



# Foreign Brides, Multiple Citizenship and the Immigrant Movement in Taiwan

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As capitalist globalization intensifies, recent discussion of citizenship has sought to decouple citizenship from its traditionally close association with the nation-state. Scholars have proposed “multicultural citizenship” and “multiple citizenship” as alternative concepts. The former is premised on the idea that the nation-state contains a degree of plurality that allows migrants to retain their cultural identity provided they adhere to the state’s political norms. The latter underscores the need to separate citizenship from limiting cultural identities and loyalties, and argues that multiple citizenship and multicultural citizenship are incompatible. This paper agrees with the ideal of multiple citizenship and shows how multiculturalism can be co-opted without changing the substantive and formal rights of citizenship for immigrants. However, the author argues that the ideal of multiple citizenship and the concept of multicultural citizenship are not inherently incompatible. Based on the experience of empowering women who migrate to Taiwan through marriage, this paper illustrates how the concept of “multicultural citizenship” can be used as a narrative strategy to challenge Taiwan’s exclusionary model of citizenship, paving the way to move towards the ideal of a more inclusive multiple citizenship.

## *Introduction*

The discussion of citizenship in the modern era has traditionally centered on the acquisition of rights and the exercise of obligations, and how rights serve to forge attachment to a particular society. Liberal and civic republican are the two dominant traditions of discourse. In both traditions the attendant



rights and obligations of citizenship were contained within the nation-state, which was itself conceptualized as culturally and morally homogenous. These approaches paid little attention to issues arising from the admission of immigrants – who are non-citizens – and how these immigrants might alter the basis of citizenship as membership in a bounded community expands and new potential members enter. As the world becomes increasingly globalized, recent writing have sought to decouple citizenship from its traditionally close association with the nation-state.

As Faulks (2000:136) points out, “there are strong contradictions between the values of capitalism and citizenship: where the values of the market are dominant, citizenship acquires a thin and vulnerable status.” Faulks illustrates how globalization is making this contradiction more acute. First, states compete for market share in an international system that is subject to minimal governance. Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are dominated by advocates of neo-liberalism. Consequently, the lack of regulation allows powerful multinational corporations to exploit poorer countries, thereby resulting into a reduction of basic social and civil freedoms, including rights to welfare and trade union membership.

Second, migration, infectious diseases, crime and ecological challenges have become global which cannot be managed successfully by any single state. Many such problems are closely related to deep inequalities that exist between states. For instance, the deregulated and unstable nature of financial markets has negative impacts on the maintenance of citizenship rights, particularly in poorer countries. In turn, this leads to greater poverty, which increases the possibility of instability, environmental damage and war. These create conditions that push more people from poorer countries to seek job opportunities and asylum in richer countries.

Under capitalist globalization, states cannot claim to guarantee their own citizens’ rights if they do not also consider the rights of individuals, including foreigners and members of other ethnic or national communities. Two alternative concepts of citizenship have been proposed to deal with the realities of a globalized context. The concept of “multicultural citizenship” is proposed by scholars recognizing both the importance and limits of citizenship based on the idea that the nation-state contains a degree of plurality that allows migrants to retain their cultural identity provided they adhere to the state’s political norms. Some scholars who adhere to an inclusive notion of citizenship propose the concept of “multiple citizenship,” underscoring the need to separate citizenship from limiting cultural identities and loyalties, and claiming that the concepts of multiple citizenship and multicultural citizenship are incompatible.

Based on my praxis-oriented research and long-term involvement in the empowerment of Southeast Asian women immigrating to Taiwan through marriage (see Hsia [2006] for details) and the making of the immigrant movement in Taiwan, this paper illustrates how citizenship can empower marriage migrants, and why the concepts of multicultural citizenship and multiple citizenship are not inherently incompatible.

This paper will first discuss different concepts of citizenship, addressing the issues of globalization followed by a discussion on the intersection of class, race/ethnicity and gender in citizenship. Using the concrete example of the making of the immigrant movement in Taiwan, the last portion of this paper will be devoted to examining how marriage migration can create a golden opportunity to move towards the ideal of multiple citizenship. The phenomenon of marriage migration is framed as the result of the ill-effects of capitalist globalization, where working class women and men from different nation-states form the alliance for their economic and social survival. The children of these transnational marriages are the living challenges to the boundaries of nation-states. Furthermore, the article will demonstrate how the rhetoric of multiculturalism can be used as narrative strategy to challenge Taiwan's traditionally exclusionary model of citizenship (which is based on descent) to enhance the burgeoning immigrant movement, and gradually move towards the ideal of multiple citizenship.

Interview data cited in the article were obtained during my fieldwork in connection with my research on marriage migration beginning in May 1994 until the present time. In 1995, I initiated a Chinese literacy program based on the theory of the "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire, 1970) aiming at empowering marriage migrants. After many years and numerous experiences of trial and error, the marriage migrants empowered in the Chinese programs collectively established a national organization, TransAsia Sisters Association in Taiwan (TASAT) in 2003. TASAT is a grassroots organization where marriage migrants are heavily involved in decision making, program implementation and daily organizational operations. In 2003, I co-founded the Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants (AHRLIM) to spearhead a movement to promote the rights of migrant workers and immigrants in Taiwan, of which TASAT is one of the founding and active members.

### *Citizenship in the Globalization Era*

Several writers claim that national citizenship has lost its importance in the present era of globalization (e.g., Soysal, 1994; Sassen, 1996), suggesting that citizenship rights have been overtaken by labor rights and human rights (Harris, 1995; Soysal, 1994).



Soysal (1994:1) argues that “a new and more universal concept of citizenship has unfolded in the post-war era, one whose organizing and legitimating principles are based on universal personhood rather than national belonging.” With personhood rather than citizenship as basis for social membership, she proposes the ascendance of post-national social membership (Soysal, 1994:44). She cites the experience of “guest workers” in Europe, who live and work in a foreign country without acquiring citizenship status. Having secured basic social and civil rights, the rights of “non-citizens” do not differ significantly from those of citizens (Soysal, 1994:119). Though Soysal is right to highlight the need to decouple citizenship from its traditional link with the nation-state and to recognize the growing importance of human rights in world politics, her thesis has been criticized for the following problems. First, while many guest workers might increasingly enjoy social and civic rights, they do not possess political rights. This problem is considered crucial since participation is one of the major defining characteristics of “thick” citizenship (Faulks, 2000). Though some immigrant groups have been able to organize themselves politically in the context of civil society, without formal rights to vote or stand for office, immigrants can take little part in the formulation and implementation of policies that may impact negatively on their social entitlements and civil liberties. Non-citizens are therefore objects, rather than active participants, of state policy. Faulks (2000) maintains that human rights by themselves do not ensure the development of participatory networks that are necessary to sustain institutions that promote governance, and those that are crucial in building bridges between immigrant groups and the dominant culture within the polity. Since membership in a polity involves responsibilities as well as rights, a healthy democracy cannot deprive large groups of individuals from participating in decisions that affect their community’s future. Also, there can be a backlash if minorities are perceived to benefit from the social aspects of citizens without playing their part in the community. For instance, the dominant discourse in Taiwan sees marriage migrants, or the so-called “foreign brides,” as public charges, who not only take advantage of the citizens’ tax money but also cause social problems that citizens are forced to suffer. Since citizenship involves participation and responsibilities, Faulks believes that human rights cannot simply supersede citizenship as Soysal suggests.

Critics have also argued that the shift to post-national membership of the guest worker experience in Europe cannot be easily replicated in other contexts (e.g., Joppke, 1998; Parreñas, 2001; Piper and Roces, 2003). Piper and Roces (2003) point out that Soysal’s theory of post-national citizenship is specific to the European context and is based on the acquisition of economic and social rights linked to long-term residence as well as the

emergence of an international regime of rights for migrants. The exclusionary practices of citizenship have been recognized as being ill-equipped to deal with an age of large-scale and heterogeneous migratory movements. The hope was that international human rights law would “provide a tool for sculpting a more inclusionary model of citizenship” (Lister, 1997:60) that would transcend nation-state boundaries. Despite the proliferation of international conventions and human rights instruments, however, to a large extent, citizenship still determines the rights that different categories of migrants can exercise (Kofman et al., 2000). The importance of international pressure in securing rights for immigrants appears overemphasized in these works, as remarked upon by Castles and Davidson (2000). In practice, the international regime of rights is weak and nonexistent outside of Europe (where migrants’ rights are also limited) (Ghai, 1999). Excluded from membership in the United Nations due to the one-China policy, Taiwan is a particular case where most international instruments of rights cannot apply.

Multicultural citizenship is an alternative proposed by scholars cognizant of both the importance and limits of citizenship based on the idea that the nation-state contains a degree of plurality that allows migrants to retain their cultural identity provided they adhere to the state’s political norms. This pluralism does not negate the existence of a dominant culture. Since multiculturalism is multidimensional, policies may emphasize some aspects and overlook others, or policies may shift over time. Multiculturalism may involve the recognition of cultural pluralism, or provision of specific economic and social needs of ethnic and national groups who may assume the responsibilities for the welfare of their communities. Multiculturalism may also include the demand for economic and social equality between migrants and the wider society, thus leading to the establishment of anti-discrimination policies accompanied by sanctions (Kofman et al., 2000).

Young (1989) is critical of the traditional concept of citizenship that demands that individuals set aside their views and perceptions that were shaped by their particular experiences in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities. Since individuals are products of cultural and social structures, rather than abstract rational creatures, they fall short of meeting the objective viewpoint that liberal citizenship demands. According to Young, liberal concepts of citizenship represent not equality between different individuals but the domination of the ideal of equality over difference, and therefore she maintains that group identities must be incorporated into the decision-making institution of the community.

With a similar interest in group rights, Kymlicka (1995:5) advances a theory of minority rights: “A comprehensive theory of justice in a multicultural state will include both universal rights, assigned to individu-



als regardless of their group membership, and certain group-differentiated rights or 'special status' for minority cultures." Kymlicka envisages three kinds of group rights: self-government rights that involve the devolution of powers to minorities within the state; polyethnic rights that protect group identity through legal and public financing of minority cultures; and special representation rights that give guaranteed representation for minorities in the community's political institutions.

However, multiculturalism is not always an entirely positive development (Kofman et al., 2000). According to Faulks (2000), the first problem with a citizenship centered on group rights is ascertaining what groups can legitimately claim to be special cases and deserve additional entitlements not available to other members of a polity, which leads to tension between groups competing for special status.

In practice, multiculturalism may encourage and reinforce essentialist and static views of migrant identities. To take Sweden as an example, although associations are generously funded, the government determines which ones are worth funding and thus can exert considerable social control. It tends to encourage organizations based on ethnicity at the local level, which makes it difficult to build bridges and political alliances across different groups. Alund and Schierup (1993:140) thus speak of "prescribed multiculturalism," whereby immigrants and ethnic organizations are co-opted into the corporatist state and are politically marginalized. While seemingly supportive of multiculturalism by financing certain immigrant and ethnic non-government organization (NGOs), it took many years for Sweden to pass legislation specifically banning ethnic discrimination.

Critics point out that an excessive emphasis on difference leads to short shrift of shared problems, and forestalls more decisive actions against racism. These criticisms have come up in several countries. For instance, the Netherlands Minorities Policy was altered in response to criticisms of the government's emphasis on culture. Official rhetoric does not necessarily correspond to the reality of migrants' lives, nor acceptance of migrants by the wider society, which may demand conformity to dominant values. Also, the Swedish model of multiculturalism has come under attack because it has left migrants with unequal rights and leading segregated lives (Alund, 1991; 1998).

Furthermore, to ask individuals to base their political position on a single fragment of their identity is a denial of their complex individuality. Multicultural citizenship thus runs the risk of essentializing and assuming timeless cultural differences within presumably bounded homogeneous ethnic groups. Proponents of group-based citizenship tend to have a romanticized view of social groups, neglecting the fact that groups can themselves be oppressive of their members. National discourses are often used by elites

to gloss over within differences, which can deflect necessary actions to tackle the roots of inequalities. State and other institutions may accept cultural norms that communities have transplanted from their home society (such as views of and treatment of women) without any real considerations of the changed economic and social environment in which cultural norms, values and traditions are put into practice.

On the other hand, some scholars who are also interested in an inclusive notion of citizenship propose the concept of “multiple citizenship,” underscoring the need to separate citizenship from limiting cultural identities such as nationality. As Lister (1997:196) has argued, an inclusive notion of citizenship, which attempts to live up to liberal aspirations to equality of all persons, must necessarily be both internationalist and multi-layered. This is what Heater (1990) has called “multiple citizenship.” The open-mindedness required by a multi-textured view of citizenship thus makes multiple citizenship incompatible with a citizenship based on group identity such as advocated by Kymlicka and Young. As Heater (1990:320) argues, “it is necessary to accept as perfectly feasible the notion that an individual can have multiple civic identities and feel multiple loyalties.”

Traditionally, the notion of multiple identities and loyalties of immigrants was seen as contradicting state sovereignty. Since countries can only exert sovereignty over the inhabitants of their bounded territories, traditional approaches assume that immigrants lose their attachment to the country of origin when they “naturalize” and adopt the citizenship of the country of destination. This process is seen as “either/or” proposition: immigrants have to choose to be either the citizen of their home country or their host country (Bloemradd, 2004).

Transnationalism provides an alternative view of a *deterritorialized* (italics added) nation-state where “immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc, 1994:7). Various forms of border-crossing networks are recognized by scholars of transnationalism, including kinship, community organizations and transnational advocacy. Multiple citizenship is seen as fostering reciprocity and solidarity in border-crossing social and symbolic ties (Faist, 2001). Whereas the concept of multicultural citizenship allows different group identities only within the boundary of one nation-state, the concept of multiple citizenship envisages continuous border-crossing ties and overlapping membership of citizens across several nation-states.

This approach to citizenship is central to theories of cosmopolitan democracy that seeks to theorize citizenship that has a global orientation and involves not just the protection of rights but also the extension of responsibilities beyond the state and the development of global institutions



of governance. It is only by extending responsibilities beyond the state that diverse cultures come to respect each others' rights, and to work together in the construction of more participatory institutions for global governance to sustain the promotion and protection of rights. In view of the urgent risks faced by the global community, proponents of multiple citizenship argue that an important step towards a more global citizenship is the greater willingness of states to exercise global obligations and to build stronger links with other countries (Faulks, 2000).

Unlike the cosmopolitan perspectives, the concept of multiple citizenship does not assume a shift in collective identity from the sovereign state level to postnational or suprastate membership and global democracy (Faist, 2001). Instead of global democracy, Faist (2001) proposes a transtate framework of dual (multiple) citizenship, but he does not discuss how this can be achieved in practice.

### *Class, Race and Gender Issues in Citizenship*

While the ideal of multiple citizenship may be a step closer to a more global concept of citizenship, class differences have persisted. Those with higher human capital are more likely to embrace dual/multiple citizenship than the economically marginalized (Bloemraad, 2004). The scheme to attract capital investments in exchange of immigrant status make immigrant visas ever more available to people with financial resources and willing to invest in host countries (Tseng, 1997). Also notable are class-based criteria for acquiring citizenship – immigration policies tend to exclude the working class while the professional and bourgeois class are favored (Martin, 1997). For example, Taiwan's immigration policy is aimed at attracting the so-called "high quality immigrants," i.e., professional/management/highly skilled immigrants, whereas blue-collar migrant workers can never be eligible to apply for permanent residency or citizenship, and marriage migrants are required to prove their financial stability to apply for citizenship (Tseng, 2006).

Tseng (2001) suggests that states often cover class selection in immigration policies through racial discourses, that is, by implying that only certain "races" or "ethnicities" have the "qualities" to become "us." On the other hand, Balibar (1991) points out that immigrants now face a new form of racism – "racism without races" – which targets immigrants rather than specific race or ethnicity as the old racism did.

Feminist perspectives have enriched the discussion of citizenship by bringing in gender differences in access to economic, social, civil and political rights associated with citizenship. They criticize the patriarchal underpinnings of multicultural policies which not only reify cultural differ-



ences within presumably homogeneous ethnic groups, but also for supporting male leadership and traditional values. Feminists point out that gender inequalities and repressive practices toward women may be left unchanged under multiculturalism. For example, domestic violence may persist on the grounds of non-intervention in the cultural practices of ethnic communities (Kofman et al., 2000; Faulks, 2000).

Moreover, immigration regulations are gendered in that they assume women to be dependents of men (Espiritu, 1997). For example, many receiving countries do not grant foreign women citizenship in their own right, but as the wife of the primary migrant. The acquisition of citizenship does not magically eliminate discrimination. Immigrants generally suffer from discrimination and stigmatization, but especially Asian women in particular (Piper and Roces, 2003). Discrimination may even be sanctioned by the state. Piper (1998) notes the distinction between formal and substantive citizenship rights, an issue of particular relevance to women, ethnic minorities, and migrants. Formal citizenship refers to legal matters (such as residential, civil, political and labor rights), while substantive citizenship pertain to social aspects (such as discrimination).

Without formal citizenship (at least initially), migrant women in transnational marriages find themselves in a precarious situation because they have to remain married for a certain number of years before they can gain full residential rights independent of the local marriage partner. If problems such as domestic violence occur prior to the end of this period and foreign women seek divorce, they risk deportation to their country of origin. Even with secure residential permits, language barriers and lack of accreditation of their qualifications can keep migrant women ossified in specific niches, such as domestic work or the sex industry (Piper and Roces, 2003).

Aside from the difficulties women encounter in their experience of migration, much of the feminist literature on citizenship also discusses the subjectivity and resistance of migrant women. Apart from acting as mothers, wives and workers, migrant women also act as citizens through their civic work—although this not as acknowledged in much of the public discourse about them (Piper and Roces, 2003). As Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) point out, despite its gendered history, citizenship provides women with a valuable weapon in the fight for human, democratic, civil and social rights. They enjoin feminists to insist on the accountability and responsibility of governments and states, without which we cannot contemplate transnational, supranational or global forms of citizenship. Community-level women's activism is not only a way of raising consciousness and self-confidence and opening new spaces for women's voices to be heard, but it is also the basis for social movements which can effect long-term changes in mainstream politics.



To sum up, most theories of citizenship, including the concepts of multicultural citizenship and multiple citizenship, remain at a philosophical or ethical level. Issues of *how* to transform the exclusionary regime of citizenship to a more inclusive one have gained little attention. Inspired by feminist discussion of citizenship, this paper takes a praxis-oriented perspective and aims at analyzing how citizenship can be used as a valuable weapon for marriage migrants from marginalized class and racial/ethnic background to promote a more inclusive form of citizenship.

### *Citizenship in Taiwan*

All countries allow the incorporation of immigrants into their citizenry through naturalization, although the criteria they use vary. Three principles describe extant practices: descent (*jus sanguinis*), place of birth (*jus soli*), and place of residence (*jus domicile*) (Faist, 2000). Taiwan's laws on citizenship have been based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*. The linking of national identity with the state was established nearly a century ago by Sun Yat-Sen, the founder of the Republic of China (ROC), which reflects the traditional Chinese emphasis on lineage and ancestry in the context of Manchurian minority rule and foreign imperialism (Cheng, 2002).

Taiwan's rapid economic growth and slow but impressive democratization have raised skepticism concerning the nationalist ideology, and have led to a variety of alternative conceptualizations vying for dominance in the ongoing nation-state building project (Cheng, 2002). Despite recent changes in its immigration and nationality laws, it remains extremely difficult to become citizens of Taiwan, except for the spouses and children of Taiwanese citizens (Cheng, 2002; Tseng, 2004). Prior to the changes in the Nationality Act in 1999, foreigners could not be naturalized as Taiwanese citizens, except for foreign women married to Taiwanese men. Foreign women were seen as "naturalizable" because of their role in the continuation of Taiwanese "blood," which apparently stems from patriarchal values that regard women as breeding objects rather than as independent subjects.

With the increasing number of immigrant women from Southeast Asia and Mainland China, concerns over the "deterioration of the quality of the next generation" led the government to add more barriers for "foreign brides" to acquire citizenship. The requirements include undergoing more medical examinations, residence in Taiwan for a certain period of time, abandoning their original nationality, financial requirements, and passing the Chinese language proficiency exams. The most difficult barrier is the financial requirement. Prior to November 2008,<sup>1</sup> the family must submit

<sup>1</sup> This policy has recently been changed after the long struggles of AHRLIM, TASAT and other NGOs.

proof of financial security, including a bank statement or official receipts for income tax wherein the amount should be at least equal to 24 times the minimum wages (about NT\$ 420,000 under the new standard effective since 1 July 2007).

### *Marriage Migrants in Taiwan*

Since the mid-1980s, Taiwan has moved from the “periphery” to the “semi-periphery” in the world system, of which one of the markers is Taiwan’s emergence as a host country for many migrant workers in Asia. From the 1990s, Taiwan has also witnessed increasing levels of transnational marriages. Statistics released in 2002 by the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, indicate that one in every four new marriages in Taiwan is between a citizen and a foreigner. The majority of foreign spouses are “foreign brides”<sup>2</sup> and “Mainland brides” of Taiwanese men.

#### *Root Causes of Marriage Migration: Globalization and Unequal Development*

“Foreign brides,” “Mainland brides,” and “foreign workers” are the three major categories of foreign-born residents in Taiwan. They face many similar situations (such as discrimination and restrictive regulations), but they also have some differences. This section focuses on marriage migrants, specifically those from Southeast Asia, as an example to illustrate citizenship issues in Taiwan.

Beginning in the late 1980s, thousands of Taiwanese peasant and working-class men sought brides in Southeast Asia. Transnational marriages of this type require a large sum of money – US\$10,000-15,000 – of which only 10 percent goes to the bride’s family as dowry. In most cases, the cost of finding a bride represents half of the savings of a peasant and working class family in Taiwan. As indicated in the statistics released by the Ministry of Interior, as of 31 October 2008, there are 411,315 foreign spouses (30.6 percent from Southeast Asia and 63.32 percent from Mainland China). Ninety-two percent of these foreign spouses are women. Among the women from Southeast Asia, 64.1 percent are from Vietnam, 20.7 percent from Indonesia, 6.7 percent from Thailand, five percent from the Philippines, and 3.5 percent from Cambodia (Ministry of Interior, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> The word “foreign bride” is common parlance in Taiwan, and reflects the discrimination against Third World women. I use the term in quotes to remind readers that the term is ideologically charged.

Many Southeast Asian women marry Taiwanese in the hope of escaping poverty, which globalization has intensified in their home countries. Globalization entails privatization, deregulation, and liberalization, all of which lead to unemployment, hunger and disease, which threaten the well-being of the vast majority of laborers. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have impoverished millions of people in developing countries through loans and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Under the sway of distorted development, farmers and workers in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries have increasingly been marginalized economically and forced to find work abroad. For women in Southeast Asia, one response to their economic plight is through transnational marriages (for further analysis, see Hsia, 2004). The push towards liberalization, privatization and deregulation also marginalized a great number of Taiwanese agricultural and industrial laborers. These low-skilled agricultural and industrial laborers found themselves in an extremely disadvantaged position in Taiwan's domestic marriage market.

Coming from disadvantaged economic conditions, the families of "foreign brides" and Taiwanese men face a bleak economic situation in Taiwan. According to a survey, 31.3 percent of interviewed "foreign brides" said that their family expenses are higher than their family income, 48.9 percent just manage to make ends meet, and only 2.7 percent have higher income than expenses. A full 78.5 percent of the families of Southeast Asian women rely on their Taiwanese husband's income and seven percent of the women are the primary earner. Forty percent of the Taiwanese husbands are working-class and 65 percent of the interviewed foreign spouses from Southeast Asia make less than NT\$2,000 every month (about US\$588) (Hsu, 2004). Since the Taiwanese husbands are mostly working-class, most foreign spouses need to take on jobs in order to supplement family income, which is fraught with difficulties because of language barriers, lack of information and resources, and exploitation and discrimination in the workplace.

#### *Lack of Social Networks and Support*

Since "foreign brides" come to Taiwan alone, they lack a support system. Most of the marriage migrants from Southeast Asia cannot speak and read Chinese, especially Mandarin. This language barrier makes it even more difficult for them to build new social networks in Taiwan. Yi-Ching from Thailand has described some of the difficulties she faced in a short story she wrote in the Chinese language program:

I was both happy and afraid when I arrived in Taiwan the first day. I told myself that, no matter what happens, it's my destiny. I didn't realize that because of language barriers my mother-in-law and I would have many misunderstandings and problems. At that time, I didn't have any friends to talk to and didn't know what to do. I cried alone in my room everyday ... Now when I look back, I see that it is not that they didn't treat me well, but rather that I thought they were being mean to me because I didn't understand what they were saying.

Although Taiwan has passed a law against domestic violence and offers various services, such efforts are of no real assistance to immigrant women due to language barriers (hence they cannot access information), and lack of training of social workers and other social services staff to handle multicultural issues.

#### *Discrimination and National Anxiety*

"Foreign brides" have been commonly construed by government agencies, media, and the general public as a "social problem" and often associate them with "fake marriage, real prostitution" and "the deteriorating quality of the next generation." Elsewhere I analyze how these images are constructed by the media and government agencies without any substantial data (Hsia, 1997; 2007). In so doing, these institutions have become what Becker (1963) called "moral entrepreneurs" – their construction of transnational marriages and those involved become the dominant discourse, in which marriage migrants, their husbands and families are constructed as the "inferior other."

The most recent illustration is the discourse on the "the new Taiwan children." The rising number of children born to marriage migrants has spurred media reports that claim a propensity among immigrant children to delayed development. Many government projects have in fact aimed to solve such "problems." In the absence of reliable data, these claims are based on the assumption that since the mothers are from developing countries, they must lack the skills necessary to educate their own children—an argument which clearly has sexist, racist and classist overtones. This fear of the marriage migrants' impacts on the deteriorating the "quality" of Taiwan's population is a dominant discourse representing the "national anxiety" shared not only by government officials and media workers but also the general public. My previous study (Hsia, 2007) has analyzed this national anxiety as summarized in the following discussion.



The fear of migrants as taking advantage of Taiwan's prosperity stems from the belief that "Taiwan's Miracle" is solely due to the diligence and superior quality of the Taiwanese people. The capital flight of Taiwanese companies to Southeast Asia and Mainland China and the import of migrant workers from Southeast Asia reinforce this national anxiety of protecting "our" success from poor, envious neighboring "others," who are perceived as stealing jobs from locals. The quality of the Taiwanese population is endangered by the influx of "low quality" migrants from poorer countries. This anxiety is heightened by the arrival of "foreign brides," whose potential to give birth is often seen as problematic and dangerous for border controllers (Navins, 2002). This fear is revealed in Taiwan's policy of deporting female migrant workers as soon as they were found pregnant at their required regular medical check-ups.<sup>3</sup>

While the government had a policy to deport female migrant workers who were pregnant, it cannot prevent marriage migrants from giving birth, as long as the government maintains its legitimacy as a democratic country. This inability to legally stop marriage migrants from producing the next generation poses a great threat to the national belief of the "superior quality" of the Taiwanese.

The discourse of "population quality" harks back to the introduction of family planning in Taiwan in the late 1960s, which stressed concerns over eugenics. It focused on the proper age for women to give birth in order to prevent infantile diseases. Its target population included those in the rural areas, aboriginal communities and low-income families, i.e., people who were considered of "low quality" because of their low level of education, which is highly related to their socio-economic status. The discourse on "foreign brides" first appeared in the media. The year before, 1997, in the wake of the financial crisis, global competition was a burning topic in the media, especially with the growing recognition of China as the "world's factory," which poses a threat to Taiwan's economy. The discourse of global competition juxtaposed with concerns over the "foreign brides" and the deterioration of population quality that would endanger Taiwan's capacity to compete globally. Consequently, Taiwan advocated for the need to attract immigrants of "high quality." The anxieties associated with "foreign brides" intensified after 2000, especially when the public learned of the increasing number of children born to foreign mothers. While Taiwan needs to increase its fertility levels, the "quality" of the children born to the "foreign brides" is in question. The discourse on "quality population" thus shifted from lower class Taiwanese to marriage migrants from poorer

<sup>3</sup> This policy was cancelled in November 2002 due to continuous protests by NGOs.

countries. The discourse against the new immigrants from poorer countries is not simply classism, but a racialized rhetoric portraying these migrants as essentially inferior and thus not qualified to be part of Taiwanese society. In other words, the discourse has become “racialized classism.”

Although the Taiwanese husbands of foreign women also had a low level of education and had working class status, Taiwanese men were not viewed or imagined as a threat to population quality. The government cannot argue that lower class Taiwanese men should not have children, or it will be accused of classism (and even fascism), and will jeopardize its legitimacy, especially among the working-class. The discourse of classism therefore shifted to that of racialized classism, which expressed elitist national anxiety without shaking the status quo. In short, as capitalist globalization intensifies inequality within the nation-state, especially class division, the state benefits from stoking anxiety and in focusing that anxiety to “foreign brides.” By diverting attention from internal inequality to the “problems” and “threats” of marriage migrants (and migrant workers as well), the political system remains intact and unchallenged.

Furthermore, the Taiwanese husbands have been omitted from the discourse on the “new Taiwanese children,” a reflection of how sexism is still prevalent in Taiwan. In the patriarchal Chinese society, women are still seen primarily as the homemakers, shouldering all responsibilities in child-rearing. The high costs of social reproduction on the one hand and the lack of state assistance to support families on the other hand have discouraged Taiwanese women from getting married or bearing children. Marriage migrants have stepped in to fill the role of social reproduction in Taiwanese society. Sexism and the burden of motherhood shared by all women in Taiwan are more unbearable for marriage migrants because they are perceived as mothers of a lesser quality.

Negative perceptions about marriage migrants are not only rooted in classism and sexism, but also in their “foreign” female bodies. As cited earlier, for a long time, only foreign women married to Taiwanese citizens could be naturalized as Taiwanese citizens because of their role in the continuation of Taiwanese “blood.” The restriction was mostly towards foreigners from the less developed countries. For example, in everyday idiom, the term “foreign workers” only refers to blue-collar workers from Third World countries, and the term “foreign brides” only refers to women from less developed countries married to Taiwanese men. The proposals aimed at “improving” the quality of marriage migrants and their children were specific to those from developing countries. The change in the Nationality Act allowing both male and female spouses of Taiwanese citizens as eligible for naturalization resulted from the lobbying of foreign men married to Taiwanese women – i.e., men from developed countries, mostly

those from the US. Unlike “foreign workers” and “foreign brides,” foreigners from Western and/or developed countries do not cause anxiety in Taiwanese society.

Immigrant incorporation in Taiwan is not only exclusionary but also patriarchal. Ironically, this patriarchal tradition of citizenship allows many women from the less developed countries to immigrate to Taiwan through marriage. Since the Nationality Act requires foreigners to abandon their original citizenship to gain Taiwanese citizenship, very few foreign spouses from developed countries attempt to apply for citizenship. The great majority of foreigners naturalized as Taiwanese citizens are marriage migrants from less developed countries. The possibility for lower class marriage migrants to become Taiwanese citizens further fuels collective anxiety in Taiwan (Hsia, 2007).

#### *Obstacles to Obtaining Formal and Substantive Citizenship*

Contrary to claims of post-national citizenship (e.g., Soysal, 1994), citizenship remains central to immigrant women in Taiwan. The following story of May, based on my interview with her in 2005, illustrates vividly the centrality of obtaining citizenship for immigrant women in Taiwan.

May has lived in Taiwan for twenty years. She has been living in fear in Taiwan because she does not have a Taiwanese ID (citizenship). May was told by a Chinese-Indonesian marriage broker that she could easily become a Taiwanese citizen once she married a Taiwanese man. She came to Taiwan on a tourist visa at the behest of this broker who introduced her to husband, a fisherman living in northern Taiwan. Contrary to the promises of the broker, May was not able to become a Taiwanese citizen. When her husband dies (her daughter was three years old at the time), May became an undocumented migrant. Because of her status, she confined herself to home and workplace for fear of being caught and expatriated. She has not visited her family in Indonesia for fear that she will not be able to return to Taiwan to take care of her daughter and parents-in-law. May has not told her family about her situation because she does not want them to be worried. She prefers to socialize with other Indonesian women because she fears that Taiwanese would report her irregular status to the police. She has been caught by the police three times. She has managed to convince the policemen to take her home so she can explain her situation. She has introduced other Indonesians with proper documentation to work with her at the construction sites so she would know if her Taiwanese co-workers plan to report her to authorities. Unable to read Chinese and lacking social capital, May has not yet found a way on how she can obtain Taiwanese citizenship. She is worried that her only daughter’s rights to inherit property would be



relinquished because her daughter has been legally adopted by her husband's brother in view of her irregular status.

The financial proof requirement is a major stumbling block to obtain citizenship for marriage migrants. Up until November 2008, the family had to submit proof of financial security under very strict guidelines, including a bank statement or official receipts for income tax wherein the amount should be at least the equivalent of twice the average annual salary based on the legal minimum wage. Since many marriage migrants and their Taiwanese husbands work in informal sectors (such as peddling, hourly waged work, and with small farmers) they do not have official receipts of income tax paid and therefore are forced to loan money to obtain a bank statement. Many families are forced to borrow money from brokers and are exploited by loan sharks.

Taiwan's patriarchal and exclusionary policy of incorporation does not grant citizenship to foreign women as an inalienable right, but is conditional on their status as the wife of a Taiwanese man. Immigrant women who have not obtained Taiwanese citizenship are often ineligible for social services and welfare benefits. Before the Immigration Act was amended in 2008, after years of struggles by the AHRILM, battered marriage migrants without Taiwanese citizenship were deported if they get divorced. Since the custody of the children was often granted to Taiwanese fathers, the deportation deprived them to return to Taiwan to visit their children. Under such constraints, most battered marriage migrant women endured domestic violence for the sake of their children. The state, thus, sanctions the power of husbands over immigrant women.

In addition to the difficulties of acquiring formal citizenship, marriage migrants also have difficulties in practicing substantive citizenship because of the language barrier, lack of social support, and inability to access crucial information.

### *Prospects for Multicultural Citizenship*

Despite language and cultural barriers, immigrant women in Taiwan have demonstrated their agency by actively participating in protests and mass actions against discriminatory policies and practices. They have waged protests against the Ministry of the Interior's plan to establish NIA and the Deputy Minister of Education's outrageous call to promote birth control by "foreign brides." On 9 September 2007, hundreds of immigrant women from Southeast Asia and Mainland China joined a rally protesting against the financial requirements for citizenship. This rally attracted media coverage because it was the first time in Taiwan's history that hundreds of marriage migrants all over Taiwan staged a street demonstration. It was

organized by the Coalition Against Financial Requirements for Immigrants (CAFRI), which was initiated by AHRLIM to broaden the alliance work to strengthen advocacy for immigrants' rights. Immigrant women's participation in civic work can be read as one way of performing citizenship.

Several NGOs in Taiwan had been working individually on immigrant and migrant issues for many years. Things changed with the government's proposal to establish the National Immigration Agency (NIA). Many critical NGOs found this proposal xenophobic because its main functions were to police, investigate, and deport migrants and immigrants whom NIA officials deemed irregular or dangerous. Moreover, the legal grounds for deportation—such as “threatening national security” and “violating the public interest”—are vague articulations that can be subject to manipulation. This proposed agency did not provide any mechanism or due process for migrants and immigrants to protect their rights. This was a turning point in the development of the immigrant movement in Taiwan and how the concept of “multicultural citizenship” has been used to promote the rights of marriage migrants and to challenge Taiwan's laws of citizenship based on *jus sanguinis*.

In order to promote the human rights of immigrants and migrants, a group of concerned organizations joined together to form AHRLIM on 12 December 2003. AHRLIM's first action was the 24 December 2003 protest in front of the Legislative Yuan against the government's proposal to establish NIA. Before the protest, AHRLIM launched a well-received signature campaign to halt the deliberation on the proposal presented by the Executive Yuan (the executive branch of Taiwan's government).

Additionally, AHRLIM lobbied in the Legislative Yuan to seek the support of legislators from different political parties. The intense lobbying and protesting resulted in the defeat of the proposal, thereby temporarily halting the government's plan to establish NIA. AHRLIM prepared for the next round by reviewing the government's proposed amendments to the Immigration Act, drafting the Alliance's own proposal in order to establish acceptable norms for a comprehensive immigration policy, holding public forums to discuss immigration policy and related issues and present the Alliance's draft on the amendments to the Immigration Act, and raising public awareness of the human rights issues of immigrants and migrants. On 5 March 2004, AHRLIM rallied in front of Executive Yuan to protest the requirement that spouses from Mainland China should present proof of properties worth NT\$5 million (around US\$150,000). On 12 July, another rally was organized in front of the Ministry of Education condemning the statement by the Deputy Minister of Education, who openly urged all directors of bureaus of education attending a national conference to “discourage foreign brides from having so many babies” because of their “low



quality,” claims which were not supported by any solid research and reflects sheer prejudice and discrimination. On 2 August, AHRLIM protested against the Council of Labor Affairs’ decision on the “money-flow management”<sup>4</sup> for migrant workers. These actions resulted in the cancellation of the stiff financial requirement for spouses from Mainland China, the issuance of a public apology from the Deputy Minister of Education, and the postponement of the implementation of the money-flow management policy.

The Executive Yuan submitted the amendments to the Immigration Act in December 2003, which contained discriminatory and anti-immigrant provisions. AHRLIM decided to lobby to reform the Immigration Act. After more than a year of intense discussions and debates, the Alliance submitted its draft on the amendments to the Immigration Act, with endorsements from many legislators of all political parties, to the Legislator Yuan in March 2005. After another two years of struggle, the amendments were eventually passed on 30 November 2007. Important reforms include anti-discrimination regulations, allowing marriage migrants who have been the victims of domestic violence to stay in Taiwan even if they are divorced, and ensuring im/migrants’ rights of assembly and to rally.

#### *Radicalizing Existing Values and Rhetoric*

In the initial phase of the immigrant movement, it had to contend with public concerns and worries over perceptions of the ill effects of immigration. To establish a dialogue with the public, AHRLIM gradually radicalized existing values/rhetoric, including human rights, multiculturalism and democracy. When Chen Shui-bian won the presidential election in 2000, the first time the opposition party won the presidential election over the long-ruling Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT), the idea of “nationhood based on human rights principles” became a popular rhetoric among politicians. To radicalize this rhetoric, AHRLIM used it in its opening statement:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>In this CLA proposal, the migrants will be required to open accounts at designated banks, where the employers and brokers can directly deposit and withdraw money. However, a certain amount—savings—cannot be withdrawn to ensure that the migrants will not run away and their medical bills will be paid.

<sup>5</sup> See AHRLIM’s website at <http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/migrants2006/>



The Government of Taiwan, which espouses a concept of nationhood based on human rights, is always touting its human rights record, yet has consistently ignored the rights of immigrants and migrants in its actual policies.... As the media stirs up fear in Taiwanese society, the Government promotes policies that actively prevent new migrants and immigrants from enjoying the same rights and benefits allowed to other residents of Taiwan even as they work and make a positive contribution to Taiwanese society. In order to promote both the Human Rights of immigrants and migrants, as well as the development of a healthy, pluralist society, a group of non-governmental organizations concerned with Human Rights, immigration policy, foreign labor, and democracy have joined with lawyers and scholars bearing a long term interest on these issues to form The Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants.

Since the Republic of China is not recognized by most international institutions, one of the primary issues on the national agenda is to prove to the world that Taiwan adheres to international standards hoping that this will gain support for Taiwan's bid to be recognized as an independent state. AHRLIM has purposefully used international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to push for a more inclusive immigration policy. As stated in its first signature campaign, the Alliance's position was:<sup>6</sup>

Every individual enjoys basic human rights, regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other creed, nationality, social status, wealth, place of birth, or any other social distinction. We support plural social development and the promotion of social dialogue designed to eradicate discrimination.

To protest against the Council of Labor Affairs' decision to require more medical check-ups for foreign teachers, AHRLIM, in collaboration with a group of progressive scholars, demanded the government to implement President Chen's promise at his inauguration speech for his second term, wherein he declared that "everyone is equal—whether you are from Tainan (his home county) or Vietnam, and should be protected for basic human rights."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See AHRLIM's website at <http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/migrants2006/>

<sup>7</sup> See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid\\_3730000/newsid\\_3731100/3731187.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid_3730000/newsid_3731100/3731187.stm), accessed on 10 February 2009.

In addition to human rights issues, ethnic issues were mobilized by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) against the KMT. DPP successfully weakened KMT's legitimacy by criticizing its "national language policy" which rendered non-Mandarin speaking people alienated from their mother tongues. Since DPP gained power in 2000, ethnic issues received much attention. The revitalization of ethnic languages has gained currency and it also contributed to popularize the concept of "multiculturalism." The DPP government had carefully employed multiculturalism to portray its governance as being more democratic and progressive through moves such as establishing the Council for Hakka Affairs and two national TV stations for Indigenous Peoples and Hakka Peoples. The DPP government crafted these "multicultural images" and used them for publicity and tourism campaigns and promoting international relations. However, these seemingly progressive values were exclusionary in practice. For example, the languages of the Southeast Asian marriage migrants were ignored and devalued. AHRLIM and affiliated organizations radicalized the meaning of "multiculturalism" by calling for the inclusion of the languages and cultures of the new immigrants as part of Taiwan's multi-cultures. During the celebration of Mother's Day in 2004, AHRLIM and affiliated organizations co-sponsored an activity titled "Mother's Name—Acknowledging New Immigrants and Migrants" for the purpose of "encouraging the public to acknowledge rich cultures the new immigrants have contributed to Taiwanese multiculturalism.....and striving to make Taiwan an island filled with rich cultures, respecting each other's cultures, different voices and faces."

To radicalize the rhetoric of "multiculturalism," AHRLIM and its affiliated organizations argued that the languages and cultures of these immigrant women should also be respected, and that immigration policy should not be based on assimilation, which implies changing the *jus sanguinis* model of incorporation.

AHRLIM also employed the rhetoric of "democracy" – which sets Taiwan apart from Mainland China – and related concepts such as "citizenship" (or citizen's rights) and "civil participation" in pushing for its agenda. In protesting against the establishment of NIA, AHRLIM framed their protest by referring to "democracy."<sup>8</sup>

Taiwan is a democratic country, where people have freedom and capacity to express their opinions about various issues. However, the government's policies and laws related to the human rights of im/migrants have never been publicly discussed, nor have they considered the rights of migrant workers, not to mention the

<sup>8</sup> See AHRLIM's website at <http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/migrants2006/>

importance of immigration policy for the prospects of Taiwan societies. AHRLIM argues that since immigration policy is 'a matter of the rights of im/migrants and their families, and what is embedded in immigration policy is what the society thinks of itself, and influence Taiwanese people's image of 'citizens' and their identity,' they demand to 'expand public discussions so that im/migrants and their families, and the general public can fully understand and participate.'

In advancing the immigrant movement, radicalizing seemingly progressive political rhetoric—such as human rights, multiculturalism and democracy—helped shape public discourse to be more receptive to new immigrants.

#### *Enhancing Marriage Migrants' Substantive Citizenship*

As mentioned previously, formal citizenship rights do not automatically guarantee substantive citizenship rights. For marriage migrants from South-east Asia, the language barrier is the first and foremost obstacle to their active participation in Taiwanese society. To combat discrimination, it is crucial to enhance migrants' participation in the receiving society. On 30 July 1995, I initiated a Chinese Literacy Program for "foreign brides," drawing inspiration from Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Boal's (1979) *Theater of the Oppressed* (Hsia, 2006). After eight years of empowering marriage migrants, they decided to form a national organization, TransAsia Sisters Association, Taiwan (TASAT), in December 2003.

The first step in the empowerment process, the offering of Chinese courses, did not always proceed smoothly. Freire (1970) pointed to the duality of the oppressed, meaning that the oppressed often internalize the oppressor consciousness. This was revealed in various ways among the participants in the Chinese courses—immigrant women married to Taiwanese men were sometimes prejudiced against migrant women workers, or women of one nationality resented women from another nationality, or women from one ethnic group were hostile to women from another ethnic group of the same nationality (Hsia, 2004).

In time, the Chinese programs gradually enhanced the civic participation of marriage migrants. At the first protest initiated by AHRLIM, marriage migrants organized by TASAT were at the front line; they voiced their dissent by performing a short skit in front of the Legislative Yuan. After their first protest, they became more active in succeeding protests and AHRLIM activities. Eventually, they became empowered to speak at AHRLIM's protest actions or press conferences.

The visibility of marriage migrants in the political arena provided the public with a different view of the “foreign brides.” The 6 July 2005 protest was covered by a major newspaper which had a photo of the protesters with the following caption: “New Immigrants Fighting for Rights: To Appeal for Suspending Exams Newly Required for Naturalization. A Group of Foreign Brides Marched to Executive Yuan with Traditional Straw Hats under Scorching Sun.” The determined faces of the immigrant women, marching like heroines, were captured and crystallized as historical moments by photographers and reporters. This image is in sharp contrast with how “foreign brides” used to be depicted in the media – helpless and weak. Similar images of active, strong marriage migrants were featured in various newspapers afterwards.

TASAT’s experience suggests that empowerment takes time; it took eight years for TASAT to come to be. Learning Chinese enabled marriage migrants to communicate better with local Taiwanese and to create a network among themselves. The involvement of local Taiwanese volunteers also helped create a friendlier environment for the marriage migrants. In addition to empowering marriage migrants and Taiwanese volunteers, TASAT exerted efforts to change the public perceptions of marriage migrants. Through seminars, writings and films, TASAT and its members constantly strove to create a sense of “betweenness” (or connection) among Taiwanese and immigrants. This is done in part by pointing out the similarities in the biographies of Taiwanese and immigrants. The fact that most Taiwanese citizens are descendants of immigrants who arrived at different times in Taiwan’s history and that many Taiwanese citizens have experienced prejudice and discrimination as immigrants in First World countries were evoked to foster a sense of solidarity with immigrants to Taiwan.

The voices of marriage migrants have done much to subvert the stereotyped image of marriage migrants as submissive, problematic and incompetent. Via theater, paintings, writings, discussions and other types of sharing at various forums and activities, marriage migrants have changed many Taiwanese’s misconceptions. As a result of TASAT’s various initiatives, several members of the organization have received awards. A former TASAT chairperson, a marriage migrant from Thailand (she has opted to maintain her Thai citizenship), received the “Life Sustainable Award 2007” bestowed by a private foundation for her achievement as “Cultural Ambassador for Southeast Asian Cultures,” and the prestigious Extraordinary Award given by the National Youth Commission of Taiwan in 2008 for her public participation, especially for her involvement in TASAT and AHRLIM. This was the first time that this national award was given to a resident without Taiwanese nationality.



A recent effort to change public perceptions is TASAT's offering of Southeast Asian language and cultural courses, where marriage migrants teach the local Taiwanese about Southeast Asia and issues of multiculturalism. Through the courses taught by marriage migrants, the local Taiwanese realize that marriage migrants can offer much expertise to the Taiwanese society. In September 2005, the first book of a collection of writings, paintings and pictures of immigrant women was published. Entitled *Don't Call Me Foreign Bride*, the book attracted public attention (the first printing was sold out in less than a month). As the editor of this book, I noticed that one of the most common responses from readers was amazement over how talented marriage migrants are, and how the book has made many readers appreciate multiculturalism and aware of their own prejudices.

The active participation of marriage migrants not only makes possible "thick" citizenship as defined by Faulks (2000), but also subverts prejudice and discrimination against them, and consequently enables them to achieve substantial citizenship. Marriage migrants organized by TASAT have been actively performing citizenship at community levels and their active participation in various activities and collective action have been crucial for AHRLIM to advance the immigrant movement in Taiwan.

#### *The Impasse of Multicultural Citizenship*

Although multiculturalism has been used effectively in advocating immigrants' rights in Taiwan, its impasse is also observable. As mentioned previously, critics have pointed out several problems with multicultural citizenship, and these critiques are also valid in Taiwan. Although the government cannot negate the demands for multiculturalism, it has taken the concept in another direction. The government's version of multiculturalism is showcasing various cultural activities such as "traditional" Southeast Asian dances and songs. In a few instances, it stood in the way of a more radical version of multiculturalism. In 2004, the Council of Cultural Development organized several multicultural activities and invited TASAT to perform. When they were informed that TASAT's presentation (a song and a play) will depict the lives and experiences of marriage migrants—including isolation and discrimination in Taiwan - the organizers asked if TASAT could perform "traditional" songs and dances instead. The council eventually decided not to include TASAT in the program. Other government agencies and private enterprises which find TASAT too radical do not offer funding to the organization. Without funds, it will be difficult for TASAT to sustain its programs.



It appears that the state and private corporations can only tolerate NGOs that advocate a version of multiculturalism that is unthreatening to the status quo. Organizations such as TASAT that practice a form of contentious politics (Tarrow, 2003) and challenge the existing structures and ideologies will find it increasingly difficult to gain access to funding. Some NGOs are aware of the danger of losing funds, thus, they comply with the demands of the state and set aside issues of immigrant women's empowerment and subjectivity. The original objective to help immigrant women has, in many cases, been replaced by the goal to obtain funds. One indicator of this trend is that the NGOs most successful in raising funds in the name of helping immigrant women have not joined AHRLIM—despite having been invited to join the alliance. More disturbing is how many NGOs manipulate the image of multiculturalism in order to acquire funding from the government and corporations.

### *Rethinking Citizenship from the Perspective of Social Movements*

Citizenship still remains central for migrants in Taiwan, but the pathway to citizenship – *jus sanguinis* – defines incorporation in Taiwanese society. The presence of migrant workers and marriage migrants has resulted to some discussions on multiculturalism in Taiwan. By radicalizing the existing rhetoric of multiculturalism, human rights and democracy, the immigrant movement has successfully shaken Taiwan's long tradition of exclusionary citizenship.

The "foreign bride" phenomenon has been global rather than a unique phenomenon in Taiwan. It resulted from capitalist globalization and unequal development, where women from peripheral countries seek survival by marrying men in semi-periphery or core countries. Compared to migrant workers, marriage migrants are in a more advantaged position to challenge Taiwan's exclusionary model of citizenship because the nature of transnational marriages involves citizens from different nation-states and their children are the direct result of cross-border migration.

The prospects of multicultural citizenship need to be examined more closely. As Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) point out, multiculturalism is a double-edged sword. While recognizing the prospects of multicultural citizenship, we should also note that multiculturalism may be co-opted without changing the substantive rights or even formal rights of citizenship of immigrants. Without linking the struggle for citizenship rights to the broader issues of capitalist globalization, immigrant women—especially those in economic need—cannot fully practice substantive citizenship

rights even if they do manage to obtain formal citizenship rights. Cognizant of these issues, AHRLIM and TASAT consciously tackled the issue of financial requirement as a major obstacle for obtaining citizenship in Taiwan. By questioning the legitimacy of this requirement, we expose the constrained economic conditions of marriage migrants and their families and the classist ideology underlying this policy, which implies that working-class people are not considered deserving of Taiwanese citizenship.

AHRLIM and TASAT have endeavored to establish an international network to further advocate for marriage migrants' rights and to promote the empowerment of marriage migrants. In defending the financial requirements for marriage migrants, the Ministry of Interior of Taiwan insisted that it is a "universal norm." It even bought a half page advertisement in a major national newspaper citing such a regulation in other countries, including the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. AHRLIM sought to verify this information with organizations or individuals in different countries and discovered that the Ministry distorted the information to justify the policy.

AHRLIM and TASAT took a further step in strengthening its links with organizations outside Taiwan. In September 2007, TASAT co-organized the International Conference on Border Control and Empowerment of Immigrant Brides. As a result of this conference, the Action Network for Marriage Migrants' Rights and Empowerment (AMM<sub>ORE</sub>) was established, which is currently undertaking an international campaign against state violence on marriage migrants: *unVEIL*. Through increased and coordinated networking with organizations from their home countries, the immigrant women of TASAT gain a fuller understanding of their circumstances and the importance of transnational collaboration.

Thus, from the perspective of social movements, I would argue that marriage migration creates a great opportunity to challenge the exclusionary tendencies of the traditional concept of citizenship. The alternative concepts of multiple citizenship and multicultural citizenship offer possibilities for immigrant incorporation, although they also have some limitations. Based on research and praxis of advocating for the rights of marriage migrants and migrant workers in Taiwan, this article demonstrated that the ideal of multiple citizenship and multicultural citizenship are not inherently incompatible. The emerging immigrants' movement in Taiwan illustrates how "multicultural citizenship" can be used as a narrative strategy to question the exclusionary model of citizenship in Taiwan and to work towards a more inclusive model that may potentially achieve the ideal of multiple citizenship.

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