

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT IN  
TAIWAN: THE CASE OF ALLIANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
LEGISLATION FOR IMMIGRANTS AND MIGRANTS\***

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*Based on the author's direct and long-term involvement, this paper analyzes how the immigrant movement in Taiwan is developed. By focusing on the Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants, which has been spearheading the immigrant movement in Taiwan, the author analyze the framing and organizational strategies of the alliance to propel immigrant movement. As a newly emergent host of country in East Asia, Taiwan's case of immigrant movement can offer lessons and point of further comparison for other East Asian countries.*

**Key Words:** *Immigrant Movement, Taiwan, AHRLIM, Alliance, Framing and Organizational Strategy.*

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## AFTER A LONG PERIOD A STRANGE PLACE BECOMES HOME

By Yung-Feng Chung and Hsiao-Chuan Hsia

The sky's so magnificent; the earth's so magnificent.  
     The endless Pacific Ocean  
     Thinking of this; thinking of that  
     Where does the road come out at?  
 The sky's so vast; the earth's so vast.  
 With no relatives, I rely upon my husband.  
 The moon's so bright; my heart's so agitated.  
     My home's so far away  
     Friends' class, Chinese class:  
 Coming out from the corner kills loneliness.  
     Chinese class, sisters' class:  
     Chinese class connects friends.  
     Sisters' class, cooperative class:  
 We have mutual trust, mutual love, and mutual help in difficulties.  
     Cooperative class, connections to everywhere:  
 After a long period a strange place becomes home.

(The Song for the Foreign Brides' Chinese Class, which is sung by members of "Chinese Literacy Programs for Foreign Brides.")

When Southeast Asian sisters<sup>1</sup> first learnt this song in the Chinese literacy classes at Yong-Ho Community College in Taipei County, everyone was in tears. Usually appearing very confident but stern, Vietnamese sister, Shuei-Hong, looked at me, with tears in her eyes and arms moving in front of her chest, tongue-tight and eventually said, "A lot of feelings in my heart that could not spell out. Thanks so much for this song!" A year and half later, a group of sisters and Taiwanese volunteers from Chinese literacy classes of Yong-Ho and Bang-Chao community colleges joined a training workshop. Some were chatting in the dormitory room while watching TV bombarded by news about Presidential Election. Sisters talked about political party's orientation in their families. Suddenly, Shuei-Hong asked everyone in the room, "There will be a new political party. Guess what it will be?" To our surprise, Shuei-Hong steadfastly told us, "Immigrant Party!" While

<sup>1</sup> In the Chinese literacy programs and subsequently the formal organization, TransAsia Sisters Association, Taiwan, Taiwanese volunteers call immigrant women from Southeast Asia "sisters."

"Immigrant Party" was still lingering in my ears, Shuei-Hong and other sisters from Indonesia and Thailand had begun to offer classes of the languages, histories and cultures of their Southeast Asian home countries.

Yong-Ho community college continued to offer Chinese literacy classes for the new immigrant women<sup>2</sup> and at the end of every term, volunteers would teach sisters to sing "*After a long period a strange place becomes home*" and all sisters new in the classes would be just like Shuei-Hong singing with tears. Interestingly, when hearing this song again, Shuei-Hong and other sisters who had been in the classes longer would tease with laughter, "*Come on, don't cry any more!! We want a marching song, because we are different now!*" In late 2004, a group of NGO representatives from Hong Kong visited Taiwan and met our Southeast Asian sisters. One sister excitedly expressed her reflection, "*I used to be very sad, lonely and feeling useless, until I attended the Chinese literacy classes. I now feel very different. I feel I can finally stand up!*"

"Immigrant' Party" is not yet established, but this group of Southeast Asian sisters had gone to several protests against unfair treatment by various central governmental agencies, including Ministry of the Interior's careless plan to establish National Immigration Agency considered as anti-immigrants' rights, Deputy Minister of Education's outrageous statement appealing for birth control of "foreign brides." On September 9, 2007, hundreds of immigrant women from Southeast Asia and mainland China joined a rally protesting against the financial requirements for applying citizenship. This rally caught much media attention because it was the first time in Taiwan's history that hundreds of marriage migrants all over Taiwan held street demonstration! This demonstration was organized by the Coalition Against Financial Requirements for Immigrants (CAFRI), initiated by the Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants (AHRILIM) to broaden the alliance work to further enhance advocacy for immigrant rights.

From helpless tears to steadfast demonstration in the streets, this journey had been filled with happiness and frustration. This paper attempts to document and analyze the development of immigrant movement in Taiwan, highlighting the efforts of AHRILIM, the alliance spearheading the

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<sup>2</sup>"New Immigrant Women" were commonly called "Foreign brides (spouses)" in Taiwan, which was considered derogatory reflecting discrimination against Third World Women. I use the term in quotes to remind readers that the term is ideologically charged. In 2003, via a "naming campaign" initiated by Awakening Foundation, one of the leading feminist organizations in Taiwan, "new immigrant women" was voted by participating "foreign brides" as their favorite choice of term. In this paper, immigrant women and marriage migrants are used interchangeably to refer to women migrating to Taiwan through marriages.

movement.

### MARRIAGE MIGRANTS IN TAIWAN

Since the mid-1980s, Taiwan has moved from the “periphery” to the “semi-periphery” in the world system. As a result, Taiwan has become a host country for many migrants in the region. According to the statistics released in 2002 by the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, one of every four new marriages in Taiwan is between a citizen and foreigner. The majority of the foreign spouses are the “foreign brides” and “Mainland brides” of Taiwanese men. As indicated in the statistics released by the Ministry of Interior, as of October 31, 2008, there are 411,315 foreign spouses (30.6% from Southeast Asia and 63.32% from Mainland China). Ninety-two percent of these foreign spouses are women. Among the women from Southeast Asia, 64.1% are from Vietnam, 20.7% from Indonesia, 6.7% from Thailand, 5.0% from the Philippines, and 3.5% from Cambodia. In addition to marriage migration, migrants also come to Taiwan for work.

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

Most marriage migrants decide to marry Taiwanese men because they hope to escape poverty and turbulence in their home countries, which has been intensified by capitalist globalization. Globalization entails privatization, deregulation and liberalization, which means unemployment, hunger and disease, and a threat to survival for the vast majority of laborers. The World Bank and the IMF have driven hundreds of millions of people into poverty in the guise of offering loans to developing countries and promising a boost in development by carrying out SAPS (Structural Adjustment Programs) (for further analysis, Hsia 2004). Under the sway of distorted development, farmers and workers in the developing countries, such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, have been increasingly squeezed economically and forced to find work abroad. For women in these countries, they could choose to find work outside of their native countries or escape their economic plight through transnational marriages.

The men whom the marriage migrants marry are mostly farmers and the working class in Taiwan. Taiwan gradually began to take on the characteristics of a semi-peripheral country in the late 1980s, when Taiwan began to exploit cheaper labor and resources in Southeast Asian, Mainland China, and other peripheral countries. At the same time, globalization began to push liberalization, privatization and deregulation, resulting in distorted

development in Southeast Asian countries and a great number of agricultural and industrial laborers in distress. The poverty created by globalization was not as serious in Taiwan as in Southeast Asian countries, but agriculture in Taiwan was clearly hollowed out by the twin forces of continued urbanization and industrialization, as well as international pressure on agriculture. Low-skilled workers have also been affected by the increasing threats of liberalization. These low-skilled agricultural and industrial laborers found survival more and more difficult and themselves in an extremely disadvantaged position in Taiwan's domestic marriage market.

#### *Stressed Economic Conditions*

As mentioned, the Taiwanese men whom Southeast Asian women marry are mostly farmers and laborers. Under these circumstances, the economic situation of Southeast Asian women in Taiwan tends to be bleak. According to a survey, 31.3% of interviewed marriage migrant women said that their family expenses are higher than family income, 48.9% just manage to make ends meet, and only 2.7% have an income higher than expenses. A full 78.5% of the families of Southeast Asian women rely on their Taiwanese husband's income and 7% of the women are the primary earner. 40% of the Taiwanese husbands are working-class and 65% of the interviewed foreign spouses from Southeast Asia make less than 2,0000 NT (about US\$588)(Hsu, 2004).

Since the Taiwanese husbands are mostly working-class, most marriage migrants need to take on jobs in order to supplement family income. They face many obstacles, however, while searching for jobs. For example, due to language barriers and isolation in the household, they do not have adequate access to necessary information and resources. Furthermore, some employers mistreat these marriage migrants, who often are unaware of their legal rights and lack social support.

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

Since these marriage migrants come to Taiwan alone, they lack a social network to serve as effective social support after they are married. 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. Although Taiwan has passed a law against domestic violence and provided various services, such efforts are of no real assistance to marriage migrants due to (1) language barriers and the resulting lack of access to information and (2) the fact social workers

and other service employees are not properly trained to handle multicultural issues.

### *Discrimination and National Anxiety*

“Foreign brides” have been commonly construed by the governmental agencies, media, and general public as a “social problem” and often attached to such terms as “fake marriage, real prostitution” and “the deteriorating quality of the next generation.” Elsewhere I analyze how these images are constructed by the media and governmental agencies without any substantial data (Hsia, 1997, 2007). It is sufficient to say that governmental agencies and media have become what Becker (1963) called “moral entrepreneurs” and their construction of the transnational marriages and those involved become the dominant discourse, in which marriage migrants, their husbands and families are constructed as “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 marriage migrants’ children to delayed development. Many governmental projects have in fact aimed to solve such “problems.” Not supported by reliable data, these claims are instead based on the assumption that since the marriage migrants are from the developing countries, they must lack the skills necessary to educate their own children – an argument clearly with sexist, racist and classist overtones. This fear of the marriage migrants’ impacts on deteriorating the “quality” of Taiwan’s population is a dominant discourse representing the “national anxiety” shared not only by the government officials and media workers but also the general public. Moreover, as capitalist globalization intensifies internal inequality, especially class division, within the nation-state, the political system as a whole benefits from the maintenance of a state of anxiety among the population, and also from focusing that anxiety outwards. By diverting attention from internal inequality to the “problems” and “threats” of the marriage migrants (and migrant workers as well), the political system remains intact and unchallenged (Hsia, 2007).

### *Obstacles to Obtaining Citizenship*

Marriage migrants have to face constraints imposed by laws and regulations, which reflect Taiwan’s exclusionary policy of immigration. 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 policy of incorporation has been based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, which is inclusive of people who can claim a common ancestral origin, real or imagined, and exclusive of people who do not share that commonality. Despite recent changes in the Nationality Act, it remains extremely difficult for those excluded from nationality to become citizens of Taiwan, except for spouses and children of Taiwanese citizens. Prior to the changes in the Nationality Act in the late 1990s, foreigners could not be naturalized as Taiwanese citizens except for women married to Taiwanese men. Foreign women are seen as 'naturalizable' only because of their ability to continue Taiwanese 'blood,' which apparently has patriarchal values perceiving women only as breeding objects, rather than independent subjects. Based on this patriarchal exclusionary policy of incorporation, Taiwan government does not grant citizenship to foreign women as an inalienable right, but rather preconditions citizenship on their status as wife of a Taiwanese man. For instance, marriage migrants who have not obtained Taiwanese citizenship are often illegible for social services and welfare benefits. Battered marriage migrants without Taiwanese citizenship are deported if they get divorced; given that custody of the children is often granted to the Taiwanese fathers, this deportation would make them unable to return to Taiwan to visit their children. Consequently, battered marriage migrants often decide to endure domestic violence for the sake of their children. The husband's power over the marriage migrant is thus sanctioned by the state (Hsia, 2009).

These laws and regulations are not only the products of, but also in turn reinforce prejudice and discrimination against the 'foreign brides.' Indeed, the very term, 'foreign brides,' reflects the discrimination against Third World women. This common parlance only refers to foreign spouses from developing countries, not to those from so-called developed countries, such as Japan, U.S. and western European countries. Additionally, these marriage migrants from Southeast Asia and Mainland China<sup>3</sup> are called 'foreign brides,' no matter how long they have been married to their Taiwanese husbands.

As the number of marriage migrants from Southeast Asia and Mainland China increases, the anxiety about the "deterioration of the quality of next generation" has led the government to add more barriers for marriage migrants to acquire citizenship. The one that troubles the marriage migrants and their families most is the financial proof requirement. As of November,

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<sup>3</sup> Marriage migrants from Mainland China are also referred to as "Mainland brides."

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.

#### THE FORMATION OF IMMIGRANTS MOVEMENT IN TAIWAN

Despite various constraints, these 'foreign brides' are never passive victims. Indeed, they have been increasingly more active in participating various protest action organized by AHRLIM. Based on personal involvement in the making of immigrant movement, the following analysis focuses on how immigrant movement in Taiwan has been developed. \

##### *The Beginning of Immigrant Movement*

In spite of various definitions and analyses of social movements, one can argue that both American and European theorists agree that one of the major characteristics of social movements is being collective struggles in certain forms of contentious politics. Therefore, "contentious collective action" is considered the basis of social movements and social movement is defined as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow, 1998: 4). From this basic definition, I would argue that the establishment of "Alliance for Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants" (AHRLIM) was the beginning of the new immigrant movement in Taiwan.

Several NGOs in Taiwan had worked individually on immigrant and migrant issues for a few years. Things have changed, however, 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 illegal or dangerous. Moreover, the legal grounds for deportation – such as "threatening national security" and "violating the public interest" – are vague articulations subject to manipulation. Human rights of immigrants and migrants are very vulnerable because this proposed agency did not provide any due process



for prosecution or mechanism to which migrants and immigrants can make appeal before they are deported. In order to promote both the human rights of immigrants and migrants, as well as the development of a healthy, pluralist society, in November 2003, Awakening Foundation (one of the leading feminist organizations) initiated a consultation meeting with organizations and scholars concerned about immigrants and migrants issues to discuss the possibility of establishing an alliance. After two preparation meetings, a group of concerned organizations joined with lawyers and scholars formed AHRLIM on December 12, 2003. AHRLIM's first action was the protest in front of Legislative Yuan against the government's proposal to establish the above-mentioned NIA on December 24, 2003. Before the protest, AHRLIM initiated a well-received signature campaign to halt the deliberation on the proposal presented by the Executive Yuan (Taiwan's executive branch). In this petition, AHRLIM first spelled out three demands:

1) The "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" clearly states that national policies must not infringe upon the basic rights of the individual for reasons of race, nationality, gender, and so forth. Although Taiwan has signed this Declaration, the Executive Yuan's plans for a National Immigration Agency combine police,<sup>4</sup> investigative, and judicial functions in a single body and make immigrants and migrants into a population of suspected criminals. The proposed NIA would focus on preventive control, in effect covering up human rights' violations in the name of security. We ask for an immediate halt to deliberation on the proposal presented by the Executive Yuan and propose that public discussion of immigration policy be allowed to return to its basis in human rights.

2) Given that immigration policy in itself requires comprehensive planning, and given the need to prevent abuse of authority, we suggest related laws be reviewed. The draft governing the organization of the National Immigration Agency proposed by the Executive Yuan is part of an organizational law that should be amended at the same time amendments are made to the related functional codes – i.e., the Immigration and Entry and Exit Law – in order to establish the terms of concrete norms for a comprehensive immigration policy. Such a policy would address such issues as the specific tasks to be assumed by the National Immigration Agency, channels for supervision of the NIA and the handling of complaints, and jurisdictional divisions with other departments.

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<sup>4</sup> According to this proposal, 75% of NIA personnel would be officers transferred from Police Departments.

3) The draft proposal presented by the Executive Yuan for the organization of the National Immigration Agency and related immigration codes are measures that directly affect the future of Taiwan's immigration policy, including the organization and authority accorded to the actual administrative organs concerned. As such, it forms a crucial link in national immigration policy, affecting the rights of immigrants and migrants. National immigration policy further contains implicit ideas about social organization that will directly affect the way Taiwanese people imagine "citizenship" and identity. Hence, we ask that public debate on such an important matter be expanded such that immigrants, migrants, their families, and society-at-large may have a greater chance to participate in, and understand the stakes of making, such policy.

Additionally, AHRLIM underwent lobbying in the Legislative Yuan to seek support of legislators from different political parties. On December 31, 2003, the same date when the Organic Laws and Statues Committee of Legislative Yuan was to deliberate the bill of Organic Act of National Immigration Agency, AHRLIM held a press conference titled "*Halt Deliberation, Begin Public Debates – We Demand a National Immigration Agency that protects human rights!*" In this press conference, AHRLIM successfully mobilized legislators from different political parties, including one from the ruling party, to appear at the press conference and sign a symbolic "Treaty of Immigrants" vowing to protect human rights of immigrants and migrants. As the result of previous efforts of lobbying, AHRLIM gained support from steering committees of opposing parties in Legislative Yuan. The majority party in Legislative Yuan decided to initiate a "counter-mobilization order" so that the Organic Laws and Statues Committee could not meet quorum to proceed the meeting, even though the ruling party tried every means to mobilize their party members in the Legislator Yuan.

The government was determined to pass swiftly the Organic Act of National Immigration Agency and made several attempts to deliberate the bill, but eventually failed because of AHRLIM's continuous efforts of lobbying. Since the government's plan to establish NIA was temporarily halted, AHRLIM began to examine the government's proposed amendments to the Immigration Act and draft AHRLIM's own proposal in order to establish acceptable norms for a comprehensive immigration policy. To this end AHRLIM held four rounds of public forums in northern, central and southern Taiwan, where NGOs and concerned citizens and immigrants discussed the current immigration policy and related issues, and the principles of AHRLIM's draft on the amendments to the Immigration Act. In addition to public forums, to raise the public consciousness of the human

rights issues of immigrants and migrants, AHRILM took up on various incidents to expose issues related to the situation of immigrants and migrants, and the problems of immigration policies and regulations. For instance, on March 5, 2004, AHRILM held a rally in front of Executive Yuan, after the Executive Yuan stipulated that spouses from Mainland China should present proof of properties worth of five million NT dollars (around US \$150,000). On July 12 of the same year, another rally was organized in front of Ministry of Education condemning outrageous 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 “ill quality,” which reflected sheer prejudice and discrimination. A few weeks after, on August 2, AHRILM protested against Council of Labor Affairs’ policy of “money-flow management” for migrant workers. As the results of continuous protest action, governmental agencies have been increasingly pressured by AHRILM and often forced to respond, such as cancelling the financial requirement of properties worth of five millions for Mainland spouses, public apology from the Deputy Minister of Education, and postponing the money-flow management policy.

Immigration Act is the legal basis of immigration policy, and the Executive Yuan already submitted amendment of Immigration Act on December 2003, whose contents, unfortunately, were filled with discrimination and were considered anti-human rights of im/migrants. AHRILM therefore decided to take up the tasks of reforming Immigration Act. After intense and detailed discussions and debates (through weekly meetings and listserv discussion) for more than one year, AHRILM 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 of 2005. After another two years of struggles, the amendment was eventually passed on Nov. 30, 2007. Important reforms in this newly passed amendment 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 the rights for assembly and rally for im/migrants.

#### STRATEGIES OF ADVOCATING IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

As theorists of “framing processes” argue (e.g. Snow et al., 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988), every social movement needs to construct discourse that earns public support and thus establish its legitimacy, which in turn becomes social pressures to force changes of the states. Since the immigrant

movement began, one challenge was to confront the public concerns and worries about negative impacts of the immigrants in Taiwan. The strategic framing that AHRLIM adopts is to radicalize the existent values and rhetoric, to construct the “*betweenness*” of “us” and “them” and to demonstrate the subjectivity of marriage migrants.

#### *Radicalizing Existent Values and Rhetoric*

To establish dialogue with the public, AHRLIM has gradually radicalized existent values/rhetoric, including human rights, multiculturalism and democracy. Since President Chen won the election in 2000, the first time the opposition party won presidential election over long-ruling KMT, “nationhood based on human rights principles” has become very popular rhetoric among politicians. To radicalize this rhetoric, AHRLIM used it to open up its first statement,

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 ROC is not recognized by most international organizations, it has been the primary national anxiety to prove to the world that Taiwan has achieved the international standards on all grounds hoping to gain more support from international communities for Taiwan to be recognized as an independent state. AHRLIM has purposefully used such international conventions as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to push for a more inclusive immigration policy. As stated in its first signature campaign, AHRLIM’s position was:

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 Council of Labor Affairs' decision to increase 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, where he declared, *"everyone is equal – whether you are from Tainan (his home county) or Vietnam, and should be protected for basic human rights."*

In addition to human rights issues, ethnic issues were critical appeals for mobilization in the opposition movement before DPP gained power in 2000. DPP had successfully weakened KMT's legitimacy by criticizing its "national language policy" which rendered non-Mandarin speaking people detached from their mother tongues. Since DPP gained power, ethnic issues continue to be the focus. As a result, revitalization of ethnic languages has become a commonly accepted rhetoric, helping to in turn spread the concept of "multiculturalism." The DPP government had carefully employed the concept of multiculturalism to portray its governance as being more democratic and progressive, such as establishing Council for Hakka<sup>5</sup> Affairs, and two national TV stations for Indigenous Peoples and Hakka Peoples. DPP government further uses these "multicultural images" to promote international relations, especially employing symbols of Indigenous Peoples for publicity in international events (e.g. propaganda to attract foreign tourists and official gifts for diplomatic delegates.) However, these seemingly progressive values are very exclusionary in practices. For example, "mother tongues" of the Southeast Asian marriage migrants have been ignored and devalued. AHRLIM and affiliated organizations have taken every chance to radicalize meaning of "multiculturalism" by appealing to include languages and cultures of the new immigrants as part of Taiwanese multi-cultures. On celebrating Mother's Day in 2004, AHRLIM and affiliated organizations co-sponsored an activity titled "Mother's Name – Acknowledging New Immigrants and Migrants" with 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."*

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<sup>5</sup> One of the major ethnic minority groups in Taiwan.

To radicalize this politically correct rhetoric of "multiculturalism," AHRLIM and its affiliated organizations have argued that the mother tongues and cultures of these immigrant women should also be respected, the immigration policy should not be based on assimilation, and thus the *san juanis* tradition of incorporation based on blood should be changed.

Similarly, "democracy" has long been regarded as an important national identity, in contrast with Mainland China (PRC), especially since DPP won their first victory in the presidential campaign in 2000. Additionally, related concepts such as "citizenship" (or citizen's rights) and "civil participation" are also common political rhetoric. Therefore, one of the three demands of AHRLIM's protest against the government's proposal of a NIA thus employed the framing of "democracy."

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 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*"

However, the seemingly universal value of "democracy" or "citizenship" is indeed embedded with material bases. As Faulks (2000) pointed out, values of capitalism, and liberal and republic citizenship are in contradiction. As market values become more dominant, values of citizenship are often forced to take the backseats. Globalization further intensifies this contradiction and immigrant/migrant issues have become symptoms of this contradiction. One the one hand, the Taiwan government has increasingly set up barriers for marriage migrants to acquire formal citizenship. They must overcome several obstacles including having a medical inspection, staying in Taiwan for a certain period of time, abandoning original nationality, submitting financial proof and passing Chinese proficiency exam. As previously mentioned, the one that troubles the marriage migrants and their families most is the requirement of the financial proof. Since the welfare system in Taiwan is based on household units and identification cards (proof of citizenship), immigrant women who

do not obtain Taiwanese citizenship are illegible for social services and welfare benefits. Therefore, the financial proof blocks marriage migrant women from becoming Taiwanese citizen and prevents them from actively participating in the society. Even when marriage migrants obtain formal citizenship, since they are greatly constrained by language barriers, economic conditions and discrimination, they apparently lack access to implement their substantial citizenship, that is, to become active participants in public issues and enjoy the essence of democracy. Therefore, to tackle the material bases of citizenship and democracy, AHRLIM initiated the campaign against the financial requirement for marriage migrant's to become citizens. After series of protest action and rallies, the burden of strict financial proof was significantly lessened in November, 2008.

In short, to move immigrant movement forward, one strategy AHRLIM employs is to radicalize all seemingly progressive political rhetoric – including human rights, multiculturalism and democracy – in order to transform public discourse to be more receptive of immigrants and migrants.

#### *Constructing "Betweenness" of Us and Them*

Constructing a sense of empathy in the public discourse is another important strategy. In AHRLIM's first petition, it pointed out the fact that most "Taiwanese" are decedents of immigrants to construct the sense of connection between "us" (the "Taiwanese") and "them" (the so-called "foreign brides" and "foreign workers"). It was stated, "*Taiwan's migratory population did not just appear out of nowhere in the last two years. Our ancestors were precisely those hardy souls who traveled, in small groups, across the ocean to brave a new life in Taiwan. Ironically, today's Taiwanese society, itself composed of immigrants, looks upon new migrants and immigrants with fear and casts them into exclusion.*" By recalling the histories and memories, AHRLIM aimed at constructing the sense of empathy among the Taiwanese so that they can better understand the issues and conditions of im/migrants.

In my previous work, I argued that "*the hierarchical self/other boundary is foundation of the reproduction of social order. 'Betweenness' is the way to break away the circle of perpetuation.*" (Hsia, 1997) Certainly, every individual has unique biography, yet individuals have never been isolated creatures. Our thoughts and action are always formed and influenced by social conditions. However, in the dominant mainstream discourse, "differences" are what attract us and become our "gaze." For instance, working class in the "first" world countries usually do not identify with the migrant workers from the

“third” world countries based on their common working class identity. Rather, the former often “gaze” on the “inferior” nationality of the latter, and their “evil” intention to “steal” their jobs. Consequently, the strategy of transnational corporations to maximize their profits by exploiting the cheapest labor all over the world remains intact and unchallenged. The boundary of Self and the Other is inevitable. The moment we write or speak the words such as “we” and “they,” the boundary is established. However, boundary does not necessarily lead to hierarchy. For example, although a White woman does not have the same experience as a Black man, yet her experiences of being oppressed as a woman can be linked to the experience of being oppressed as a Black. Racism and sexism may appear as two different things on the surface. However, if we look into the “connectedness” and “*betweenness*,” we would notice that struggles and frustration in the process of resisting these two forms of discrimination are indeed similar.

The “*betweenness*” or “connection” of experiences can effectively open the door for empathy, through which a more critical perspective can develop to examine the structures where personal experiences are embedded in. For instance, from my experience of conducting workshops for Taiwanese to understand the issues of immigrants, I find that the most effective mechanisms to change the participants’ perspectives is what I call a “shock” exercise. After watching a short film about immigrant issues, I unexpectedly held the discussion in English. By being forced to stay in a situation where the language is foreign to them, the participants quickly developed all kinds of emotions, such as frustration, anxiety, fear, anger, etc. In the sharing after this exercise (in Chinese), the participants all enthusiastically expressed their empathy with the marriage migrants and further discuss what can be done to help the immigrant women. Many of the participants after the workshops began to actively develop various programs in their communities for the immigrant women with the critical understanding of liberation education and related issues. Additionally, by various means, including lectures, newspaper articles and books, to recall the historical memories of Taiwan as a society of immigrants and their descendents, and experiences of Chinese immigrants being discriminated in the U.S., is to transform Taiwanese gaze to see their “*betweenness*” with the immigrant women.

In addition to creating a sense of empathy, “*betweenness*” may trigger strong feelings that lead to action. As Paulo Freire (1970) maintains, people are prepared to act only on issues about which they feel strongly. For instance, many Taiwanese volunteers actively participate in tasks and issues related to marriage migrants, after they realize the similar situations with them as women, daughters-in-law, and mothers, which in turns helps the



making of immigrant movement in Taiwan.

*Demonstrating the Subjectivity of Marriage Migrants*

To ensure the legitimacy of the immigrant movement, it is essential to have active participation of immigrants themselves. Many social movements impose themselves as the “spokespersons” on behalf of the marginalized mass neglecting the subjectivity of grassroots in the movement. More often than not, the mass that participate in the protest action is “mobilized” without knowing fully the issues at stake and sadly becoming only “props.” This tendency of social movements to speak on behalf of the marginalized has been much criticized by feminists of colors and from the third world (e.g. hooks, 1984; Collins, 1990; Monhanty, et al 1991). Having the subjectivity of marriage migrants as the priority, efforts have been made since 1995 to empower marriage migrants, when the “Foreign Brides Chinese Literacy Program” was initiated. After various trials and errors, the Chinese Literacy Programs gradually develop programs based on the combination of the “*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*” and the “*Theater of the Oppressed*” (see Hsia 2006 for details). After eight years of empowering marriage migrants, the first national grassroots organization for marriage migrants, TransAsia Sisters Association in Taiwan (TASAT) was founded on December 7, 2003. TASAT was one of the founding member organizations of AHLRIM.

Since long before AHLRIM was established, TASAT had been empowering and organizing marriage migrants for many years and consequently the subjectivity of the immigrant women have been gradually developed in the process, the “legitimacy” of immigrant movement in Taiwan can thus be founded. At the first protest initiated by AHLRIM, marriage migrants organized by TASAT were at the front line voicing their dissent by performing a short skit in front of the Legislative Yuan. The marriage migrants organized by TASAT have become significantly more active after their first protest, often participating in AHLRIM activities, speaking at protests or press conferences, and sharing their experiences and opinions at various activities.

For instance, in the morning of July 6, 2005, marriage migrants from Taipei, accompanied by many women’s, workers’ and human rights groups, awaited other marriage migrants from Southern Taiwan, who took a mid-night bus with their husbands, children and Taiwanese friends, to join the protest in front of the highest central government, Executive Yuan, against their decision to increase obstacles for obtaining citizenship. On September 9, 2007, to protest against the financial requirement for applying

citizenship, TASAT along with other organizations that form Coalition Against Financial Requirement for Immigrants (CAFRI) took up to the street demanding the scrap of the "proof of financial security." This rally is considered historical and caught media attention because it is the first time in Taiwan history that hundreds of marriage migrants from all parts of Taiwan join the rally.

The voices of marriage migrants often are able to help subvert the public image of them as submissive, problematic, and incompetent. Via theater, paintings, writings, and other types of sharing at various forums and activities, marriage migrants have changed many Taiwanese's stereotypes. Another more recent effort to change public perceptions is TASAT's program of Southeast Asian languages and cultural courses, where marriage migrants teach the local Taiwanese about Southeast Asia and issues of multiculturalism. From these courses taught by the marriage migrants, the local Taiwanese realize that marriage migrants can offer much expertise to the Taiwanese societies. 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 has caught public attention (The first print 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 has been amazement over how talented marriage migrants are, and how the book has made many readers so much more appreciative of multiculturalism and aware of their own prejudices.

Further, the active participation of marriage migrants has gradually changed the media construction. For example, a major newspaper significantly reported AHRLIM's protest on July 6, 2005, with a vivid caption under the picture, "*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 steadfast looks of the marriage migrants, with no signs of tiredness from a midnight bus trip, marching like heroines, were captured and crystallized as historical moments by photographers and reporters. This scene is in sharp contrast with how "foreign brides" used to appear in the media, helpless and shameful, and this historical scene captured in the picture was repeatedly used in the newspapers afterwards.

To demonstrate the subjectivity of marriage migrants, it takes a long process of empowering. To take TASAT as an example, it took eight years of empowerment starting from the Chinese program initiated in 1995. Via learning Chinese, TASAT has gradually enhanced the civic participation of marriage migrants, making them better able to communicate with local

Taiwanese and to create a network among themselves. The involvement of local Taiwanese volunteers also has helped create a friendlier environment for the marriage migrants. It is crucial to stress that the marriage migrants need a process of empowerment before they can appear in front of the public and the mass media with great confidence, and consequently drastically challenge the mainstream construction of them as problematic. Without this process of empowerment, “foreign brides” often appear as victims, which will reinforce the dominant media construction of them as problematic. Many NGOs have “foreign brides” present at the press conferences with tears and even with their faces covered. This may be well-meant to raise public awareness of the problems “foreign brides” are facing, yet it reinforces the mainstream images of the “foreign brides” as problematic and helpless victims.

The process of TASAT’s experience of empowering marriage migrants can be illustrated as figure 1. This process of empowerment starts from fulfilling marriage migrants’ practical needs of learning Chinese, and gradually moves towards meeting their strategic gender needs. Via fulfilling their needs of learning Chinese, the literacy program aims at creating a space for group dialogue by encouraging immigrant women to share experiences.

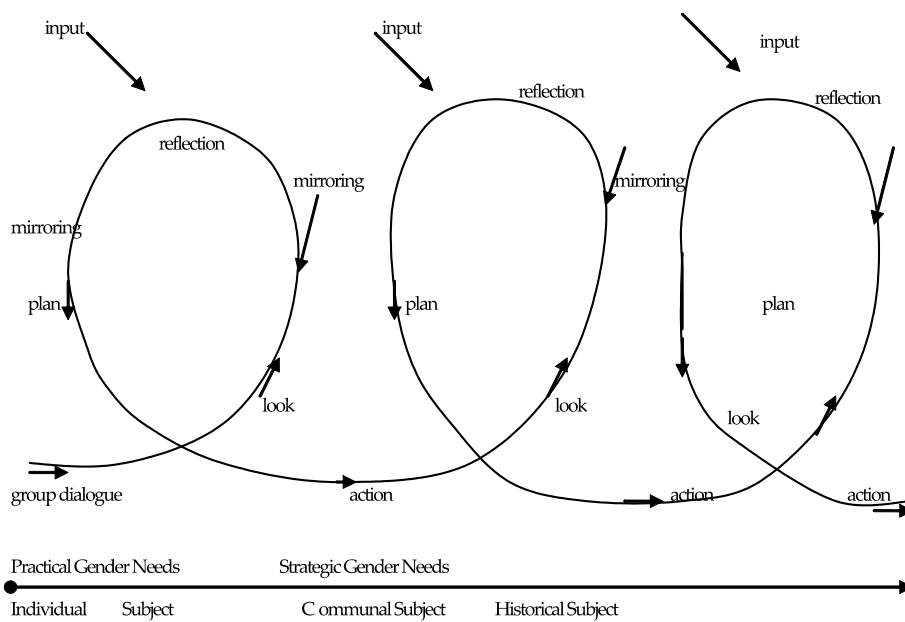


FIGURE 1. SUBJECTIVATION PROCESS OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN

From this space of group dialogue, marriage migrants gradually transforms from individual subject, then communal subject, and further become historical subject actively participating in public issues and involving in immigrant movement, which meets their strategic needs. This subjectivation process is dialectical, rather than a linear process. At every bottle neck and crisis encountered, various methods are used to create “mirroring” effects where immigrant women can look at the situations from a distance and reflect on themselves, which then leads to discussion, adding necessary input, and collectively finding resolutions and further action. Moreover, the contents of strategic gender needs are not predetermined. Rather, it is developed in the empowering process where new needs are developed as we continuously strive to break away obstacles. For example, since TASAT was formally established, the needs of transforming public images arose, so action to train marriage migrants as teachers for multiculturalism and Southeast Asian cultures was initiated. As marriage migrants became more aware of the impacts of immigration policies and laws on their welfare, TASAT began to work with other organization to establish AHRLIM to transform policies and laws. (for detailed discussion, see Hsia, 2006a)

To sum up, the formation of immigrant movement in Taiwan can be illustrated as Figure 2. After years of empowerment, TASAT began to work with other organization to establish AHRLIM to transform policies and laws. The active participation of immigrant women, the legitimacy of immigrant movement initiated by AHRLIM has been established. AHRLIM aims at changing the public perception of marriage migrants, and immigration

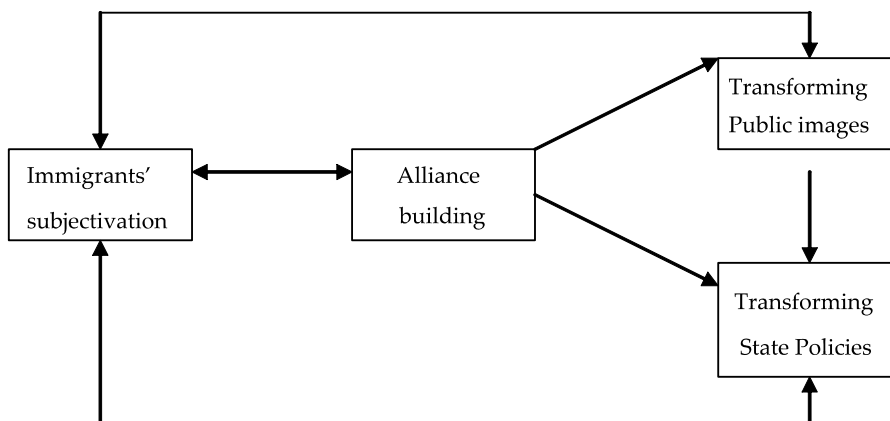


FIGURE 2. THE FORMATION OF IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT IN TAIWAN

laws and policies. By actively participating in the alliance for movement and being able to transform public images and state policies, marriage migrants are further encouraged and their sense of historical subject is strengthened (see Hsia, 2006a for details).

#### ALLIANCE BUILDING: ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME DIFFERENCES

Many studies have shown that social movement organizations have made efforts to build alliances to broaden support and strengthen the movements (e.g. Parker, 2008; Stephen, 2008). Successful collaboration within and between social movement organizations is found to depend to a great extent on agreement over the tactics and strategies the movement alliance will pursue, as well as the organizational attributes the movement demonstrates (Gamson, 1975). When an alliance is composed of organizations with different agendas and constituencies, crucial issues include what make movement alliance difficult, and how to resolve differences to effectively collaborate for campaigns. Litcherman (1995) identified two types of “cultures of commitment,” personalized and communitarian, and argued that these cultural aspects played a significant role in complicating the viability of a lasting alliance between activist communities. Having the similar concerns in mind, Beamish and Lubebbers (2008) analyze the anti-Bioterror Lab coalition in Boston whose members include both communitarian and personalized types of commitment and have coalesced and persisted, contrary to what Litcherman predicted. Beamish and Lubebber argue that the foremost reason why this coalition persisted was that the “cause ownership” was clearly defined at early stage of the movement. The group directly affected by the anti-Bioterror lab was acknowledged by other members as owning the primacy in this fight and thus should take the lead, including its organizational style. The constituency of the leading group in this alliance is poor and mostly African Americans, who feel oppressed and betrayed by Whites for a long history. By clarifying the “cause ownership” early on with other members in the alliance, many from White, professional, middle-class backgrounds, the trust within the alliance could be gradually developed and thus the alliance could persist. Similarly, Stephen (2007) in her study on the collaboration between the Latino immigrant organization and non-immigrant organization in an alliance for immigrant rights, the ability of the non-immigrant organization to sit back, listen, learn, and follow the immigrant organization’s lead is the key to develop trust necessary for the

successful alliance-building.

The members of AHRLIM are from organizations with different experiences, agendas and constituents, including women, labor, human rights, migrant workers and marriage migrants. In terms of organizational characteristics, AHRLIM's members include service-providing NGOs, advocacy organizations and grassroots immigrant organizations. Some member organizations have links with different political parties, and some even had conflicts prior to the establishment of AHRLIM. The following analyzes AHRLIM's organizational strategies to resolve these differences and tension.

#### *Heterogeneity with the Basis of Unity*

As the result of assuming the "ill quality" of marriage migrants and their children, Taiwan government began to devote much attention to these issues around 2002. As one of the leading feminist organizations in Taiwan, the government often invited Awakening Foundation for various consultation meetings. As the Board Member of the Awakening Foundation at that time, I was constantly consulted by the staff concerning issues related to marriage migrants. After careful discussion, we concluded that our efforts and energy should not be drained by countless meetings with the governments, which were often used by the government as endorsement from NGOs. Since the government was rushing to establish the NIA whose organizational structure and principles were problematic, we found it urgent to consolidate efforts and strength from more critical NGOs and experts to advocate rights for immigrants and migrants. To develop the movement for im/migrants issues, we decided to initiate an alliance comprised of organizations and experts concerning for immigrants and migrants issues. Awakening called for a consultation meeting on November 6, 2003, where organizations, scholars and legal experts concerning human rights, women, workers, marriage migrants, migrant workers discussed the situations and the possibility of forming the alliance. After two consultation meetings, AHRLIM was established and the founding organizations include Awakening Foundation, TransAsia Sisters Association Taiwan, Taiwan Association for Human Rights, Women Labor Rights Association and Rerum Novarum.

The composition of AHRLIM is very heterogeneous, because we believe that immigration issues should be very comprehensive and by forming the alliance, we wish to broaden our perspectives and through the heterogeneous networking, we can reach to different sectors and gradually

develop a more comprehensive movement for im/migrant issues. Though heterogeneous, the alliance had its basis of unity from the beginning. As stated in the first signature campaign, the position of AHRLIM is,

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.

This position was discussed by the founding organizations and served as the basis of unity. After the signature campaign, AHRLIM invited all organizations and individuals who agreed with the basis of unity to join membership (both organizational and individuals) of AHRLIM. More organizations and individuals have joined AHRLIM. AHRLIM has been a generally open and loose coalition without any organizational hierarchy or even secretariat. Though we value heterogeneity, AHRLIM decided to have a basic rule for recruiting new members. To ensure the basis of unity, new members must be recommended by existent members, and endorsed by three additional members, without any objection.

#### *Conscious Efforts to Avoid Spotlights on Individual Organizations*

Since AHRLIM was initiated by Awakening Foundation, spotlights were easily cast upon Awakening Foundation at the beginning. For instance, the news coverage on AHRLIM's first protest action often framed the action as initiated by "women's organization." To ensure AHRLIM as a collective effort with a comprehensive agenda of im/migrant issues, Awakening made conscious efforts to project AHRLIM, instead of any individual organization. Efforts include that representatives of other organizations take turns to be the contact persons for the press and to serve as the moderators and speakers at AHRLIM's activities. As the results of these conscious efforts, AHRLIM soon became recognized as a collective by the media and even government agencies. Although AHRLIM does not have any office or even a secretariat, when necessary, governmental agencies respond to our protest action by writing official documents and letters addressed to AHRLIM rather than any individual organizations.

#### *Finding Links to Different Interests*

Being a heterogeneous formation, one major challenge for AHRLIM is to

create an environment where different members find appropriate angles for them to be more involved and consequently, AHRLIIM can be a more solid alliance even though we still stay as a loose coalition. As the representative from Taiwan Human Rights Association reminded us after AHRLIM initiated the first signature campaign, *"there are so many signature campaigns everyday that people do not even bother to read it. Some organizations may support it, but only to show their spirits of solidarity. If we do not find ways for them to see the close connection between AHRLIM's concerns with their own concerns, they will not be committed to im/migrant issues."* To establish a collective identity, AHRLIM articulated the issues of im/migrants to link to the concerns of existent movement organizations, including women's, workers and human rights, so that they can identify im/migrants as their extended constituencies. That is, AHRLIM argue that im/migrants should be constituents for all organizations and the fights for im/migrant's rights are not only fights for the "others." Rather, it is the struggle for justice and social values, such as gender equality, human rights, democracy, for our own future.

AHRLIM is an open alliance welcoming concerned individuals and organizations to participate (Chen, 2006). In addition to find links of issues to various individuals and organizations, AHRLIM also tried to maximize expertise of all members. For example, law professor and professionals contribute a lot for AHRLIM to draft amendment to immigration regulations, and to analyze issues and come up with strategies from legal perspectives. Those members that have expertise in advocacy are more familiar with tactics of lobbying with legislators and negotiation with governmental agencies, while organizations that provide direct services or grassroots oriented (whose members are mostly im/migrants) can bring to AHRLIM problems they encounter from first hand interaction with im/migrants. For lobbying efforts, members with different links to political parties and politicians maximize their existent networks to gain support for AHRLIM's agendas. Essentially, AHRLIM appreciates expertise of different individuals and organizations, and members can enrich each other via working together in AHRLIM (Awakening, 2006).

#### *Overcoming Communication barriers and Ensuring Democratic Decision*

Ideally, we would like to have every member participating in AHRLIM's meetings. However, many members cannot attend meetings because of their time limits, personal or organizational priorities, long traveling distance (meetings are mostly held in Taipei), etc. To encourage members to participate, AHRLIM created an e-group where all members can discuss



issues. Agenda and minutes are always posted before and after meetings for all members to comment and discuss. The importance of e-group becomes clearer when AHRLIM expand membership to individuals and organizations in southern Taiwan. As one member based in southern Taiwan remarked (Chen, 2006), *"Since we are part of the listserve, when there are some issues we are concerned, we just raise the issues and participate in the discussion. So when necessary, it's fast to mobilize people..... It had been proven later on that we use the mechanism of e-group discussions is a correct decision."* This mechanism of e-group discussion helps those who cannot attend actual meetings comment and discuss, and consequently makes the functioning of AHRLIM more open and democratic (Chen, 2006).

In addition to e-group discussion, to ensure a more democratic mechanism of decision making, AHRLIM employs the principle of consensus. From its start, AHRLIM has cared much about the building of consensus and trust among members. To avoid division and split, AHRLIM has not employed voting to make decision. All decisions, including initiating activities and recruiting new members, have been made by consensus. If any member objects, AHRLIM continues the discussion, until consensus is reached. Sometimes consensus takes time and consequently AHRLIM cannot respond immediately to certain issues. In these cases, some individual organizations will initiate action on their own, instead of using the name of AHRLIM. (Chen, 2006). These efforts of establishing consensus, especially at the earlier stage of AHRLIM, are crucial to develop a more solid alliance with members from very heterogeneous background.

#### *Consolidating Efforts*

Since im/migrants issues are very complicated and AHRLIM has been tackling a lot of issues, from physical abuses of im/migrants to condemning discriminatory remarks by politicians. Knowing that the movement for advocating im/migrant rights will be long term, AHRLIM found it necessary to prioritize issues and consolidate our efforts to reach our goals gradually. After Executive Yuan's plan to establish NIA was successfully postponed by AHRLIM, we began to examine the legal ground of immigration policy and set a concrete goal of reforming Immigration Act. When AHRLIM took up certain issues, we tried to link the issues to Immigration Act and exposed how the present Immigration Act was anti-human rights of im/migrants and advocated AHRLIM's position of reforming Immigration Act. By concentrating our efforts in reforming the Immigration Act, and thus the orientation of immigration policies, AHRLIM was able to consolidate

various protest action, forums and other activities. Moreover, by working collectively in studying and revising Immigration Act and related policies, members of AHRLIM gradually developed more trust and consensus, which in turn strengthened the coherence of AHRLIM. After the goal of reforming Immigration Act was achieved in November of 2007, AHRLIM has decided to take up the tasks of reforming regulations governing marriage migrants from Mainland China,<sup>6</sup> so that the movement of advocating im/migrant rights can be further enhanced.

### *Expanding Solidarity*

With the understanding that immigration issues should be comprehensive, AHRLIM has made efforts to expand our network. For instance, since TASAT has offices both in Taipei and Kaohsiung (in southern Taiwan), staff of TASAT tried to link individuals and organizations in southern Taiwan to AHRLIM. TASAT's office in Kaohsiung has developed network with organizations in southern Taiwan which offer direct services to marriage migrants. Those service-oriented organizations were very rich in knowing the problems marriage migrants were facing, yet often were unaware of how policies and laws had been causing these problems. After AHRLIM held consultation meetings in Kaohsiung on October 23, 2004, TASAT tried to develop a network of organizations and individuals concerned with im/migrants, where they could share experiences and discuss issues. Gradually, the network in southern Taiwan became involved in AHRLIM. Via e-group discussions, organizations in the south are more aware of how policies and laws affect the lives of im/migrants and the strategies to change them. Similarly, individuals and organizations based in Taipei can learn much from the problems these service-oriented organizations encounter in southern Taiwan. The network developed in southern Taiwan become very crucial when AHRLIM decided to expand network and form Coalition Against Financial Requirement for Immigrants.

Since immigration laws are complicated and the tedious procedures of reforming the laws are often seen difficult to be involved. To reach out broad spectrum of people and organizations, expand solidarity work and help those concerned with im/migrant issues be involved in the campaigns for the rights of im/migrants, AHRLIM initiated the formation of Coalition Against Financial Requirement for Immigrants (CAFRI). Since members of AHRLIM found that most service-oriented organizations condemned the financial

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<sup>6</sup> Due to the political tension between Taiwan and Mainland China, marriage migrants from Mainland China are regulated by different regulations.

requirements for marriage migrants to apply for citizenship and this financial proof was considered by marriage migrants and their Taiwanese families the most outrageous, AHRLIM decided that a broader coalition for campaigning against the financial proof was necessary. In addition to the member organizations of AHRLIM, CAFRI was joined by dozens of other organizations. CAFRI initiated a petition against financial requirement, which was endorsed by more than one hundred organizations and more than 1300 individuals. After a series of protest action, CAFRI organized a rally on September 9, 2007, where hundreds of marriage migrants from Southeast Asia and Mainland China joined hand in hand to oppose the financial requirement for naturalization. As the results, the burden of financial requirements was eventually greatly lessened in November 2008.

To reach out broader public and develop network with other progressive organizations, AHRLIM collaborated with a well-known group called "Trees Music & Art" which has organized annual "Migration Music Festival." We organized the first Migrant Workers Singing Contest on October 18, 2006, as part of the series of Migration Music Festival 2006. The purpose of the contest was to allow migrant workers to gather together and showcase their talents, and to promote a better understanding of their cultures and lives among Taiwanese people. Since Migration Music Festival has attracted much audience and it shares with AHRLIM the common goals of advocating Southeast Asian cultures and migrants rights, AHRLIM wished to reach out to the public interested Southeast Asian music and make them more aware of im/migrants issues. On October 2007, AHRLIM continued to collaborate with Migration Music Festival with the singing contest titled "Southeast Asia Sings!" In this second contest, the goal was to encourage participants from different nationalities to learn Southeast Asian songs.

#### *Implications on Alliance Building for Immigrant Rights*

As mentioned, studies in the U.S. showed that the key to resolve differences within an alliance is to clearly define "cause ownership" and which organizations should take the lead in campaigns (Beamish and Luebbers, 2008; Stephen, 2008). However, AHRLIM demonstrates very different strategies dealing with differences in agendas and constituencies. Instead of identifying certain organizations as the ones owning the primacy and thus entitled to take the lead, AHRLIM made efforts to ensure equal participation and democratic procedures, to avoid failure of the alliance.

In the countries like the U.S., where racism had a long history, it is understandable that the issue of “cause ownership” is the foremost concern for an alliance to persist. Moreover, in countries where immigration has a very long history and im/migrants have already developed solid networks and organizations, grassroots im/migrant organizations have all the capacities to lead the campaigns for im/migrant rights, whereas in countries where immigration is still an emerging phenomenon, im/migrants are constrained in their capacities to form political forces. For example, in the case of Europe, in Britain and France, where there are long-established communities with citizenship rights, there are more long-standing associations and migrant women, particularly second generation, have started to enter the formal political sphere (Kofman et al., 2000: 164). On the contrary, in southern European countries, which have only recently become countries of immigration, migrants have had less opportunity to build political organizations (Danese, 1998). Similarly, studies have documented that immigrant-serving organizations are crucial in mass mobilizations in the U.S. for the historical immigrant demonstrations in 2006, where millions of im/migrants participated in a series of marches in cities throughout the U.S. Moreover, the leaders of these organizations are often immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants (Cordero-Guzmán et al., 2008).

Compared to North America and Europe, East Asian countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, have a relatively short history of immigration. While im/migrant networks and political organizations are still very limited, issues and difficulties facing im/migrants in East Asia are very urgent under capitalist globalization. Therefore, existent movement organizations in these East Asian host countries cannot simply ignore the conditions where im/migrants’ human rights have been vastly violated and wait for the im/migrants to build their own networks and political forces. However, issues of subjectivity for im/migrants are still crucial for the making of a solid im/migrant movement. Therefore, the challenges for organizations to build im/migrant movements in East Asia are to simultaneously balance the need to tackle urgent issues and to empower im/migrants. To this end, AHRLIM’s position is to respect grassroots immigrant organizations like TASAT and im/migrant-serving NGOs for their first hand experiences with im/migrants, and the same time maximize the expertise of other organizations, so that all organizations can contribute and learn from each other. AHRLIM’s experience can offer lessons for organizations in East Asia that are concerned about im/migrant rights.

## CONCLUSION

Movements advocating for immigrants rights should be multi-sectoral, since immigration issues are comprehensive and related to various issues including gender, class, ethnicity, human rights, etc. The experience of AHRLIM shows how an alliance of organizations and individuals with different interests but with a common concern for im/migrants can work collectively to propel the immigrant movement. Many challenges are facing AHRLIM, such as how to sustain it without a formal organizational structure, and how to further transform the anti-migrant state and public. Nevertheless, AHRLIM has demonstrated one way of making the dream of the immigrant movement a reality. It is important for us to compare different approaches of developing immigrant movement, including alliance-building, and enrich each other's experience. Issues of what strategies work or fail in what contexts should be carefully studied so that im/migrant movements can be further enhanced in this capitalist globalization era.

It is especially imperative for us to develop an international network as we notice that marriage migrant issues are becoming global and many nation-states have been implementing related laws and regulations. Moreover, governmental agencies often employ other countries' laws and regulations as references, either to learn from others or to legitimate their policies. For instance, to defend its reluctance to scrap financial requirements for marriage migrants to apply for citizenship, Ministry of Interior of Taiwan continuously argued that financial requirement is "universal norm". MOI even bought a half page advertisement in one major national newspapers citing regulations from other countries, including U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. Since AHRLIM's members have developed contacts with organizations or individuals in different countries, we were able to collect information from these countries whose policies and regulations were obviously distorted by Taiwan government purposefully to defend its anti-human rights policies. In September 2007, TASAT co-organized the International Conference on Border Control and Empowerment of Immigrant Brides. During the conference, AHRILM held a press conference and a dialogue with MOI officials where the delegates from different countries openly confronted MOI's distortion of immigration policies in those countries. Moreover, as a result of this conference, the Action Network for Marriage Migrants' Rights and Empowerment (AMM♀RE) was established, which is currently undertaking an international campaign against state violence on marriage

migrants: *unVEIL*.

It is from AHRLIM's vivid experience that we find it imperative to develop an international network of organizations advocating for immigrants rights, so that the rights of immigrants can be further protected and the power of immigrants themselves can be further strengthened!

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