

Background to International Dating

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“Mail Order Brides”

- “Mail Order Bride” Business
 - Catalogs
 - Online Dating
 - Romance Tours
- International Dating
 - Marriage Focused
 - Differentiates from sex tourism



Human Trafficking?

- Two High Profile Murders in WA
 - Brides from Philippines & Kyrgyzstan
- IMBRA
 - Passed with bipartisan support in 2005
 - Limits men to 2 K1 Fiance Visas
 - Requires background checks
 - Resources for brides
 - Defining IMBs



IMBRA Impacts

- Industry originally against
 - Used to sell physical addresses
 - Realized the safety risks
- Actually helps industry
 - Men are vetted
 - Must conduct correspondence through site
 - Monetized



Recent Developments

- Tiktok and Passport Bros
 - Colombia, Dominican Republic, Philippines
 - Using Apps versus agencies
 - No vetting on either side
- Targets for Violence
 - 8 U.S. citizens murdered in Medellín (11/23-12/23)
 - Dating App method
 - Scopolamine (Devil's Breath)



Ukraine War

- Political and life crises
 - Easier to meet women during unstable times
 - Women have left to EU
- Number of agencies have shut down
 - Local matchmakers continue
 - Portugal, Romania, Germany and Ukraine
 - Online Services



Research Methods

- All agencies IMBRA compliant
- Began in 2010
 - Followed 3 romance tours from A Foreign Affair
 - Colombia, Ukraine & the Philippines
- Other Agencies
 - Dream Connections, Match Guaranty
- Boutique Matchmaking Agencies
 - Ukraine
 - For Him Dating, It's Possible, Prime Matchmaking
- Affiliate Marketing Sites



Masculinity

- Men involved
 - Conservative
 - Traditional Gender Roles
 - Heteronormative families
 - White
 - Divorced
 - Boomer Generation
 - Undertones of Incel culture (younger)



Men's Search

- Can be exploitative
 - Search for women's labor
 - Traditional feminized labor
 - Marriage historically
- Potentially Abusive
 - Story of Alana
 - AFA translator
 - Married & Divorced American



Potential for 'Scams'

- 90% of the industry is online
 - “Keyboard Romeos”
 - Monetized
 - Chatbots & AI
 - \$8 per message
 - Fantasy versus reality



Intimate Migrations

- Overlap in men searching for women's intimate labor
 - Romance tourists
 - Sex tourists
 - Romance Retiree Migrants
- Similar geographic spaces
 - Relative affluence
 - Availability of women's labor
 - Cost of living
- New forms of imperial reach
 - Gentrification
 - Exploiting vulnerable populations



Conclusions

- Complex issues of regulation and ethics
 - Preventing Exploitation
 - Encouraging intercultural exchange