

Swinging: extramarital sexuality in Thai society

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Abstract

Swinging is male dominated, and this androcentric behaviour requires a great deal of thought and discussion between the couples before making their decision to select and join another couple in swinging activities. Swinging rules and regulations are established and strictly practiced by these members. The patterns of swinging can be divided into two types: touching without intercourse, and complete sexual interaction. The reasons for swinging are determined by the husband's domination, sexual experiences, loneliness, childlessness, perspectives on equal rights and experience using internet communication. Swinging is a continuous learning process and can be divided into five stages: (1) revelation (2) consideration and selection (3) action (4) life-management and (5) behavioural reorientation. An emic point of view focuses on how the participants in social activities create a conceptual structure to give meaning to their activities. In this study, the emic view was used to study the advantages and the disadvantages of swinging. This approach was also used to examine the decision-making process by which a couple decides to become involved in swinging as well as their planned and considered decision cease swinging.

KEYWORDS: swinging, extramarital sexuality, Thai society

Introduction

Mainstream culture, in Thailand or elsewhere, often views monogamy as the desirable sexual norm for human beings (de Stefano & Oala 2008: 13). Monogamy requires partners to refrain from sexual relations outside their marital relationship (Weaver & Woollard 2007: 1). However, monogamy does not reign absolute for everyone. In fact, extramarital sexuality is a phenomenon that has happened since the dawn of humanity (Maven 2009) and is still practiced in most societies, either culturally or individually. Schmitt (2005: 247–311) noted that, from 14,059 people across 48 nations, only 16% were strongly following a monogamous paradigm, while 84% were polygamous. In the United States, 22.7% and of married men and 11.6% of married women reported having sexual intercourse with another person sometime in their married lives (Wiederman, 1997: 170). These statistics are similar to those found among Thai husbands in the Bangkok area. Even though the survey included only a small sample (160 cases), 23.75% stated that they have had a mistress or concubine while married and 55% wanted to try to do so, if possible (Chaisinthop 2000: 49).

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Extramarital sex occurs in several ways: adultery (Kipnis 1998: 290), infidelity (Solstad & Mucic 1999: 55; Smith, 2007–997), a mistress (Nicholson 2006: 55), or through prostitution (Schensul et al. 2006: 618). Glass & Wright (1985: 1101–20) thought that the extramarital relationships of married couples could be categorized into three types: emotional involvements, sexual involvements or a combination of the two.

Swinging is a kind of extramarital sex but differs from the examples of the sexual types described above, since swinging couples both openly admit sexual intercourse with another couple and there is less of a double standard, since both husband and wife together engage in the activity (Peabody 1982: 427).

To be precise, swinging is a sexual lifestyle among married couples, in which the husband and wife agree to have sexual relations with other couples or other people, in a context where all of them are sexually engaged at the same time and usually in the same place (Denfeld & Gordon 1970: 93; Fang 1976: 220). This kind of sexuality deviates from the model of romantic love (Boekhout et al. 1999: 98), does not fit the stereotype of monogamy and is usually stigmatized by society (Hymer & Rubin 1982: 533).

That is why swinging is hidden and why the number of persons involved in this kind of sexual activity is unknown (de Visser & McDonald 2007: 460). This form of sexual activity seems to be increasing as an alternative lifestyle (Rubin 2001: 711). In the United States, for example, 1% of couples reported being swingers in 1971. This number increased to 2% by 1974 and reached 15% by 1995, according to Bergstrand and Williams (2000). Additionally, around 120 to 400 clubs are now available for swingers in UK and North America (Roberts 2003).

Studies and investigations of the hidden world of swinging activities have mostly been carried out in the West. Jenks (1998: 507–521) provided literature reviews of swinging activity and explained that the vast majority of swingers belong to the middle and upper middle classes. They have an average education and income, and are usually in professional and management positions.

O'Neill and O'Neill (1970: 101–112) explained that the process and development of swinging can be divided into four steps: great interest, curiosity, enthusiasm, and participation in swinging. The husband plays a significant role in decisions about swinging (Henshel 1973: 887) by advertising himself and his wife as a couple in magazines, newspapers, or being a member of a club (Walshok 1971: 488; Jenks 1998: 518).

The benefits of swinging include: the couple's satisfaction, relief from sexual monotony, improved sexual performance, and an increase in the number of friends (Fang 1976: 230). The possible negative impact might be jealousy, possessiveness, lack of commitment and involvement, boredom, loss of interest, disappointment, guilty conscience, fear of discovery and fear of sexually transmitted diseases. These negative factors were significant reasons for some couples to withdraw from swinging activities (Denfeld 1974: 46–47; Fang, 1976: 231; Jenks 1998: 515–516; de Visser & McDonald 2007: 461).

Thailand is another society that has been unable to resist the influence of the new sexual interpersonal lifestyle. Swinging, as found in news reports, is dramatically increasing and is practiced either by married couples or by teenagers. The data from one website indicated that approximately 23,000 members are registered in clubs.

Obviously, swinging has dramatically increased, despite its cultural stigmatization. Thus, this behaviour needs to be studied. This research is designed to understand the pattern of swinging activities and the reasons, advantages, and disadvantages, from an emic point of view. It is important to say that it is not the purpose of this research to promote or support swinging activities as appropriate sexual behaviour for the Thai population.

METHOD

This is a qualitative study involving informal, in-depth interviews and phone interviews. At the beginning, the researcher joined a swinger website adopting a *covert role* and pretending to be a person who was interested in swinging activities. Personal information ('Hello, I'm single, aged 30, height 175 cm and weight 75 kg. I'm interested in swinging for a while and want to know a real couple. I am open for everything, but we have to talk first') was posted on a web board. After being posted, there were many responses from the members. Unfortunately, many of them were adolescents or not couples. Thus, they were excluded from this research, as they are not related to the required criteria. Some genuine couples answered, but the researcher felt very uncomfortable when talking or asking them questions. To solve this problem, the status of the researcher changed to an *overt role* to make it easier to find new key informants.

The original way of contacting the key informants was by telephone; their numbers were posted on the web board. Only three couples agreed to take part in this research. In the process of creating rapport, the researcher's objectives were explained. The ethical considerations of the research, especially the issues of confidentiality and security, were discussed and the couples were ensured that all information would be anonymous. All three couples were living in metropolitan Bangkok. With each couple, informal and in-depth interviews were carried out at a restaurant. The length of an interview was 60 to 90 minutes. In the case of an explanation being unclear, phone interviews were supplemented to gain as much information as possible. To assure the quality and validity of the data, all information was rechecked by the data triangulation method. Content and system analysis were applied for research conclusions.

Key informants

Couple A have been married for nine years. Both of them graduated with master's degrees from a university in Bangkok. Before their marriage, the husband enjoyed all kinds of sexual media and also had sex with prostitutes while his future wife remained a virgin. After marriage, sex toys such as a vibrator, dildo or goats-eye cock ring etc. were applied to increase their sexual feeling during normal sex. They are an infertile couple, because of a problem with sperm morphology. Their extramarital sex started because of his infertility. Her wish to become pregnant resulted in sex with her brother-in-law. This was supported by her husband's planning and a consensus among each other to keep this a secret as long as possible. Unfortunately, she did not get pregnant as expected. Because of their childlessness, their life changed to an open lifestyle, enjoying sexual media, live sex and sex chat, and finally swinging activities.

Couple B have lived together for five years. The husband and his wife had previously been married three and two times, respectively. Both have their own children, but they live separately. The husband graduated with a bachelor's degree and works in the state enterprise sector, while his wife opened a small restaurant in their home village. The husband had desired multiple partners and extramarital sex for a long time, even during his first or second marriage, while his wife was less desirous of extramarital activities. This difference in sexual needs persuaded them to join the swinging world to fulfil the sexual demands of the husband.

Couple C have been in a relationship since they were studying at the same university. They married and have been living together for eight years. Pre-extramarital activities had been taking place since their time at university and mostly happened in a shared dormitory; the fellow-lodgers were his friends. Their main sexual activity was exhibitionism. This was always carried out at night, when his fellow-lodgers were sleeping. They found it exciting. Sometimes they had sex with the light on so they might be seen by their neighbours. Finally, they had group sex with his friends and this became the starting point for their swinging.

Results

Patterns and rules of swinging activities

The couples in this research belong to the middle class, are working in government or the business sector, have reliable incomes and are followers of Theravada Buddhism. Their ages range from 33 to 49 years and they all are well-educated (three bachelor and two master degrees among them). The patterns of swinging activities, as normally performed by the respondents, can be divided into two main categories:

a) Touching without the intercourse: this pattern is normally performed by the beginners. It consists only of touching, kissing and sharing oral sex, while penetration is still performed only with one's own partner exclusively. The sexual activity can take place in the same bed, with all participants together at the same time, and orgasm from spouse to spouse.

b) Complete sexual interaction. This ultimate act of swinging is performed in three ways (1) unlimited sexual intercourse in the same bed (2) sexual intercourse performed in separate beds (3) sexual intercourse in separate rooms. The last one is not very popular as it can be thought of as adultery, and swinging must be sincere and make everyone happy all together.

Even though swinging is established in Thai society as a sub-culture, some rules are established and strongly practiced by the members:

- 1) meeting or contact must be arranged by the husband only
- 2) do not ask for personal information when the relationship is not well developed
- 3) do not take any advantage of other couples; all expenditures must be shared
- 4) be polite to and respectful with each couple
- 5) do not drink alcohol before a meeting
- 6) ask 'May I ...,' every time before touching, kissing or penetrating
- 7) do not hurry sexual activities or only think of another round
- 8) do not take photographs or any kind of recordings
- 9) do not pass on names and addresses of swinger partners to anyone, without permission
- 10) *avoid jealousy, adultery and emotional attachments with other couples*
- 11) keep it secret as much as possible.

Reasons to swing

There are a variety of reasons why people decide to enter the swinging world. As with Henshel's findings (1973: 889), these investigations found that swinging was instituted by the husband. The husband originates the interest, and introduces or initiates his wife into this world by showing erotic or pornographic videos, especially in the so called 'foursomes' (sexual activities of four people at the same time) or group sex, or providing swinging experience stories for reading. Moreover, imagining group sex or thinking of another man is also stimulating for the woman when having normal sexual intercourse with her husband.

Sexual experience is a significant factor for entering the world of swinging. All respondents have had several sexual experiences, including premarital sex, sexual activities with two or three partners, group sex, sexual exhibitionism, sex with a brother-in-law, and all of the swingers have a strong preference for voyeurism. Thus, to learn more and enjoy swinging activities is not difficult for them.

The family structure can also be a supportive reason in the decision-making process. The nuclear family, childlessness, loneliness, boredom and a search for new excitement are reported as reasons for taking part in swinging activities.

Another reason is equal rights. Even if the spouses have the same sexual experience and are facing the same problems in life, women playing an active role in sexual activities are still more repressed than men playing this role. For a balance of sexual rights, swinging can fill this gap.

Finally, the development of information and communication technology, especially the internet, is an important source of information for swinging knowledge, acceptance, and sexual action, since it is easy to access, private and it is more comfortable for couples when they introduce themselves on the web board in their own home. Without the internet, the opportunities for chatting, dating and performing are limited. Even though some magazines, bars and night clubs are available as an intermediate connection for making contacts among couples, they were not mentioned as a significant resource because of a lack of privacy.

Cycle of swinging

The conclusion of the cycle of swinging is shown in Figure 1. The research found that there are five main stages for acting as swingers.

1) Commitment to swinging. After the couple agrees, personal information including age, weight, size and pictures (if preferred) is posted on the web board. Information about sexual desires and preferences are also attached.

2) Consideration and selection. After receiving some response, information about body shape and face pictures will be exchanged. Chatting via the internet, web board or by phone, it is possible to establish a relationship. Nude pictures can be asked for, but this depends on the situation and the development stage of the relationship. This phase takes a lot of time to ensure that they will find a perfect couple. The respondents stated that they might spend more than a year before making a selection. Before swinging, a meeting must be held. The reasons for the meeting are not only to get more information about each other, but also to check and observe the other couple's quality of life, health, and personality.

We spent almost five years to become real swingers... including the time when she had sex with my brother (Couple A, husband).

Approximately one to two years we were talking about it, she said ok and allowed me to put an announcement on the website (Couple B, husband).

Of course, we were afraid; every day the news reports about crimes... we need to meet and talk before swing. A place to meet is also important; for safety, we met at department store as so many people are there. But we were lucky as most of them we met were good, good talking, and no problem at all. But we spent a lot of time making sure before we met; we talked on phone, e-mail, exchanged pictures, and so on, so many things we did (Couple C, husband).

It's very necessary, it's not easy for me, if I don't know much about them, I would not go, especially when they asked so many questions about me, I skip immediately. There are manners, before being swingers we have to pay attention to those manners. It seems unsafe if someone only asked for personal information, if I want to tell, I will tell, but don't ask (Couple A, wife).

We have to meet... for sure! We are not like those adolescents, it's impossible for someone to have sex with my wife so easily. You know! We have to meet around five to six times before swinging normally. Just like first time is for friendship to get known to each other, next time for dinner, another time for cinema, something like this, until we sure that we are in a good relationship, otherwise I'm feel unsure (Couple B).

At least we have to ask about their experiences in the past, how much attention they paid to it, using every time or not (condom), they can answer even true or fake, but at least we have to ask, and make our decision (Couple B, husband).

I checked on their face, eye tuck, if they seem "down-at-heel" like a sick person, I will say to him (her husband) no I don't want to, because basically, health will be shown on the face, white tongue... I also said no! I'm afraid might be they affected with AIDS (Couple A, wife).

3) Sexual interaction. Usually, the sexual activities take place at a two- or three-star hotel. Motels are also possible but very rare, as they are considered neither clean nor comfortable by the females. The more experienced swingers usually take good care of the new swingers. They pick them up or send them back, invite them for a meal or act as a host and so on. To protect them from HIV/AIDS and other sexual transmitted diseases, condoms were used every time for penetration.

If they are younger than us, we will take care of them, especially at the first time of their swinging. I will pick them up and send them back, but only the first time. If we go for another time everything "American share": half and half (Couple C, husband).

I prefer hotels, I don't like motels as they not very clean, but he likes it (her husband), because video and mirror are available, maybe it's increasing his sexual emotion, I don't know, but I don't like it as it's dirty; we also did not know which kind of people using those towels, we could not know is it clean or not? There are so many cheap hotels, which are clean and I feel good with this. I feel uncomfortable every time when I go in and come out from the motel, maybe because I'm a lady, I think every lady feel awkward with motel (Couple A, wife).

Everyone knows about this rule, every couple has (condom) for their own, everybody afraid of sexual diseases. Before swinging, we will say like, "Prepare your own (condom) ok!" Someone understand wrong, they thought wearing one can be enough, but for me not, before penetration to whom I want, I have change, even return to my wife I also change, otherwise I feel unsecure. You know, for me, I used more than 3-5 packs for one swing. If it not sufficient, I will allow them only touching but not for penetration, it's like we play only for our own couple (Couple A, husband).

It must be used, absolutely, I am also afraid; if they don't wear (the condom) I will say no, it's very strict, and everyone knows (Couple A, wife).

4) Emotional management. After the sexual encounter, the husband usually supports his wife emotionally (asking about feelings; whether she feels disappointment or has a bad impression; whether she is happy or in pain). Life management after the swinging activity can be divided into three patterns: a) acting normal: swinging has happened and is finished, no deliberation, b) adopting more individual confidence and wishing to attract new couples, c) an awareness of the potential subsequent effects upon the marital relationship such as: jealousy, sexual passion, adultery or perhaps even blackmail.

There was pain afterward, she cried, but at that time it was fun, but later she was angry I felt sorry for her. We were talking about that; ok, we stopped it with that couple, because she felt pain (Couple B, husband).

It's normal, I'm not virgin, I did not think much about this, just saw my husband happy, then I am happy, too... nobody can say I'm bad because even I have sex with other men, but I have sex in front of him, it's not cheating, he knows and he is managing for us (Couple C, wife).

Nothing, everything can be happened and it's finished, no need to worry (Couple B, husband).

I adapted myself; I do everything for to seem younger and more beautiful, that I don't feel ashamed when I go for a swing (Couple C, wife).

I talk to him directly, asking, “How you feel?” She was younger, more beautiful, and richer, too; I asked him not to cause jealousy, but only to inform him not to go alone (Couple B, wife).

We were talking already together that I would not contact the other couple without her; if we go, we have to go together. I think we don’t have a problem with jealousy, no! For sure not, I can guarantee (Couple A, husband).

I don’t want to go alone; if I go, she has to go with me, it’s fair play, if we go, we go together (Couple C, husband).

I talked to him... don’t go swinging alone, don’t cheat me, if something starts to go in the wrong way you have to talk to me directly (Couple B, wife).

5). Behavioural reorientation after life management has been done. Behavioural reorientation can be carried out in two ways: continuing with the same couple or looking for a new one.

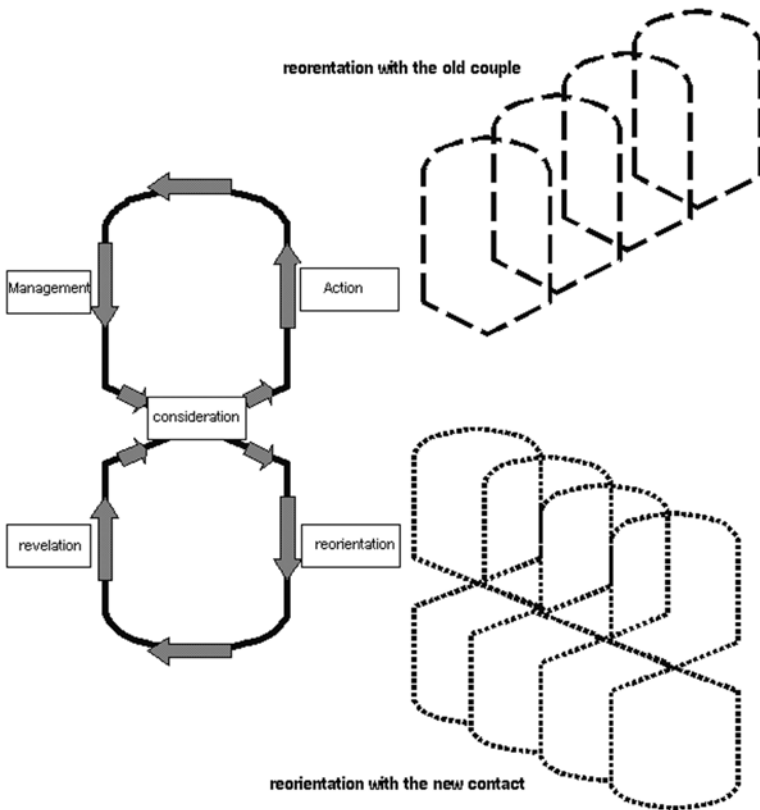


Figure 1: Cycle of swinging

Advantages and disadvantages of swinging: an emic point of view

The vast majority of the respondents agreed that swinging fulfilled their sexual lives and desires. It increased the excitement of their daily life when chatting and making new contacts or dating other couples. It made their sex life more colourful and, in some cases, helped remove a couple's sexual dysfunctions. In contrast, the couples admitted that there were disadvantages to swinging. For instance, there is a high risk of HIV/AIDS infection and/or other sexually transmitted diseases. Another disadvantage is the potential for social stigmatization, which can cause them to feel uncomfortable or unhappy. It can also cause anxiety because of the potential for blackmail and a fear of public exposure. Moreover, several respondents explained that swinging meant playing with life, because without a good agreement between husband and wife it is easy to lose family ties.

It's better for our life as a couple, especially for sex, as we never asked what we need, never paid attention, but now we dare enough to say each other what we need... "Please use your hand on this point, please use your tongue on that point." We never talk about this, just do it as a duty, but now it's "Please do those... please do this." I think it's good (Couple A, husband).

I'm not sad 'cause of swinging, I'm not a virgin, and I have a husband. It was different; it's not like when I had sex with his brother-in-law, at that time I felt guilty and sad... like it should not have happened, but for swinging, even at the first time I felt uncomfortable, but for the next I felt nothing bad (Couple A, wife).

It has become my habit. We used to have group sex when we were students, and it was so exciting. After we were married and we had sex, I had problems with my erection. We had to use so many techniques, but after swinging it's better (Couple C, husband).

I used to ask him once, do you like her? And I said to him directly... please... don't go to her so much, it will become a big problem in our life as a couple; we have to protect our life, too, otherwise we will be fighting (Couple A, wife).

Sometimes I have to warn him – don't give much information about us to other couple, as I am afraid of blackmail (Couple A, wife).

If I felt unsafe and I will not have sex with them, as there are so many sexual diseases nowadays (Couple C, wife).

Do they have any plan to stop their swinging behaviour?

The swingers also described 'exit scenarios' and how to know when the appropriate time has come to stop, i.e.; if it becomes boring making new contacts, or when they get older and they want to be a good role model for their children or grandchildren.

I am thinking it might be stopped once when we are bored. Think about it: some people used to eat meat for the whole life but at the end they can change to vegetarian. If we are getting bored with this life (swinging), bored of making a new contact, bored of making an appointment, bored with difficult people, like impostors, we will quit (Couple A, husband).

I could not say when we stop swinging, but one day we will stop, we can't do it for our whole lives; if we are completely old, nobody will want us. Maybe when the secret is explored, like when we walk on the street and found that couple we already had sex with, walk on another street also found another couple, or realized that we know them from website. If it happened in this way, it's obviously shown that we are swinging too much, might be near to public exposure (Laughing) (Couple A, wife).

We could not do this until we are old. The 'day of shrink' will come once day. It did not mean sex is unable to be performed by the elder, but means we are unable to do as we might have another thing to do... like taking care of grandchildren, if we not stop our grandchildren can swear at us. But now we don't have grandchildren, then we can enjoy for this moment (Couple B, husband).

If my children come to stay with me, I think we can't go for swing, must be quiet, and take care them (Couple C, wife).

Discussion

Swinging exists in Thai society. It is not instinctive behaviour and it requires a long time to consider, become informed, and then to act. Swinging in Thai society has been criticized as androcentric and this research confirms what has been found in previous research (Henshel 1973: 889). The idea of swinging is initiated by the husband, but the final decision to say 'yes' or 'no, or the selection the most fitting couple is made by the wife. Like the findings of O'Neill and O'Neill (1970: 101–12), Fang (1976: 220–37) and Biblarz (1980: 137–44), this research found that no one was forced to engage in swinging activities, and all agreements were respected by all the swingers.

As was found in previous research, the swingers in this study were found to have similar backgrounds. Swingers, in either Western or Eastern societies, generally belong to the middle class, are well educated and have a good income (O'Neill & O'Neill 1970: 104; Bartell 1970: 121; Knapp 1976: 210; Jenks 1998: 509). Because of globalization and the growing number of internet users, advertising by the couples in magazines, newspapers or as members of a nightclub or a bar (Denfeld & Gordon 1970: 95; Walshok 1971: 488; Peabody 1982: 427; Bartell 1970: 114) has changed. Increasingly, advertising activities are managed by the couples themselves via a chat room or web board at home, since it is more private and therefore more secure from public exposure. This might be a reason that many people in the lower socioeconomic levels rarely access these sources.

In this research, the rules of swinging in Thailand corresponds with previous research, especially the rules of being respectful to each couple, keeping secrets, and jealousy management (Denfeld & Gordon 1970: 98; de Visser & McDonald 2007: 461), but differs from the finding of O'Neill and O'Neill, and Fang, in which drugs, alcohol, marijuana, and hashish were generally used in swinging activities to increase sexual feeling (O'Neill & O'Neill 1970: 109; Fang 1976: 221). The use of these kinds of sexual stimulants was not found in this research. Alcohol, especially, is not allowed to be consumed before or during the meeting.

Experiences with premarital sex, prostitution, group sex or addiction to sexual media are precursors to becoming attracted to swinging. This has been mentioned in previous research (O'Neill & O'Neill 1970: 111; Denfeld & Gordon 1970: 88; Bartell, 1970: 128; Jenks 1998: 509). This research also found that family structure, for example: an incomplete nuclear family, childlessness or no children to nurture, encouraged swinging activities.

In this research, the cycle of swinging can be classified into five stages, unlike the four steps of O'Neill and O'Neill's explanation. After the phase of participation, the couple begins the process of life management by re-checking their feelings of satisfaction or disappointment. The results of this phase influence the process of deciding whether they will be with the same couple or search for a new one. That means the cycle of swinging does not absolutely end at the 'boundary line' of orgasm; other important steps must be considered to fulfil and manage their sexual desire.

Swinging seems to create an important set of advantages and disadvantages in a couple's life. Swinging increases the excitement in the couple's life and it also increases the opportunities to talk about what they really want. These kinds of benefits are also reported from previous research. The negative impacts are mainly based on fear: fear of social exposure, fear of sexually transmitted diseases (especially HIV/AIDS) and anxiety about social stigmatization (O'Neill & O'Neill 1970: 109; Fang 1976: 231; Denfeld 1974: 47; Jenks 1998: 515). Regardless, the real evidence of negative impacts has not been clearly reported.

The small scale of this sample size is a limitation to a complete cross-sectional study. For more complete results, a serious, long-term study of the positive and negative impacts on these couple's lives should be initiated.

Conclusion

Swinging is an interesting topic because it involves sexual behaviour, both physical and emotional, between couples who would be traditionally monogamous (Roberts 2003). The advantages of swinging are clearly explained by the key informants, but the disadvantages or negative impacts are not unambiguous. Thus, the negative impacts of this lifestyle needs further study, especially with regard to sexually transmitted diseases, life management and family ties.

Inside the emic point of view, swingers think about an exit scenario when the appropriate time comes. Nobody can swing forever. Swinging is desired by some couples

because of their sexual needs, and their needs can be fulfilled in different ways. Thus, to quit the swinging lifestyle is a personal decision. No one can help them with this decision, because swingers and swinging exist within a closed society; no one from the outside who is not a swinger can join or influence the group.

Swinging is a real phenomenon in Thai society and is dramatically increasing, not only among married couples but also with the younger generation and adolescents. This research confirms that premarital sex, cohabitation, early sexual intercourse and the enjoyment of sexual media are significant factors that attract people to becoming swingers. Another question is how to prevent the younger generation or adolescents from taking part in activities that encourage them to engage in a swinger's sexual lifestyle. This topic should be a concern to all social stakeholders.

The limitation of this research is caused by the small sample size. This limitation mirrors the same problem that previous studies have encountered. The swingers probably feel uncomfortable taking part or being a respondent. They do not want to talk about or explain their stigmatized experiences and fear public exposure. For example, in a qualitative study, only four couples in the UK (de Visser & McDonald 2007: 462), five couples in Brazil (De Oliveira 2007: 6–7) and 25 couples in Canada (Henshel 1973: 887), agreed to participate in the studies. Since the goal of qualitative research is to produce an intensive, authentic and descriptive account of experience and action, the number of cases might not be that important (McLeod, 2003: 30).

Finally, there are many ways to perceive swinging, depending on the situational context. If we look back in history, swinging can be seen as a traditional human behaviour, i.e.; sharing one's wife with a guest in a ceremony of 'putting out the lamp' in the Inuit culture (Pines, 1998: 115). Perhaps, swinging might be acceptable when discussing issues of sexual liberty and human rights. Some swingers might be in need of treatment by a psychiatrist if it was perceived as related to some kind of sexual deviancy, while epidemiologists might worry about the fact that swingers could spread HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. Good or bad? It depends on the individual or outsider's interpretation and etic point of view.

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POVZETEK

Svingerstvo je v domeni moških in to androcentrično vedenje zahteva veliko premišljenosti in pogovorov med pari, preden izberejo in se pridružijo svingerskim dejavnostim. Pravila svingerstva določajo udeleženci in se jih strogo držijo. Vzorce svingerstva lahko razdelimo v dve skupini: dotikanje brez spolnega akta in popolna spolna interakcija. Vzroke svingerstva opredeljujejo dominantnost moža, spolne izkušnje, osamljenost, umanjkanje otrok, pogledi na enakopravnost in izkušnost pri rabi interneta. Svinganje je nenehen process učenja, ki ga je mogoče razdeliti na pet stadijev: 1) razodetje, 2) razmislek in izbor, 3) akcija, 4) upravljanje življenja in 5) vedenjska reorientacija. Emični pogled se osredotoča ne to, kako udeleženci socialnih dejavnosti gradijo konceptualno strukturo, ki tem dejavnostim da pomen. V pričujoči študiji smo s pomočjo emičnega pogleda proučevali prednosti in slabosti svinganja. Enak pristop smo uporabili tudi pri proučevanju procesa odločanja, v katerem se par odloči vključiti v svinganje ali pa načrtuje in se odloči za prenehanje svinganja.

KLUČNE BESEDE: svinganje, izvenzakonska spolnost, tajska družba

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