

# Multiculturalism from Below: Empowerment Approaches of Social Cohesion in Taiwan

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# Marriage Migration under Capitalist Globalization

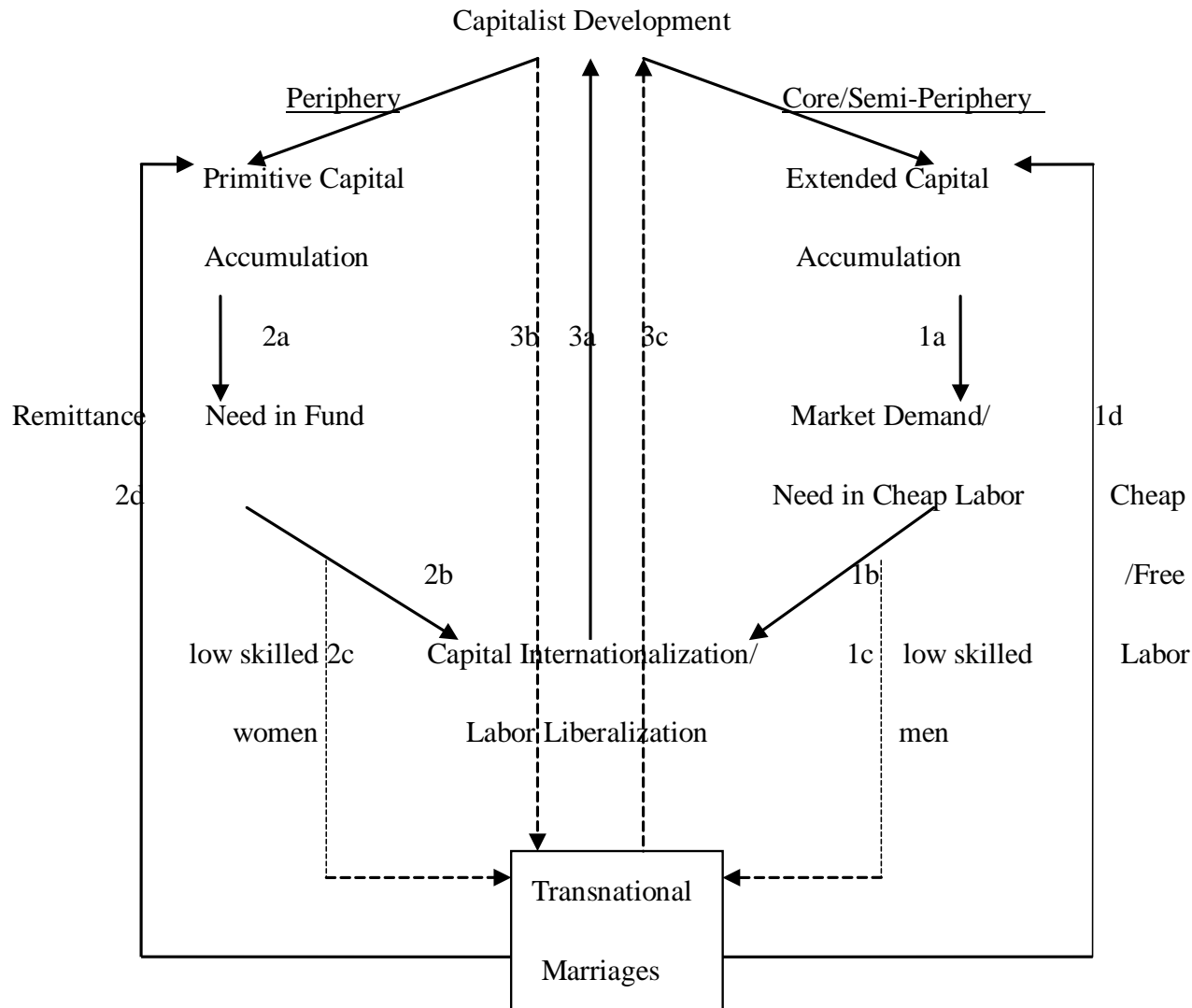
- Paralleled with the trends of (blue-collar) labor migration
- In 2010, a quarter of permanent migration flows to Japan and more than half of permanent migration flows to South Korea were from marriage migration (OECD, 2012).
- Almost 40% of marriages in Singapore involve at least one citizen of Singapore and a non-citizen.
- In 2012, nearly 13 percent of the 139,000 registered marriages in Taiwan involve an international spouse.

# Case of Taiwan: Background Statistics

- Population: 23 million
  - Marriage migrants:
    - 480,000 foreign spouses (33% from Southeast Asia and 67% from Mainland China).
    - Women: 92%
    - Southeast Asian marriage migrants: Vietnam (62%) , Indonesia (20%), Thailand (5%), Philippines (5%), Cambodia (3%).
- peak in 2002: 1/4 new marriages  
1/8 new born babies

# Root Causes of Marriage Migration: Capitalist Globalization

Diagram 1: Commodified Transnational Marriages and Capitalist Development Since 1980s



# Reproduction Crisis and Restructuring of Reproduction

women's free reproductive labor

→ increasing women's labor force participation

+ welfare crisis

→ importing foreign domestic workers: Band-Aid solution:  
dropping fertility rates

→ working class and peasant men disadvantaged in marriage  
market

→ restructuring of reproduction

foreign brides' contribution in three folds:

**maintenance of labor, renewal of labor, cheap labor**

# Constrained Situation of “Foreign Brides”

- **Economic difficulties**
- **Isolation**
- **Discrimination**

Causes of “Social Problems”:

Fake Marriage;

Interfior “Quality” of them & their children

“Waste” of Social Welfare

- **Legal Constraints**

No citizenship ID, No rights!

Increasing Barriers

# Border Control, Discrimination and Legitimacy Crisis

- Border control → “Quality” control
  - fear of “foreign brides” capacity of giving births
- Ideology work to prevent legitimacy crisis
  - can't deny citizens' rights to transnational marriages
  - can't force working class citizens not to have children
  - targeting the “quality” of foreign brides
- Discrimination intensified in globalization context
  - >concern of “population quality” in Taiwan shifted from lower class nationals to “foreign brides” after financial crisis in 1998.

# Citizenship and Immigration Policies in Taiwan

- *jus sanguinis*
- Patriarchy : Prior to the changes in the Nationality Act in 1999 (effective on February 9, 2000), foreigners could not be naturalised as Taiwanese citizens except for women married to Taiwanese men.  
status dependent on Taiwanese husbands.
- No explicit immigration policies until 2003
- Fear of deteriorating “population quality”



# Multiculturalism: A Touch on the Nerves of National Anxiety?



2011, Breivik:  
admiring Taiwan, South Korea and Japan as  
“modern country that never adopted multiculturalism

# State Responses

- Always respect multiculturalism
- Policies and laws to protect the human rights of im/migrants
- Breivik never visited Taiwan

# Violent Reaction from the Civil Society after the Killing of a fisherman by the Coast Guards of the Philippines in 2013



“No Sales to Non-humans  
(Filipinos)

Please don't shoot me. “

# The Emergence of the Concept of Multiculturalism in Taiwan

- Democratization movements in 1980s
- Indigenous Peoples first appear in Constitution in 1994
- In 1997 amendment of Constitution: “the nation recognizes *multi-cultures* and actively protects and promotes the languages and cultures of the Indigenous Peoples”.
- Becoming “politically correct” national identity in the 1990s.
- DPP won first presidential election in 2000—multiculturalism, democracy and human rights—as opposed to PRC
- the original notion of multiculturalism in this nation-building project originated from anti-KMT regime did not include immigrants and migrants. DPP’s anti-migrants policies

# Multiculturalism as Strategy to Develop the Immigrant Movement

- Radicalization of existent rhetoric:  
multiculturalism, democracy, human rights
- Demonstrating the values of multiculturalism  
---Marriage migrants' active participation in  
AHRLIM, lectures, TASAT theater, documentary film,  
etc.

# The Making of Immigrant Movement

- From “Chinese Literacy Program” in 1995:  
integrating Pedagogy of the Oppressed and the Theater of the Oppressed.
- Empowerment of Marriage Migrant Women
- Empowerment of Local Women
- Giving Voices to the Marriage Migrants
  - Writings; Painting
  - Teaching Southeast Asian Languages, Cultures, Multiculturalism...
  - Participating in Alliance for Im/migrants Rights (AHRLIM)
  - Participating in international network (IMA, AMMORE)



Initiation of “Chinese Literacy Program for Foreign Brides”  
July 31, 1995, Meinung, Kaohsiung,



## House visits



After trials and errors,  
a module of the program  
was established:  
Warm up,  
theme discussion, key words.



## Immigrant women participated in every detail of the process of establishing a national organization—TASAT

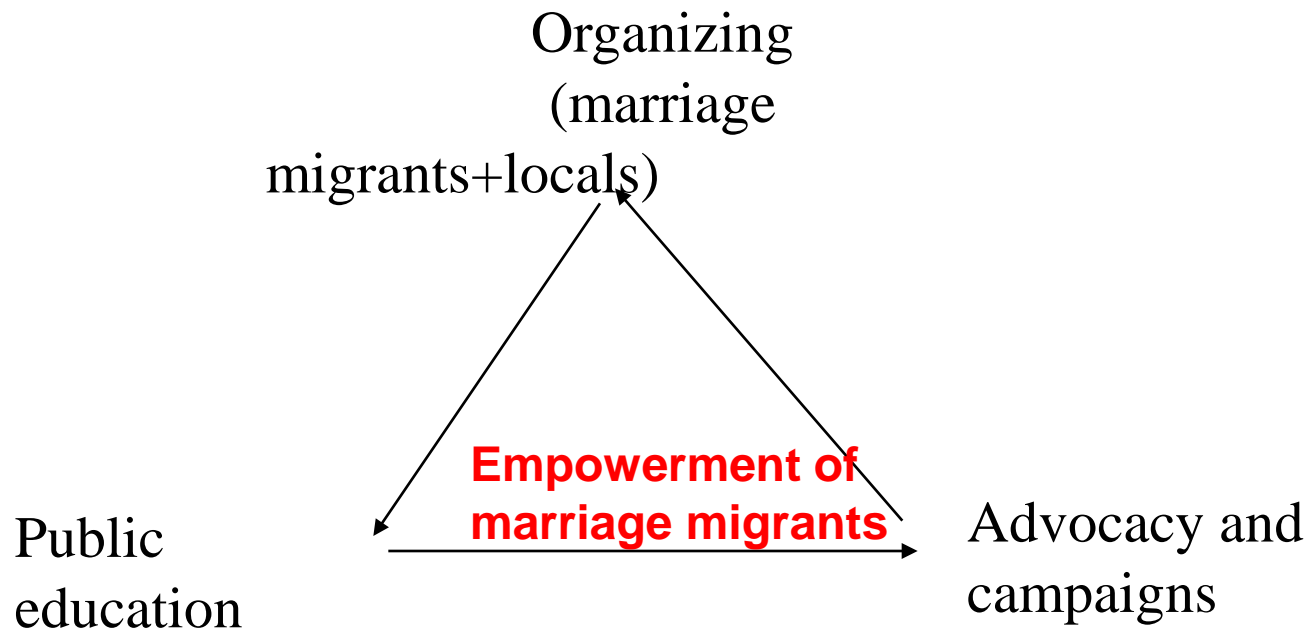


# 2003 Press Conference for the Founding of TASAT: TransAsia Sisters Association, Taiwan.





## Objectives and Orientations of TASAT (TransAsia Sisters Association, Taiwan)



# Organizing

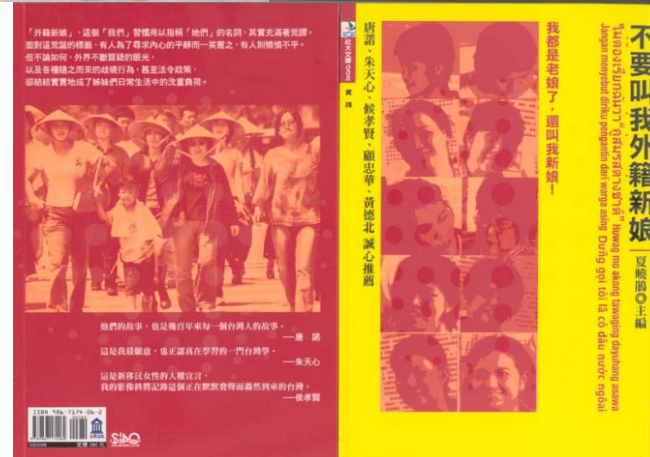
- organizers training
- volunteers training





# Public Education

- Training Marriage Migrants to become Lectures of Southeast Asian Cultures and Multiculturalism
- Publications (books, documentary films, blogs)
- Awards





剛從印尼到台灣發現在同樣的太陽下，  
有兩個不同的世界，我還有很多要適應  
和學習的地方。

(我從鄉下來，原本過著簡單的生活，來到台灣並到  
好多複雜的東西，以前沒坐過電梯、電扶梯、捷運。  
第一次坐好暈，可是很方便。以前在鄉下愛怎麼走，  
就怎麼走，在都要看系工系架(登呢) )



# TASAT Theater



姊妹，賣冬瓜！

Let's Not be Afraid!

ไม่ต้องกลัว,





# Campaigns and Advocacy



TASAT co-founded  
AHRLIM (Alliance for  
Human Rights Legislation  
for Immigrants and  
Migrants) in 2003



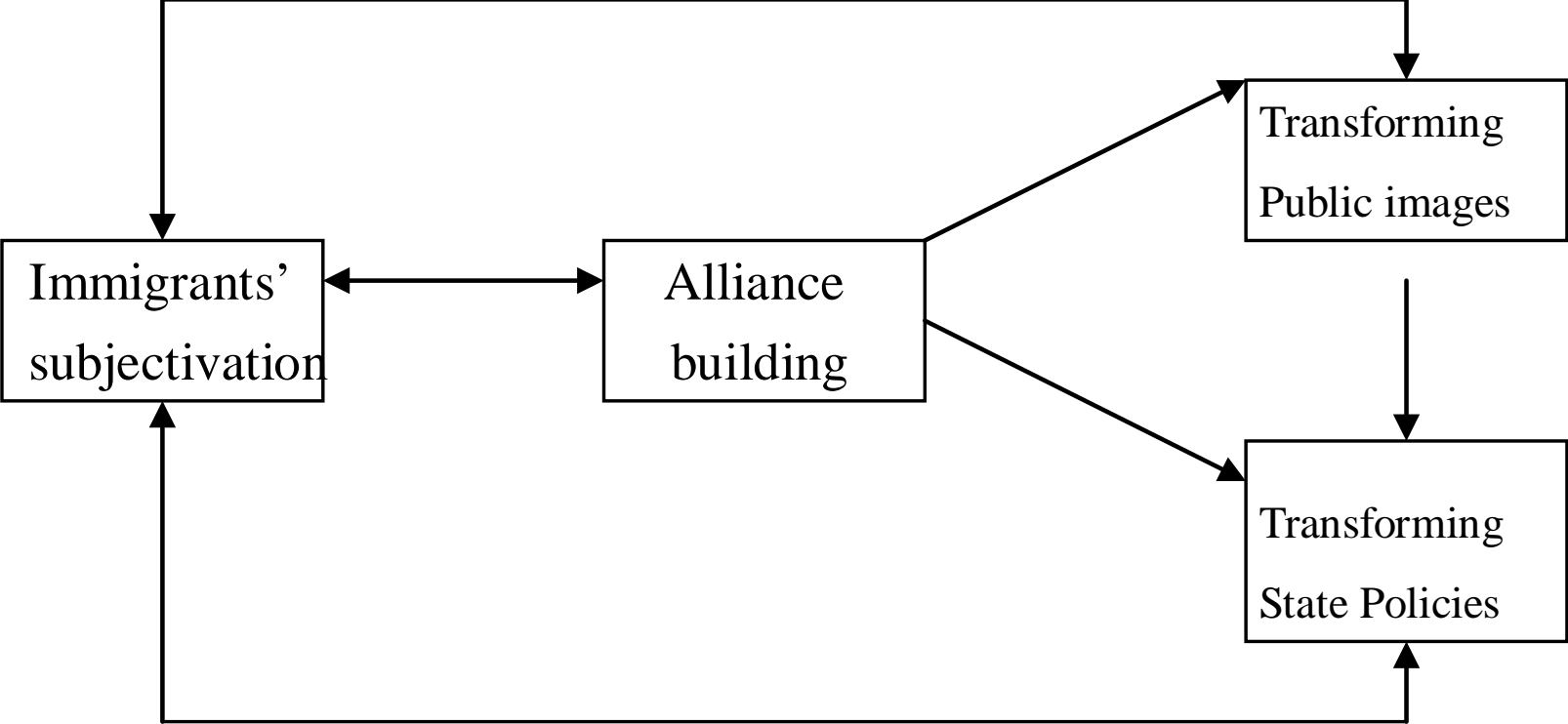
AHRLIM's first  
protest:  
TASAT at the  
frontline!



# Dialogues with governmental agencies, legislators



# The Formation of Immigrant Movement in Taiwan



# Solidarity with other marginalized groups





# Linking with International Network and Alliances



December, 2006, International Peace Festival, India



December, 2006, International Migrants Alliance, Philippines



September, 2007, Formation of AMMORE



Oct. 2008, International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR)

# Major Achievements of the Amendment of Immigrant Act in 2007

1. victims of domestic violence can stay
2. rights to assembly and protest
3. provisions on anti-discrimination
4. provisions on due process



# Campaign against the Financial Requirement for Naturalization

- 420,000 NT (14,000US\$) to apply for citizenship
- After series of campaigns,  
the requirement was canceled  
in Nov.2008







Historical march on 9.9, 2007  
against the Financial  
Requirement



## 2009 Major Achievements of the Amendment of the Regulations Government Mainland Spouses

1. Separate laws for Mainland Spouses
2. Amendment on June 9, 2009
3. Required length of stay from 8 to 6 years
4. Rights to work upon arrival
5. No more 2 million limit of property inheritance
6. No more financial requirement for citizenship

# Newest Achievement: New Curriculum for Primary Schools starting in 2018

- Southeast Asian Languages will be included as one of the options for the required subject of “native ethnic languages or new immigrants’ languages”
- Marriage migrants will become teachers of this new subject

# Conclusion

- Emergent phenomenon of migration poses great challenges to the societies whose model of citizenship has been traditionally exclusionary.
- Marriage migrants pose more anxiety and threats to the locals because they are literally part of the local families, particularly as mothers of the Taiwanese children.
- To counter the prevalent prejudices and discrimination revealed in the public's attitudes, media, policies and laws, the migrants have to speak for themselves—as proactive members of the societies.
- Migrants know the best about their conditions and what they are aspired to. Their voices should be the basis of policies and laws.

- Migrants need support to gain strength and political space, rather than “brokers” to speak on their behalf.
- To effectively change policies and laws, both confrontational and constructive tactics are needed.