

Transnational Marriage:

Traditional Western Masculinity and the Cyber bride Subculture

Senior Project/ Pilot Study

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Introduction

Q: Why do Western men choose to participate in an International Marriage Agency?

My generation is growing into adulthood with limited understanding of how dating, marital courtship, marriage and beginning a family is expected to occur. Dynamic changes within our contemporary society have destabilized and differentiated the meaning and context of love, desire, and gender relations for the Western man and woman. Human mating and attraction has altered with cultural changes because of adjustments in our biology, technology, and values. Internet dating, virtual sex, women in the workforce, and the prospect of AIDS are some of the attributing factors in our cultural and marital evolution. It should be no surprise that in the past decade a new form of marriage transnational marital correspondence has emerged in the form of Internet Marriage Agencies (IMA), which has grown because of advancements in globalized relations and communication. Specifically speaking, the internet allows the compression of time and space to form imaginary communities where transnational courtships resulting in marriage are facilitated by an agency or industry that promotes transnational passion and love.

I became interested in the subject of transnational sexuality and courtships in my Soc. 370 Environmental Inequalities and Globalization course, where my projects were focused on trafficking women and sex tourism and my research theory remained critical to underline the need for women's emancipation from gender domination and exploitation. My focus and point of interest began to shift from the women involved, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the men who created the market for exploitation. I soon became interested in why men chose to participate in a correspondence marriage through an Internet Marriage Agency when researching IMA websites. One website provided video testimonials of men on *romance tours* in foreign countries discussing women, culture and hospitality services provided to them by the IMA. I chose to do content analysis of these posted videos because of the emotionally charged testimonies especially when discussing distaste for western women and desirability for foreign women. I began wanting to research Western men's desire for foreign women through IMAs and found

that studying a man's desire rather than choice in participation would be too ambitious of a task, so I have selected a research question that will analyze the choice rather than desire.

Personally, I find this topic interesting and disturbing since women in this type of marriage market can easily be exploited, but I do not think all relationships and selection and life partner can be based on such horrors of trafficked women and sex tourism. As much as I find critical and feminist perspectives correct and provide a great understanding of traditional men's cognitive styles it is still difficult to be as critical of them because of my western beliefs in individualism. My own approach and opinions on mate preference and family values can be best described as uncertain. I view the universality of marriage as a false concept and think every cultures norms and values should be respected just as they are by individuals living within a particular social environment. I grew up in a home with parents performing complimentary gender roles, but to no extent traditional or nuclear roles, with both my parents participating in the public and private sphere. As far as my own mate preference goes I am heterosexual and am not interested in using IMA that offer *mail-order-groom* industry. I am on the *marriage market* but hold no preference for a life partner other than finding someone that I do not want to change.

My investigation to understand why western men choose to marry foreign women in the correspondence marriage industry is important because it implicates men's choice of marital courtship and mate preference to women within the United States and other western countries is losing its appeal. To approach this topic I will be covering the analyzing the traditional family system with an emphasis on the past fifty years to accentuate the effects of a nuclear family structure and to illustrate our culture's elective affinity between masculinity and power. The institution, structure, and study of the family has undeniably socialized western men's cognitive style to expect and want the social forms that are in agreement with traditional values, which emphasize: a patriarchal hierarchy and the "complimentary" gender roles (Thistle 2006). By studying the changes in marriage and family we can begin to pull out concepts that were idealized rather than actualized and how these ideals are affecting Western men's values when choosing a life partner.

After providing a historical dialogue on traditional masculinity and marriage I plan to evaluate how choice of the traditional corresponds with contemporary issues of race, class, and nationality. Westerner's choice for foreign brides might come from the belief that foreign women have the ability to take men back to a nostalgic and hopeful traditional time while simultaneously pushing them forward through contemporary globalized correspondence. The appeal of choice to find a foreign bride seems to let men reinvent what they desire since they are applying their traditional values and desires in a modern context where issues of out-group marriage are no longer seen as negative issues. To understand traditionalism in modern times is to understand the reinforcement of the nuclear family as a universal norm while simultaneously breaking down traditional prejudice based on class, ethnicity and nationality of out-group marriage.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspectives: Critical Feminist v. Ethnographic

In my research on this topic I have found just a few articles and books dedicated to the *mail-order bride* system and most are based off an over generalizing critical argument that enters into the trafficking of women rather than focusing on the correspondence relationship. Most literature is quick to point out the exploitation involved by viewing the consent to marry as a form of consumption with men *buying* women for *sale*. I do not deny that men engage in this marital courtship for conscious or unconscious exploitative objectives but the role of the exploiter and the exploited cannot be generalized to each man and woman participating in a correspondence marriage. My research question of why men choose the service of IMA's cannot fully be answered by adhering to or ignoring the critical analysis portraying stereotypical naiveté of foreign women and abusive intent of western men.

Constable (2006), a sociocultural anthropologist has been researching U.S.-Asia correspondence marriages since the early 1990's and has completed the only research to acknowledge stereotypes being perpetuated and reified by the government, justice rights groups, and other contemporary scholars. Constable (2006) points out: "like the term

“trafficking,” the term “mail order bride” tends to define the bride and groom solely on the basis of larger structural inequalities” (p.76), which denies the validity of correspondence marriages and the choice to participate by both parties. It is with Constables research that I am able to theoretically balance my study since she provides an ethnographic argument for men and women participating in IMAs which contrasts most other research and provides a more objective insight to my study.

For example, Mila Glodava and Richard Onizuka(1994) propose an argument in their book *Mail-Order Brides: Women for Sale*, critically analyzing IMA’s and their participants without recognizing that they themselves have inadvertently naturalized traditional stereotypes of the omnipotent male and demeaned female. Constable (2003) argues against most of the controversy proposed by Glodava and Onizuka (1994) by looking at Western forms of gender dominance and realizing that these people aren’t abstract *buyers* and *sellers* they are people *on the marriage market* just like other Western singles. “This form of ‘selling’ or ‘marketing’ oneself is not literal (no more literal than the description of bars as ‘meat markets’), and to define it as such when it involves foreign women not only seriously misrepresents the process but also robs women of their ability to act in meaningful ways” (Constable 2006). Likewise, it also disallows western men to act in a meaningful way, as well, since they themselves and their desire in marriage partner are stereotyped.

So why are men, who are no longer interested in their American counterparts, using IMAs to find a foreign bride? I would like to think it is not a question of who is at fault or what is wrong with American men or women but a question of what their social environment is/was and how that has affected their cognitive framework. The destabilizing impacts of modernity and/or post-modernity have given new meanings to marriage and socially agreed upon norms and values which hinder traditionalism and feminism from finding a middle ground when discussing the topic. Nicole Constable (2003) argues that feminism has been used as a scapegoat for men’s feelings of socio-economic displacement and powerlessness. There is an undeniable discrepancy in an individual’s agency and desires between the traditional patriarchies of nuclear family and feminist egalitarianism because men “do not want a relationship in which all roles and duties are shared equally, but one in which the roles are more complimentary, divided in

a ‘good old-fashioned way’” (Constable 2003). It is this discrepancy that the mail order bride industry has been able to augment itself, since it capitalizes on men’s preferred choices in a partner’s values.

Issues of race, class and most of all gender are cornerstones of understanding traditional masculine desires but it is important to not be hasty about generalizations of desire. Postulation and hypotheses on why men are using IMAs usually comes from a critical feminist perspective where cultural and economic exploitation is accentuated. In order to fully comprehend the Western man’s desire to marry a foreign woman, especially from a less developed country, it needs to be understood that there is no completely unique or typical mail order bride experience.

Western Masculinity: Carriers of Traditionalism in Modern Times

“To study the history of the American Family is to conduct a rescue mission into the dreamland of our national self-concept. No subject is more closely bound up with our sense of a difficult present—and our nostalgia for a happier past. How often, in reference to contemporary problems, does the diagnostic finger point in the direction of family life?” - John Demos (Heiner 2006).

Within the past century America and other Western nations have been transformed by sexual revolutions, civil rights and women’s rights movement, which has drastically altered what, was once the dominant and well governed gender binary structure. Western marriages are changing mostly in response to a shift in women’s socio-economic roles and feminist requisition, which undermines and corrodes the traditional infrastructure of marriage as a patriarchal institution (Robinson 1996). The bifurcation of consciousness has now reversed itself negatively affecting those we typically view as the majority or privileged. This is because the dominant view of masculine privilege is waning with rise in feminist influence which gives reason for men to victimize themselves as the subordinate group that must unjustifiably condition themselves to view the world through a changing dominant but equitable structure (Applerouth and Edles 2007). The participation in IMAs allows men to feel that they are

carriers of liberalism and restitution, and can provide increased agency to the foreign women they marry, while importing complimentary gender roles.

It is of importance to look at the concept of traditional masculinity in modern times because it gives insight as to why men are choosing to leave their native land to find a life partner from another area and culture, and it also divulges information about these men's western socialization of what family and marriage culturally symbolizes and means.

Amidst growing Western concepts of autonomy and egalitarianism within the family one novel and dichotomizing concept, no more than a half century old is the nuclear family and the idea of a public and private sphere with inherent correlation to a specific gender. Western men may deny the pervasiveness of political and economic factors in choosing a spouse to marry because family and marriage represent what is sacred, moral, and anti-capitalistic. I argue in support of Coontz's (2000) theory that the nuclear family is Western mythology that is inherently tied to our society's economic structure, political system, and mass media entertainment.

The conflicting under bearings of the traditional nuclear family and its values originated primarily with women's movement from the private to public sphere. Western women's dependency on household work and organization of the private sphere once worked to compliment gender relations with men controlling economic and political life within the public realm. Susan Thistle's (2006) book *From Marriage to the Market* archives the collapse of women's domestic economy in the past forty years which helps underline structural conflict of the family. The collapse of a single earning household and male breadwinner, most common in middle and upper-class families, has commanded most of the public's understandings about family organization post WWII. Thistle (2006) argues that this is an assertion which overlooks changes within the home, primarily affecting women, in structure, sexuality, and gender roles. I think this is of importance to look at since feminism and women's absence from the home was determined as much by the structure of the market as it was by women's volition to enter the workforce. For example, the commercialization of women's work by a service economy with increasing technology to improve efficiency of housework forced women

to depend on wages as a central support system (Thistle 2006).

Emerging gender differences because of dynamic economic change have created the need to study a conflict arising from a dual career couples and working wives/mothers. Men participating in the IMA industry might choose a foreign bride in hopes of avoiding what so many Western families are: the work family conflict. Cinamon and Rich's (2004) study on work-family roles and gender differences found that although there has been mass socialization of traditional gender roles, men are placing a greater importance on their family roles and women placing greater importance on work roles. This growing significance is in addition to their performed traditional roles. Still it was found that more men than women fit Cinamon and Rich's (2004) work profile and more women fit the family profile. This study does not take into consideration people who identify as androgynous, but other studies have shown that androgynous individuals exhibited greater personal satisfaction but more job related stress than those who were strongly gender typed (Crooks & Baur 2005). Even though Cinamon and Rich's (2004) study does explain gender differences within the work-family conflict it does not touch on the evolution of cultural values.

The continuation of this mythological family form, the nuclear family and its values, can be explained through multiple theoretical frameworks. It could be argued that Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra and hyperreality can help explain the nuclear family. For example, Rather than focusing on the explicit value of relationships we are now, as a society, more drawn to the implicit value of relationships: "imagistic advertising (mass media stereotypes) encourages emotional engagement as well as unconscious desires and compels consumers to organize and find identity in cultural products" (Applerouth and Edles 2007). Baudrillard's concept of cultural consumption could underscore the motive behind Internet Marriage Agencies, and numerous other social forms, since they cater to artificial needs based off the nuclear family. As much as I enjoy Baudrillard's work and critique of modern society I must argue that men choosing to participate in a correspondence marriage do not view their family values as false, artificial, or replicated for which there is no original.

As exemplified above, analysis of the cyber-bride industry can easily lead to a

slippery slope of critical stereotypes that create a mythology where commanding men *buy brides* and deceived women *sell themselves*. As useful as Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality and commodification is at critically explaining traditional expression in modern times other critical theorists have over-generalized correspondence relationships where mail order brides are altogether put into exploitative positions where they are reduced to a commodity. Men do not enter into relationships for pure forms of exploitation, what is seen as exploitative relationship to some can be seen as a complimentary relationship to the traditionally minded.

The existence of the traditional nuclear family and its strict gender binary was limited in its actualization but over idealized to images and structures that entertainment, advertisements, and propaganda produced. Pro-feminists movements and monetary independence are both political and economic forces that have guided marriage to a social space of egalitarianism and autonomy which intimidates the traditional family structure and its participants by destabilizing meaning placed on roles and regulations within the family, gender, and sexuality. Traditionally minded masculine efforts to restore patriarchal values, involving assignment to roles and rituals within the public and private spheres, are a staple to differing subcultures of men, whether they are Masculinists or Anti-feminists (Coontz, 2000). The sub-culture of men participating in Internet marriage agencies (IMAs) are carriers of the "simpler" traditional times when there was security and freedom within the engendered complimentary rituals and norms, yet simultaneously are carriers of a contemporary colonial conquest that uses technology to advance global consumerism and retain national notoriety.

These simpler *leave it to beaver* time, which never actually existed, facilitates connotations and assumptions made on the traditional family's behalf of having a high cognitive influence by and symbiotic relationship with masculinity. Masculinity within a patriarchal structure has its limiting forces to what is acceptable behavior, especially within marriage, but it is usually one associated with the freedom of expression (political and economic) within the public sphere. The concept of masculinity is one of debate since some contemporary theorists have denounced the existence of gender at all since it is a social construct while others find it to be a timeless reality with biological bearings.

In order to focus on Western Masculinity within the past fifty years I will be focusing on both indicators of privilege and ideals, and historical research and theory that have ingrained masculinity into supreme marital and social status.

Privilege within the western world is considered being white, middle-class, heterosexual, and/or male. Men within the subculture under study are privileged, but it is not seen or felt as privilege to them since privilege is usually invisible to those who possess it. Privileged individuals have a taken for granted sense of reality since they “are the standard against which everyone else is measured” (Kimmel 1987). The invisibility of masculine privilege has gone without question in the western worlds until about two centuries ago which creates a dynamic setting for present times. We have moved from marriage as an economically tied subject to one focused on love and companionship, but never in the western world has marriage stood for autonomy and interdependence that is defined by the two parties equal independence. To some this sense of autonomy and recognition of their invisibility can create a dynamic realization.

“The invincibility of privilege means that many men, like many white people become defensive and angry when confronted with the statistical realities or the human consequences of racism or sexism.... Renouncing privilege ultimately substitutes an individual solution for a structural and social problem... Trying to rid oneself of bad attitudes, renouncing one's unearned privilege also, finally, brings us no further than the feelings of impotent despair that we often feel in the face of such overwhelming systematic problems. We feel lonely. We feel isolated from our friends, our families, our colleagues” (Kimmel 2003).

When there is recognition of privilege it is undoubtedly uncomfortable, creating feelings of guilt and anger, but it depends on if individual will be more driven to accept or deny their proven privilege. The privilege of men within a patriarchal structure is to have it taken for granted reality that gender does not matter. Privilege is played out by those in a *let's pretend game* that is supported by the dominant cultures symbolic capital and violence. Even though a binary structure and classifications within gender create a social formula within our culture it not only creates a shared meaning for social solidarity but also conceptualizes grounds for social domination (Applerouth and Edles 2007).

This may give some insight as to why men prefer to not marry Western women and choose women from another culture because of their defensive reaction to people pointing out the unequal power dynamics of men and the market. For Michael Kimmel (1987), accepting or denying gender privilege has differing affects since men and their mindsets can be classified into three perspectives in reaction to the rise in feminism, which include: Anti-Feminists, Masculinists and Pro-feminist.

Antifeminists view their social privileges as biological and use this argument for the basis of returning women to the private sphere, since it is biologically inherent for men to have ultimate power in the public sphere. This group is a large proponent of the nuclear family by their reliance on women to stay in the private sphere as a beacon of ultimate morality. This morality cannot and should not be expressed in the public realm since it constrains men's natural impulses of rationality and competition, especially within the capitalist market (Coontz 2000). The cyber-bride subculture under study may identify with these traditionalist views, since they see and feel their privilege as a standardized norm and patriarchy as an inevitable. They also may identify with Masculinists and empathize with men who have internalized their privilege and come out scarred. Masculinist claim that men and women have been oppressed to an equal degree, but men's strife is different because in their reaction to feminism they too have been wounded in the struggle to exude and perform their preferred gender role. While Anti-feminists are unapologetic for existing patriarchal forms and actually work to restore them, masculinists are a bit more apologetic of privilege since they view themselves as victims to the manipulation of women and see the gender binary as a legitimate social concept because men and women act innately as opposing forces (Kimmel, 1987). This backs the belief that a harmonious and enduring relationship can come from the complimentary, *separate but equal*, engendered roles. Pro-feminists who support an autonomous and egalitarian form of marriage view the complimentary roles of the gender binary as an issue of control rather than love (Constable 2003).

These three categories of men have been explained but you still might be thinking “OK, well what do mean by men and masculinity?” Crooks and Baur (2005) in *Our Sexuality* explain that the polarization of gender and sexuality created an American culture of contradictions where women were stuck between images of Madonna and

where while men were trapped between idealistic purity and the candid pleasures of sexual expression. Religious influence, mainly from Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, frequently helps to develop and reinforce gender stereotypes in youth because of the tendency to emphasize male supremacy (Crooks & Baur 2005). Those who have transcended gender roles expressing both characteristics of men and women are androgynous, and are a category that

Gender, whether it be masculinity or femininity has been changing, is currently changing, and most likely will continue to change whether guided by politics or economics because the expression of gender, whether it be pro or anti-feministic, is a social performance and does not hold any biological validity for its structural stratification. Post modern theory proposes that “gendered subjectivity is not something ‘fixed’ or ‘essential,’ but a continual performance. Gender is not a singular act, but a representation and a ritual...” (Applerouth and Edles 2007). Pleasures and desires of masculinity are differentiating, which supports Judith Butler's concept of performativity within gender because desires and pleasures are culturally sustained and the life span of the attraction is inherently tied to practices and acts which legitimate it. Participants in IMAs are changing their environmental surroundings for intervals of time so they may feel they are legitimately performing what they see as correct and/or biological gender roles. As one bride searcher stated in Bangkok: “Here, You can be King” (Prasso, 5)! Through their performance and acceptance of the performance by the counterpart, foreign women, actions and ideals are not questioned, commented upon or criticized by different compulsory practices of *others* internal features. These *others* might include westernized women and men of a feminist/pro-feminist view that would review the circumstances of marriage exploitative.

IMA participants make the trip maybe not so they can just say and act the way they want but have someone receptive and comfortable with their expression of masculinity. Critics of the cyber-bride industry, IMAs and the men participating, argue that they commodify women and turn them into a consumer relation rather than a pre-marital relation. Intense research and participant observation done by Kathryn Frank (2002) on the relationship between female strippers and male clients reveals much about

the premarital relations on Romance Tours, especially concerning economic exploitation and its insignificant meaning to the men. A review of her work explains

“that some (men) felt that the explicit commodification actually made the experience more authentic, since no one had to pretend that that money wasn't at the heart of male-female interactions...regular customers are interested in emotionally intimate relationships, even if they are simultaneously fraudulent. They feel vulnerable, cared for, even ‘close’” (Kimmel 2003).

Reoccurring themes for men using the cyber-bride industry appear to circulate around the avoidance of playing a social game. Even though most of these men have a “let’s pretend the nuclear family did exist and still exists” game, they do not want to continually justify and defend what they subjectively find attractive, especially in modern life where receptive women are only a mouse click or plain flight away are receptive. This marriage structure gives particular men the arena where the pressure is taken out of the social interaction because the dynamics of relations are within a controlled environment provided by IMAs.

Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, and Larsen’s (2004) *A Century of Mate Preferences: the Cultural Evolution of Values* discusses causes of the cultural evolution of values they find attractive in a mate or life partner between 1939 and 1996. Mutual attraction, physical attraction and love gained in importance the most for mate selection. Mutual attraction is a given when examining marital courtship and life partners but physical attraction towards women in mate preference refers us back to a conversation of socialization of gender and sexuality. After WWII, television idealized middle-class suburban social conformity where spouses slept in separate beds, while simultaneously the magazine industry published its first issue of *Playboy* promoting recreational sex rather than sex for procreation (Buss et al. 2001). This contradictory yet enlightening social phenomenon has provided insight as to how dynamic mate preference has been and can be.

It should be reiterated that correspondence marriages are in no way a novel concept when approaching the topic of marital courtship and choice in life partner. Correspondence marriage and travel have been a long standing tradition for some cultures marriage norms. Americans and Westerners may find IMA’s a shocking desire and one

to be critical of but as Constable (2003) points out we must understand the men participating are not all making a choice in bride that is dependent on exploitation and the recreation of the nuclear family.

Correspondence Marriage Agencies and Travel

The profound desire for women on the American frontier is not a new notion, during the late 19th and early 20th century there was reason for the advertisement of eastern female spouses. Men who traveled west found land copious with natural resources but found themselves leading *semi-barbarous* lifestyles with the disproportionate ratio of men to women. Newspaper marriage agencies were formed as logical means of stabilizing the gender ratio and securing society with a women's civility. Enss (2005) cites a mail-order bride advertisement in the newspaper *Alta California* in 1851 announced: "We want an emigration of respectable females to California: of rosy cheeked 'down east' Yankee girls- of stout 'hoosier' and 'badger' lasses, who shall be wives to our farmers and mechanics, and mothers to a generation of 'Yankee Californians' "(p. 6). Korean and Japanese *picture brides* immigrated to the Western United States when their native counterparts also needed and valued the presence of women in a new and foreign ethnoscape (Enss, 2005). *Mail-order brides* before the introduction of the internet in the 1980's communicated with foreign men through letter writing, relating more as pen-pals, which limited the industry because tools and services for translation were probably limited and/or expensive.

In the 1990's technology gave birth to the Internet for public use which breached earlier limitations for globalized services. With the Internet's growing accessibility IMAs provided two services to Western men, offering them the option of taking part in a *romance tour* in their country of interest or the less expensive option of becoming pen-pals via the internet.

Romance tours began in 1995 with Website A, the website providing content for my analysis, a successful IMA, which offers Western men tours of the foreign country of interest where they may sight-see, date, and/or propose to a woman. These tours range in price from \$800 to over \$8,000 depending on services and time spent within the country,

and provides everything needed to meet and marry a foreign woman from interpreters to fiancée visas kits. Socials and private dates are arranged through the IMA's hospitality services that provide customized hard copy profile books of women and make arrangements and reservations for the clients. This scenario can be seen as a legitimate way to meet women and form an understanding of their culture, but it begs the question if these men would voluntarily travel to find a wife in a foreign country if the services of an IMA were not offered? Popular countries and areas of interest have been and remain popular vacationing locals for core countries.

To investigate cross cultural tourism that occurs during IMAs *romance tours* Lord et al. (2008) studies the *Cultural influences of cross-border vacationing* which aids in understanding of an individual's motivation for cross-border consumption. The study shows that individualistic cultures, as experienced and seen in most western nations especially the U.S., "place their personal desires and benefits ahead of the group, their behavior regulated by personal attitudes and cost benefit computations" (Lord et al. 2008). This contrasts collectivist attitudes in travel that emphasize satisfaction through social agreement and group harmony. Men participating in IMAs might do so because IMAs advertise vacations or tours that directly deliver an experience that maximizes an individual's relevant benefits of price, quality and service which are inherently tied to the participant's values. The effectiveness of a vacation or business providing vacations is to emphasize pleasure and uniqueness of the experience (Lord et al 2008).

To help support the idea individualistic tourism it is important to look at men's imagination and modes of tourism that may dictate the attraction to areas with high rates correspondent marriages like the Ukraine, Russia, Latin America, and SE Asia. Lengkeek's (2001) study on *Leisure Experience and Imagination: Rethinking Cohen's Modes of Tourist Experience* focuses on the imagination of *out-there-ness* and tourism using Alfred Schutz's *lifeworld* concept to synthesize the individual and their environment. It is pointed out that "Imagination as a projection of possibilities can bring people to the point of where they go in search of sensory experiences that have, in everyday life, been consigned to the margins or rejected altogether because they do not fit in" (Lengkeek 2001). IMAs ability to create what Lengkeek calls *mode of amusement, interest and change* encourages both the assignment of fantastical signs and clichés to

create leisure attraction and a disassociation from a certain cultures predominant reality. With Western societies the predominant reality of the traditional gender binary and complimentary gender roles are losing its idealism. IMAs provide their customers with not only a service but access to the inaccessible where “Migration takes the individual to the promise land. The extraordinary becomes ordinary or is mastered in a niche in which a fixed place has been created for it” (Lengkeek 2001). Unfortunately, this theory and research does not touch on how fantasies and metaphors are actualized but rather focuses on the differences in modes of tourism. For my study these unknown origins of metaphors and fantasies are supplemented by the IMAs ability to capitalize on traditionally minded men who no longer find their family values within their native country.

Ukraine, Russia, Latin America, and SE Asia remain popular areas for pen-pals relationships and provide a technological arena for men and women to post biographies and begin chatting or e-mailing. True, face-to-face dialogue is not an integral part to this correspondence and emotions may be limited to punctuation symbols such as ;-), for a wink and a smile or :-P to stick out the tongue, yet this differs no more than a telephone conversation where emotional cues are only audible (Constable 2003). Keeping advancing technology in mind as well video-phones are attractive commodities to those participating in globalized relationships and are increasingly being used with greater availability and lowering prices. Communication has been helped by technology but correspondence between two cultures can be difficult with differing contexts, meanings and articulation.

To understand cross-cultural pre-marital correspondence Constable (2003) became involved in three private internet groups: Filipino-American Family (FAF), U.S.-Filipino Group (UFG), and U.S.-Chinese Relations (UCR). These private internet groups were created to provide its members with a supportive social network for questions and concerns. These groups are mostly used by men but some women do become involved. Internet groups are put in place for those interested in correspondence marriages and for those who have already married a foreign bride to discuss concerns, difficulties and apprehensions. Constable noted that the groups self description was like body of *extended family* and a *close-knit community*. Personal and practical inquiries are

made on how to approach the INS interviews, where good hotels and restaurants are near the embassy, and what type of calling cards are best to use. Cultural discussions allow men to inquire what the women are like from certain countries or communities within that country. Lastly, this is an open space for women and mostly men to share their success and failures in their experiences with correspondence relationships (Constable 2003).

Contrasting these private groups one of the most stirring and provocative use of the internet is the display and array of *foreign bride* profiles on IMA websites. The manner in which women are presented undeniably caters to the sexualized imagery of popular western media. Profile pictures mimic Western media by positioning the women in the shot as a pin-up girl or playboy layout, with the women on her back arching her chest into the air while nibbling on her finger. More conservative pictures are portraits that are evocative of high school photos or studio shots. The dress and attire varies from minimal, maybe just a bikini bottom to dresses reminiscent of those worn by teens. Nude pictures are made available for purchase by websites to guarantee the customer that “our ladies wont hide anything...you will see them as they are- in the nude” (Malarek 2004).

As disturbing as this may be for some, it should also be viewed through an alternate lens. There is no doubt that IMAs post pictures that can make the imagination run sexually amuck, but is this what men ultimately desire for a life-long partner. Tolentino’s (1996) study of third world women in transnational space and IMA catalogs found that catalog producers were divided on whether to produce the image of a hooker or virgin even though the connotations within pictures are distinguishable enough to comprehend. Most men who Constable(2006) has come in contact with and interviewed shied away from sexually suggestive and aggressive photos since there was presumption that the women worked in the hospitality and/or sex industry. They were also viewed to be less likely interested in these women since they did not reflect the family values they might wish to have in their own home (Constable 2006).

Westerner’s attraction to participate in an IMA may or may not be driven by the visual images presented on the industries websites at all, and it could be that their interest is more deeply rooted than physical attraction. *Mail-order brides* are in no way a novel concept but the context of desire and demand has changed because of social, geographic,

and political development.

Desire and Mail Order Brides: Race-ism and Politics

Felicity Schaeffer- Grabel (2006) argues that western men view themselves as a rescuer coming in to save those economically disadvantaged in a globalized world, while simultaneously saving and restoring traditional marriage in their home country. In her own words:

“ Men access a multicultural patriotic manhood through adherence to the ideal American values at the foundation of the immigrant's assimilation into the nation: hard work, traditional family values and gender roles, and notions of benevolence couched in romantic ethics of chivalry and the saving of women. Nationalism is founded on the preservation of an invented traditional past and a future vision of modernity” (Schaeffer-Grabel 2006).

Participation in the *mail-order bride* industry means they are entering the future of multicultural corporatism which creates a new global class and masculinity where women are still viewed as the dependent party in a relationship. This is not a singular masculine global class but part of a network of global

Another factor in understanding the choice for foreign non-westernized women has to do with the cultural characteristics and ethnic stereotypes of mainly Eastern European, Latin American, and South East Asian women. Women from another culture or look to be from a foreign culture have physical characteristics that have been historically stereotyped and fetish-sized over by the Western Caucasian community. Western meaning and connotation of race and culture border on being either a form of “racism” or “race-ism”. Sheridan Praso (2006), author of the *Asian Mystique*, suggests that “Racism” applies negative meaning and characteristics to an ethnicity while “race-ism” has neutral or positive distinctions, which suits the arena of this study since men desire their marital spouse to have these physical and cultural characteristics.

This “race-ism” is furthered by viewing the reproduction with foreign women as rejuvenating the biology of their family. What was once illegal and taboo for

traditionalist no more than a half century ago is now reversed itself, with white women being social and biological carriers of a tainted purity and corrosive feminism. A male client describes his appeal to finding a foreign bride based on a biological argument:

“My final decision to pursue a foreign bride resulted from an argument I heard between my mother and her new husband. Mother was bitching moaning and carrying on about how her life was a drudgery and how she felt unappreciated... This is when I realized that the odds are stacked against me finding happiness with an American wife, which has led me to say, “it is time for new genes” (Planet-Love 2001).

This makes men not only the heroic engineers in the global economy but also global genetics. This rejuvenation for western men through interracial marriages can only exist if it is transnational as well as interracial because no matter the race they are still Americanized and/or Westernized women. Another point to make is this rejuvenation is occurring while white Americans continue their urban flight towards gated suburbs and away from forming interracial communities.

Schaeffer- Gabriel (2006) expresses concern over corporate media messages of conservative multiculturalism that promote advertisements that liken the Internet to a utopia, where race, class, and gender are no longer important, only the mind is. Schaeffer- Gabriel (2006) explains, “while race is idealized as no longer a relevant category for the future of our technological world in the West, where everyone now supposedly has access to technology, Internet ads also project those outside of technology, in developing countries, as the place race now resides” (p.3). This gives reason and validity to the argument that capitalistic development will provide a better future for all. Unfortunately, this could be contradictory development since the further capitalistic and technological under-developed countries and women presiding become the less likely bride searchers will find a women untainted by effects of modernity.

Sheridan Prasso (2006) argues that Asian fetishism is less about the actual physical characteristics and more about the *mystique* of Asian women which emphasize the exotic and fantasy like sensuality. The western distinction of Asian women being romantic and seductive began with the Greeks and their creation of Aphrodite, their

goddess of beauty, love and sex, which was supposed to mimic or model the Oriental woman. During European colonization of the East scholars wrote falsely about the anatomy of Asian women reporting horizontal shaped vaginas and abnormally large clitorises. The development and take-off of the Western cosmetic industry was aided by the Asian mystique, since western women could keep their white virtue while expressing a non-white sexuality. In 1935 a *Vogue* advertisement ran explaining how to wear an Asian frock and make-up to appear *as exotic as you possibly can*. With the rise of white-washed Hollywood in the following years historical fact became fiction with continual stereotypical renditions of Oriental femininity and sexuality in popular films like: *The Barbarian and the Geisha* with John Wayne, the James Bond movie *You only Live Twice*, and the classic *South Pacific* (Prasso 2006). Most recently the Vietnam War propelled the sexual relations between east and west sparking the *mail-order bride* business and clientele in Australia primarily (Robinson 1996).

Eastern European mail order brides, either from Russia or the Ukraine, have had a different history with their own stereotypes. Before communist Russia fell Western countries especially the U.S., produced images and descriptions of Russian women as bulky, stubborn, and cold because of the political propaganda. When communist Russia fell and the Cold War ended Slavic brides were said to be tolerant, patient, and obedient. An agency located in Odessa advertizes that “while Western women think they are goddesses and able to cope with anything on their own, a Russian woman will rarely leave a bad (really bad) husband because of the fear that she won’t find another one. For many years the state and men have been oppressing them and they don’t think much about themselves” (Enss 2005). This furthers the IMAs idea that there is no possible way for a western man, their clients, to disappoint his foreign female counterpart since these women are the antithesis of the critical feminists with western culture. This caters to any person’s ultimate idealistic but unrealistic desire that there is no possible way of disappointing your marital partner. This secures men and who they are already as a western man who does not need to change in order to be the object of desires themselves.

Another social phenomenon concerning gender roles is that some mail order brides are already breadwinners in their home country. Sex tourism frequently overlaps with the *mail-order bride* industry especially in metropolis areas of Asia, Russia, and

Latin America. Women migrate to cities like Kiev, Bangkok, and Sosua to make money off sex tourism and hopefully find an interested western suitor. Brennan's (2004) study of sex tourism in the city Sosua of the Dominican Republic explores how gender expectations have changed from the traditional, with women sex workers acting as the breadwinner within a relationship or family.

“While sex workers must temper their displays of monetary gains so as to not compromise their reputations as mothers sacrificing for their children, men openly enjoy freedom from gender ideologies that make demands on them to appear as hard working and sacrificing fathers. In this sexual economy, men even can flaunt their unemployment” (Brennan 2004).

Men within Sousa, and probably other places with the same political economy, have a muted masculine machismo since masculinity is equated with a sponge that absorbs what feminism has worked for.

Men who find IMA courtships desirable are could also be expressing an ambition to restore or adapt their own identity and/or masculinity. Western men are able to do this by following the historical military occupation within these countries where “hospitality girls” are supplied for foreign armed forces, especially the U.S. military. Military bases within the Philippines have drawn in just below 10,000 girls and women from economically depressed urban areas. Women are helped economically but objectified with the men at the base labeling the experience and the women as “R&R,” rest and recuperation, and “LBFM,” little brown fucking machines (Tolentino 1996). Intimate relations and purchase of either Eastern European or Asian women for fantastical or practical reason alludes to the re-masculation of participating men primarily because military is highly related and reaffirming of western power and masculinity.

Ethnography, conflict and feminist theory, exchange theory and role theory are the four major theoretical frameworks to be expressed on this topic by the scholarly community. The ethnographic approach (Constable 2003) constitutes a minority of research but presents an argument that counters more of the earlier work published by feminist and critical theorists. Ethnography challenges earlier research concluding that transnational correspondence marriages are based on exploitative gender, political and economic relations, since reifying cultural stereotypes within critical analysis. Role and

exchange theory (Tolentino 1996) can both be interwoven into the ethnographic and critical feminist arguments since cultural roles and social exchange are inherently tied to the subject at hand.

Methodology

Objective

My main objective in content analysis of IMA video testimonials is to gain further insight as to why western men are choosing to use transnational correspondence marriage agencies to find a future life partner. To answer my research question I have done content analysis of 20 video testimonials made by men participating in an Internet Marriage Agency. I will be using an alternate name, *Website A*, for the website containing the videos so the identity of the IMA and its clientele will remain confidential and protected. Prior to data analysis I used grounded theory to let the literature and differing theories to speak for themselves and give me a holistic theoretical framework where conflicting theories can be studied. The purpose of this content analysis is to understand the *lifeworld* of men in this subculture, whose choice of participation with an IMA has social and structural effects on a global scale. My research goal by using phenomenology and ethnographic content analysis will be to discover and understand the communication of meaning and verify theoretical orientations (Althiede 1987).

Theory

I began observation and analysis of videos with the intention to do a quantitative study and do open and axial coding to create concept mapping. I chose to switch my theoretical framework to a qualitative approach and use the ethnographic content analysis and phenomenological techniques to suspend judgment on the research topic because the primary framework of scholar's analysis are mostly critical and feminist theory driven. This is an appropriate approach to analyzing concepts like family values, masculinity and desire because these are all concepts, which are highly typified and prone to stereotyping. By doing a purely quantitative study as I had planned would hinder my examination and interpretation on inconsistent and alterable meanings of the mentioned concepts.

Phenomenology will allow my analysis the theoretical space to practice interpretations of these videos since traditional and modern western typifications are used to construct the *lifeworld* of the individual's consciousness under study.

Phenomenological methodology will help look at the logic and meaning of these men's experiences and allows the subjects to speak for themselves. Rather than searching for causal connections and patterns of correlation I would like to understand these experiences by suspending biases, by realizing my own as researcher and being open to here another's reality or consciousness. Phenomenology "assumes that we're dealing with an incomplete understanding of the situation, and find out how it looks to those on the other side, what their experience of the situation is" (Daniel 2005).

Phenomenology and ethnography will allow room for interpretation of patterns or themes in interviewee's verbal and non-verbal behavior. Not only will I be looking for reoccurring concepts, but themes that stand out to formulate central ideas since they provide as much insight into central ideas taken from observation. Interviews under analysis have a phenomenological essence since they are answering open-ended questions that allow the IMA interviewee freedom to structure the topic to their own meanings and examples (Gogdan & Bilken 1992). By using ethnographic content analysis I will be concentrating on individual's values and views to help describe cultural knowledge, and interpretive phenomenology aids in finding concealed meaning in video testimonials.

Sampling

My sample is 20 video testimonials on Website A. Website A was one of the first IMA to introduce Foreign Women Romance Tours to the industry, where men may purchase tours of the area in which they are interested in seeking a bride. Tours are offered in Russia, Ukraine, Colombia, Thailand, Philippines and Peru and can cost up to \$8,000, depending on the city and duration of tour. Video testimonials take place while men are on their tour and the location of interviews is filmed at their hotel, IMA hospitality offices, or IMA sponsored socials, usually within the hotel convention center or local club.

I chose website A because of its long standing service and experience in providing the social arena for correspondence marriages. Website A provides a media

reference guide for third party information on the industry including newspaper and magazine articles from sources like TIME magazine, The New York Times, BBC news, Maxim, Penthouse, The Washington Post and many more. Television specials on the IMA have also been produced by MTV, Discovery Channel, 60 Minutes, and more. Beyond Website A's global recognition and growing reputation, since its beginning in 1995, it provides a diverse selection regions for men to correspond with or visit.

Unlike some IMAs that specialize in correspondence and tours of a specific area or country, Website A offers tours in four different regions: Russia, Ukraine, Latin America, and Asia. Russian tours and operations offices are located in St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Volgograd, Veliky Novgorod, Kazan, Rostov-na Donu, Ufa, and Tver. Ukraine tours and operations offices are located in Kiev, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Odessa, Krivoy, Rog, Crimea, Zaporozhye, Poltava, Mariupol, Vinnitsa, Kherson, Sumy, and Nikolaev. Latin tours and operations offices are located in Cartagena, Barranquilla, Medellin, Peru, and Costa-Rica. Asian tours and operations offices are located in China, Philippines, and Thailand. Website A specializes in multiple city tours in Russia and New Years Eve parties on Latin and Asian Tours.

I chose Website A for its video testimonials since it had the highest diversity than other websites I studied and I make the assumption that it would diversify and give my qualitative analysis further depth. By not limiting my content analysis to video testimonials from one area I have not confined the range of men's interests and am able to draw out similarities and differences in participants experience by their culture and country of choice.

My sample was done randomly selected to better represent the larger group. I chose to only do content analysis on 20 video testimonials because any more would constitute enough data to do both a qualitative and quantitative analysis and I would rather concentrate on an ethnographic content analysis that is not statistically driven.

Unit of Analysis

IMA's provide tours to their customers that include activities like sight-seeing, group dates, personal dates and socials, and my unit of analysis is video testimonials that allow men to reflect on these social and environmental interactions. The recording

location of video testimonials, my unit of analysis, takes place in a foreign country at a social gathering sponsored by the IMA. Video testimonials featured on this sight are done at *socials*, usually, which are gatherings scheduled as a part of the tours that IMA's sponsor where men interested in women of a particular area may meet with women they have seen on the website's catalogs. Socials appear to take place in hotel convention rooms and clubs where women easily outnumber the men five to one. Other interviews are done on the side streets of these foreign countries, probably done right outside of the hotel or tourist location. Video testimonials vary in length, from ten seconds to three minutes long, and are used by the website to advertise customer satisfaction. For one man's full interview there might be three to six of these video clips.

Mode of Observation

I have done content analysis of Website A's video testimonials to answer my research question: Why do Western men choose to participate in the Cyber bride industry, a form of an International Marriage Agency? By applying content analysis my work has been accessible and has allowed me to repeatedly review the social artifacts so mistakes in observation and analysis have been eliminated or minimized. My greatest disadvantages of choosing these videos is not knowing all of the interviewer's questions and not having a partner in my analysis to cross reference findings and conclusions.

Fortunately the men recorded have a tendency to repeat the question asked in their answer so I have gotten a sense of what type of questions are asked. Also the questions can be heard but it is a muffled un-microphone voice. Questions can be heard but these video testimonials were not made to focus on the questions being asked but the answers given. They are all open ended questions and usually ask them to express their feelings about or towards something like the city, culture, or women. During observation of my sample I have drawn out cognitive characteristics, and their desired or undesired characteristics in women. Repetition and patterning of concepts or themes in the video will be subject to phenomenological and ethnographic analysis. These video testimonials will allow me to analyze the IMA customer's semiotics which will assist me in interpreting signs, symbols, and the meaning placed on testimonial topics. The words of

these men are taken as fact and according to existential phenomenology these acts that IMA participants experience are captured in communication, via video testimonials.

It must be taken into consideration though that the video testimonials on Website A are provided to prospective customers as an advertising tool that one would expect to boost membership and travel. These presentations of videos are made available on Website A to promote participation and stimulate the imagination of prospective customers so there are probably definite biases in the editing of which videos and men are best at expressing their experience with the IMA as positive as possible. This bias works with my research question though because I am interested in why men are choosing to participate in IMAs.

Even though I have used grounded theory entering my study it is cognitively impossible for me to have entered this topic without preconceptions of my own. The only preconceptions I can apply to my possible results are drawn from implications based off of my literature review, annotated bibliography, and my personal preconceived notions that I have put to the test as much as the research topic at hand.

Personally, I predicted that attractiveness, receptiveness, and acceptance by the women will be of most desire to men participating in IMAs. American women and foreign women will be dichotomized as one superior to other in respect to physical, social and emotional aspects and characteristics. I predicted that Western men will find the traits of a traditional housewife whose domain remains within a socially distinctive and economically controlled private sphere. Since I have been depending on grounded theory, I am depending on the research to speak for itself once analysis begins, but for now these are my, the researcher's, meaningful and subjective ideas. In order to do a proper content analysis, especially within phenomenology it is important for me, the researcher to bracket and decide on when and how to divulge personal experience.

Parameters on my interpretation will be limited to what type of questions are being answered and predetermined topics up for discussion. This can make elaboration on topics more difficult or not possible. Results of this study could imply how a subgroup of Western men feel towards their own perception of Western Women and how mate selection has changed with globalization. The public accepts this type of industry to cater to men but I wonder what the results of studying Western women desiring a foreign

groom, since there are sites that do offer cyber-grooms or mail order husbands. Videos of foreign women are provided and for full analysis of the male/female roles, meaning and expectations I would suggest doing a content analysis of those videos as well. After completion of study raw data will be destroyed by the beginning of January 2009.

Data Analysis

Through application of grounded theory and social theories in my literature review I have begun to conceptualize the results of the study. My unit of analysis is Website A and I will be studying social artifacts in the form of video testimonials/advertisements. I have analyzed 20 video testimonials, which I have alphabetically labeled *A* through *T*, over a four week period, covering approximately five interviews a week. I have begun by establishing seven basic descriptive units surrounding men's feelings that will help ethnographically by providing exploration of their descriptions and phenomenology aids in discovery and interpretation of their narrative or interview. The use of grounded theory for primary data analysis allows the coding of themes directly and inductively from my sampling which will ultimately help my interpretation of meaning with development of theory in relation to ethnography. My application of ethnographic content analysis is emic in intent since I am interested in discovery rather than predictions.

Since these video testimonials could be substituted as IMA advertisements it is important to look at the videos primary figures, their basis for credibility, roles, settings, type of product and persuasion arguments (Hessy-Biber & Leavy 2005).

Table 1: Video Testimonials Presented as Advertisement for Website A

Characteristics and Presentation	Analysis
Primary Figures	Website A clientele
Basis for Credibility	Serviced customer's testimony Authority because experienced customer
Roles	Masculine customers tourists
Settings	clubs/ convention centers (socials) hospitality offices side streets
Type of Product	Experiential product Provision of social environment to meet, engage, and marry foreign women
Persuasion Argument	Opinion based Feelings about or towards: foreign country, women and services

When looking at the video testimonials as an advertisement by the IMA the primary figures, male clientele of IMA, basis for credibility is that they are an experienced service user that has authority through participation and involvement to claim Website A's credibility. The roles of these men are customers explaining what they like about the social environment or arena provided by the IMA. The primary figures also take on the role of tourist by fitting its description and definition: a person traveling especially for pleasure. Men do not describe their experience as daunting or not pleasurable, in fact just the opposite, so I would argue the role of primary figures is not just a customer but tourist as well. The type of product that is being advertised is not the women or country locals alone but an experiential package that is more about environmental interactions and social fulfillment than consumption.

Even though there is a presumed bias of the video testimonials to promote Website A for business purposes the open ended questions that were audible enough to interpret are not leading questions and encourage the interviewee to respond in an unrestrained manner to articulate personal experiences. The interviewers are not using a microphone so questions were retrieved by maximizing the volume which made question retrieval hard but not impossible. Discernable questions I was able to transcribe were:

What do think...? or *How do you feel...?* questions in relation to foreign women, IMA socials and IMA services.

The seven themes I have drawn out of my data collection are highly based off the questions asked since the purpose of the testimonies is to exhibit Western men's meanings and feelings about specific topics, like the women and socials to provide insight into their choice of participating in an IMA. Even though the questions do guide the topic of discussion, they are still open-ended questions. Many men explained their answers using topics outside of the question that was asked which implies further meaning and value placed on the topic question. For example, when men are asked about their feelings towards foreign women they usually answer positively about women participating in IMAs in contrast to Western women. For most men their desirability for foreign women had to be articulated and legitimated in contrast to undesirable traits they found in Western or specifically American women. My data analysis is highly dependent on the expansion of answers inside and outside the topic provided since the language, rituals, and relationships with women, the foreign country and IMA are not all completely unique or conclusively typical.

The seven themes I have discovered through data analysis are IMA participant's feelings: 1. Towards foreign women, 2. Towards American/Westernized women, 3. Towards the foreign country, 4. Towards Website A, 5. Towards Website A socials, 6. About themselves, and 7. About the overall experience. Each of these groups has one or more signifiers that are open for interpretation of cultural meanings and values.

Table 2 Expressed Themes in Video Testimonial by Primary Figures

Themes	Signifiers*
Foreign Women	<u>Physical Characteristics</u> : beautiful, sexy, high ratio of women to men, poised, Opposite of American Western women <u>Mental Characteristics</u> : Receptive, honest, educated, family-oriented, home-minded, different than American/Western women Opposite of American/Western Women
American/Western Women	Opposite of foreign women(physically & mentally), renounced interest, immature, uneducated/cultured, feminist/non-traditional
Foreign Country	Safe, beautiful, historical, welcoming
Website A	Helpful, easy, wonderful, well-organized, apprehensive at first
Website A Socials	Paradise/heaven, high ratio of women to men, anxious at first, overwhelming, relaxed
Themselves	Heritage, interest in family-oriented women, nervous prior to experience/subsequently fulfilled
Overall Experience	Worth recommendation, great/wonderful/amazing experience, dedication to further experiences

*All Signifiers are based off men's repeated expressed feelings towards or about the thematic topic. Signifiers are not put in order of significance.

Men's themed feelings towards foreign women were the most discussed topic of all interviews. Men usually repeated two to three times how impressed they were with both the women's mental and physical characteristics so it was important for me to separate the signifiers. Most descriptions of women were described in opposition to another group of women which divulges that men have polarized views of what the proper feminine role is. For the most part to describe one category of women, foreign women, they had to be described in relation to what men saw as their antithesis: Western women. Their assessment of either group of women was heavily reliant on a comparative argument, antagonism, and contradistinction.

Men's description of the foreign country depicted their experience as safe and the foreign community as welcoming and nice. Not one interviewee expressed critical or negative attitudes towards their experience once they were in the foreign country but some men described skepticism and apprehension before making the trip. Men were fond of the areas they toured because of its diversity and authenticity. One man did comment that the business environment reminded him of home which he found convenient and comforting. They commented on the positive social environment stating that the people of the community were nice, friendly and accommodating.

Website A was put in positive light when participants were asked about the services but most men had to be more directed with this question. When men were asked to talk about the IMA services they usually got off topic so the initial question had to be repeated. By expressing what they like about the IMA services they usually got off the topic question by either going into description about the city and women. Most answers were one simple sentence summary using one of the signified words before moving on to a different topic outside of Website A and the organization. Interviewees seemed to over emphasize what was provided by Website A like the women rather than feedback on the actual IMA itself and its employees.

Website A's socials were another primary theme along with foreign women since both took up most of the subject time in interviews. Men were very enthusiastic about describing their experiences emphasizing the high ratio of women to men. This theme showed high level gratification since men had made presumptions about socials being awkward or overwhelming but all video testimonials expressed socials as a relaxed and open-minded atmosphere. The socials environment was likened to men's definition of Venus, paradise, or Heaven.

When men brought their personal life into the topic they discussed their personal heritage, interest in family-oriented women, and nervousness prior to experience which were subsequently fulfilled. Some men interjected that they were of Russian or Slavic *stock* and wished to meet women within a culture their familial history was connected to others expressed their own passion for dancing or diversity that was expressed in a particular country. Men described themselves as having a children or being married before but they did not distinguish themselves as being home-minded or family-oriented.

These descriptors were left in application to women. Video testimonials articulated men's skepticism about using an IMA to find a bride because they thought either the women would not like them or the IMA was an internet scam of some type. The customers all promoted Website A as a wonderful experience worth doing again, but most expressed preliminary skepticism before participation.

The overall experience of men were repeated and signified by the men's willingness to initiate recommendations to men watching the testimonial and friends and family back home. Most men finished their statements or answers by concluding with a simple sentence describing the experience as amazing, wonderful, and great and *having a ball*. Another meaningful signifier of their overall experience was the effort and ambition to do another romance tour. Some men made reference to this being their second or third tour and the overall experience being worth doing again.

Deduced themes and signifiers are taken from reoccurring topics, mostly directed by the questions and the persuasive argument by primary figures, which has allowed me to distinguish meaning in this subculture. Interpretive phenomenology allows me the theoretical clearance for this meaning to be represented as I, the researcher, understand it to be. Shared ideas and commonalities within video testimonials primarily and ultimately allowed signifiers of themes to surface. Even though data analysis has sufficed my preconceived notions, it will be the syntheses of preconceived notions and unexpected data material that will help me form a knowledge base, new and/or supportive ideas, and provide insight as to why men choose to participate in the IMA industry.

The issues of gender, ethnicity, and family values that I will be discussing are highly obscured by stereotyping. Even though families are expanding their consideration and speculation of gender and ethnic stereotypes children still normally engage in activities that are gender typified. Studies of popular TV shows have concluded that gender equality is increasingly being portrayed but gender stereotypes are still abundantly present (Crooks and Baur 2005). Even though stereotypes are generalized notions that do not take individuality into account they are still widely used, accepted and even expected. There are layers of stereotypes and reified stereotypes that must be taken into consideration in this data analysis.

Stereotypes have helped build the existing theoretical frameworks used to study

the topic of *mail order brides* or transnational correspondence marriages. The manner of which this topic is approached has majorly been within a critical and conflict theoretical framework which has been argued against by a minority of research dedicating its analysis to cultural descriptions using ethnography. The data analysis of video testimonials have provided me participating men's feelings about and towards multiple aspects of their participation in an IMA which will help in ethnographic synthesis of published literature and personal findings and interpretation.

Synthesis

My data collection from observed interviews and comprehension of published literature have provided my research with content and theoretical bearings to assist my understanding as to why Western men are choosing to participate in an Internet marriage agency. Trends and patterns have been observed in the literature review by uncovering concepts and theoretical frameworks. My data analysis has provided both insight into the concept's relationship to participating men and insight into the concepts promoted by the Website A using interviews as a source of advertisement.

The video testimonials posted on Website A do provide material for my analysis but the social environment and use of these video testimonials are not research driven. The context of which these videos were produced and exhibited makes them social artifacts that express men's positive feelings about their IMA experience and provide a form of visual advertisement for prospective customers.

Taking into consideration my research question, why men choose to participate in an IMA, the persuasive argument used by Website A's video testimonials are based off the experiential authority of the clientele. Men on the video testimonials or advertisements are giving the experiential product affirmation by just describing their interactions with women, the country being toured and Website A. This affirmation is not only just a testimonial but a tool for the IMA to encourage future customers to use Website A for its "proven" experiential product and services. All advertisements are expressing the beneficial and superior services provided by Website A through the interviewee's dialogue, but the audio and visual aspects of these advertisements should be reviewed (Hesse-Bibber & Leavy 2005).

The audiovisual material shown on these videos provides further insight into the demographic of customers and their relations with other participants and the foreign women. Most videos were recorded at the large socials that take place in local clubs or hotel convention centers. Men were usually dressed professionally with a suit and tie or dressed down in a polo shirt and sports jacket. Men's attire changed depending on the country's physical and cultural environment, with men in Peru mostly wearing khaki shorts and a polo shirt while men in St. Petersburg strictly stuck to a suit and tie, but both scenarios were exhibiting men in upper-class Western attire whether formal or informal. Women were seen in the same attire no matter the area and the dress was mostly centered on skirts and dresses ending above the knee and shirts that had no sleeves. Also, all women wore little to no make-up. The basic visual of the videos presents an experiential product that conforms to two types of attire assuming two different forms of the experience: a formal and informal experience. The context of the activities and self presentation are reflected in the men and women's attire with men showing the IMA experience as a dress-up or dress down event while women are dressed in what I can best describe as feminine attire.

Audio presentation of the advertisements is primarily the man speaking about his experience, women never spoke but laughed or giggled whenever the man made reference to something he found amusing enough to laugh or share joy over. This improves the advertisement since these men are shown to be the director of the conversation but still exhibited friendly interactions with the women who were responsive to their interactions. If men were shown with women it was a stereotypical traditional gender relation. The advertisements show women that are slim, showing skin, beautiful without make-up and positively responsive to the man's interactions. If a man was filmed with a woman it was common for him to make reference to something about her but women were never asked questions. The man spoke for the woman, either for reasons that she did not want to speak or could not speak English, while women remained a supportive side companion.

Men were more likely to be filmed with foreign women at these socials rather than on the city side streets or hospitality rooms because the socials encourage men and women to mingle for the night and meet each other, with an obvious higher ratio of

women to men. Men filmed at socials with a woman or women were not normal but when women were represented they were making physical contact with the man. If standing during the interview men were holding the hand of the women or arms were inter-locked. If men were sitting next to the women they had either placed an arm around the women's shoulder or on her knee. If a man was to smile down at the women she often laughed and rested her head on his shoulder for a couple seconds. Again, women were responsive to the physical interaction as much as verbal interaction.

The audiovisual material represented on the video advertisements, especially when the man is presented with a woman, has a relationship with the narrative given by the primary figure. Every interviewee or primary figure narrative touched on how the women were *kind* and *responsive*, which was audio and visually reinforced by their filmed interaction. Testimonial narratives also expressed how beautiful and sexy the women are which was visually augmented by their feminine dress and Western ideals of physicality.

The presentation of the multi-component advertisement, having audio, visual and narrative material is combined to represent men satisfied with the experiential product. Customers shown with women reinforced the interviewee's authority to recommend and advise the benefits of using IMA, since the primary objective of IMA services is the introduction of couples on a global basis. Website A's advertisements help my understanding of why men choose to use an IMA because the presented testimonies are aimed at proving their experiential product creates an atmosphere worth investing their time and money in.

Using phenomenology, these men have a *stock of knowledge* or taken for granted reality that their mate preference does not exist or is hard to find in Western societies for a multiple of reasons. From what my research has provided, this subculture's stock of knowledge interprets Western women as non-receptive and opposite of what they find they desire in a foreign bride. This stock of knowledge is not reflected upon since it is a biographical reality created through personal experiences which are ultimately taken for granted. When Western men find their taken for granted reality is put into question by negative relationships and interaction with Western women their stock of knowledge must use an alternate arrangement for interpretation and imagination. The prospect of an

alternate arrangement is facilitated by inquiry into the IMAs and the possible shared experiences when watching video testimonials.

Men might be more likely to participate in an IMA if the demographic of men presented on the films is similar to their own creating in-group dynamics. With exception of one interview all men were Caucasian and all men presented themselves as clean-cut whether dressing informally or formally. The choice to participate by someone viewing the advertisement might not depend on the narrative at all but the demographic visually presented. The choice made by these men to participate is facilitated by media presentations, like the video testimonials, since they give firsthand accounts of how the services provided by the IMA are beneficial and superior to mate selection in the men's native areas.

The narrative made by men in their testimony and their basis for credibility was usually provided by a comparative argument between their native land and the superior foreign experience. Lengkeek's (2001) study on *Leisure Experience and Imagination: Rethinking Cohen's Modes of Tourist Experience* helps support the use of advertisements for men to imagine themselves in the place of the interviewee. The audiovisual images and narrative takes on a touristry and/or vacation tone since men are describing these experiences as someone traveling for pleasure. Men might choose to participate in an IMA after viewing one of these videos because there is an exchange of realities. Imagination of participation can be created by viewing these testimonials because this extended reality is filtered through a person's judgment and understanding creating meaning and projection of possibilities (Lengkeek 2001). Created meaning and this "projection of possibilities can bring people to the point of where they go in search of sensory experiences that have, in everyday life, been consigned to the margins or rejected altogether because they do not fit" (Lengkeek 2001).

According to men's comparative argument that the social environment for mate selection is better under IMA services in a foreign country rather than in their native country reveals that their gender expression and mate preference has been marginalized within their existing reality. Men's testimonies provide comparative examples of women's receptiveness:

“...you can come up to some woman in the subway and ask her directions or whatever question they are very friendly, open. In America if you got a good-looking girl and ask her something in the subway she’s gonna say some dirty to you, give you a dirty look.” – *B*, Russia

“The most fantastic women in the whole world. I've never seen anything like it back in the United States; I probably never will back in the United States. I will never look at the American woman the same way that I have.” – *A*, Russia

Men’s argument against finding a women whether it is unappealing or too hard of a task in the Western region and/or the U.S., usually stems from the instability of gender roles and family values within those regions. The instability of family structure is not a novel phenomena and the interpretation of this phenomena as a cultural crisis is one of our society’s historical past-times (Hiener 2006). Video testimonials repeatedly expressed the desire for and findings of family oriented women, but surprisingly men never projected family-orientation towards them unless it was to reveal they had already had children or were previously married or engaged.

As pointed out by Thistle (2006) some Western men’s ideal of family which suits a gender binary structure has been marginalized. With women’s entrance into the public sphere the demands of work and family create a dual career for the Western woman while public policy and social spending undermines family aid. These men may choose to participate since the imagined reality reflects gender roles of the nuclear family with a wife who does not have the work-family conflict, and if they do they are still primarily family oriented. Men’s testimonies reflected that foreign women were well educated and family oriented.

“In general, I get more of the feel that the girls I've met here are, I don't want make it sound bad, but like my parents were when I was growing up. Women are more focused on the home and the family and husband, not so much in career, although they have careers. But they seem more concerned about your welfare and a family's welfare...”
– *B*, Russia

“In general I would probably say that the Ukrainian women are probably more family oriented rather than work-oriented; they enjoy family situations much more than the American women that I haven’t discovered anyway. They like the family life, they like to take of the family, and they are just very pleasant to be around.” - C, Ukraine

“Well I was very apprehensive about Russia, I find the people are tremendously warm, very deep, very educated, far more educated than the typical American you run into. I’ll be back many times; I plan to spend every minute I can over here.” – F, Russia

“ Family is very important to Peruvians and that one of the reasons I come here all the time because of their thoughts with family and togetherness and it’s something you don’t find in America.” - N, Peru

Cinamon and Rich’s (2002) study found that dual career women are more likely to bring work conflict back to the home/family which creates a further source of conflict for the women and family overall. Men do acknowledge how well cultured and educated these women are but are more intent on emphasizing their desire for a family-oriented women, maybe to avoid the women’s dual career conflicts often researched and discussed in America. Thistle (2006) points out that *the golden age of the American family, was largely a creation of public policy*, and this is a fact that some choose to look over and blame deterioration of family values on the work-oriented woman. Men might choose to participate in an IMA so they may experience the company of family oriented woman who understand the supremacy of the family, while men remain expressing an interest in a family-oriented women while the expression of their own family-orientation is absent from video testimonials.

Interested participants who view these video testimonials can begin to project the possibility of his involvement by imagining women who are, again, the antithesis of American women. Men who are choosing to participate whether for the family orientation or physical beauty are extending different parameters of reality to imagine what Lengkeek (2001) calls *out-there-ness* which is usually described metaphorically.

The use of metaphors within video testimonial narratives were mostly in regards to the socials and experiences with women where hedonistic delight and happiness is expressed. More specifically:

“The socials are like dropping into the planet of Venus, just surrounded by women. The hardest part, you see one woman that is just so beautiful and you turn and there’s one better looking than the one you were looking at. It just doesn’t end.”-O, Russia

“...the only thing I feel unfortunate about is that there are too many women for too few guys. It's men's heaven up here (hahaha). It's too much!” -E, Russia

“ It’s an unbelievable, unbelievable dream land. It’s like paradise, right? Don’t you agree? Look at these smiles (pointing to women’s smiling faces around him) isn’t it beautiful?! We have paradise on the earth right here in Davao...” - T, Philippines

These metaphors, however enigmatic, makes the imagined experience of finding a beautiful foreign bride with family values unassailable since the act of playing around with this knowledge provided by testimonies can lead to a belief in the imagined. IMAs ability to create what Lengkeek (2001) calls *mode of amusement, interest and change* encourages both the assignment of fantastical signs and clichés to create leisure attraction and a disassociation from a certain cultures predominant reality. The mentality of those vacationing or traveling should be taken into consideration since Western or American men are doing so in a distinct cultural and cognitive style which is catered to by the IMA.

Lord, Putrevu, and Shi (2008) study on the *Cultural influences of cross-border vacationing* can help explain how the American mentality orients itself while traveling. Travelers from the United States are coming from an individualistic approach rather than collectivist which highlights the primacy of their personal desires and benefits, which legitimates their etiquette being guided by personal rather than group values. Adding to this individualistic approach to tourism, phenomenology explains that the creation of *typifications* and ideal types of Western and foreign women are made on and individualistic interactions. Even though the men participating are intersubjective beings,

they still have subjective and individualistic experiences unique from others (Applerouth and Edles 2007).

While there is respective authority given to the individual experience, American mentality when traveling has created shared meaning that categorizes them in vertical individualism. This vertical individualism emphasizes competition and hedonism when traveling and allows men to embody their tourist *ideal type* and project their marital partner's *ideal type* (Lord et al. 2008). The emphasis on competition may help explain men's rationalization because comparative argument for the superiority of foreign women and inferiority of American women is continually made. One testimonial describing Website A's services and assistance, unintentionally expresses his own *self serving biases*:

"It's a very good operation. The people are very honest and concerned about helping you find the right woman ... They are easy to get along with, sometimes more tolerant than I think they should be, but that's probably good for the American people."

-N, Peru

Men might choose to participate in an IMA since it provides a social arena for men to express themselves, based on personal desires and values, in ways that they see as marginalized in Western regions (Lord et al. 2008). This quote denotes that some men are acknowledging their personalities are being indulged and catered to but it is still *good for the American people* since it still works for individual's cost-benefit analysis and hedonistic desires.

Using Lengkeek (2001) writings on modes of tourist experience and Lord et al. (2008) study on American cultural influences on transnational vacationing, men's choice to participate in an IMA is aided by the IMA's presentation of an imagined alternate reality and provision of a social atmosphere and service that caters to that alternate reality.

Combining my methodology of advertisement content analysis and theoretical frameworks, phenomenology and ethnography, to draw out cultural meanings through narrated experiences would not have been possible without literature on the changing family values and gender. By applying and synthesizing previous research and theory my advertisement content analysis has revealed that most men participating in an IMA

choose to do so since the social and physical environment reflect their preference in cultural behavior.

Conclusion

My study to determine why American/Western men choose to participate in an IMA provided a variety of answers that were mainly dependent on the theoretical framework of research. Most research on the *mail-order bride* industry has pointed to a feminist and/or critical argument claiming that men participate to create a new global masculinity based on the universality of gender and family norms with connotations of domination. Other studies offer a cultural explanation of men's choice to participate by entering their study with acknowledgment and critiques of stereotypes often used in critical and/or feminist research. Within my review of literature on this topic, critical or not, men's choice to participate in IMAs could be driven by one or a compilation of the following: changing family values, cultural stereotypes, and cross cultural attraction.

By using these dichotomized frameworks I was able to get a holistic view of the subject by examining the darker gender domination and lighter cultural functionality of men participating. By applying phenomenology and ethnography I was able to remain unbiased as I possibly could when trying to pull out meaning from the narrated experiences. By analyzing video testimonials as advertisements along with theory of the imagination and tourism I predict that men choose to participate in IMA particularly after viewing the IMA website and /or watching video testimonial advertisements because of a belief in the imagined. Along with the belief in the imagined men are creating meaning through the shared narration and interpretation of these video testimonials.

When men interested in participation visit IMA's like Website A the video testimonials along with other images are present on the home page. For pre-deciding customers, review of these video testimonials and/or advertisements can create imagination of an extended reality where the fantasy for finding the perfect life-partner is occurring for other men that they can identify with. Content analysis has revealed that most men participating in an IMA choose to do so since the social and physical environment reflect their preference in cultural behavior which has been marginalized in their primary reality.

I would encourage further research into American /Western men participating by doing a longitudinal study of men before, during and after their experience, not dependent if they get engaged /married. Most research is done on presumptions of stereotypes but we need to understand how participating men or men interested in participating view their connections to stereotypes. By doing a study like this we could better categorize the cognitive style of men entering participating in this industry. Researchers could see if they are coming from an anti-feminist, masculinist, or pro-feminist framework in relation to definitions of gender and personal family values. Beyond qualitative research there also needs to be quantitative studies done on how many men are participating, getting engaged, getting married, and the success/ failure rate of transnational matrimony. Most quantitative research was done prior to IMAs inception and prior to public use of the internet so quantitative studies should be done as well.

The explored literature did not allow me to answer the research question as I planned but using grounded theory allowed my methodology to explore the culture of Western masculinity and the meaning of their experiences with Website A. I did not predict that ethnography and phenomenology frameworks would align as well as they did with Lengkeek's (2001) study on the experience of tourism and Lord et al. (2008) research on cultural influences of transnational vacationing .

The explored literature on the topic failed to provide a united understanding of the macro and micro level dynamics around the topic because of the polarized theoretical frameworks researchers were coming from: critical and feminist theory and ethnography. I leaned more towards the ethnographic approach in my methodology since not much research on IMAs has been done without a critical and feminist bias. By applying ethnography and phenomenology I was able to uncover major themes of cultural importance to men and creation of meaning through an extended reality or imagination.

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Data

Key: **1.** Feelings towards foreign women

2. Feelings towards American/Western women

3. Feelings towards the country

4. Feelings towards the Website A

5. Feelings towards Website A Socials

6. Feelings about themselves

7. Feelings about their experience overall

Website A Testimonials

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old / alone/ retro club

A1, 2: The most fantastic women in the whole world. I've never seen anything like it back in the United States; I probably never will back in the United States. I will never look at the American woman the same way that I have.

A3: I heard speculations, but as I checked into them I felt they were real and since I've been over here that is the greatest thing a man could ever want. Country is rich in culture, people are fantastic, has a rich history too. It's a very beautiful country.

A5: Very relaxing, women are everywhere. The ratio of women to men is so great that you spend all day just talking to different ones and never go around everyone being able to talk to.

A4: A: I haven't been able to use an interpreter, because everyone I've talked to spoke enough English. I liked communicating with them. Staff is very helpful, this is my third tour and staff is wonderful, probably the best wherever is.

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old / alone/ retro club

B1, 2: Different than Americans. Much more home-minded, down to earth, friendly, courteous, very sincere and gracious, I believe. I don't want to downplay American women. There are a lot of good American women. So, different culture here in Ukraine.

B1: In general, I get more of the feel that the girls I've met here are, I don't want make it sound bad, but like my parents were when I was growing up. Women are more focused on the home and the family and husband, not so much in career, although they have careers. But they seem more concerned about your welfare and a family's welfare.

B3: To tell the truth you hear a lot of negative publicity in press about police and mafia and crime, those kinds of things. But in my experience here it is safer than in any American city that I've been in. I feel very safe walking down the streets at night, I feel very comfortable at night, you know, there are stupid things, of course, but very, very comfortable.

B1, 2: Probably the number of women. It seems like there is a greater proportion of women versus men here. Although, you can come up to some woman in the subway and ask her directions or whatever question they are very friendly, open. In America if you got a good-looking girls and ask her something in the subway she's gonna say some dirty to you, give you a dirty laugh. So, much more sincere, friendly people here.

B1: I guess I don't know for sure that they are the right choice but they seem to have a lot of qualities I am looking for, which I referred earlier about the home life. They are more concerned about the home and are not so concerned about career.

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old / suit and tie/ alone/ side street daytime

C1: They are very beautiful women, they are very sociable, friendly, and they are very easy to get to know and they are just enjoyable to be around.

C1: In general I would probably say that the Ukrainian women are probably more family oriented rather than work-oriented; they enjoy family situations much more than the American women that I haven't discovered anyway. They like the family life, they like to take of the family, and they are just very pleasant to be around.

C1: My surprise is the number of available women in this city. They are all beautiful, like I said they are just very to get along with, they like American men, they enjoy their company and we enjoy theirs.

C 5: It's very relaxed, it's comfortable, everyone mingles and gets to know each other and starts talking, there's nice dancing - it's a very good atmosphere.

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old / suit and tie/ alone/ convention center

D1, 2: Hi. It's wonderful. These ladies have got the American women beat by far. I mean, once you have been here you could never settle for an American woman. And they are polite, they are poised, they are receptive, that's an incredible experience, it really is.

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old / suit and tie(blue)/ with woman/ convention center

E4, 5: [Webcite A] is not paying me a cent, I have no idea who you guys are, but it's very very nice, it's very real, the only thing I feel unfortunate about is that there are too many women for too few guys. It's men's heaven up here hahaha. It's too much.

E1: We've asked them as a standard question Why would they be interested in an older man, and they tell us persistently that older men are more understanding, we are more mature and we are very different from the young Russian men. I think they appreciate our the Western men's respect that we have for them as people because perhaps Russian men do not treat them with the same kind of respect that a Western man will treat every other women.

E1, 6: I did meet a girl from Moscow, she is a country girl speaks very very little English but I'm having her fly over from Kazan to St.Petersburg. I have arranged for her to fly in tomorrow and she'll be able to spend a couple of days in St.Petersburg, she's never been here before. And I did meet her on Moscow tour, we spent a couple of days touring the Kremlin together with an interpreter that was from your facilities and so it could be something quite serious. She is 23 she's got a Master's degree in engineering, and I'm 45 for the world to know, so I feel quite pleased that I've told her all the truth about myself and she seems quite satisfied that I am an honest person so there could be something down in the work for me in terms of marrying a Russian girl.

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old/ navy polo/ with woman/ convention center

F1, 2: Well I was very apprehensive about Russia, I find the people are tremendously warm, very deep, very educated, far more educated than the typical American you run into. I'll be back many times; I plan to spend every minute I can over here.

F4, 5: Well it's quite a thrill, I had no idea it would be this good. My friend talked me into coming over and I'm thanking him every day. I mean it just blows my mind how special this is. [Website A] is a good outfit, wonderful outfit; I can't believe how warm the atmosphere is here. The only thing crazy is that there are 30 girls to every guy here, so guys if you do not come over here you are missing it. This thing is a blast, I'm having a ball.

Caucasian/ 40 yrs old/ suit and tie/moustache/ with woman/ convention center

G1: They are much more educated, well educated. And they are cultured, extremely cultured. And they are very interested in American men, very interested in American men.

G1, 2: The ladies were I can say much more educated, they are just so much fun to be with, you can carry on conversations with them and they would know everything about everything, and the age difference is not a problem cause these ladies are so much more mature than American ladies, that if you were somebody that is twenty-five or twenty-six, even though you may be in your forties it's not a problem much so ever, you feel very comfortable.

Caucasian/ 30 yrs old/ muscle T-shirt / alone/ convention center (world map backdrop)

H1, 3: Yeah, I'm having a great time. The Russian women are just beautiful, they are intelligent, they're very friendly. It's great! It's a great place!

H5: Oh gosh. I was flabbergasted at the first social. When I walked in, there are so many women, and there is you walking elbow to elbow with them, all over with smiles and wanting to dance.

Caucasian/ 50-60 yrs old/ suit and tie / alone/ convention center

I1: The women here are much more feminine, much more receptive; they have less of an agenda in terms of what they are looking for materialistically in life.

I1: They are not in feminist movement and they don't believe everything they read in Cosmopolitan magazine.

Caucasian/ 30-40 yrs old/ suit and tie /with interpreter/ convention center

J6: One of the reasons I decided to come to Russia was that I had a nice girlfriend that got killed in the car accident last year and she came from a poor family with not a lot of luxuries in life and I know that women in Russia struggle with not a lot of luxuries, and my girlfriend appreciated everything so much that I thought I would like to have another woman that had not had a lot of luxuries in life, that could appreciate a good man, that was trying to make a nice life for me - and that was basically my number one. I also looked at the catalogues, how attractive the girls were - I was physically attracted to them and thinking all the time that this really is true and gonna happen, but as it turned out this is really true, and they are all really very nice and everything that [Website A] told me that I doubted - and I doubted everything they told me - it has turned out to be true.

Caucasian/ 50-60 yrs old/ suit and tie (red, white & blue) /alone/ hospitality room

K 3, 6: I come from a Slavic stock, I am second generation American, and there are physical similarities between many Americans and Eastern European or European stock. I would be much less interested in going to South America or Asia - it's much easier to talk to people with common origins. In the case of Russia - I had a unique interest in Russia for many years, after all, Russia - the Soviet Union as an empire - was the opposite pole with democracy, and as soon as that changed, as soon as the process of change began it was interesting to be able to come over here and see whether in fact we could be friends, part of this was very much to establish friendship.

Caucasian/ 20-30 yrs old/ grey and white T-shirt/ glasses /alone/ side street daytime

L1: I think probably they view marriage, they believe that once you get married you stay married; you are faithful to your spouse. In my opinion, the biggest difference is the beauty factor, I think that there's something very different in the structure of Ukrainian and Russian women, both in facial features, their appearance, their eyes, the way the hair styles are and the bodies of course, they keep an excellent shape. But aside from the physical thing cause you want more than a physical relationship with a woman the attitudes. Even the younger women, the majority of the younger women and middle and older-aged women all desire something that men want in a wife. Honesty, compassion, they want loyalty, and they want somebody that desires a family.

L1: In my opinion, the biggest difference is the beauty factor I think there is something very different in the structure of Ukrainian or Russian women. There are some facial features, their appearance or their eyes, the way their hairstyles are and their bodies of course: they keep them in excellent shape! But aside from the physical thing, because you want more than a physical relationship with a woman - the attitudes: even the younger women, the majority of the younger women, and middle- and older-aged women, - all desire something that men want in a wife. That is: honesty, compassion, they want loyalty, and they want somebody that desires a family.

Caucasian/ 40-50 yrs old/ orange T-shirt/ glasses /w/arm around woman/ hospitality room

M3, 6: The whole experience has just been great I cannot think of a better vacation I have had. With my job, I am divorced and have two children, I have either had trips with my children or trips through my work, so this is the first trip I have done on my own in a very, very long time. I have had more fun on this trip than I can remember in recent years.

M1: What do I think about her? I think she's is the right woman for me. She is strong, independent, smart. She is running her own business. She is very affectionate. In think we are a good match we have good chemistry and I am planning on coming back to Peru to visit her again and see where that goes from there.

Caucasian/ 30-40 yrs old/ dark T-shirt/ glasses /alone/ moustache/ hospitality room

N3: I only knew about Peru from program such as National Geographic, the Peruvian mummies, Machu Picchu, of course the famous places that most people know but what a lot of people don't realize about Peru is the food is excellent here and is deeply rooted in Spanish history. The architecture is wonderful there is so much diversity here in Peru. You can have Amazonian jungle, the desserts, the beaches, swimming, horseback riding, anything you want sail gliding.

N1: Peruvian women are very special, there very family oriented. They take pride in taking care of their families and taking care of their men. They are very sincere

and honest. They will answer your questions honestly. You do not have to beat around the bush or wonder what their up to. They are very honest, open and sincere.

N2, 4: I found about Website A searching the Internet. I was very disappointed with the women in general in the United States and so I looked for something different in another country, one with family values. It's a very good operation. The people are very honest and concerned about helping you find the right woman and as you get to know the people that are involved with Website A you can see that they're interested in helping you find the right person for yourself. The people that work in Website A are very nice, very friendly, very personable. They are easy to get along with. Sometimes more tolerant than I think they should be but that's probably good for the American people.

N1, 3: Peruvian people are wonderful. Family is very important to Peruvians and that one of the reasons I come here all the time because of their thoughts with family and togetherness and it's something you don't find in America. Come to Peru! There are beautiful women. The people are friendly; the people are friendly in general. You don't have to speak Spanish and you can get by speaking English here because there are so many people that speak English. It's a country that promotes tourism very much and there's so much to see and so much diversity. It is a wonderful place to come to. Oh yes, I would definitely recommend Website A.

N3: I enjoy Peru very much. One day I plan on living here. This is a wonderful country and I enjoy the people here. The values of the Latino community is very special. The most I like about Lima is of course their warm weather. Its green, it's beautiful, the people are friendly and you can always go and talk to people here and they don't have a problem with talking to you. They are very open-minded.

Caucasian/ 30-40 yrs old/ suit and tie/ earring /alone/ moustache, bald/ convention center

O1, 2: I decided to try this social- not really liking the American women's attitudes, and hearing things about Russian women about how beautiful and sexy they are. I showed up here. The hotel were staying at is one of the best in the St. Petersburg area here. The staff has been unbelievably helpful with any of my needs. Hearing about how beautiful they are in Russia, they are coming short they are unbelievably gorgeous. So many of them, so beautiful, so thin, so sexy. It's like heaven on earth for this last week. I been with vey many Russian women and enjoyed every second I've had here.

O1, 2: I am surrounded by the most beautiful women in the world. I can't go back to the states and settle for an American woman. The attitude the way Russian women treat their men is so diverse from American women that if I don't find a Russian woman here now I will be back.

O5: The socials are like dropping into the planet of Venus, just surrounded by women. The hardest part, you see one woman that is just so beautiful and you turn and

there's one better looking than the one you were looking at. It just doesn't end. I love socials and can't get enough of them.

Q1: I have met many women. I have been here five days and talk with an accent already. I have visited them in their apartments. I have gone to dinner with many women and spent company with them - Always very kind and very sweet. They love the attention and like American men so it all worked out for me.

Caucasian/ 40-50 yrs old/ sport jacket and tie/ glasses, facial hair /alone/ hotel bar

P1: My number one impression is that I am very happy I did this. Obviously, the number one reason for coming here is to meet nice ladies and I have been very impressed with the ladies I've met. They have been very friendly, easy-going, sincere and made me feel very welcomed in their country.

P1: I would say Russian women tend to be very traditional in their outlook. They want to find a stable man. They seem very honest and sincere, and like I've said before I have been very impressed with them.

P2,5: At the beginning it's a little overwhelming because it's really something that one is not used to because back in America we never get this ratio of this many women to men. But after a while it becomes easy and the reason for that is the women are more approachable and it makes it a lot easier.

P3, 4: The impression in America is that Russia is not a safe place; I have not found that to be the case. The people are friendly. Going on tours like Website A makes it safe, easy, and enjoyable. So my recommendation is to come over. There's a good chance you'll meet a life time partner. Even if you don't go it's a wonderful experience I think every man should experience once.

Asian/ 20-30 yrs old/ brown T-shirt & khakis/ glasses /with women/ hotel

Q1: I corresponded with a couple girls and I wanted to come to china. This is why I am sitting here today. I've met a lot of nice girls, no regrets.

Q5, 6: I was pretty nervous when I first got here, and I didn't know what to expect and I was very nervous. The set up was going to be girls at the tables and we had to go around and speak to different girls. Once socials started I mean it was such a relaxed atmosphere and it's so much fun.

Q7: I have had the experience and a half. Even the guys that I've met, I mean the guys are fantastic. I've just had so much fun it's been a really great week.

Caucasian/ 40-50 yrs old/ white T-shirt & hair/ glasses /with women/ hotel

R6, 7: I punched in *Asian women* in the computer and I was actually looking for Asian women in the States but your site came up. So I said *ok let me try this*. I am pretty new to computers so I got on it and everything went good. Then I found out about your Romance Tours so I thought it was going to conflict with something else and finally it worked out and it's really been excellent. I have enjoyed the whole thing and I've met a very nice lady. We rented or I mean we hired and interpreter yesterday and she was just absolutely excellent.

R1, 5: Ok the socials, well, were I think better than what I had expected. There were some women, just awesome looking women. I like Asian women so maybe I am just little prejudice, but yes it was everything I expected and more. Very well done, very well put on and the company did everything they said they were going to do.

R3, 7: You know what?! I was less scared here than I am going to Detroit. I was not scared at all, not a bit. Everyone's been very polite, very nice. They just do whatever they can to make your stay nice.

Caucasian or Latino / 25-35 yrs old/ brown white jacket/ alone/ hospitality room

S3: I think this is a beautiful country. I have had a very nice time. The city too was very interesting. There were a lot of stores and restaurants from back home.

S1, 5, 6: The socials...the socials is an experience that I can only describe but in order to really understand it you have to live it yourself. The women were extremely beautiful, extremely friendly. They were very outgoing. They love to dance and they was not shy at all. The dancing was great. I like to salsa and meringue so it was very easy for me to fit in and dance with the women, and once the women saw the way I was dancing they were very anxious to dance with me.

S5, 7: The social events were fantastic. They were very well organized very well put together. It was great experience and if I had to do it all over again I would definitely do it.

S1, 3, 7: I would definitely recommend the Lima tour to anybody that's interested in coming to Lima and finding that perfect someone. It's impossible not to find that perfect someone because everybody is looking for the same thing and they are friendly and outgoing. The women are family oriented and they are very serious about being in a relationship.

Caucasian/ 40-50 yrs old/ striped shirt cowboy hat/ with 3 women/ hospitality room

T1, 3, 7: Well it's so wonderful to be here. It's a great experience and it's my third day now and we've had three socials here it is unbelievable. I don't understand why the Filipina man doesn't choose all these beautiful women that there still bachelors. It's

amazing! Amazing, amazing, amazing! I have been all around the world. All the continents in world, I've lived there I've worked there but I have never seen so many beautiful women together. It's an unbelievable, unbelievable dream land. It's like paradise, right? Don't you agree? Look at these smiles (pointing to women's smiling faces around him) isn't it beautiful?! We have paradise on the earth right here in Davao and it's a wonderful experience. They're intellectual (pointing out surrounding women) she's a nurse, a nurse, and yeah a nurse and they're all experienced and professional. They know how to talk, they speak English because you know in many countries you meet beautiful women and S. America for instance they speak Spanish and speaking Spanish is nice but you have to speak Spanish yourself to understand these people but here everybody speaks English. That's the amazing thing, they are well trained and they are well educated and I must say thanks to all the mothers and fathers that produced all these beautiful children that made it so good here. I was a wonderful experience I really enjoyed them a lot, and (speaking to the women) I want to thank you all for being here tonight.

T1, 3, 7: I don't know if you have any special questions or you want me talk about certain things in life but this is a wonderful and unique experience. I have never dated before like this. I am a bachelor now for seven years and I look around and this experience my heart was beating everyday twice as fast just because of the fact you see all these beautiful ladies around. It's not only the beauty that's outside it's the beauty that's inside these women. They have such a warm heart, deep inside it comes up and it comes out and that's really the Far East mentality. The spirituality is there too. It's the most beautiful place in the world, Davao. It's really unique what they have here. The spirituality, I mean I went to a Catholic church today and all these people they pray every day. They're religious but they are not fanatics. They're energetic, they believe in God, a real thing in life and love is part of their culture. I am really really happy I had this experience and I want to thank your organization for doing such a wonderful job, and I don't know where you get all these beautiful women from. I don't understand because the American or the Dutch, I am a Dutchman, they come down here the first thing we look for is this kind of women in life. It's wonderful, wonderful, wonderful and I really appreciate it.

