to try drug. Once he tried it, he found that drug could make him stronger in the sense of being able to drink more beer, compared to those who did not use drug.

However, since the school has resumed, he is committed to studying not only in regular classes but also evening extra classes on mathematics, physics, and chemistry (7 days a week). He said “I have to pay more attention to study and try to get good marks”. His dream is to study in China. However, he still goes and hangs out with friends sometimes, but the frequency of going out is less than the past years. For example, in the past he went out 4 – 5 times a week, but now he just goes out 1 or 2 times a week.

### **1.3.1 Approaching girls for sex is the nature of men.**

Kop named beer bars and discotheques as the places in which he hangs out with friends and finds girls. If he gets a girl, he will take her to a guesthouse for sex. He normally goes out with Seng (case 1) and another older man for hunting girls.

He first had sex when he was 14 years old or when he was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year high school. The first sex was with a girl whom he got from one discotheque [he also named the discotheque]. That night he remembered that he approached the girl in the discotheque. He and the girl got a little drunk. After the discotheque closed, he took the girl to a guesthouse. The girl did not resist at all. Since then he started hunting girls from night entertainment places. At the beginning of his sexual experiment, he admitted that he did not use condom with girls because he had no idea about condom.

Kop used to have sexual relation with a girl who just finished high school. His sexual relation with the girl lasted about 2 months without protection. Because he and his partner did not use any contraceptive methods, his partner was pregnant. One day, he was told she was pregnant. He did not know what to do about it. He just asked his partner to find the way out by herself. Finally, the girl chose abortion

by taking medicine. Afterward, he just tried to escape from meeting with her because he was not ready to take responsibility for that. When unwanted pregnancy occurs, the burden and responsibility are just placed on the girl.

However, his parents nowadays bring condoms from hospitals and leave them in the house. He thought that his parents leave condoms on purpose, so that he can use it. His parents know he has been playing with girls, but they do not say anything about this matter. He said “I know my parents want me to prevent diseases”. Now, he brings with him condoms when he goes out at night and uses it for sex with girls. I exclaimed “wow! It sounds very easy to get a girl”. He turned to me and said: “*Mun ngai dok Aiy Oun* (it is easy to get [a girl], brother Oun (my nick name)). He smiled and added “You went out with us many times already. I think you should have known the situation. Approaching girls for sex is a kind of nature for men”. As far as I have been with Kop I saw him getting the girls from the discotheques two times.

Kop acknowledges that beer gives him more courage to approach girls. He pointed out that without beer he does not dare to say or approach girls when he was in discotheques. Beer has become very important to young people to socialize with friends and show that they belong to the group. He said “if I cannot drink or refuse to drink beer, I cannot go out with friends”. Friends will say either I am a high-class person different from friends or I am not strong, or I am not a man”. I then asked him what a man means to him. He said “a man must be able to drink and has experience in sexual matters”. Kop added that nowadays young people tend to drink much more beer, partly because people in general have better economy, and they can afford beer and nightlife, and partly because young people do what adults do. Adults also drink a lot of beer in all social events.

### 1.3.2 “My Imagination and Porn Movies”.

When Kop sees girls wearing revealing clothing like short skirts, it fires his imagination that links with the porn movies that he has seen. He wanted to do with the girls as porn movies showed. He knows about porn movies at a very early age when he was 7 or 8 years old. He saw this kind of movie by chance while his elder brother watched it. Later on, he was curious, so he tried to find and watch it. He was

able to find movies of this kind himself when he was 11 years old. Just right after, he finished primary school. At first, he got a porn movie from a friend. Later on, he can seek movies of this kind by himself from VCD/DVD shops. He revealed that all his sexual experimentation initiated as a result of watching porn movies and magazines. He tries to do sexual acts as what he has seen from the porn movies. He likes Thai porn movies because the style of having sex is alike. He likes the natural ones that show romance, sex, and pleasure, but no use of sexual toys. Japanese men from the porn movies use a lot of toys to stimulate women. He said “Women do not look satisfied with men’s performance. That is why he preferred the Thai ones”.

Kop said that renting and/or buying porn VCD/DVDs in Vientiane are very easy and cheap. Three VCDs cost only 5,000 (US\$ 0.5) for rent. Everyone who is interested in porn movies can get them from VCD/DVD shops. Now, he does not often watch the porn movies unless the new and popular ones come into the market. For example, last year, there were a series of porn movies of *nong nat* (acting by Thai female super model); he got 3 versions to watch.

In the end, Kop claimed that not only do boys watch porn movies, but also girls. Both learn and experiment with sex like in the porn movies. In this way, young people initiate sexual activities at an early age. Sometimes, boys share with girls porn movies with the purpose of stimulating girls’ sexual desire. Boys expect to have sex with girls afterward. However, he did not have experience in sharing porn movies in order to cheat girls to have sex with him. Nor does he have friends who trick girls to have sex with in this way.

### 1.3.3 Porn Movies Reproduced by Young People

Kop told that nowadays there is a new practice in terms of sex among young people since mobile phones have more functions, such as taking photos and shooting video. Young males use these functions when they have sexual activities. Afterward, they share those porn video clips among close friends. But, often those video clips are gone far across one peer network to another. This sexual practice reflects the strong influence of mass media in the form of porn movie that young people imitate and reproduce through technology (mobile phone camera).

Porn video clips are made in the following way: A boy sets up his mobile camera when he has sex with a girl (or girlfriend). The girl may have or may not have consent to the shooting of video. The shooting places are, for example toilets and private rooms. Kop said “I have got some video clips from friends; I know even some girls and boys from the video clips because they are from my school”. Kop shared with me 5 different porn video clips using mobile cameras for shooting.

First video clip lasted 55 seconds. It shows the boy and the girl having sex. Only sexual organs of the boy and the girl are shown. In the end, it shows the very young girl in bed posing on the mobile phone camera. She just put on some clothe covering her upper part of the body. She looked confident smiling and raising her fingers (as symbol of victory). According to Kop, both the boy and girl are at 5<sup>th</sup> year high school.

Second video clip lasted 2.20 minutes. It shows a young couple having sex in the restroom. The boy sits on the toilet and the girl sits over the boy. This clip does not show sexual organs but it is explicit that both were having sex. The girl was topless wearing *sin* (type of Lao skirt) without underwear. The boy took off his underwear and left it at his knees, and his t-shirt was not taken off.



**Figure 5: Porn video clip 2**

Third video clip (see Figure 6) lasted almost 10 minutes. It was very explicit. The boy and the girl [both should no be more than 18 years old] show all their bodies naked. Both are very young. They girl did oral sex for the boy, and the boy stimulated by licking and sucking nipples of the girl. Then, the boy penetrated and changed positions back and forth [the boy set up positions similarly to porn movies]—they started from the position in which the girl laid down. Then they changed to the position in which the girl sat over the boy moving up and



**Figure 6: Porn video clip 3**

down. For a while, the boy inserted his penis into the anus of the girl. No condom was used for this sexual intercourse. Gender power relation in sexual acts, given this couple, was very clear. The boy was the person who controlled and guided the girl to act according to what he wanted.

Fourth video clip lasted 1.20 minutes. It shows that the boy and the girl were having sex in the balcony. It looks like there is third person was shooting video of them. The boy was smiling, but the girl just laid down and let the boy do. The boy seemed to be shy of facing the camera.

Fifth video clip lasted 1 minute. It shows that both the boy and the girl are naked in the restroom. The boy sat on the toilet hugging and kissing the girl, but the girl seemed to resist. In the end, the boy insisted the girl to sit over him. The boy was then trying to stimulate by licking around the tummy of the girl. There was someone was trying to shoot video. The boy and the girl may or may not know that the third person was shooting their private activity.

#### **1.3.4 “Good” and “Bad” Girls by Parents’ Language**

Kop’s parents teach him that he should look at a girl very carefully whether or not the girl is good. The “good” means: the girl should be educated; the girl should not wander around at night, and the girl should respect Lao customs. Then, I asked him about what “bad” girl from his parents’ perspective or your perspective. He defined the bad: The girl hangs out and drink beer in bars and discotheques at night. [It is interesting in this point, in the belief the girls who wander around and drink beer in entertainment venues are considered “bad”. Given that those girls who are hunted, get what they deserve because they are “bad”].

He tries to find an ideal girl following his parents’ teaching. He has found that kind of girl now. He reveals that he is currently falling in love with a girl who is a distinct female student in class. He said “I really like and love her, but my concern is that she may not love me because I am not as a “*nak hian keng*” (distinct student) as her. He said “For one I love, I don’t want to have sex with because I am afraid that when I get her, I will leave her somehow”. [This statement is consistent with that from Seng (case 1)]. He reasoned that he was not ready to take responsibility

for family life. He and the girl do not have a job, and thus his love relationship will not last long in this condition.

#### 1.4 Case 4: Tom (a virgin boy)

Tom is a sixteen-year-old boy. He is in 6<sup>th</sup> year high school. He was born into a middle class family in Vientiane. He is one that belongs to the same group (including Seng, Do, Kop, and him). He has an elder brother and elder sister. He is the youngest child of the family. He said “My mother always teaches me by showing a good example. She wants me to behave well... In the past, I hurt my mother and my sister when I was in 4<sup>th</sup> year high school; I raced motorcycle with friends and caught by the police. Yet my mother came to pay for a fine to get me out of detainment. At the time, my mother cried and I could see that she was very disappointed about what I did. I really felt guilty about what I did that time. Since then, whatever I do, I try not to hurt my mother”.

Tom is closer to his mother than to his father because his mother acts as a person who is responsible for teaching him, his brother, and sister and taking care of the whole family. His father also works hard for one organization in order to support family. According to him, his father behaves well (does not have women outside of marriage); his father is a family man.

Going out with friends, Tom started to drink beer since he was a 3<sup>rd</sup> year high school student, or when he was 13 or 14 years old. His reason for drinking beer is to make friends, to increase courage to talk, and to find release (when brokenhearted). Tom goes out with friends to drink beer in bars and discotheques about 3 – 4 times per week. He thinks that his friends go out more often. He claims that he hangs out drinking beer with friends just for fun, but does not hunt girls as his friends do. He said “My friends always go on and on after drinking beer. I see my friends taking girls to guesthouses when they get the girls from the discotheques”. He admitted that he is not skillful in approaching and cheating girls to have sex as his friends are. He said “I am the person among friends, who has no experience about sex. Sometimes, I also question myself why I am not doing as my friends do [hunt girls]. And sometimes, I

feel jealous of my friends because they are *keng* (super) in approaching girls for sex”. He claimed that he is still virgin. He has never had sex with any girl yet.

Beer becomes very critical to lead young boys and girls to sexual encounter, even one-night stand. Tom remembered that one night he was little drunk and a girl from one high school whom he met in a discotheque asked him to go to a guesthouse [it is an implication of persuading to have sex]. But, he did not dare to try as the girl offered. He suggested that young people nowadays drink a lot of beer. Often young people persuade each other to drink beer. He cited young people persuading each other “Hey, where to go to drink beer?” We sort of ignore about negative impacts of the beer. He added “Even though I know beer is not good for health, I cannot resist friends”.

Among friends, Tom is quite dominated by friends. For example, sometimes he was teased by friends about his elder sister. For example, Do (case 2) said “can I have your sister? I like your sister; she is very pretty”. Later on, I asked Tom privately how he felt about what his friend said about his sister. He breathed in and said “Sometimes, I felt uncomfortable, but I did not say anything because they are my friends. And it is very common for boys saying or expressing this way”.

Tom was involved in all activities with his friends, except for hunting girls. For example, he watched porn movies together with friends. He watches occasionally with friends (Seng and Do). When friends have new porn movies, they will get together and watch in friends’ home. But, he could not watch these kinds of movies in his home because there was no privacy. He could not allow his mother and sister to know or see movies of this kind. However, he said that he was not so interested in these kinds of movies; he watched because he was with friends. In addition, He mentioned that nowadays young boys in his school shared porn video clips of their own or their friends’. This practice becomes popular among young male high school students. Some video and photo clips he got from friends show boys and girls who are naked or having sex. He even knows some of them because they are from the same school as him.

### 1.4.1 Thinking about Hunting When Being Brokenhearted

One night, I met with Tom. I noticed that he had a new haircut, and he called his new haircut a brokenhearted style [that is pretty short]. Tom revealed that he drank a lot of beer because he has just broken up with his girlfriend. His girlfriend is pretty. From what Tom told me, she is one year older than him. She studies at a college. He blamed himself that he was not mature enough. He was too jealous. “So the girl cannot stand him” he repeated again and gain. He blamed himself because he was like a kid. Thus his girlfriend has left him. His relationship with this ex-girlfriend lasted about 3 months only, but did not deepen to the level of having sexual relationship. One day the girl just asked him to be as a friend rather than boyfriend. He said “I also tell friends I am brokenhearted, but they just said that I am stupid because I did not have sex with my girlfriend. That’s why she left me”.

Tom said “Sometimes, I want to do as my friends do [hunt girls]; I ought to behave like my friends do. But, I cannot do as they do because I am not *keng* (super) like them”. [He expressed that he is sometimes jealous of friends (Seng, Do, and Kop in cases 1, 2 & 3) because they are so skillful in cheating girls to have sex with them.]

### 1.4.2 “Friends are very important to me.”

While talking with him, there was a call from a girl. He told that this girl was interested in him. But he does not like this girl because she is quite *hi* (high social status) from her acting—intimidating friends. Friends are very influential to him for selecting girls. For example, if friends do not approve of his choice of a girl. Then, he would just drop her. On the other hand, if his friends are keen, he will put all his efforts in the chase.

If possible, Tom wants to have a girl who is quite white and more importantly can accept his jealous nature. However, if the girl is a virgin, she is perfect. He added “if the girl whom I love is not a virgin, I have to try to accept the reality. However, I am still not 100% sure of it. If I can find another better girl, I will leave her”. He added “Virginity is like a pride to men. Every man expects to have a

girlfriend or wife who has never *phan chai dai ma kon* (had sex with any man before)". However, he thought that it must be difficult to get a virgin to be a wife because nowadays young people started their first sex at an earlier age than before. For example, he referred to his friends (Seng and Do) who began to have sex at an early age. He knows that young people even practice one-night stand. So, it is less possible to have a virgin girlfriend or wife.

Although Tom is not skillful in hunting girls, he wants to have several girls as companions. He said "I want many different girls (*boo sam naa*) to go with me. For him, sex is not the main attempt, but he wants to show friends he has some intimacy with many different girls. So that, his friends would think he was attractive to girls, and they would at least accept him.

## 2. Conclusion of Case Report

The four young male informants are friends from the same group, the same high school, and of the same age. Four of them have experience in nightlife together; often they hang out drinking beer in entertainment venues until very late night. They have a lot of similarities and some differences in terms of sexuality. Three of the four informants practice multiple sexual partnerships. One of them claimed that he remains virgin; however he wants to have multiple girls to accompany him, so his friends would accept him.

Seng, Do, and Kop initiated sexual activities at an early age (when they were 8, 12, and 14 years old). Their early sexual experimentation is because of exposure to porn movies; they learned and started to practice according to "scripts" provided by porn movies. But, the scripts from these materials do not guide them with regard to protected, safe sexual acts, and sexual responsibility. Three of them practice hunting or cheating girls (from entertainment settings) to have sex with them, including one-night stands.

Seng, Do, and Kop have strong belief in and value of virginity. They search for and hunt virginity which is called *peud sod* (open freshness or purity). Virginity ties up with "purity" free from diseases, including HIV, with *keng* (super), and with good luck. They will not use condom if they know or judge girls are virgins. Because of this

belief and value, Seng experienced getting two girls pregnant, and Kop got one girl pregnant. The girls themselves had to find the way out and finally chose induced abortions as solutions. When belief in and value of female virginity are strong and reinforced by a practice (blood ensuing from the loss of virginity photographed and shared among friends), there will be more and more girls to be vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy.

### 3. Social and Cultural Context

During my study, I conducted interviews with several key informants. One doctor who works at Mother and Child Health (MCH) hospital describes the current situation concerning induced and incomplete abortion based on his experience dealing with complications of abortion in females. It is likely that when a young couple faces unwanted pregnancy, the male partner will buy his partners *ya chine* (pharmaceutical abortifacents), literally meant Chinese medicine. When females have hemorrhage due to incomplete abortion, they will come into hospital or private clinic (this doctor also runs his private clinic). Most of the time, he sees the females who have the problem come in with her parents or relatives without their male partners accompanying. Rather, their male partners will come when they recovered and about to go back home. MCH (2006) reported for the first six months of 2006 there was at least one woman every 2 days, on average, that comes into hospital for care due to complications of abortion.

All key informants recognized that unwanted pregnancy is the critical problem that threatens young females' health because often it is followed by unsafe abortion. But, it seems that this issue has not been seriously discussed and tackled. One of the key informants claimed that sex among young people is inevitable when they have sexual intimacy to a certain level. But, the most important thing is how we can enable them to protect themselves from vulnerability to unwanted pregnancy and STIs. However, it is recognized that this issue is very complex beyond contraception use per se.

A female doctor working in the Vientiane Youth Center clinic reported having young female clients (from time to time) coming in because they bled after taking *ya*

*chine* (pharmaceutical abortifacents) or some of which have concern whether or not they are pregnant. If they are pregnant, they want to have an abortion. However, the Vientiane Youth Center clinic does not provide abortion service. In addition, young male clients with symptoms of STIs come in for treatment in the clinic. Given this, it is clear that young people practice unprotected and unsafe sex, even though both NGOs and GOs have been disseminating information on SRH, including STI and AIDS through many different forms of interventions.

One young female, 18, who frequents discotheques revealed that when she was at high school, her friend was pregnant. Afterward, her friend had to drop out for arranged marriage because of pregnancy. Now both just stay with parents in the home because they have no jobs. She said “Pregnancy among [unmarried] young females is heard from time to time. But, this time it happened to my close friend. I was shocked and very sorry about this thing because I was the person who persuaded my friend to go out. Partly it was my fault because I and my friend went out, and we often split. I went with my boyfriend and she went with her boyfriend privately. Yet this thing happened to her”. However, unwanted pregnancy among young females cannot happen per se without supporting or contributing factors like night entertainment venues that facilitate sexual intimacy.

### **3.1 Contextual Factors**

Following, I will present my research findings on contextual factors that contribute to and/or shape young male sexuality in relation to unwanted pregnancy. I will divide my explanation into two major parts: 1) *Contributing factors* and 2) *Socio-cultural construction* that shape and govern the young male informants to practice hunting girls without notion of responsibility for their action.

#### **3.1.1 Entertainment Venues**

The number of entertainment establishments for young people is increasing, compared to that of the last 10 years. Young people seem to have more freedom to hang out and enjoy their nightlife. The entertainment venues play a very

important role in supporting young males’ hunting of girls. For example, young males begin by drinking beer in beer bars and move on to the discotheques that are very crowded with young people. In these places, young males try to find and approach girls. First, they approach the girls to drink beer together. If the girls do not refuse, they will enjoy drinking and dancing together along with rhythm of Thai pop music. Sexual intimacy between the boys and the girls is developed in such a short period of time in this venue. For example, from approaching the girls to drink beer to touching the girls’ bodies, it takes only one or two hours. Such an environment setting really supports young people to express their sexual intimacy. Hugging and kissing between young people in the discotheques can be observed.

*Beer bars for young people:* Popular beer bars in Vientiane draw numerous young people to hang out drinking beer. These venues are the “starting point” of the young males for hunting the girls. Beer in these places is cheaper than that in the discotheques. So, the young males prefer to start off their nightlife in these places. Despite



**Figure 7: Beer bar**

regulations for entertainment venues, owners not to allow children under 18 to enter, all the customers are younger than 18 because they are high school students, aged 13 – 17. Some bars are open even in the daytime for students who escape from schools to drink beer. I noticed a number of uniform young students escape from schools to drink beer in one bar. This kind of bar accommodates 200 - 300 people. This bar is full of high school students on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. It seems that regulations by the state cannot accelerate to be enforced effectively in the growth of entertainment industry at present.



**Figure 8: Advertisement by discotheque**

One night, I went with

young male informants, while talking with them a boy was distributing slips (20 x 10 cm) advertising a discotheque & karaoke. I found this advertising very interesting. The program in the advertising paper shows activities from Monday to Sunday to be offered to young customers: “Buy one bottle of beer get one free, hot girl in the table, drink beer competition to get prize, lady night, team dance competition, sexy dance competition” are set out in the schedule table (see Figure 8 in the preceding page). Winners of the competitions will be given prizes like two bottles of beer, three bottles of beer, and one carton of beer (for dance team winner). The first 20 people coming will get 1 bottle of Spy of 4% or 5% of alcohol (for lady night). This promotion is very encouraging to young people. The following day, I went to the discotheque and I saw it was full of boys and girls.

A 16-year-old girl told me “My mother took me away from the previous high school because I had “*ke lay*” (bad) friends”. That is, she and her friends always tried to escape from school. She also mentioned one of the beer bars (which is very popular) she and her friends went to drink beer there. However, she admitted that she has “*ke lay*” friends again in her new high school. She still escapes from the school sometimes because school is kind of boring. She named one beer bar that offers a good deal (buy one bottle of beer, get one free) to young people.

*Discotheque*: The young male informants cited the discotheques as the places for hunting girls. Let me describe about this setting. The discotheques are equipped with dance floors, music counters, and round metal tables and chairs. There are many places of this kind in Vientiane. But, the young male informants like two places most. These two places are packed with several hundreds (300 – 500) of young people on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday nights because these days girls may enter the venues free of charge as a promotion. As a result of this, many young people prefer to go out on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights. For the four other days, there are less young people in these venues. Inside these venues, it is very



**Figure 9: Discotheque in Vientiane**

loud with Thai pop music, crowded, and smoky. The young male informants normally approached girls from these places. If they get the girls, they will continue by asking to drink more beer to the other places. They persuade the girls by saying “*pai pai kin beer to*” (let’s go to drink more beer). The extending places for drinking beer are normally the guesthouses.

*Guesthouse:* Three of out the four young male informants have experience in bringing girls for sex in guesthouses after discotheque closure. There are numerous guesthouses in Vientiane. Many of guesthouses are located near to entertainment venues. But, some are located on small roads. However, those places will not be difficult to find because their signs offered by Beer Lao are very visible. The young male informants prefer to use ones that are located on the small roads, which are not easily to be observed by others. Rooms in the guesthouses will cost around 40,000 Kip to 100,000 Kip (US\$ 4 – 10). For the young male informants, they choose the cheapest ones.

Some nights after entertainment closure (23.30 pm), I stopped by guesthouses (for observation). I saw many young couples riding their motorcycles into the guesthouses. In addition, many couples of adults also rode their motorcycles and drove their cars with girls into the guesthouses as well.

All the venues, beer bars, discotheques, and guesthouses seem to set up to mediate the hunting to happen. Without these venues, young male hunting may be not possible.

### 3.1.2 “Hunting and Being Hunted”

One girl who frequents discotheques in Vientiane claimed that “Hunting and being hunted” is not strange to her at all. The practice is quite common among young people. Her male friends also said to her “I wait to see who will hunt you, or who will eat you”, or they said “Today I will hunt this girl; I have to get her”. I noticed that she did not look upset with being talked about in this way. She said “For me, I know every game that boys play, yet I will not be a victim. I simply refuse to play with their game, and that’s it...I started going out at night since I was 14 and now I am 18. Four year experience teaches me a lot about boys”. Before having had

nightlife experience, she was also cheated by boys... However, girls who have ever been hunted will hunt good-looking and/or rich boys. In fact, the girls will signal by blinking or winking somehow and if a boy feels, he will come to approach [Even though girls hunt, they still play a passive role because they wait for boys to approach].

With regard to hunting girls, an older man is also involved in hunting girls. One 38-year-old man revealed that he has his objective of playing with the young male informants. His objective is to have young girls. He said “I want to stimulate my sexual desire; when I go out with those boys, a lot of young girls come to surround, and sometimes I get one for sex. However, I do not force; I do thing with consent from the girl. However, very rarely I forced because I was drunk”. [Beer is used as an excuse for violence]. If he takes the girl to a guesthouse, and the girl does not jump off his motorcycle, meaning everything is Ok [for sex]. Having the boys as friends, he feels fresh, taken care of and respected. In addition, a 20 year-old man in the bar said “many older men like accompanying young boys because the older men want to have young girls. Older men have more money to pay for beer, while young boys have more attraction to girls”. Yet, girls are at risk of being hunted or victimized.

### 3.1.3 Beer (Lubricant for Hunting)

In Lao society, Beer Lao is very popular and very much socialized in all levels and social events. Beer is widely promoted through a variety of channels with non-restriction for advertising. Beer is a very important factor or mediator that contributes to the process of “hunting” and “being hunted”. In other words, beer plays a role in creating a *space* of hunting girls. According to the young male informants, it is clear that beer is involved in the whole process of the young males’ hunting from the beginning to the end. That is, the young males gather together to drink beer in order to find the girls. To initiate chatting with the girls, they ask the girls to drink beer together in discotheques. After discotheque closure, they ask the girls to have more beer in the guesthouses. When the young male informants and girls continue drinking beer together, they will of course get drunk. Likely, they will end up having sex because girls have less resistance at this stage. Condom use is conditional; if the girls

are virgin, the young male informants will not use it because condom is thought to be for disease prevention.

Young people (both boys and girls) nowadays drink a lot of beer. A girl said “If I drink soft drink, friends will look at me and think that I am a high class person, and I will not get on with them well”. She described that the reason for drinking beer among young people is to have fun, socialize, and increase courage. For example, boys will dare to approach and say to girls after drinking beer. She recognized that young people drink more beer now. Young people started drinking at a very early age since junior high school (11 – 13 years) because of peer pressure. She explained that at school there is not much to do, yet once students have free time, they will talk each other into drinking beer. She said “I also experienced this kind of thing; school is kind of boring because there are no creational activities”. She referred to one of the beer bars that is always full of young uniform students, and she asked me to go and see if I want to know more [I had already observed this place several times. I saw this place as exactly the same as she told me].

All key informants recognized that beer is a very important factor that leads young people to be at risk of sexual and reproductive health issues, such as STIs and unwanted pregnancy. A female doctor from Vientiane Youth Center clinic who experienced in giving counseling to girls with unwanted pregnancies said that the girls’ partners accompanying always said that they forgot to use condom because they were drunk. Beer is always used as an excuse in this matter.

During my fieldwork, I went and hung out with the young male informants. I observed that young people drinking a lot of beer. From this point, I also looked at the society in which young people live. According to the young male informants, beer plays a very important role in supporting the informants’ hunting; for example the informants started from persuading each other to drink beer in the beer bars, proceed to discotheques, and guesthouses afterward. Beer is involved in the whole process of hunting. That is, the young male informants ask the girls where to drink more beer; of course guesthouses are the places they actually plan to bring girls to drink more beer and end up having sex. When they take the girls to the guesthouses, often the process ends up with sex.

One key informant expressed her concern “I am very worried about the future of the nation when I see young people who will be leaders and human resources of the nation drink too much beer”. She claims that adults, especially parents, have to take responsibility for this misbehavior because adults are role models drink beer at almost every social event, such as meeting with friends in the home, *baci*, birthday, etc. Children begin seeing this kind of practice since they were born. Children will, more or less, absorb and act on accordingly. For example, some parents even ask their little children to go and buy beer for them (especially when their friends come to visit) and sometimes even ask children to pour beer for parents and their friends. Language of *laow ya pa ping* (alcohol, cigarettes, and fish), as a social norm, remains valid until now. *Laow ya pa ping* have to be provided when friends come to visit. If one does not do so, he is thought to be mean. (See appendix A for more discourse analysis about Beer Lao).

### **3.2 Socio-cultural Construction of Sexuality**

#### **3.2.1 Acting on and Reproducing Porn Movies**

R-rated and X-rated movies are cited by all the young male informants and key informants as the critical sources for young people. Three of the four young male informants started to watch movies of this kind at an early age, yet experiment with sex at an early age. They acknowledge that they have learned about sexual acts like positions and foreplays from these kinds of movies. Learning from the porn movies is an on-going process through the peer network, not only watching but sharing, and challenging to do like what they have seen from the porn movies. Then they tried to practice following sexual acts provided by the porn movies. For example, Do tried experiment with sex with his aunt’s adopted daughter since he was 8 after he watched a love scene from an R-rated movie.

However, porn movies very rarely show sexual acts with condom use. For example, one video clip of young people showed that the boy and the girl have sexual acts similar to porn movies, such as setting up camera, performing oral sex, and changing sexual positions back and forth. But, the boy and the girl from this clip video

acts sexually with no condom use. All key informants claimed that mass media, including porn movies and magazines, are not appropriate sources for young people to learn about sexuality. But, nowadays all materials of this kind become very influential on young people, and they tend to imitate acts from these materials, especially from porn movies. One of the key informant said “porn movies are influential sources for young males to initiate and engage in sex, but these materials do not tell how to practice safe sex at all”. On the other hand “information on SRH” materials that are available provide very basic information that cannot meet the needs of young people.

Porn materials provide young people with sexual fantasy and stimulated sexual desire. Yet, young people try to create conditions similar to those movies. For example, one of the key informants referred to his own experience “I read an erotic book that describes about a male student comes to visit home. He goes out with a girl to the river bank sitting and chatting with each other in a romantic manner. Afterward, they ended up having sex”. He said that he always thought about the scene from the erotic book and wanted to do the same when he went back to visit home (outside Vientiane).

The key informants also claimed that other potential printed materials, such as *Spicy*, *Gossip*, *VT Pool* magazines, and “love story” books (Lao people can read and understand Thai) are also sources for young people to learn about style of dressing, sexual intimacy, and eroticism following Thai stars as role model. Following this, I went to visit the markets; I saw a lot of these types of magazines in the general book shops. These magazines are also available for rent in some VCD/DVD shops in Vientiane. I visited VCD/DVD shops and noticed that covers of these magazines are put a lot of “renting stickers” marked as codes of customers. I asked the owner of the VCD/DVD shop; she said “these magazines are as popular as VCDs/DVDs.”

A man who is involved in hunting with the young male informants also suggested that the important sources of learning about sex among young people are porn materials. He said “Nowadays young people know about sex a lot because they learn from multi-media, such as TV and VCDs that show sexual acts both directly and indirectly. He spoke generally, but could not pinpoint ones that he thought are really influence young people. According to him, 90% of young students from high school already initiated sexual intimacy or intercourse. One study conducted in Vientiane also

shows a high percentage of about 82% of unmarried males (median age of 18 years) having had “sexual experience with person leading to orgasm” (Toole, Coghlan, Holmes, & Xeutvongsa, 2005, p. 7). Finally, he claimed “Sex education should be available for young people once they enter high school, so that they will be able to protect themselves”.

Moreover, the other form of mass media from Thai TV programs (In Vientiane, people can have access all Thai TV channels, such as 3, 5, 7, 9, TTV, etc). Soap operas are very popular among people. It seems that Lao society has really been bombarded by all mass media of this kind are produced from outside the country. All these channels also show some love scenes and other implications about sex.

### 3.2.2 Language Use

A set of language recalled by both the young male informants and key informants is very supportive of young male hunting and encouraging young males to experiment with sex without responsibilities. In other words, the set of language tend to encourage male domination and female subordination in heterosexuality. However, I do not mean male dominance over females in every sexual encounter.

One may argue that there are many discourses of language use that teach (young) males not to experiment with sex before reaching an appropriate age and not suppress females in sexual relations. For example, a discourse from Buddhist religion teaches both males and females to practice monogamy; however, some may adopt it, but many do not. I am sympathetic about this “argument” and realize that a lot of discourses existing in society are contradictory.

However, my research found that discourses of language use by peers and parents/adults to encourage young males to practice irresponsible sex remain very strong. For example, *Peud sod* (sex with a virgin) means “open freshness/purity” and *keng* (super), and a pride of men. Condom will not be used with a virgin because virginity is thought to be free from diseases, such as HIV. Purity meaning of virginity is embedded in society. Over time, belief in and value of virginity remain very strong and are inherited up to the current generation. One of the four informants was very proud of himself because he had sex with virgins.

He took photos of the blood on bed sheet ensuing from virginity. He shared with friends these photos like he showed his *khuam keng* (super) and ability. This kind of practice also encourages friends to do so, thus producing, reproducing, and sustaining the embedded belief and value of female virginity.

For example, one of the young male informants had four porn VCDs, and I asked him which VCD he wanted to view first. He chose the one that shows a bleeding vagina on the VCD cover because he understood that this porn movie would show about *peud sod* (break hymen). This reflects value of and belief in virginity shaped by a “discourse of purity or freshness of female virginity”.

Meaning of “losing and gaining virginity” between women and men encourages young males to use sex as a tool in order to control their girlfriends. Seng said “If we get virginity of girls, the girls will never leave us”. Tom was said by friends (when he was brokenhearted) he was stupid because he did not have sex his girlfriend, so his girlfriend left him. This language really encourages young males to get “virginity” of the girls. However, two of the young male informants, despite being hunters of girls, resisted that they did not want to have sex with girls whom they really love, although they are the hunters of girls. In this sense, *hak thae bo tham lay* (“true” love does not destroy) remains valid in “true” love relation<sup>2</sup>.

Following is a set of language use that supports male dominance, sexual experimentation and sexual irresponsibility that potentially contribute to their partners’ unwanted pregnancies:

**Language use by peers:**

- *Peud sod* (open freshness/purity) means *keng* (super), good luck, and long life.
- *Meung dai hed faen mueng laa vaa?* (Have you had sex with your girlfriend yet?)
- *Kou dai fun man lae ee nan* (I have already had sex with that girl)

---

<sup>2</sup> “True” love relation: Young male informants mean love that they care about and expect marriage in the end.

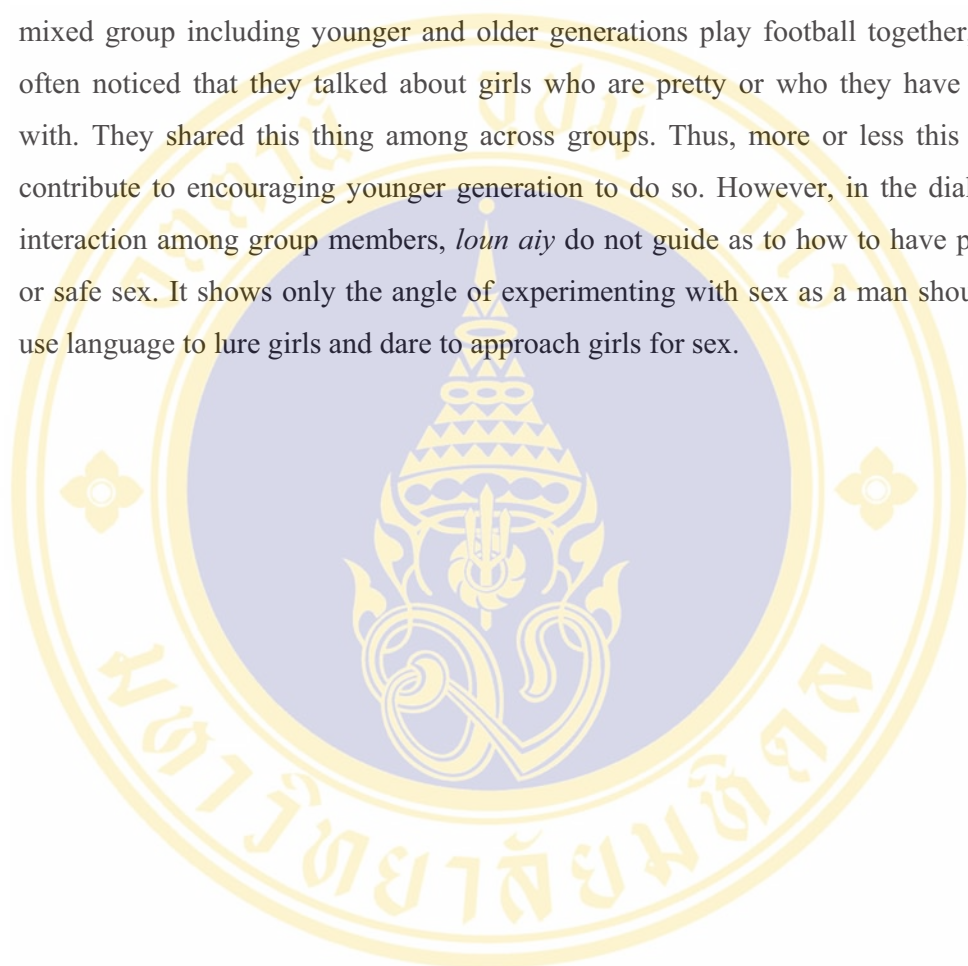
- *Meung kheu ngo thae phou ying hai thaa meung paan naan yang bo dai fun* (How stupid you are, the girl wants you, but you have not had sex with her yet.)
- *Ee Naow* (Rotten woman) is used to name a girl/woman who has multiple sexual partners.
- “If we get virginity of girls, the girls will never leave us.”
- “*You did not have sex with your girlfriend, so she left you.*”

#### **Language use by parents and the elderly men:**

- *Pai lin saw ya siay huaw mou hai khaow dai!* (When you go and have sex with a girl, don't let her catch or fine you).
- “If you sleep (have sex) with a girl, be careful she will catch you for marriage (*la vang khaw khum*). You can do, but don't have commitment”.
- “Don't take a girl to the bush, but a guesthouse (acceptable)”.
- “Good” girl and “bad” girl:
  - Good girl is educated, does not wander around at night, and respect Lao customs.
  - Bad girl is a person who hangs out to drink beer in bars and discotheques at night. [Given this definition, girls who stay up late in the entertainment venues are considered as bad, so they deserve to be hunted]
- “For men, just let them go, as they have nothing to lose”.
- *Hed lod ku si siey ngeun hai* (do it [have sex with her] I will pay a fine for you)
- *Meung kheu ngo thae phou ying hai thaa meung paan naan yang bo dai fun* (How stupid you are, the girl is already on side, but you have not had her yet.)
- *Ying mak dai chai mak dai* (A female likes a male, but cannot get him unless the male initiates, whereas a male likes a female, can get her.)

- *Ai khou bo mee khuam ai sou bo sai non nam* (If you are shy of asking your teacher, you will not have knowledge, and if you are shy of approaching your lover, you cannot sleep with her/him).

In addition, one key informant (male) referred to his experience that young males follow what *loun aiy* (brother generation) say and do. For example, mixed group including younger and older generations play football together, and he often noticed that they talked about girls who are pretty or who they have had sex with. They shared this thing among across groups. Thus, more or less this tale can contribute to encouraging younger generation to do so. However, in the dialogue or interaction among group members, *loun aiy* do not guide as to how to have protected or safe sex. It shows only the angle of experimenting with sex as a man should do—use language to lure girls and dare to approach girls for sex.



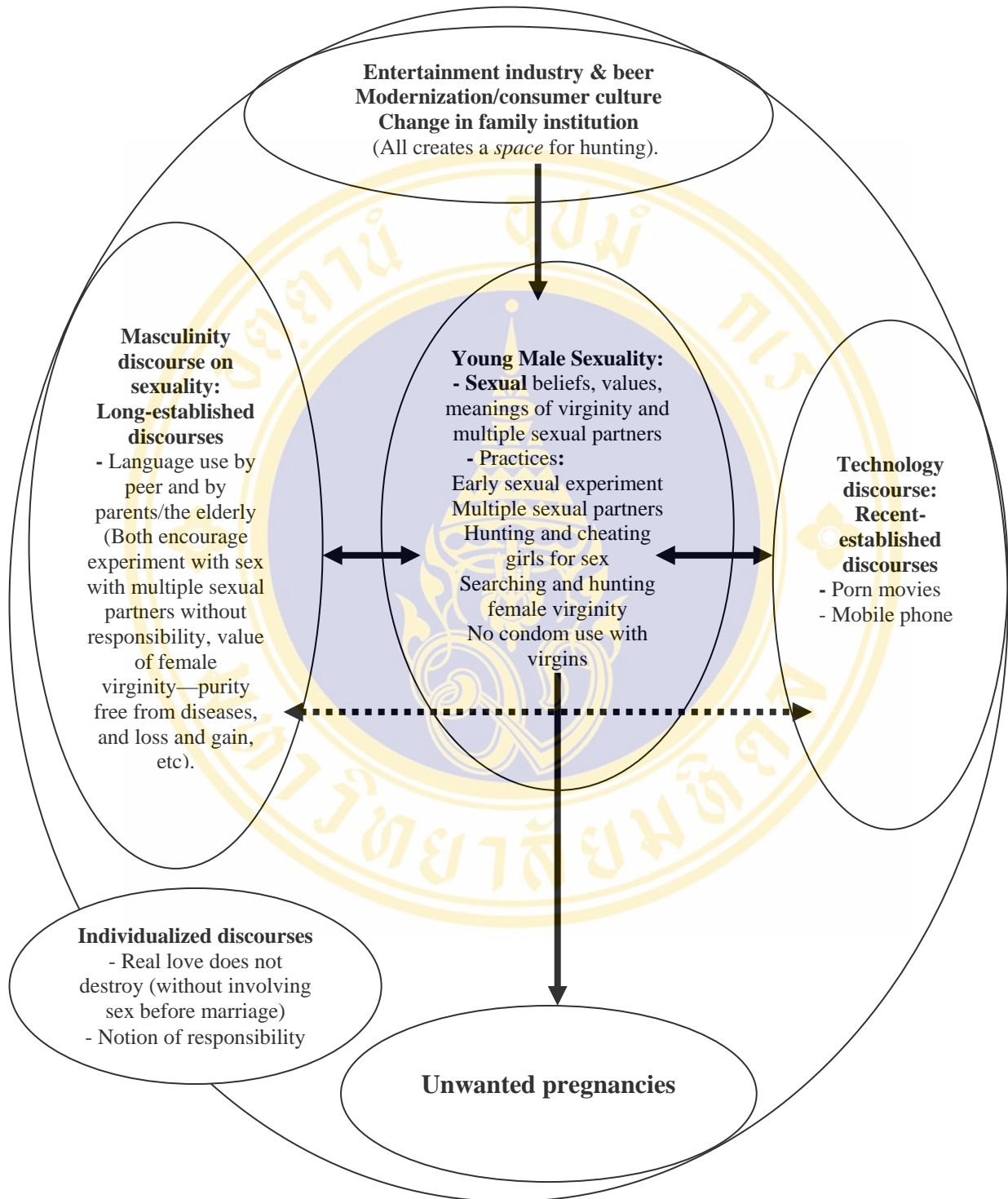
## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss young male sexuality and the socio-cultural construction that contribute to unwanted pregnancy. Sexuality issues to be discussed in this chapter are not necessarily from all the young male informants (as a commonality) in terms of beliefs, values, and practices, but if it reflects to greatly contribute to female partners' vulnerability to unwanted pregnancy, it will be taken into consideration.

My discussion will be in line with “discourse analysis”. Therefore, I would like to define the term discourse in my analysis. Discourses include two types: 1) *Institutionalized/authoritative* discourses (both long-established and recently-established) are in the form of textual and verbal communications that construct the way people think, belief, mean, and understand the world according to knowledge given by their discourses. We know the world within knowledge provided by our discourses, so if we want to understand people's practice in a particular time and place, we have to understand dominant discourses in that setting (Jones, 2003, pp. 125 - 126). And 2) *Individualized/personalized* discourses are rooted from personal judgment and critical thinking, in a particular context, to be “self”; often there are in conflict or negotiation with dominant discourses. In addition, the term “*discursive practice*” is also used to refer to a practice that produces, reproduces, reinforces, and sustains power of dominant discourse.

My discussion chapter will be based on the following diagram:



**Figure 10: Analytical Framework**

## 1. Entertainment Industry & Beer and Change in Family Institution

The contemporary society is saturated and dominated by a variety of messages and “ideological discourses” that are produced and reproduced through mass media and information technologies to shape and create “not real” or “more than real” reality (Baudrillard, 1983b & Kivisto, 1998: 142, cited by Delaney, 2005, p. 278). Entertainment industry is now growing very fast in Vientiane, compared to that in the past decade. It seems that state regulations to control entertainment establishments are not properly implemented by the entertainment venue owners. For example, there are regulations in place to ban children under 18 to enter entertainment venues. But, in reality there are a number of bars and discotheques springing up to accommodate boys and girls under 18 years. A discourse of “national poverty eradication” through socio-economic development is accelerating urbanization and modernization that produce new materials and styles for young people. For example, bars and discotheques are equipped with similar styles to that in Thailand. These entertainment venues play Thai pop music to entertain young students from high schools. Listening to Thai pop music and DJs speaking in Thai is considered modern.

According to empirical data, it is obvious that entertainment industry plays a very important role in supporting all the way of young male informants’ hunting of girls. The process of hunting is that the young informants begin their hunting by drinking beer in the beer bars and move on the discotheques in which they try to find and approach the girls. When girls do not refuse, they will enjoy drinking and dancing together along to rhythm of Thai pop music that are played very loudly. It is very crowded and dark in the discotheque venues. Sexual intimacy between the young male informants and the girls is developed in such a short period of time in this venue. For example, from approaching the girls to drink beer to touching bodies of girls, it takes only between one and two hours. Hugging and kissing between boys and girls in the discotheques can be observed. Environment of the venues serving young people is very supportive of sexual intimacy as well as of the process of hunting that the young male informants practice. After discotheques, there are the other places like guesthouses, to accommodate or allow young male informants to complete their hunting of girls to have sex with them. The entertainment venues and the beer together

make young male informants' hunting possible. Both create a *space* of hunting for the young male informants.

Beer is involved in the whole process of the hunting for the young male informants. Beer Lao is very socialized and normalized in Lao society. Beer Lao produced and reproduced a lot of discourses, such as: *Beer Lao* (with 5% of alcohol) is a good choice for serving the society, does not affect health...*Drinking Beer Lao also promotes the Lao economy indirectly because over 40% of Beer Lao price is tax...Muang Lao Beer Lao. Beer Lao along with Lao society; Beer Lao is the international gold medal beer, etc.* With these dominant discourses, Lao people feel ownership of the product of Beer Lao and consume it without questioning about negative consequences. Everyone with no age restriction can buy and drink beer. One key informant strongly expresses her concern when she sees young people who will be human resources and labor forces of the nation are drinking too much beer everywhere.

Last but not least, family institutions have less power to control their children nowadays. Parents tend to raise their children in the material-oriented way. For example, they use mobile phones and motorcycle as incentives for their children to study. But, they have lack of notion about danger that their children face. For example, how are young people, 13 – 17, allowed to stay up till late night in entertainment venues? This is an indication that reflects an important change in Lao society in the era in which Laos is developing itself through market economy and turning its direction to modernization.

My claim is that the context that facilitates the young male informants' hunting is a very complete mechanism. It moves the process of male hunting from one stage to another very effectively. Missing any contributing social factor in the mechanism, the hunting might not be possible. In one sense, it is very common to say when a country opens its door to the market economy, this opening will bring about changes. These changes will be both positive and negative. In another sense, when we do not have clear measure to prevent and deal with the problems as a result of economic development consequences, we seem to let young people fall in the trap set up by the social structure for modernization. In other words, young people seem to be exploited or victimized utterly due to modernization and materialism.

## 2. Technology Discourses: Porn Movies and Other Mass Media

R-rated and X-rated movies are commonly cited by the young male informants as critical sources for learning about sexuality among young males. They acknowledged that they have learned a lot from all movies of this kind. Porn movies produce discourses that govern the young male informants' sexuality, such as hunting, fantasy, and experiment with sex without notion of responsibility. For example, they cited that they have learned sexual position and all kinds of foreplays. Yet, they try to find a space to practice after watching it. The way they can do to fulfill their desire framed and stimulated by the porn movies, is to go hunting and cheating girls to have sex.

The young male informants acknowledged that they started to watch the porn movies at an early age. For example, Do initiated with sex with his aunt's adopted daughter when he was only 8 years. It reflects that the technology of porn movie is very dominant; it advances young male sexuality to express in the form of hunting girls. At the same time, family and society allow boys to experiment with sex by themselves with lack of restriction.

Dominant discourses from porn movies shape and govern young males in the way in which sex just responds to momentary desire without love and responsibility. When they want, they just go out and cheat girls to have sex for outlet without notion of responsibility for their action that may harm their partners' health when pregnancy occurs. They just have no notion about burden their partners will have in case of pregnancy because all media of this kind do not show in terms of sexual responsibilities and acts.

Discourses from the porn movies, in a sense, also support masculine sexuality discourses (men have to have sexual experiment with multiple partners and sexual skills). To gain sexual skills and do as men do, the young male informants have to equip themselves with knowledge about sex through porn movies. In the IT era, mass media technology is powerful to shape notions and practices among young people. Powerful discourses from media, including porn movies and from "traditional" masculinity in the form of language together shape the young male informants to be the hunters of girls.

Gender sexuality provides more space to males, so that they can have more access to porn movies and act on what they have learned from these kinds of materials. As seen, porn movies also treats women as sexual objects not as persons. Men lead and control all sexual acts, while women do according to what men want. But, the problem is that discourses from all these movies do not guide the young male informants to practice protected or safe sex, such as condom use apart from showing sexual arousal, acts, and fantasy.

Since mobile phone has more functions, including camera, young males use it to take photos and to shoot videos when they have sex with girls or girlfriends. Afterward, they share these video clips among friends. These are evident that porn movies directly contribute to the construction of young male sexuality. Five porn video clips I have got from Kop show sexual activities of young students, some couple from high schools. The boys from the video clips set up mobile phone cameras to shoot videos and share them among friends. One of the 5 video clips shows several sexual positions like ones in porn movies; the boy led all sexual acts, while the girl just followed. Gender power in heterosexuality reflected very clearly from the video clips of the young people. All porn video clips of young people show unprotected and unsafe sex practices; no condom use is shown. One study, conducted in Northeastern Thailand, Ubonratchathani Province, also suggests that media is the important source for adolescents to learn about sex because “they could not learn from school”, and “scripts” from media technology could guide them to practice in the way that harm their health (Tongrong & Muttiko, 2004). *Khaw Wan Mai* (new day news) on (Thai) TV Channel 3, on March 31, 2007, reported that sharing porn video clips through websites nowadays is widespread, before people sought porn movies to watch, but now they shoot their own sexual activities and share among friends. All these are the discursive practices that reproduce and sustain power of discourses from mass media and masculinity.

### 3. Masculinity Discourse on Sexuality through Language Use

There is a set of language used and reproduced in everyday life through the social structure—peers, parents, and the elderly. The language reflects and/or constructs social values, norms, expectation or vice versa. This socio-cultural construction produces a variety of social rules (different in time and space), including double standard in sexuality. Following, I will discuss the set of language that is derived from double standard in the form of discourse that encourages male dominance in sexuality. A study of young men’s sexual behavior in Vientiane also reflects that males have value of multiple sexual partners because of male impulse: “*A fortunate man can have sex with a new woman until old, while an unfortunate man will have sex with the same woman until his death*” (Toole, Coghlan, Holmes, & Xeutvongsa, 2005, p. 8). This language sustains its primacy by encouraging males to practice sexual partnerships following “masculinity” standard.

#### 3.1 Language use by peers

- *Peud sod* literally means “open freshness or purity”. This term is very powerful to encourage young males to search for and hunt virginity. Female virginity ties up with purity, good luck, ability of a person who can “open freshness” or break hymen. In this belief and value, girls become more at risk of SRH problems, such as unwanted and STIs. For example, two of the four informants will not use condom if girls are virgins. However, male virginity is not attached to this kind of value. One of the informants took photos of blood ensuing from the loss of virginity and shared with friends these photos. This practice is “powerful” to sustain values of, beliefs in female virginity, and practices (of hunting female virginity) among the group of informants as well as other groups of men.
- *Meung dai hed faen mueng laa vaa?* (Have you had sex with your girlfriend yet?). If you do not have sex with your girlfriend, she will leave you. This language is encouraging for males to approach their girlfriends to have sex with them.

- *Kou dai fun man lae ee nan* (I have already had sex with that girl). This language is powerful to encourage boys to experiment with sex, as friends do. Sex is about power and power is about acceptance and praise by friends. Sex is a dare for boys whether they belong to the male group that is dominated by “masculinity” discourse through this language.
- *Meung kheu ngo thae phou ying hai thaa meung paan naan yang bo dai fun* (How stupid you are, the girl wants, but you have not had sex with her yet.). If you do not approach girls to have sex, you are looked down on. You may be thought to be homosexual, or you are not real men because you cannot do “as men do”.
- “If we get virginity of girls, the girls will never leave us”. It is very clear that virginity means power. So, males gain power, while females lose power in the context of breaking hymen. However, Seng and Kop have their own “personalized discourse” of *hak thae bo tham lay* (“true” love does not destroy until after marriage) that competes with “authoritative discourse” in case of “true” love.
- *Ee naow* (Rotten woman) is used to name a girl/woman who has multiple sexual partners. It is a very clear difference in gender sexuality. Male having multiple sexual partners get praised “*keng*” (super), whereas females having multiple sexual partners have no values in the eyes of society.

A set of language discussed above puts a lot of pressure on young males to do following a “do as men do” discourse. If they do not follow, they betray “masculinity”. They will be teased and looked down on; they will be considered different from the group. But, consequences of action of “do as men do” often endanger the health of girls and women in case of sexual violence and unprotected or unsafe sex.

### 3.2 Language Use by Parents and the Elderly Men

In terms of parents’ language use to teach their children, I do not mean every parent uses the following phrases for teaching their children. There are a set of language use teaching children to be “good” or “responsible”. But, what I wish to

discuss in terms of language is about discourses that encourage males to practice unprotected and unsafe sex which put their partners at risk of unwanted pregnancies.

Seng's mother also teaches him "If you sleep (have sex) with a girl, be careful she will catch you for marriage (*la vang khaw khum*). You can do, but don't have commitment". Do' stepmother also teaches him *Pai lin saw ya siay huaw mou hai khaow dai!* (When you go and have sex with a girl, don't let her catch or fine you). This language teaches boys not to take any responsibilities for their sexual practices, but encourage them to escape from responsibility for their action. In this sense, male power dominance in sexuality is reinforced and sustained not only by men but also by women. Women are dominated by this kind of this course when they have sons.

Kop's parents reminded him of choosing girls using a standard of "good" girl and "bad" girl: Good girl is educated, does not wander around at night, and respect Lao customs. Bad girl is a person who hangs out drinking beer in bars and discotheques at night. Given this definition, girls who stay up late in the entertainment venues are considered bad, so they deserve to be hunted.

"For men, just let them go, as they have nothing to lose" in terms of sexual experimentation. For example, a grandfather encourages a boy "*Hed lod ku si siey ngeun hai* (do it [have sex with her] I will pay a fine for you)". With this language, the boy is very encouraged to experiment with sex without any responsibility for his action. In this sense, young males are pressured not only by friends, but also by the elderly men. In short, all "patriarchal" social systems maintain "masculinity" ideologies through male sexuality power over the body of females—males have to be aggressive, active, and skillful in terms of sex. So, it is clear that young male informants are shaped and governed (or used in a sense) to express their sexuality in the way of hunting of girls in order to sustain "masculinity" discourses produced from "patriarchal" social systems.

A set of language use remains powerful in the Lao context in terms of shaping the ways boys or men think, believe, and practice in their sexualities. Derrida suggests "the deconstructive analysis of language" using the term *discourse*; he believes that language we use has primacy to shape us and create reality (Wallace and Wolf, 1999: 407, cited by Delaney, 2005, p. 263). Language contributes to the construction of social values, norms, and ideologies in respect of gender sexuality

(Thaweessit, 2005, p. 29). Male and female sexualities are socially constructed in a different way.

Double standard is applied to males and females in sexuality in terms of sexual orientation, belief, experiment (more space for males and less space for females), relationship, experience, expression (active and passive) between males and females. Double standard governs male and female sexuality using two different sets of knowledge provided by discourses, and discursive practices that produce, reproduce, and reinforce in the form of language in everyday life. Language use constructs and reinforces social values, norms, and ideologies that encourage males to dominate, but females to subordinate. I have found some examples through my study in regard to double standard in sexuality between young males and females:

**Table 2: Gender Double Standard in Sexuality**

<b>Males (following masculinity)</b>	<b>Females (following femininity)</b>
Hunting by approaching girls to drink beer, followed by sexual intimacy and intercourse	Hunting by winking and waiting for males to approach
Multiple sexual partnerships mean <i>keng</i> or superman.	Multiple sexual partnerships mean <i>ee naow</i> (as rotten women with no value)
Virginity means nothing.	Virginity is very valuable to be preserved.
Encouraged to experiment with sex without responsibility	Restricted to experiment with sex

#### **4. Young Male Sexuality: Beliefs, Values, and Meanings of Virginity**

The young male informants have very strong beliefs and values in regard to virginity. When they *peud sod* (breaking hymen), this action means the pride, *keng* (super), power, ability, gain, and even links with good luck and prolonged life. Virginity is very important to determine use or no use of condom. A “discourse of virginity” is “purity” embedded in Lao society from the old days to these days. The long-established discourse of virginity binding with purity in conjunction with a recently-established discourse of “AIDS prevention” determines the notion of the

virginity free from AIDS. Seng asked “do you think a new thing [girl] has AIDS?” The word “thing” from his question means “girl”. He added “if I use condom with virgins my friends will laugh at me”. Seng really wants to *peud sod*. *Peud sod* does not mean “break hymen”, but literally means “open freshness/purity”. It has meaning beyond physical action. Seng believes that *peud sod* will help him with “good luck” and “long life”. He even took photos (using his mobile phone) of the blood on the bed sheet as a result of the loss of virginity of girls and saved the pictures on his mobile phone. He shares with friends the pictures when he talks hunting girls. He is very proud of showing the pictures. What Seng does is the discursive practice, which reinforces and sustains the sexual belief and value binding with virginity. When condom is not used in case of breaking hymen, young male sexual partners may be at risk of unwanted pregnancies and getting STIs, including HIV.

A discourse of “loss and gain of virginity” between men and women is also very dominant. In this sense, virginity attaches to power. For example when males have *peud sod*, they are very proud of it because it reflects their ability, as Seng said not many men are able to *peud sod*. Linking virginity with power, women who lose their virginity, they lose their power. Their power to negotiate with their male partners becomes less. In this way, males use sex as a tool to control females. One example of double standard in regard to virginity is that females are supposed to preserve their virginity until after marriage, whereas males are encouraged to experiment sex with multiple sexual partners in order to gain experiences and skills.

## 5. Multiple Sexual Partners

Males are taught through a set of language that encourages them to break hymen and to experiment with sex with multiple sexual partners. Language creates meanings of multiple sexual partnerships, such as *real men* and *keng* (super) and sustains its primacy. The young male informants (except Tom) have between 5 and 20 sexual partners. Two of them have experience in getting girls pregnant. The unwanted pregnancies were left to be the girls’ responsibility. The girls sought induced abortion as solutions. Afterward, the two informants tried to avoid meeting with the girls and played a trick by abusing and controlling the girls—whatever the girls do have to be

approved of by them. As a result, the girls were uncomfortable, and broke up with them in the end. One out of the four informants has not experienced sexual intercourse, but his sexuality along with the belief in and value of multiple partnerships; he attempts to have multiple girls going with him *bo sam na* (many different girls). So that he will at least be accepted by his friends, even though he is not able to hunt the girls as his friends do, for example one-night stand. In a nutshell, multiple sexual partnerships are the popular practice in the group of the informants as well as other groups of males because it means *keng* (super) and power, and males get acceptance and praise by friends by practicing multiple partnerships. The society reacts that the more partners males have the more they are *keng*.

## 6. Individualized Discourse

Tom, one of the four informants, does not practice hunting as his friends do. I tried to understand this difference, but it is not so clear that he has his own standpoint of not doing the hunting. He said that he wants to hunt the girls, but he cannot do because he does not have enough skill to approach the girls as his friends do. Sometimes, he feels jealous of his friends when he sees his friends hunting the girls from the entertainment venues. Because of being not able to do hunting as his friends do, he tries to have multiple girls to accompany him without sexual relations instead of hunting, so that his friends will at least think he is capable and attractive to girls. Given that, it is some sort of compromise between personalized discourse (of companionship instead of hunting the girls) and authoritative discourse (of doing as men do—having multiple sexual partnerships by hunting the girls).

However, in another sense, individualized discourse from Tom's personal judgment and notion (of responsibility) seems to be influenced by his family institution. He revealed that he used to hurt his mother, and his mother cried because of what he did (when he was caught by the police because he raced motorcycle with friends). He was detained and his mother came with tears to pay a fine to get him out. Since then, he promised not to hurt his mother again. He becomes conscious of doing things since then. According to him, his mother plays an important role in teaching and taking care of him, his brother and sister. For his family, his father goes out and

works for one private organization. He said that his father behaves well, does not have other women apart from his mother. In case of Tom, family institution still plays an important role in guiding him to be able to judge what he should do and should not do. This reflects that, not every time, institutionalized discourse can dominate people because individuals have their own critical thinking to be “self”, thereby making their own choices. However, “self” is not innate, but acquired through a process of learning and interaction, for example between young males and parents, relatives, friends, etc in particular time and place.



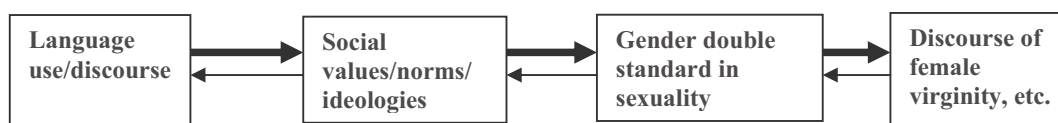
## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Conclusion

Sexuality is very complex and is subject to change through time and space. My ethnographic study with young male high school students, 16 – 17, looks into their sexuality and its socio-cultural construction that contribute to unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion. My attempt is to seek a new explanation of unwanted pregnancy mainly through discourse analysis. There are two domains that my study aims to look into: 1) Young male sexuality including sexual beliefs, values, meanings, and practices, and 2) The socio-cultural construction through discourses and language use that construct and govern young male sexuality in contributing to unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion.

Young males have a strong belief and value of female virginity because virginity means “freshness” and “purity” to them. In this belief, they will not use condom with a virgin because condom ties up with a discourse of AIDS prevention, and thus condom is only for disease prevention. A virgin is pure, and thus she is free from AIDS. However, the power discourse of female virginity goes far beyond the attached meaning of purity. That is, when young males break hymen called *peud sod*. When we translate *peud sod* directly from the local term, it means “open/gain freshness”. *Peud sod* means “good luck” and “long life” to the group of young males. The discourse of virginity governs young males to practice unprotected sex, yet lead to making their partners at risk of unwanted pregnancy. Following, I would like to show a diagram that reflects how the discourse of female virginity is rooted under the umbrella of patriarchy:



**Figure 11: Discourse of Female Virginity Sustained**

The diagram above presents the cycle of institutionalized discourses from patriarchal systems that produce, reproduce, reinforce, and sustain their power. Language use in everyday life is also very powerful that governs young males to do as men do following masculinity. Men are allowed and encouraged to experiment with sex with multiple sexual partners, express and fulfill sexual desire, and have sexual experience and skill. The “masculinity discourse” constitutes and governs the young males to express male sexuality in the active and aggressive way, such as hunting and cheating girls to have sex with them, and condom will not be used if girls are virgins. Yet, this practice can endanger the health of their female partners.

Language use encourages the young males to experiment with sex without responsibility, such as: *Pai lin saw ya siey huaw mou hai khaow dai!* (when you go and have sex with a girl, don’t let her catch or fine you); “If you sleep (have sex) with a girl, be careful she will catch you for marriage (*la vang khaw khum*). You can do, but don’t have commitment”; “For men, just let them go, as they have nothing to lose”; “*hed lod ku si siey ngeun hai*” (do it [have sex with her] I will pay a fine for you), etc.

Long-established discourses from masculinity in the form of language and popular discourses from the porn movies uphold the young male informants to experiment with sex (for example, Do experimented with sex since he was as young as 8 years old because of the porn movie discourse) and practice hunting the girls from the entertainment venues at night. Young males started to hunt the girls because they wanted to experiment with sex as men do following the masculinity of discourse. Meanwhile, they began to watch porn movies at a very early age. Popular discourses from the porn movies encourage them to experiment with sexual activities at a very early age. For example, three of the four young males, initiated sex when they are 8 – 14 years old. According to the porn movies that the young male informants brought and viewed for discussion, only two male actors use condom. It is obvious that almost all porn movies do not illustrate condom use during sexual acts. Following the porn

movies as a role model, condom use young males can be questionable. The porn video clips (performed by young students) I got from Kop are evident that porn movies young people watch are very influential on young people's sexuality. Young males set up mobile camera to shoot their sexual activities. They then share their videos with friends. They act out scenes from porn movies, as can be seen in the video clips. This is a discursive practice that is governed by popular discourses of the porn movies (generally available from VCD/DVD shops) in Vientiane.

All the process of hunting, beer is a vital contextual factor. Without beer, hunting is less likely to happen. Beer is involved in the hunting from the beginning to the end. Beer is used to create a *space* for the hunting of girls to happen. That is, the young males use beer as a tool to get to know the girls; they ask the girls to drink beer together in the discotheques, and develop sexual intimacy in a very fast manner when under influence of alcohol. When the entertainment venues are close, they ask the girls to go out with them and find a place to drink more beer. The place to drink more beer is the guesthouse where sex, including one-night stand, is likely to occur. Often, sex happens without protection and safety in hunting condition because both parties are drunk.

The social structure to facilitate socio-economic development and modernization, including entertainment industry (bars, discotheques, guesthouses) and beer, have become a very important catalyst to fuel the process of hunting girls that the young male informants practice. At the same time the family institution becomes weak in terms of raising and controlling children. It is clear that adolescents, 13 – 17 hang out in entertainment venues until very late night. The adolescents are raised by more materials. For example, many parents use mobile phones and motorcycles as incentives for their children to study. All this changed environment creates a *pace* for the young males to practice hunting.

## 2. Recommendations

Unwanted pregnancy followed by induced abortion is recognized as one of the major causes of maternal mortality and morbidity in Laos. Ministry of Health enforced the National Reproductive Health Policy in 2005. The policy covers nine key elements

of reproductive health, one of which is “Prevention and management of complications of abortion” (MoH, 2005). The objective of this component is to “reduce prevalence of both short term and permanent term complications of unsafe abortion” (MoH, 2005, p. 11). To achieve this objective, the policy guides concerned institutions to make joint efforts on both RH information provision/advocacy and health service delivery to the people. However, Laos has very limited data (both qualitative and quantitative) to explain the picture of unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion.

### **2.1 For Further Research**

Further qualitative and quantitative studies will need to look at: Female sexuality, in terms of sexual experience in relation to unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion.

### **2.2 For Intervention and Policy Development**

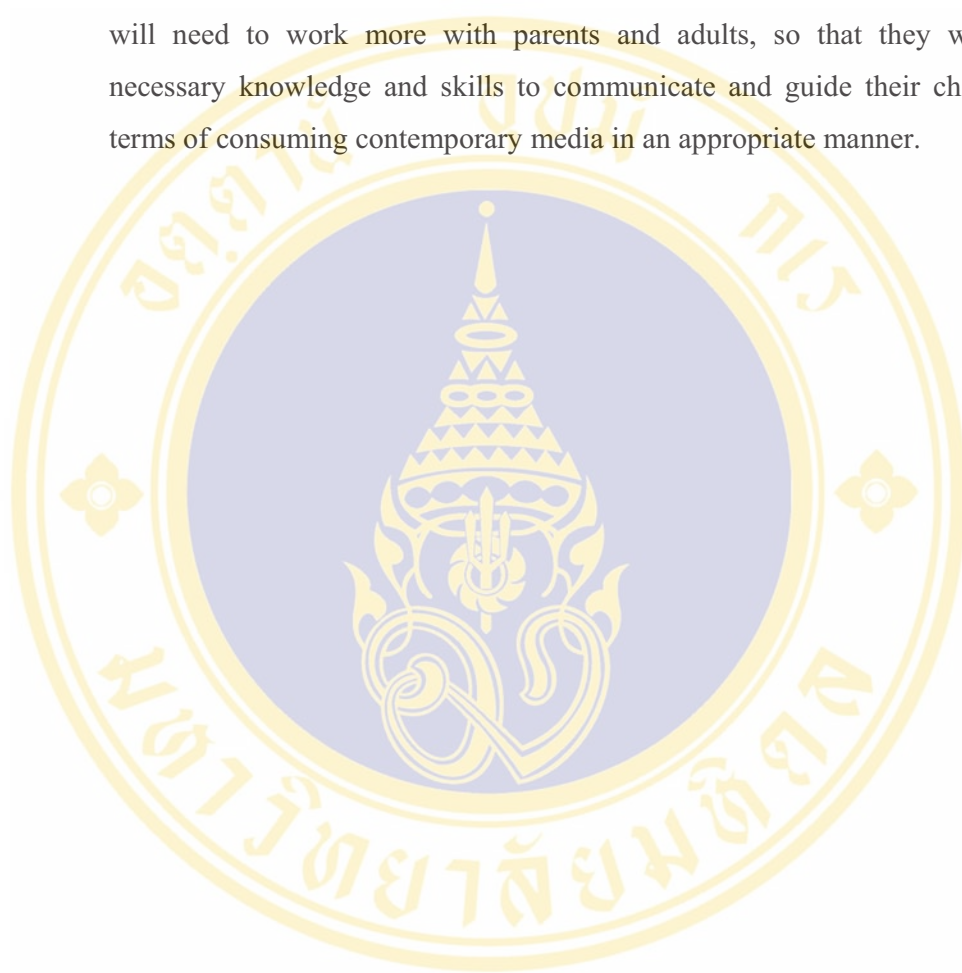
Action to address the problem of unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion should focus on root causes that construct and govern male sexuality conducive to the problem due to unwanted pregnancy. To be able to do so, we have to go beyond the “lack of knowledge and awareness of contraception use among young people”. It means that we have to understand the social and cultural context more before action is taken.

- My research indicates one of the root causes of unwanted pregnancy is very much related to gender like double standard in sexuality because male and female sexualities are constructed in a different way. Males are governed following a “discourse of masculinity”, and females are taught following a “discourse of femininity”. Therefore, in order to narrow down gender gaps, we have to inject children a good notion of being gender sensitive and responsive, responsible for their own action, and respectful of human rights. How to go about this? Gender and (sexual) rights should be incorporated into curricula from kindergarten and primary school. This way is strategic; we may not see

its impact of action in a few years. But, we will see impact in the long terms on the broader society.

- Regarding gender sexuality, parents and all people in society have to question about a set of language we use to teach our children (difference between boys and girls). My research found that many words we use from the old days to these days very much encourage males to dominate females in terms of sexual relationship. We use language to encourage boys to experiment with sex without responsibility and to break hymen (we use “loss and gain” conception about virginity)...Herein I use the term “discourse” as representing power from language use. This discourse reinforces and sustains male power dominance that contributes to unwanted pregnancy. Therefore, a set of discourses should be deconstructed and reconstructed with other discourses that produce good health for people. I recognize that it is very difficult to change because power discourses are very embedded in society, but we have to intervene if we wish to bring about changes. Some institutions in Laos are attempting to address gender issues; it is a good start already. We can build on gender issues and try to understand underlying causes of it and redress it by replacing new knowledge or discourses.
- With regard to beer drinking, if we think that beer is far to lead young females to unwanted pregnancies, we are still too far to address the problem of unwanted pregnancy/induced abortion that threaten females’ health and their lives. Beer Lao needs to reconsider its marketing strategy in promoting and advertising with non-restriction as it does these days. Rules or laws for alcohol consumption with age restriction should be developed and submitted to the National Assembly for approval. In addition, rules and regulations for entertainments venues that serve young people under 18 should be enforced properly and effectively.
- In the era of power of media technology, computer, internet, mobile phones, TV, pornographic VCD/DVD all are accessible. Yet children and young people should be provided with orientation in use of these kinds of materials. So that they will have knowledge and are able to choose appropriate materials for their ages. According to my research findings, the young male informants watch

porn movies as early as 8 years old and they just tried to experiment with sex in their own way. Now, they are 16 – 17 years old and called themselves the hunters of girls. To prevent and address this problem, it requires adults at all levels to understand those materials and give proper guidance to their children in appropriate use of all materials of this kind. Therefore, projects/programs will need to work more with parents and adults, so that they will have necessary knowledge and skills to communicate and guide their children in terms of consuming contemporary media in an appropriate manner.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahman, E., & Shah, I. (2004). *Unsafe abortion: Global and regional estimates of the incidence of unsafe abortion and associated mortality in 2000*. Geneva: World Health Organization
- Aronowitz, S. (1995). My masculinity. In M. Berger, B. Wallis & S. Watson (Eds.), *Constructing masculinity*. New York: Routledge.
- Ba-Thike, K. (1997). Abortion: A public health problem in Myanmar. *Reproductive health matters*, 5, 94 - 100.
- Boonmongkon, P., Jaranasri, C., Limsumphan, S., & Thanaisawanyangkoon, S. (2000). Adolescents' life styles and their sexual and reproductive health problems. In *Thai adolescent sexuality and reproductive health: Implications for developing adolescents' health programs in Thailand* (pp. 15 - 34). Nakhon Pathom, Thailand: Center for Health Policy Studies.
- Delaney, T. (2005). Modern and postmodern theory. In *Contemporary social theory: Investigation and application* (pp. 259 - 289). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- EU/UNFPA. (2005). *Baseline survey, quantitative report*. Vientiane, Laos: Reproductive health initiative for youth in Asia (RHIYA) programme/UNFPA.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (1995). How to build a man In M. Berger, B. Wallis & S. Watson (Eds.), *Constructing masculinity* (pp. 127 - 134). New York: Routledge.
- Fongkaew, W. (1996). *Sexuality and gender norms among Thai teenagers: Problems and Solutions*. Paper presented at the Conference Name|. Retrieved Access Date|. from URL|.
- FHI. (2006). *Behind the pleasure: Sexual decision-making among high-risk men in urban Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Family Health International.
- Gammeltoft, T. (1999). Our love has no limits. In *Our love has no limits* (pp. 76 - 165). Hanoi: Youth publishing house.
- Gutting, G. (1994). *The Cambridge companion to Foucault*. New York: The Press Syndicate of University of Cambridge.

- Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Sharpe, S., & Thomson, R. (2003). When bodies come together: Power control and desire. In J. Weeks, J. Holland & M. Waites (Eds.), *Sexualities and society* (pp. 84 - 94). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Jones, P. (2003). Michel Foucault: Discourse theory and the body-centredness of modernity. In *Introducing social theory* (pp. 123 - 140). Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Kendall, C. (1995). The construction of risk in AIDS control programs. In R. G. Parker & J. H. Gagnon (Eds.), *Conceiving sexuality* (pp. 250 - 278). New York; London: Routledge.
- Kholifah, D. R. (2005). *Constructing discourse on sexuality and sexual subjectivity among single young women in Pesantren (Muslim Boarding School), West Java, Indonesia*. M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom.
- LWU/UNFPA. (2006). *Combined sixth and seventh periodic report on the implementation of convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*. Vientiane, Laos: Lao Women's Union.
- Lyttleton, C. (2004). *Final evaluation, Regional model - factory workers reproductive health awareness and services project*. Vientiane, Laos: CARE International in Lao PDR.
- MCH. (2006). *Statistical report on mother and child health care services (in Lao)*. Vientiane, Laos: Mother and Child Health Hospital.
- MoH. (2005). National Reproductive Health Policy: MoH/UNFPA.
- NSC. (2006). *Results from the population and housing census 2005*. Vientiane, Laos: National Statistical Center.
- NSC/UNFPA. (2001). *Lao reproductive health 2000*. Vientiane: State Planning Committee, National Statistical Center.
- Paiva, V. (1995). Sexuality, AIDS and gender norms among Brazilian teenagers. In H. T. Brummelhius & G. Herdt (Eds.), *Culture and sexual risk: Anthropological perspectives on AIDS*. La Vergne, TN: Lightning Source.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). Designing qualitative studies. In *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2 ed., pp. 145 - 198). California: SAGE Publication, Inc.

- Pholsena, V. (2006). *Post-war Laos: The politics of culture, history and identity*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS).
- Phyakeo, P. (2006). *Sexual behavior of young male college students living in the government dormitory in Vientiane, Laos*. M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University, Salaya, Nakhon Pathom. (pp. 19 - 34). London: SAGE Publications.
- Richardson, D. (2000). Theorising heterosexuality. In D. Richardson (Ed.), *Rethinking sexuality*
- Sacdpraseuth, A., Soukhaphone, P., Kommanivong, C., & Banechith, C. (2003). *Hospital-based descriptive study of illegally induced abortions-related mortality and morbidity and its cost on health services*. Vientiane, Laos: UNFPA.
- Seidman, S. (2003a). Social constructionism: Sociology, History, and Philosophy. In *The social construction of sexuality* (pp. 25 - 39). New York: w. w. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Seidman, S. (2003b). Social theories of sexuality: Marxism and Feminism. In *The social construction of sexuality* (pp. 13 - 23). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Soonthorndhada, A. (1996). Chapter two: Adolescent premarital sexual behavior. In *Sexual attitudes and behaviors and contraceptive use of late female adolescents in Bangkok: A comparative study of students and factory workers* (pp. 15 - 52). Bangkok, Thailand: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University.
- Sychareun, V., Boupaha, T., Kounnavong, S., Thovisouk, B., Prabouasone, K., & Hansana, V. (2005). Providing contraceptive services to unmarried youth in Vientiane In T. E. Blair (Ed.), *Researching sexuality and sexual health in Southeast Asia and China* (pp. 115 - 138). Nakhon Pathom: Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health.
- Tangmunkongvorakul, A., & Bhuttarowas, P. (2005). Gender and sexual health of adolescent females in Northern Thailand. In T. E. Blair (Ed.), *Researching sexuality and sexual health in Southeast Asia and China* (pp. 33 - 61). Nakhon Pathom: Southeast Asia Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health.

- TARGET. (2007). Target report *TARGET MAGAZINE*, (pp. 26 - 30). Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- Thaweessit, S. (2005). Representations of gender and sexual identity in research. In T. E. Blair (Ed.), *Researching sexuality and sexual health in Southeast Asia and China* (pp. 15 - 30). Bangkok: Southeast Asia Consortium on Gender, Sexuality and Health.
- Tongrong, S., & Muttiko, M. (2004). Rural adolescent sexual health in socio-cultural context: A case study of village in Ubonratchathani province. *Journal of Medical Social Science* (2), 41 - 57. Faculty of Social Sciences and Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.
- Toole, M., Coghlan, B., Holmes, W., & Xeuvongsa, A. (2005). Study of young men's sexual behaviour Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic. August - November 2004. 1 - 28. Burnet Institute, Vientiane, Laos
- UNFPA. (2002). Population, reproductive health and the millennium development goals: How the ICPD program of action promotes poverty alleviation and human rights. New York: United Nations Population Fund.
- UNFPA. (2004). *National progress in implementing the ICPD program of action: Investing in people*. New York: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Vance, C. S. (1995). Social construction theory and sexuality. In M. Berger, B. Wallis & S. Watson (Eds.), *Constructing masculinity* (pp. 37 - 48). New York: Routledge.
- Weeks, J., Holland, J., & Waites, M. (2003). The gender of sexuality. In J. Weeks, J. Holland & M. Waites (Eds.), *sexualities and societies* (pp. 43 - 45). Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Whittaker, A. (2000). More painful than birth: Abortion In *Intimate knowledge: Women and their health in North-East Thailand* (pp. 150 - 191). NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Yang, X., Yukun, H., Lijun, B., & Xiuhua, J. (1995). Determinants of unwanted pregnancy and abortion in Beijing, China. *Reproductive health matters*, 5, 95 - 103.
- Khaw Wan Mai* (new day news) on (Thai) TV Channel 3, on March 31, 2007  
<http://www.beer-lao.com/aboutlbc>

[http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/show\\_news.php?subaction=showfull&id](http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/show_news.php?subaction=showfull&id)

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/ac776e/ac776e06.h>

[http://www.moc.go.th/opscenter/ub/Indochinapic/Laos/images/vientiane\\_jpg.jpg](http://www.moc.go.th/opscenter/ub/Indochinapic/Laos/images/vientiane_jpg.jpg)

<http://www.straight-talk.net/abortion/consequences.shtml>





## **APPENDIX A**

### **BEER LAO'S DISCOURSES**

#### **1. Beer Lao and Society**

##### **1.1 Beer Lao and Young Males' Hunting of Girls**

During my fieldwork, I went and hung out with the informants. I observed that young people drink beer a lot. From this point, I also looked at the society in which young people live. According to the informants, beer plays a very important role in supporting the informants' hunting; for example the informants started from persuading each other to drink beer in the beer bars, proceed to discotheques, and guesthouses afterward. Beer is involved in the whole process of hunting. That is, the informants ask the girls where to drink more beer; of course guesthouses are the places in which beer are available after the entertainment closure. When the informants take the girls to the guesthouses, they drink more beer together, thus getting drunk. The informants said that when the process comes to the guesthouse, hunting will be successful.

##### **1.2 Beer Lao in History and at Present**

Talking about Beer Lao without knowing its history may not be complete. Yet, I want to review the history of Beer Lao in summary before I discover the importance of this product in the context of young male sexuality. Beer Lao has existed in Laos over 30 years. According Lao Brewery Co., Ltd (LBC), LBC was established in 1971 and commenced its production in 1973, "originally known as Brasseries et Glaci è res du Laos (BGL)." The BGL was run under a joint venture between the French and some local investors. Until the political change in 1975, the BGL was utterly controlled by the Lao government. It then became a state enterprise

known as Lao Brewery Co., Ltd (LBC) under the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts. From 1993, LBC has been a joint venture again “between the Government, with a 49% share, and Loxley (public) Co. Ltd. and Italian Thai (public) Co. Ltd. holding a combined share of 51%”. (<http://www.beer-lao.com/aboutlbc/>)

In early 2002, the two Thai shareholders withdrew their shares from LBC, and the entire control of LBC was brought back to the Lao Government again. Afterward, “Carlsberg Asia, a unit of Denmark 's Carlsberg Breweries AS (K.CRL), and TCC, a Thai company who is Carlsberg's partner in Thailand, each agreed to acquire a 25% stake in LBC. The rest of 50% are still held by the Lao government”. (<http://www.beer-lao.com/aboutlbc/>). In other words, LBC and Carlsberg are as equal partners holding this business together.

According to TARGET Magazine “Beer Lao is the only domestic product covering 99% of [national] market and over 40% of sale value is brought into the national treasury for the socio-economic development” (TARGET, 2007, pp. 26 - 27). Sixty percent of which is distributed within Vientiane Capital, and 40% is distributed to provinces. Distribution of Beer Lao has increased every 5 years. From 1995 to 2000, its distribution increased more than double from 23.43 – 50.77 million liters of beer), and from 2000 to 2005, its distribution increased nearly double from 50,77 – 93,90 million liters. (<http://www.beer-lao.com/aboutlbc/>). Let’s imagine in the simple way if I just take up 60% of 93,90 million liters of Beer Lao and divide it by the Vientiane population of 698,318; each person received 80,68 liters in 2005.

Recently, LBC has invested in the establishment of a second brewery factory in the Southern Province of Champassak. As expected, the new brewery factory will begin producing beer by the end of 2007 with an initial production capacity of 50 million liters per year and can increase in its production up to 200 million liters per year. (TARGET, 2007, p. 29). The overall production capacity will be up to 210 million liters per year when the new factory begins its production. (Vientiane Times, July 10, 2006, cited in <http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/shownews.php?subaction=showfull&id>). The business extension of the LBC reflects its accomplishment in the distribution of Beer Lao and success in creating market demand in country.

### 1.3 Beer Lao in the Eyes of the Lao people and Policy Makers

Because the LBC supports a variety of social and political events, Beer Lao is in very good image in the eyes of most of the Lao people. It has sponsored important events, such as Lao National Day celebration, the 10th ASEAN Summit (held in Vientiane), SEA Games, traditional festivals (Boat Racing and That Luang Festivals), and other sports competition in country. Recently, Beer Lao has provided a financial support of 672 million Kip (over US\$ 67,000) for “The 3rd Football Prime Minister’s Cup or Beer Lao’s Cup” in order to celebrate the 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Lao National Day ([http://www.Beer-lao.com/contents/show\\_news.php?subaction=showfull&id](http://www.Beer-lao.com/contents/show_news.php?subaction=showfull&id)). Through these events, Beer Lao is fully promoted through multi-media, such as newspapers, radio and TV broadcasting.

### 1.4 Beer Lao Advertising and Its Power

Beer Lao has been widely promoted through a variety of channels. We will see the logo of Beer Lao is displayed over a number of places in Vientiane. When I rode my motorcycle around Vientiane, I observed that Beer Lao is promoted in a variety of forms with no restriction, for example through billboard, name-boards of entertainment venues, banners, t-shirts, jackets, tissue boxes, umbrellas, speed limit signs, mass media, social/political events, etc.

As seen, most of guesthouses, hotels, restaurants, bars, drink shops, snooker clubs display “name-boards of the place” offered by Beer Lao, from which Beer Lao and Carlsberg logos are attached alongside. Those name-boards or signs are offered by LBC free of charge. I have talked with five owners of bars and guesthouses; they liked Beer Lao-offered name boards and appreciated this offer because the name boards look very nice and consistent among places of this kind. Besides, when I traveled around Vientiane, I saw numerous Beer Lao-empty-bottle cartons piled in front of beer bars, restaurants, and “small” drink shops, waiting to be exchanged with Beer Lao-full-bottle cartons that Beer Lao-trucks everyday deliver to their customers.

Beer Lao was given international awards, such as gold, silver, and bronze medals in 2003 and gold medal and silver medal by Monde Section held in Czech

Republic in 2006 (TARGET, 2007, p. 27) . These awards are said repetitively for advertising. “Cheers to Beer Lao for gold medal” headed in the local press, Mr. Kissana Vongsay, Managing Director of the LBC said “The medals not only belong to the company, but also to all Lao people” ([http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/show\\_news.php?subaction=showfull&id](http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/show_news.php?subaction=showfull&id)).

### 1.5 Beer Lao and Lao Society

Drinking beer, not limited to entertainment places, spreads out all over the society. I went out and observed at night; I saw many small groups of people along the roads sitting and drinking Beer Lao. I rode my motorcycle along the road about 15 Km long; I saw 10 groups, ranging from 2 – 5 people drinking beer in front of their houses and vendors at night. This kind of practice is very common and looks like a culture; beer attaches to everyday life of the people.

Often I hear people talking or showing *the number of cartons of the beer for baci (traditional event) or birthday or wedding party*. To people the number of cartons of beer seems to mean some sort of purchase capacity or the degree of fun through the organized events. Another expression I hear is that *kin beer bo maow maan bo muan* (drinking beer does not get drunk; it cannot be fun).

Beer Lao per se produces and reproduces a number of discourses for marketing purposes that are very powerful to socialize and normalize it into society. TARGET Magazine (2007) cited what Deputy Director of LBC/Beer Lao responded to the question regarding negative impact on the society due to an increase in Beer Lao production: “Alcohol and beer are luxury goods and they are not necessary for daily life, however, the society needs them. Since the old day almost all events such as meeting, celebration, guest receiving and so on, which have happened in daily life in the country and abroad, used and needed these goods. Therefore, Beer Lao product with 5% of alcohol, a good choice for serving the society, does not affect health. Drinking an appropriate amount is good for health. If there is no beer, people will drink other alcohol beverages instead. Drinking Beer Lao also promotes the Lao economy indirectly because over 40% of Beer Lao price is tax. Based on the good ethics, Beer Lao runs businesses and always thinks about the society and wants it to

become better, the country to be strong and the people to obtain well-being. The company has the unchanged policy on promoting fields that useful for people use as education, public health, sport, anti-drug project, poverty elimination project, accident reduction project, drunk-don't-drive project, the project for stopping children under 18 years old drinking and others" (TARGET, 2007, pp. 29 - 30).

According to the text from the Deputy Director of LBC, he starts its argument by using a "discourse of social need" of alcohol. Its argument is that even if there is no Beer Lao, people will still drink other alcohol because alcohol is very important to social activities and events since the old days. In Lao culture, alcohol, including *laow khao* (Lao whiskey), *laow hai*, *laow tho* (in fermented jar), etc. have been used long time before the presence of Beer Lao. Alcohol use is for socialization, such as receiving guests and friends, *baci* (following Brahma practice), traditional festivals (like rocket festival and boat racing festival), and wedding parties in the old days. I agree on this point that suggests alcohol plays an important role in Lao society for long time. Thus, there is a discourse of *laow ya pa ping*, (alcohol, cigarette, and fish) that teaches people to provide these things to receive friends and visitors. If one does not do so, he/she is considered to be mean. However, traditional alcohol is not as popular at present as beer. Beer Lao has replaced alcohol especially in urban areas. Beer Lao has gone far beyond the traditional discourse (of alcohol, cigarette, and fish to cater for visitors); now it is penetrating into many different sectors of society, such as sport games and drinking after work. Beer Lao has multi-media as a very powerful tool for advertising. Advertising Beer Lao produces a lot of power discourses over society, reproduces, and reinforce its power through multi-media.

Through mass media, Beer Lao borrowed a "medical discourse of good health" to support its claim: Beer Lao is a better choice [than other alcohol of high percentage of alcohol] because it contains only 5 percent of alcohol; *it does not affect health; drinking an appropriate amount is good for health*. This message does not intend to provide neither complete nor accurate information to people (e.g. how much is the appropriate amount and good for health?), but just functions for marketing purposes in order to get popularity for Beer Lao product, and of course to increase beer distribution.

In order to support its claim, Beer Lao also uses a very powerful discourse “of economic development of the nation”: Drinking Beer Lao contributes to the national economic development because Beer Lao company pays a great deal of tax to the state. This discourse is very dominant because the Lao Government considers the economic development of the nation as a top priority in order to be able to eradicate the national poverty by 2020. Apparently, from time to time through mass media, high ranking government officials acknowledged Beer Lao’s support. For example, Mr. Bouasone Bouphavanh, Prime Minister of Lao PDR, congratulated the LBC on its success in Beer Lao business, and this success reflects the right direction under leadership of the Lao Government (The Lao Government holds 50% of LBC’s share.) ([http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/show\\_news.php?subaction=showfull&id](http://www.beer-lao.com/contents/show_news.php?subaction=showfull&id)).

Beer Lao also uses a “discourse of good ethic” Beer Lao gains profit as well as returns profit in part to society. Beer Lao is a key sponsor for many different social events and projects. For example, Beer Lao provided financial support for the National Day’s celebration and a variety of sports.

More importantly, Beer Lao produces a “discourse of possession and pride of product”: Following messages are produced and reproduced through mass media and all kinds of advertising:

- “Meuang Lao, Beer Lao”
- “Beer Lao along with Lao society” “Beer Lao is the international gold medal beer”. Managing Director of Beer Lao Company said in local press “The medals not only belong to the company, but also to all Lao people”.

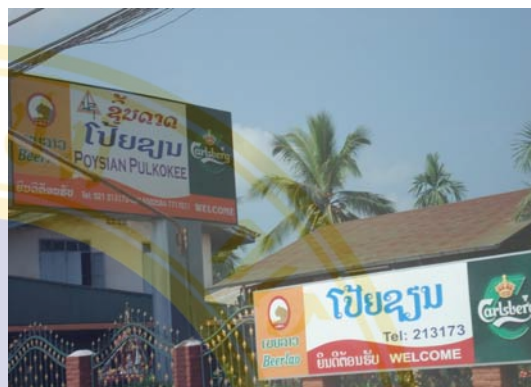
Picture (Figure 11) reflects the reality that the power discourses of Beer Lao dominate society. There are three different billboards/signs from three institutions that are put together. Yellow one is offered by Beer Lao to the guesthouse (with clear written Beer Lao and its “tiger head” logo). The top one with white background belongs to the college, and the middle one and the one (right) next to Beer Lao belongs to the primary school.



**Figure 12: Bee Lao advertising along with sings of school and college**

The interesting thing is that why the signs of Beer Lao and educational institution are put together without questioning about it. This indicates the level of Beer Lao is normalized in society. Beer Lao is seen as a part of culture or life of the people at all levels.

The picture on the right (Figure 13) is the sign that is offered by Beer Lao to the restaurant. In the middle of the sign, a space is given to the owner of the restaurant. The owner can put the name of the restaurant and some advertising words. Left and right spaces are for Beer Lao and Carlsberg (restaurants, beer bars, discotheques, all kinds of entertainment places, and guesthouses are provided with this kind of sign in Vientiane). It seems that all these places are like channels for Beer Lao to convey more and more power discourses to dominate society.



**Figure 13: Beer Lao advertising through restaurants**

A speed limit sign (Figure 14) warning people using vehicles to reduce speed because they are to go to school areas. This sign is also offered by Beer Lao and its logo (tiger head) is very visible on the bottom. In one sense, this indicates good ethics that Beer Lao has for society. In another sense, it reproduces and reinforces Beer Lao's power discourses (Beer Lao Meuang



**Figure 14: “Speed limit” sign with Beer Lao’s logo**

Lao, Beer Lao along with Lao society, Lao product as pride of the Lao people and son on). But, the same sign (see Figure 15) of warning to slowdown speed because of school area. We notice that no Beer Lao’s logo attaches to the sign which is near to the international school areas.

As a result of the synergy of all the discourses produced by Beer Lao through non-restriction of advertising, Beer Lao is able to penetrate into all levels and all social activities of the people in everyday life. Beer Lao becomes as a very important part of everyday life. My study found that nowadays young people drink more beer; once they have free time they always persuade each other to drink beer and many of young male and female students even escape

from schools to drink beer. Beer is as important as up to the level in which young people persuade each other: “where to go and play?” as a tradition is replaced with “where to drink beer?” (*pai kin beer sai?*). Sport games, football, paten, and badminton, are challenged and bet among friends in the number of bottles and/or cartons of beer. Often, the statement of “Can you do this for me I’ll give haft a carton of beer” is heard in society. Drinking beer, not limited to entertainment places, on the road, in front of common vendors, etc., is very common nowadays. More and more dominant discourses are produced and reproduced by mass media, and as a result people drink more or more beer in society. The discursive practice is inherited from generation to generation to sustain power discourses of Beer Lao. In the end, negative consequences due to drinking beer are sort of ignored because Beer Lao is full of “good image” and “pride” as a Lao product internationally recognized.

If we think beer is far to lead young females to be at risk of unwanted pregnancy, we are still too far to address SRH problems. My research found that beer plays a very important role in creating a *space* for the young male informants to be able to hunt and cheat girls in discotheques. The informants reported beer is used all the way of hunting (from the beginning to the end). That is, the informants hang out drinking beer in the entertainment venues. They find and approach the girls to drink beer and enjoy drinking and dancing together. Then, they ask the girls to go out with them and find a place to drink more beer after the entertainment venues close. Finally, they and the girls drink more beer in the guesthouses. Subsequently, unprotected and unsafe sex occurs and can result in unwanted pregnancy. According to the report for



**Figure 15: “Speed limit” sign with no Beer Lao’s logo**

the first six months of 2006 (January – June) by MCH Hospital in Vientiane, at least one case in every two days came in hospital due to the complications of unsafe abortions, such as excess bleed and infection. It is the conservative number of cases because this figure is from only one hospital, excluding other hospitals and private clinics. CEDAW report (2006) for Laos also indicates one of the contextual factors is “drinking [alcohol] and using drugs are the causes of sexual relations and increase the possibility of having unsafe sexual intercourse” (LWU/UNFPA, 2006).



## **APPENDIX B DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

### **1. Participant Observation Guide**

This technique will be a continuum to observe what young males say; what they do, and what they actually do. Whenever researcher is with young males, he/she will apply this technique to crosscheck data that have been gathered through other techniques. However, this technique can, in practice, be used at the same time with In-Depth-Interview and Informal Discussion.

- Where do young males live? Where do they go when they have free time? Why do they go there?
- What do young males actually do when they are free?
- What do young males actually talk about when they live or go out together with friends?
- What do young males talk about in terms of sexuality? Do they talk about un/protected and un/safe sex? How do they interact about in their group?
- What sources do young males learn about sex? For example, what type of materials have they learned from?
- What materials do young males share with friends in their group?
- What language is used by friends to encourage young males to engage in sexual activities? How do friends interact with the language?
- What contextual factors contribute to shape young male sexuality in a particular way?

### **2. In-Depth Interview Guide**

In-Depth Interview will be carried out with individual young males, especially who have direct experience getting girls pregnant.

- What are young male sexual beliefs, values, meanings, and practices?
- What do young males define about un/protected, un/safe, and ir/responsible sex?
- What do young males mean their sexual relationships, such as type, number, and duration?
- What do young males mean masculinity in the context of sexuality, such as sexual orientations, acts, and relations?
- What types of young male sexual practices contribute to “their partners” unwanted pregnancies?
- What do young males mean by their sexual practices that contribute to “their partners”) unwanted pregnancies?
- In what way do young male sexual practices contribute to “their partners” unwanted pregnancies?
- How do young males describe their interaction with girls before they end up having sex with girls?
- What sources do young males learn about sex? For example, what type materials have they learned from?
- What messages have young males received? From where? What do messages tell them to act sexually?
- How do young male sexual practices contribute to “their partners” unwanted pregnancies?
- What is language used by friends to encourage young males to engage in sexual intercourse? How does language influence young male sexual practices in a particular way?
- What are conditions of using or not using contraceptive methods among young males? Why and why not?
- How are young male sexual beliefs and notions shaped by, for example, mass media, school teaching materials, language use by friends/older people? How do their sexual beliefs and notions reflect on their sexual practices to contribute to “their partners” unwanted pregnancies?

### 3. Informal Discussion Guide

This technique will be used to seek more clarification. Informal discussion will take place with either a small group or individual persons. Topics or points to be discussed will be based on “gaps” identified through In-Depth Interview and Non/Participant Observations. This technique can be used very comfortably when researcher is with informants anytime.

### 4. Key Informant Interview Guide

This technique is to seek information from key informants who have experience working in the field of ASRH. Interviewing these people will contribute to and support the explanation of phenomenon of unwanted pregnancies.

- What do key informants think about young male sexuality contributing to unwanted pregnancies? How does young male sexuality contribute to this phenomenon?
- What are patterns of young male sexual practices?
- Did key informants have direct experience with young females who had unwanted pregnancies? If yes, how did unwanted pregnancies occur?
- How does gender role contribute to unwanted pregnancy occur from their perspective and experience with young people?
- What do key informants identify as key factors to contribute to constructing young male sexuality that put females at risk of unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions?
- Do key informants have examples, such as materials, words, texts, role models, etc that are considered as influential on young male sexuality? If yes, what are they?
- How do those messages and role models contribute to the construction of young male sexuality in relation to unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions?

## 5. Non-Participant Observation Guide

This technique will be used to describe the context in which there may be factors encouraging young males to engage in sex. Researcher will observe in places where young males go and hang out at night.

- Where do young males in general go and hang out at night? Why do they go there? Until what time do they hang out there?
- With whom do young males hang out?
- Where do young males and girls go after they hang out in the place?
- How is it different between weekdays and weekends in the place?
- Is it common young males behave this way?
- How does this context potentially contribute to unwanted pregnancy?
- What are contextual factors that constitute young male sexuality conducive to their partners' unwanted pregnancies?

## 6. “Viewing Pornographic Materials and Discussion” Guide

This technique will be to identify “potential discourses” from porn materials and other materials that shape and govern young male sexuality in relation to unwanted pregnancy.

- What scenes is a young male interested in? Why?
- What does he learn from those scenes?
- What are messages conveyed to him? How does he interpret messages into action?
- What does he mean by a particular sexual act he learns from the porn material?
- What about his friend? Do they do the same? Why? or why not?

## BIOGRAPHY

<b>NAME</b>	Mr. Ounkham Souksavanh
<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	September 6, 1969
<b>PLACE OF BIRTH</b>	Vientiane, Laos
<b>INSTITUTION ATTENDED</b>	National University of Laos, 1988 – 1994 Medical Doctor Health Social Science International Program, Mahidol University, 2005 – 2007 M.A. (Health Social Science)
<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>	Rockefeller Foundation
<b>HOME ADDRESS</b>	266 Naxay, Saysettha District, Vientiane Capital, Laos Home Phone: 856-21-450-313 Mobile Phone: 856-20-772-3771 Email: ounsouksavanh@yahoo.com