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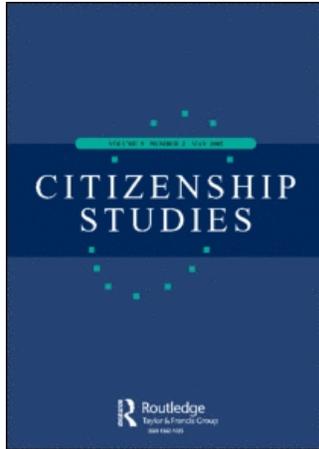


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Taiwanizing female immigrant spouses and materializing differential citizenship

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Taiwan holds the Asian record for the proportion of families that involve so-called ‘foreign brides’. Marriage migration has brought close to half a million immigrant spouses into the country over the past decades. Most of these women come from Mainland China, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. This paper discusses how the Taiwanese state and society have actively pursued the integration of immigrant spouses since 2002, with a set of policies that acknowledge the massive migration of ‘foreign brides’ and the impact of this phenomenon on society. It argues that the attempt to integrate new immigrants is fraught with a discourse that serves to further stigmatize these women, discriminate against them, and, therefore, create an ‘Other’ that is used to erect the ideology of nation-building in Taiwan. The paper provides a critical analysis of policies, academic discourse and NGOs fundraising strategies to show how these institutions reinforce the idea that immigrant spouses are problematic and, therefore, need to be ‘Taiwanized’. This results in a system of differential legal and social citizenship in which immigrant spouses are at the bottom of the social hierarchy in Taiwanese society.

Keywords: Female migrants; normalization; nationalism; migration policy; NGO; Taiwan; Vietnam

On 6 July 2005, the Taiwanese Deputy Minister of Education, speaking to directors of local educational departments, publicly appealed to female immigrant spouses (*waiji xinniang*, *dalu xinniang*) to ‘not give birth to so many babies’. He also said to his audience that, contrary to Taiwan’s policy, immigration policies ‘in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA select immigrants of high quality’. He also referred to the Taiwanese spouses (men involved in cross-border marriages) in very negative terms stating that ‘everyone knows well who marries foreign brides’ (*China Times Daily* 2004). In April 2006, a Taiwanese legislator was reported to have made the following statement: ‘The US army dropped Agent Orange chemicals in Vietnam, and many Vietnamese women are infected. They give birth to a lot of handicapped babies. The Taiwanese government should examine Vietnamese women marrying Taiwanese to ensure they do not have deficient genes that could negatively affect Taiwan’s next generation’ (*United Daily* 2006). In contrast to these two voices, a Taiwanese man married to a Cambodian woman wrote to a newspaper to complain. He wrote, ‘Taiwanese society often finds a miserable foreign spouse to display in order to gain sympathy . . . I ask benevolent Taiwanese and NGOs not to utilize us as a means to raise funds’ (Huang 2006). This speaker was the director of an NGO called ‘Care for the Development of Foreign Brides’.

In these statements, three individuals holding different social positions express their opinions about women who migrate to Taiwan through marriage. They represent voices

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from different organizations: the government, the academics and the NGOs in civil society. The government representative is concerned about the population policy, particularly the *quality* of the population, which could suffer due to the potentially high fertility of low class immigrant spouses *and* their Taiwanese husbands. The legislator constructs foreign spouses – particularly Vietnamese ones – as a threat to the homogeneity and health of the nation. The third statement comes from the community to criticize the common portrayal of immigrant spouses – particularly by some well-intentioned NGOs – as being vulnerable and miserable. Though they have different concerns, these three groups construct and portray immigrant women as a socio-economically disadvantaged and inferior class that should be assisted and ‘improved’. However, we will argue that, through a desire to integrate immigrant spouses, various institutions of power contribute to the further exclusion and victimization of immigrant spouses through underlying constructions and categorizations of these women. This ‘Othering’ process is intertwined in the ongoing process of Taiwan’s nation-building, which started in the 1980s when Taiwan’s status in the international community came into question. Institutional discourses and power inscribed on immigrants should be examined in this Taiwanese identity formation process, which is different from the racialized whitening process in the USA described by Ong (1996).

Power, institution and citizenship

Aihwa Ong argues that, despite apparently universalistic treatment of newcomers, governments produce categories of immigrants based on historically situated social constructions of class, ethnicity, race and gender (Ong 1996, 2003). These categorizations entail different paths to cultural citizenship in the host society, with some being short and speedy, while others are tortuous and lengthy. State power, she argues, builds cultural inscription on immigrants through various institutional processes. In the case of Asia, Ong observes that the ‘embrace of self-enterprising values has made citizenship rights and benefits contingent upon individual market performance’ (Ong 2006, p. 500). She also states about Asia that ‘in camps of the disenfranchised or displaced, bare life becomes the ground for political claims, if not for citizenship, then for the right to survive’ (Ong 2006, p. 500).

Inspired by Ong’s works, in this paper we discuss how a group of immigrants – women from Vietnam immigrating through marriage to Taiwanese nationals – are located at the low end of the spectrum of immigrant groups and how this location is enacted through various policies and institutional practices. These policies and practices are deployed through Taiwan’s process of nation-building and searching for a national identity. Host societies locate immigrants in a specific social space and identify them in relation to native social practices. In response to these new social practices and forms of power imposed on them, immigrants have to adopt new behaviors and strategies to fit into the host society, which differs considerably from their home communities. For example, Mexican immigrant women in the USA encounter a new gender system and note that ‘in the North, women give the orders’. Immigrants have to adapt to a new way of performing gender in a different social organization of public space and economic opportunities for women (Hirsch 1999, pp. 1340–1345). Another commonly documented strategy for immigrants is to attempt to erase differences; for example, second-generation Spanish migrants to the Basque Country in Spain tried to behave like the Basque to erase ethnic markers (Goicoechea 2005, pp. 657–660).

Soon after arriving in Taiwan, a female migrant spouse discovers that she is expected to be ‘a good wife, a good mother and a good daughter-in-law’ (Wang 2007). However,

these identities are not automatically conferred to them; instead, they are inscribed on them through different discourses from various institutional powers. Immigrant spouses have to be disciplined to be 'docile' so that they conform to the new social norms. In the historical conjuncture of the late previous decades, they are embedded in Taiwan's nation-building movement and are normalized by different institutions in order to be made Taiwanese. Although the immigrant wives are entitled to stay in Taiwan and theoretically become new citizens, they are in a liminal position and not yet members of the society. They are set in relationships with the state, family and community, which together constitute their identities, and at the same time produce and reproduce a racialized and gendered society in Taiwan.

Many Taiwanese scholars have already pointed out the importance of the ideology of nationalism that uses blunt policies and measures to exclude female migrants (Tseng 2004a, Kung 2006, Hsia 2007). However, the state is not a coherent unit that implements its policies; rather, as many researchers have pointed out, different departments in the government compete to pursue their own interests in daily practices (Heyman 1995, Mountz 2004). It would be wrong to think that different government bodies work together to achieve a grand nation-building project. Instead, the power to include and exclude is exercised diffusely, or decentralized. Different institutional practices normalize the immigrants and locate them in a specific social space where their rights are defined in relationship to the local domain of citizenship. The immigrants' multiple identities and experiences are shaped in historically and socially specific contexts and institutional domains, not on the head of a pin, and in Taiwan's specific historical context, they are located in the nation-building context.

Chen and Yu (2005) find that different ethnic groups in Taiwan,¹ which often have different party preferences and national identities, have very different attitudes toward immigration policies. Such attitudes can only be explained in Taiwan's specific political context in which a heated debate over Taiwan's identities prevails, that is, a China-related identity or a Taiwanese identity. This debate has dominated political discourses since the 1980s.² The slogan 'Love Taiwan' captures the mainstream ideology and political sign that can be used to identify 'we' and 'they'. Situated in this social context, the immigrants are constructed as 'Others' who need to be Taiwanese. In other words, this 'Othering' process is also a Taiwanese subjectification that constructs not only immigrants' identities, but also Taiwanese identities.

The narrative about *who* they are explains *where* they are located in Taiwanese society. Female immigrant spouses in Taiwan are deciphered as culturally distinct, and, therefore, different institutions are mobilized to locate them in the right place so that they can become closer to 'us', and eventually be granted citizenship. Different institutions are structured in different social contexts and have different goals to pursue, so different narratives are produced to meet the institutional requirements and assign the 'Other' to the right place. Immigrants are often described as the 'Other' who must be placed in a right position, like asylum seekers and clandestine illegal immigrants in the UK, who are identified by the media circles as the possible original carriers of the foot and mouth virus (White 2002, pp. 1055–1056). Likewise, in Canada, illegal immigrants are portrayed in the media as a kind of disease leaking into the nation that should be 'quarantined' through incarceration (Mountz 2004, p. 334). It is not what they have done, but who they are, that prescribes their socially proper place, either a detention center or a family. Through this social positioning process, immigrants are defined as undeserving of certain political and civil rights, and a system of differential or 'partial citizenship' (Ong 2006) is established. Like the process of 'whitening'

immigrants in the USA, the female immigrant spouses experience a 'Taiwanization' process, which requires them to be properly located in the national space.

We analyze the discourse and practices of three institutions in Taiwan to make our argument: the government, the NGOs and academia. These three institutions have different agendas and, therefore, operate with a different logic. The government is concerned with its 'population quality', but, due to increased social pressures, the Taiwanese government changed its exclusionary policy towards immigrant spouses to an official 'inclusionary' one after 2002. NGOs are often regarded as possible solutions to the oppressive migration regime (Ball and Piper 2002), or it is assumed that they are able to help improve the migrants' poor situations (Piper 2004a, pp. 84–85). The third institution is academia, which claims to produce objective knowledge and be more critical of exclusionary state migration policies. However, these three groups tend to operate using similar assumptions about female immigrants and, in the end, contribute to the production of a racist, gendered, stratified, problematic society in which the female immigrant 'Other' is the focal point. Although NGOs and academics often depend on state funding, they operate under different logics. NGOs are expected to contribute to society by filling gaps ignored by the government, while academics claim to be independent of political power when producing scientific knowledge. In Althusser's words, they have relative autonomy in their own sphere (Althusser and Balibar 1970). As we will argue, these three institutions and their different logics converge to construct a racialized, gendered, lower class of female immigrant spouses.

Characteristics of Taiwan's immigration policy

Like other Asian countries, two important demographic trends in Taiwan are the delay of marriage and the increasing proportion of women who remain single (Jones 2004). Since marriage remains a strong norm among men who tend to rush into marriage in their late 30s and early 40s, international marriage has become a common strategy for single men and resulted in increasing numbers of female migrants settling in Taiwan through marriage since the end of the 1980s. This phenomenon has developed in partnership with Taiwan's capital investment in Southeast Asia and China. In addition, the Asian geography of inequalities is crystallized by commercialized marriage between men from developed nations and women from poor ones. Vietnamese 'foreign brides' in Taiwan, thus, need to be situated in the complex nexus of globalization and regional inequalities. In the early 1990s, most 'foreign brides' coming to Taiwan were ethnic Chinese from Indonesia and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since the mid-1990s, Vietnamese female spouses outnumbered brides from Indonesia and became the second largest female immigrant group in Taiwan, only surpassed by PRC brides. These cross-border marriages of Vietnamese females are mainly arranged by business organizations or result from social connections between those who married Taiwanese and their relatives in the hometown (Wang and Chang 2002).

Table 1 shows that about one in 10 newlywed couples in Taiwan in 2005 involved a foreign spouse, excluding PRC Chinese spouses who are not officially considered foreigners. If PRC Chinese are included, the proportion of registered cross-border marriages reaches one in five.³ In the past five years, about one in eight newborn babies has mixed parents. Grooms and in-laws expect Vietnamese female spouses in Taiwan to be wives and mothers and do domestic work in the household. On average, Vietnamese brides become pregnant six months after arriving (Wang 2001a). In addition, Vietnamese brides try to get paid work in sectors that only require low skills. Due to different and stricter

Table 1. Statistics of foreign migrant partners and their babies in Taiwan.

Year	According to household registrations			Taiwanese married with foreign nationals (%)	Newly born babies whose mothers are migrant partners (%)
	Marriage registrations (couples)	Non-Chinese foreign spouses (persons)	Chinese spouses (persons)		
1998	145,976	10,413	15,041	17.4	5.1
1999	173,209	14,670	21,165	20.7	6.0
2000	181,642	21,338	26,474	26.3	7.6
2001	170,515	19,405	32,719	30.6	10.7
2002	172,655	20,107	33,840	31.2	12.5
2003	171,483	19,643	34,426	31.4	13.4
2004	131,453	20,338	10,972	23.8	13.2
2005	141,140	13,808	14,619	20.1	12.9

Sources: Data 1998 to 2002 is from Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics, *Guoqing tongji tongbao* [Reports on National Development], published on 26 August 2003. Data 2003 to 2005 is from Ministry of Interior, *Neizheng tongji tongbao* [Reports on Internal Affairs], week 3, 2006. Available from: http://www.moi.gov.tw/moi2004/upload/m_38736_6618287037.doc [Accessed 6 July 2006]. Data of newborn babies in 2003, 2004 and 2005 is from Ministry of Interior, *Neizheng tongji tongbao* [Reports on Internal Affairs], week 22, 2006. Available from: <http://www.moi.gov.tw/stat> [Accessed 6 July 2006].

government regulations towards them, Chinese immigrant spouses have more difficulty entering the job market.

The mass influx of immigrants into an imagined homogeneous society in such a short period makes the previous migration policy unsustainable. The government had to change its migration policy in order to face the new situation. Changes, however, are often patchy, and the main principles underlying migration policies in Taiwan have not truly changed to the extent they should. In the following section, we briefly discuss the characteristics of Taiwan's migration policy, which frame the current migration governance.

After the Nationalist government took over Taiwan in 1945, it strongly enforced the 'sinicization' policy, and all discourses were based on the 'One China' imagination, which was said to consist of five ethnicities, namely, Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Muslim and Tibetan. The most important ideology that sustains this imagined myth is the patriarchal *jus sanguinis* principle, which dominates the post-war Taiwanese immigration policy.

Based on this principle, overseas Chinese holding Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan) passports or their descendants are entitled to enter Taiwan. The civil war between the Nationalists and Communists in 1949 had created large outflows of Chinese refugees to mainland Southeast Asia and the golden triangle area in Thailand and Myanmar, where the Nationalist government supported a large military bastion to fight against communist China (Chang 2002). From 1995 to 2002, 'overseas Chinese proof' was issued to more than 220,000 overseas Chinese, and, with this proof, they could enter Taiwan to study or live. According to Article 4, Nationality Law, revised in 2001, individuals with a parent who was a ROC citizen could apply for naturalization. Before this revision, the Nationality Law regulated that only descendants of male ROC passport holders could apply, and it prohibited foreign men who married Taiwanese women from acquiring Taiwanese citizenship, although foreign women who married Taiwanese men could. In addition, Article 1, Name Statute, regulated that foreigners applying for naturalization, or the children of cross-border marriages, need a commonly used Chinese name to register, which is normally tied to the spouses' surname. It means that the rights of female immigrant spouses are recognized only in relation to their status as 'spouse' or 'mother'

(National Police Agency 2006). Without attachment to a Taiwanese national, either a spouse or child, an immigrant woman has to leave when her temporary residency permit expires. This practice supports Turner's argument that 'a familial ideology of procreation has been a major legitimating support of the contemporary ensemble of entitlements that constitute the social rights of citizenship' (Turner 2006).

Another key concept of Taiwan's migration and citizenship policy is 'population quality' (*renkou suzhi*) and the categorization of individuals and migrants as being of lower or higher quality. Because a segment of the population is regarded as low quality, the government conceives that its mission is to work towards improving the quality of this undesirable and burdensome group. In the 1960s, when international development agencies were pushing developing countries to control their birth rates, the Taiwanese government set up a 'Population Policy Committee', which remains an important organization in the Ministry of Interior. This committee passed a 'Population Policy Guiding Principles' document, and its preface clearly states that 'population is one of the elements that builds up a nation, and its quantity, *quality* and distribution will influence national development and social welfare. Population policy should be set within the framework of national development, and, therefore, it is necessary to enact these principles' (Executive Yuan 1992; italics by authors). Chapter 3 of the document identifies some categories of citizens that threaten population quality. These categories include 'genetically deficient, infected and mentally ill people' and 'elderly, females, disabled and low income people'. The low quality segment of the population is a burden on society, but the government's duty is not to protect their right to survive but 'to improve their capability to serve the society so that human resources can be fully utilized' (Article 15).⁴

Because a segment of the native population is regarded as being 'not qualified' or of 'low quality', it is not surprising that Taiwan's migration policy reflects a class-based ideology. Taiwan's government explicitly states that it will attract a 'high quality population' to work and settle down. In the draft of 'Migration Policy Guiding Principles' released in 2004, skilled professionals and overseas investors are targeted as a 'high quality population', and the government should provide all necessary means to help, for example, grant citizenship easily and make bilingual schooling available. Since blue-collar foreign workers are regarded as 'not qualified', the draft openly excludes 'foreign workers', which in Taiwan's social context means unskilled guestworkers from Southeast Asia, from applying for permanent residence status or naturalization.

Foreign spouses who want to naturalize have to prove that they are capable of being economically independent. According to Article 7, the Enforcement Rules of Nationality Law, one has to prove that 'one's average monthly income is twice higher than the basic wage announced by Council of Labor Affairs'; 'the average annual savings in domestic financial institutes is 24 times higher than the basic wage announced by Council of Labor Affairs'; or 'one has property valued over NT\$5 million (around US\$150,000)'. However, the basic monthly wage in 2006 is NT\$15,840 (around US\$480), and a native Taiwanese recent university graduate can expect to earn NT\$28,000 (US\$850). Given this, how can a non-Chinese immigrant (over 90% without university education) expect to earn more than a Taiwanese university graduate? This regulation reflects the deeply rooted, class-biased ideology that limits access to citizenship.

Finally, Another characteristic of Taiwan's migration policy is the emphasis on 'national security'. During the Cold War period people's movements were regarded as threatening, so they needed controlling. The household registration system that developed in Japanese colonial times remained after the Nationalist takeover in 1945, and any temporary movement had to be registered at a police station. Even nowadays, according

to the Floating Population Registration Rules (Article 3), when one leaves his or her registered household and stays elsewhere for 15 days, he or she has to register. Because population movement across the border was controlled, the tourist passport was not issued until late 1970s. The first target to achieve in the original drafted Migration Policy Guiding Principle was 'to protect national security and interests'; therefore, under the cap of national security, all migrants are required to register at the police station. They can be denied entry into Taiwan if they are considered potential threats to the national security. This regulation is especially applied to PRC Chinese spouses who are often suspected of being Chinese Communist spies infiltrating Taiwanese society.

These three principles that framed policies to control population movement began to face structural pressure to change after the 1980s. The continuing fertility decline and rising education level has resulted in a shortage of blue-collar manual workers since the late 1980s. With the ageing population, the care industry needs caregivers to meet the demand, which is currently being met by Southeast Asian guestworkers for higher income families and through marriage to foreign women for lower income families. The mass influx of guestworkers and foreign wives made the old migration policy obsolete.

When the society faced a severe shortage of cheap labor in the late 1980s, the Taiwan government and capitalists negotiated to import guestworkers to replace high-cost Taiwanese workers. At that time, many capitalists preferred to import PRC Chinese unskilled workers because there was no language barrier. However, the government strongly declined this proposal, based on reasons of national security, and only allowed the import of workers from other countries. In addition, there was discussion about which migration scheme to adopt, and the final decision was to adopt Singapore's model, that is, the guestworker scheme making migrants temporary sojourners. The main reasons for adopting this scheme are based on two assumptions: first, these migrant workers are culturally different from the Taiwanese, so they could not assimilate; second, they are low-skilled and should not become a burden for Taiwan's society (Tseng 2004b). These elements set up a differential immigration policy driven by a concern with national security, the priority given to qualified immigrants and the fear of ethnic heterogeneity. This policy conforms well with the nation-building process of Taiwan by providing the needed 'Others' for the construction of itself as a nation.

The influx of migrants began to attract popular attention after 2001 and four expressions are commonly used to refer to them: 'foreign bride, foreign spouse, Indonesian bride and Vietnamese bride'. This change can be found in different spheres, and, in the following section, we will use the three institutions – the government, academia and the NGO sector – to illustrate that incorporating immigrants into the society simultaneously reproduces the exclusion process of the 'Other', which makes immigrants incapable of achieving effective entitlements of citizenship.

Differential citizenship in government's social integration discourse and practices

The Taiwanese government changed its policy on foreign spouses from exclusion to inclusion after 2002. This change is most obvious in the entitlement of social rights, including easier access to the job market, free Mandarin language instruction and public health coverage. The government also started collecting data on a regular basis on this group of immigrants in order to improve their policies and programs. In 2002, the Ministry of Interior began planning a general survey of foreign spouses, and it was carried out in October and November of 2003. In the conclusion, the official report states:

Many problems arise when the nationals marry foreigners or Mainlanders. For instance, it could produce many problems because of fragile love marriage, disadvantaged economic situation, weak social support networks and low social status. These problems result in poor adaptation and family problems. Fertility and health problems affect population quality. Low education problems make it hard to cultivate children. When there is domestic violence, there are no social support networks. Other problems include falsified marriages and illegal migration. Important objectives of current migration policy include planning supportive measures to meet their (immigrant spouses) personal and family needs and protect their rights, helping these immigrants assimilate into Taiwan's society, and creating a multicultural society. (MOI 2004, p. 40)

Most of the conclusions are assertive statements without any evidence from the survey. No items in the survey ask about domestic violence or social networks. Despite the fact that the survey contains no data on falsified marriages or illegal migration, the conclusion suggests that there will be such problems, reinforcing a preset ideology that these immigrants will bring social problems.

In one way, the government's policies have addressed the issues of its immigrants and attempted to increase its ability to manage migration, but, on the other hand, its assimilation policy continues to view these female immigrants as good 'traditional women'. One of the survey questions asked 'what course or training do you want to take', and the options were 'language training, health care training, parenthood training, medical care training, job training, living skill training (cooking and hairstyling), women and children safety information, domestic violence and sexual harassment information or residency status information'. These limited choices express the government's ideology that these female immigrants are supposed to be tied to their families and take care of their husbands (cooking, hairstyling), children (parenthood, health care, women and children safety) and the elderly (medical care training). There are no choices like political participation, Southeast Asian language media offering, local community facilities information, and so on. Though it also offers information on domestic violence and sexual harassment, it still bonds these immigrants' lives to their families.

Concerning their status as residents, the only way for foreign spouses to legalize their stay in Taiwan is through their husbands or children. The fact that immigrant spouses do not have any identity of their own as immigrants is strongly tied to the imagined nationhood based on the principle of patriarchal *jus sanguinis*. Consequently, integration and assimilation policies are simultaneously gendering, racializing and problematicizing these immigrants. For example, if we refer to the above foreign spouses national survey questionnaire, the content and wording of questions locate these female immigrants in the social space of the family, working as domestics, caring for the elderly and minding the children. If their integration fails, their presence on Taiwanese soil will endanger the entire Chinese patriarchal order. Effective citizenship is dependent on the patriarchal principle, thus a differential citizenship is created.

In May 2003, the Council of Labor Affairs revised the Employment Service Law and relaxed its regulations on the employment of foreign spouses, excluding PRC spouses.⁵ Once the foreign spouses get the Alien Residency Certificate, they do not need any official permission to enter the job market. Although this policy seems open and favorable to the employment of immigrant spouses, other institutional designs reaffirm their *otherness* and limit these women's right to work. One major problem is that permanent immigrant spouses and temporary guestworkers hold exactly the same type of ID card. Taiwanese employers do not like to hire foreign spouses because they do not know whether their residency card is valid or falsified. They worry that the foreign bride might be an illegal guestworker. An employer who hires an illegal migrant worker will be fined up to NT\$700,000 (US\$21,000), regardless of any awareness of the document's validity. This

harsh regulation is used mainly to bond guestworkers to only one employer without any possibility of changing (Wang and Bélanger 2005). However, since both foreign guestworkers and immigrant spouses are issued the same residency card, employers cannot easily distinguish between the two types of immigrants (permanent via marriage and temporary via a work contract). Therefore, the Taiwan Council of Labor Affairs advises that foreign spouses bring their residency cards, passports and household registration certificates, which document their Taiwanese spouses' names, when they look for work. Because they have to take so many precautions and need to affirm their identity through numerous documents, it reinforces that fact that they are foreigners (the same status as guestworkers) and dependent on their Taiwanese spouses.

Another change in social rights is health care. Taiwan's medical care is public and universal, and all citizens have to join the system. However, all Taiwanese going overseas for more than six months are eliminated from the household registration automatically and are not entitled to access the public health care system. When they return, there is a four-month waiting period, and all medical expenses incurred during this period must be paid privately. This means that immigrant spouses or their families have to pay the medical expenses if immigrant spouses are sick or seek medical care during these four months. To alleviate the financial burden on these families, the Department of Health announced in 2005 that the government would provide female immigrants with subsidies of NT\$600 (about US\$18) for prenatal care, NT\$1000 (about US\$25) for contraceptives or NT\$10,000 (about US\$250) for sterilization (Bureau of Health Promotion 2006). According to government officials, the subsidies are to encourage immigrants, who are normally economically disadvantaged, to take preventive measures in controlling births and to have more time to think about how many children they want (*Liberty Times* 2005).

Although the fertility rate has declined rapidly over the past 20 years and the government has attempted to encourage childbearing, the position towards immigrant spouses differs. Why does the state have a different policy toward this specific group? The unspoken ideology is 'population quality', which regards these female immigrants as being unqualified and their children as potential burdens on Taiwanese society. The assumption is that they are likely to be in a lower social class and medically at risk for physical or mental health problems. This integration program ironically limits the rights of immigrant spouses because they are constructed as being a threat to an imagined normal, high quality, homogeneous Taiwanese society.

NGOs' role in reproducing differential citizenship

Although NGOs play an important role in supporting migrants and developing empowerment programs,⁶ they also experience enormous limitations in terms of resources, which is seldom discussed in migration studies (Piper 2004b, p. 227). Recently an increasing number of articles are criticizing NGOs for being an arm of the government (Townsend *et al.* 2004) that sometimes fail 'to mobilize supporters as a political force, as opposed to a mailing list of donors' (Edwards 1999, p. 197, cited in Desforges 2004, p. 566). We agree with these critics. Taiwan's NGOs that assist female immigrant spouses are subject to limited resources, and the logic of survival makes them, at times, become another important institution that reproduces immigrant spouses by infantilizing them and making them inferior.

The emergence of certain kinds of NGOs is often related to the resource funding from the government. In Japan, a publicly subsidized home care scheme for the elderly activated an increase in the number of NGOs' registration in 1997 to become designated as service providers (Takao 2001, p. 295). In Taiwan, the government announced officially

in January 2005 that it would put NT\$3 billion (about US\$91 million) into supporting immigrant spouses and their children. Before this announcement, the Minister of Interior had reported to the cabinet in February 2003 that one of the objectives for setting up a special care program for immigrant spouses was to 'help them to integrate into Taiwan's life, to have a happy family, to prevent any family and social problems caused by their deficient adaptation' (Yu 2003).

Since 2003, the Taiwanese government has devoted much funding to social services for immigrants. Resources attract more NGOs to work on providing services to these immigrants. Tsai and Hsiao (2006) point out that 46 registered NGOs in Taiwan claimed that their main task is to serve the needs of foreign spouses, but almost all of these organizations were set up between 2003 and 2005. They said that 'government funds did play an important role to facilitate the direction and functioning of the NGOs for foreign spouses' (2006, p. 25). These NGOs are project-oriented, and, without government funding, they might not be able to function well. On the other hand, like in Japan, the government bureaucracy expects these NGOs to work as an extension of the government by providing social services (Takao 2001, p. 298).

In addition to government funding, some big NGOs try to raise funds from the public, and the Eden Social Welfare Foundation in Taiwan recently did one of the most successful fundraising activities. In June 2005, it cooperated with the magazine *Business Weekly* to report a story regarding children of Taiwan–Vietnam international marriages left in Vietnam ('Taiwanese kids in Mekong Delta'). The magazine reported that it spent half a year investigating the phenomena of 'broken' Taiwanese and Vietnamese marriages and the children who were brought to Vietnam following divorce. It claims that there were more than 3000 'Taiwanese' children left in Vietnam without any rights to education.⁷ After this 'investigation', it sent out a team to make a 'documentary' film to validate this report. Embedded in the reports of different stories to raise funds, Eden wrote the following:

A broken Taiwanese and Vietnamese marriage,
A problem of nationality dilemma makes
3,000 Taiwanese kids in Vietnam not able to access education and become life-long illiterates.

Below these touching words appears, '*Business Weekly* and Eden Foundation invite you to help these *Taiwanese* kids to have opportunities to access *Chinese* education, pave a road for them to *return home*' (italics by authors). In less than one month, Eden Foundation had raised more than NT\$10 million (US\$300,000).

This fundraising constructs children of immigrant spouses in a patriarchal and racist way. In this report, an ethnocentric view dominates; for example, in the beginning of the story, it describes the origin of Mekong River flows from China to the ocean via Vietnam, but the children from China (Taiwan) and from Vietnam have different fates. In addition, it cites a female Vietnamese interviewee saying, 'I want my two kids to stay in Taiwan so that they can have better future. I don't want them to forget their language root, *Mandarin*, and wish them to learn Mandarin well' (italics by authors). In such a discourse, Taiwan (China) is juxtaposed with Vietnam to symbolize the position of male Taiwanese *vis-à-vis* female Vietnamese. These children are from Taiwan and their roots are in Taiwan (China), so if they are unable to return home, they will become illiterate. 'When Eden Foundation set up a Mandarin language kindergarten here (Vietnam), the Vietnamese bride Luan felt like finding a *savior*', the report says. Therefore, the Taiwanese should *pave a road* for these children to return home to learn Mandarin, so they will not forget that their roots are in Taiwan (China).

In addition to this racialized discourse on these immigrant spouses, an unspoken discrimination is the class-based description of these families. These families are depicted as being 'poor', 'disadvantaged', 'without resources to educate their children' and, therefore, in need of Taiwanese help. The story quotes a Vietnamese grandmother who 'constantly reminds her two grandsons (whose father is Taiwanese) that they should not forget Mandarin, so that they can *find a job in the factory (when they grow up)*. There is hope and chance in Taiwan', she says. These children of cross-border marriages are destined to work in factories because they belong to that underclass. Parents cannot even afford to send their children to kindergarten, let alone give them good educations.

Different groups in society try to take advantage and profit from these people. The exposure and reporting of this story in June 2005, like other event marketing in Taiwan, utilized electronic media, newspapers, magazines, roundtable discussions and participation in the documentary film festival to maximize its 'market exposure', with the final goal being to raise funds. It is irrelevant whether the story distorts reality or not; finding a way to reach the readership to raise funds is what matters. The director of this film said that he had planned to include a happy shot with children playing at home in the Mekong Delta at the beginning, but *Business Weekly* overthrew his plan because it would not *correctly* represent the miserable situation of these children and Taiwanese might not sympathize with these families. The capitalist logic – to maximize profit – dominates the whole process of news and story reporting. It helps the NGOs to raise funds by claiming that 'disadvantaged' families need to be integrated, but, at the same time, they are reproducing the discriminatory image of immigrant families in Southeast Asia.

This discourse is widely accepted by the Taiwanese and positively reaffirmed by the government. In fact, the Government Information Office nominated such a racialized and biased report as being the best annual special report in a 2006 competition for the best publication of the year. Though there were many critical voices against this report in 2005 (Phuong 2005), the government in 2006 still identifies this report with its ideology that these families are not 'qualified'. They are considered to be of low social status and an inferior race, and there is a need to assimilate them into Taiwanese/Chinese culture. The director of the Children's Bureau, the Ministry of Interior, made such a comment after the release of this story: 'These immigrants' children would not be *Taiwan's burden* if we *give* them proper assistance. The Taiwanese children in Vietnam should return home as soon as possible to take *enlightenment* education' (italics by authors). Since the Taiwanese are superior, they have the right to enlighten the 'Other' who is inferior through humanitarian repatriation, education and social integration. In this example, children with a Taiwanese father are considered Taiwanese citizens without hesitation, despite their mixed and problematic origin on their mother's side.

NGOs subjected to resource scarcity have to resort to representing a group of people as being 'disadvantaged', 'powerless', 'easy to abuse', 'not capable', and so on, in order to raise funds from the government or the private sector to continue functioning. They use language that the government and the public can easily understand or that conforms to their imagination, which reinforces their pre-existing bias. In this process, they try to help these immigrant families integrate into society, but, at the same time, they participate in the social process of reproducing an inferior, problematic, racialized 'foreign bride' and preventing integration of 'these immigrant women'. Power is exercised on immigrant spouses by integration practices that discourage active citizenship, not by exclusion of their rights. In the case of the Eden Foundation, we are shedding light on how structural constraints met by NGOs make raising funds a matter of survival, although the fundraising strategies vary across different NGOs. Some NGOs, like World Vision, are led by their

public relations section, while others, like Compassion International, do not use public media to raise funds. For NGOs focusing on assisting foreign spouses, their motivation is not to produce an inferior and miserable image of female immigrant spouses, but they have to work under current social structures and may, therefore, although inadvertently, create the effect of exclusion.

Academic research and the problematization of ‘foreign brides’

Using four key words to search Taiwan’s marriage migration research from 1997 until December 2005, we find that 93% of the total academic publications concerned immigrants’ lives in Taiwan. If we check these articles in detail, we soon discover that the theme ‘education of immigrant spouses and of their children’ comprises 68% of total publications, which also mirrors the collective worry of Taiwanese society concerning the ‘quality’ of these immigrants. Despite this general tendency, dissonant voices within the research community focus on immigrant spouses’ agency through daily strategies (Wang 2007) or participation in associations and groups (Hsia 2006). While some research has the power to debunk stereotypes and false collective imaginings of immigrant spouses, most studies serve to powerfully reinforce categories and stereotypes and, therefore, justify the perpetuation of a hierarchy of immigrants and differential access to cultural citizenship.

From a sociological analysis of knowledge production, the mass production of this knowledge is related to two social factors: research funding and the unconscious social construct of the target group. When the government began taking the phenomenon of marriage-based migration seriously, the academic community also had the opportunity to get project funding from the government. If we look at the projects funded by the government, we often find titles like ‘Subsidy to humanities books collection for the education of disadvantaged groups’ (NSC 2006) or ‘Research on child’s language development of new immigrant females’ (Executive Yuan 2006). In 2003, the National Science Council, in charge of Taiwan’s academic development and policy, sponsored a large, three-year research project to probe into the development of the children of immigrants. Both local and central government bodies fund different types of studies of the new object. The Taiwanese Government Research Bulletin shows that prior to June of 2006 there had been more than 100 research projects related to marriage migration, and most of these research projects were funded in the four years prior (RDEC 2006).

Surveying the migration research in Taiwan between 2000 and 2005, Lim and Wang (2006) find that more than 70% of recent published articles on migration in Taiwan dealt with adaptation, support systems for immigrants, children’s education and health. But why are these issues, and not others, of such interest to the scholars? For example, there are more than 500,000 Taiwanese living in China, but there is not one article discussing the education of Taiwanese children in families living in Mainland China, despite the numerous problems associated with the PRC. Also, the education of PRC Chinese spouses’ children does not attract any discussion, but some research discusses the potential threat to the national security by this group of immigrants. In comparison to the abundant research on the ethnic relations in overseas Taiwanese factories, there is no research on ethnic relations between the new immigrants and local society. Lim and Wang (2006) attribute this research agenda to two unconscious social constructions of these immigrants: racial and class status differences. The PRC spouses are supposed to share the same ethnic culture as the Taiwanese, so there would not be a social integration problem for them and their children. On the other hand, because they are regarded as culturally different, immigrant spouses from Southeast Asia and their children will need to overcome language

acquisition and cultural shock difficulties. In addition, these Southeast Asian immigrant spouses are mostly from a lower socioeconomic status, so they are viewed as being 'disadvantaged' in their access to resources. These two simplified assumptions of foreign spouses lead to the conclusion that the Taiwanese have to empower or help 'them'. In the case of the US, Ong argues that the differentiation of subject-citizens operates through racial bipolarism that situates immigrants in a white to black spectrum (Ong 2003). In Taiwan, Vietnamese immigrant spouses belong to a racial minority, while PRC immigrants do not, and, in this respect, female Vietnamese migrants are constructed in relation to race, class and gender ideologies, while PRC Chinese migrants are constructed in relation to class, gender and national security ideologies.

In this process, the academic community is participating in the social structures that reproduce a 'disadvantaged', lower social status and a racially different 'Other'. These immigrants are seen as being powerless, easy to abuse and unable to educate their children. They need to learn Mandarin so that they can communicate with their children, to bring them up. If not, these children could suffer language development problems, be unable to keep up in school, be doomed to fail in future competition and become a burden on society. To avoid this future pessimistic scenario, the academic community, funded by government grants, probes into the 'problems', develops support schemes to 'empower' them and helps them adapt to Taiwanese society. In one way, the academic community helps integrate female immigrants into Taiwanese society, but, on the other hand, it creates the 'Other' as being powerless, disadvantaged and of a lower social status to legitimize government and professional interventions, and, at the same time, produces a superior national Taiwanese identity.

Conclusion

This paper documents and discusses a contradiction. On the one hand, the state and society actively pursue the integration of immigrant spouses, by paying attention to the integration of immigrants and the well-being of the women, men and children who live in families containing an immigrant spouse. On the other hand, discourse about immigrant spouses does not match the objective of genuinely integrating them into Taiwanese society. A closer analysis of policies, academic discourse and NGOs fundraising strategies reveals that they serve to reinforce the idea that immigrant spouses are problematic for the quality, stability and well-being of Taiwanese society, which is undergoing a nation-building process and needs an 'Other' to locate itself in the international community. Thus, a system of differential citizenship is created to distinguish 'them' from 'us'. Both legal and social citizenships are constructed through differentiated practices based on ethnicity, class and gender.

Citizenship is practiced in different social domains, but decentralized power exercised in individualized fields prevents some people from the full entitlement of rights. As our analysis shows, different institutions exercise power on the female immigrants to locate them in a specific social space, which impedes them from acquiring cultural and social citizenship as a 'normal' Taiwanese. They are constructed as being inferior, helpless and underclass 'Others' whose citizenship is, and should be, incomplete. It provides the dominant groups with reasons to intervene in their lives in the name of social integration and reproduce a differential citizenship regime.

In this way, Taiwanese national citizenship is defined by labeling a group of outsiders and aliens (Turner 2006). These female immigrants experience an assimilation process, and they are passively participating in a nation-building project, a project through which Taiwan wants to assert itself in the world community. When Taiwanizing these female

immigrants by confining them to the family domain, locating them as disadvantaged and powerless and creating a racially incompetent people, Taiwanese society reasserts its position and superiority in the current world politics and continues its path to becoming a nation, which has yet to be recognized by the world.

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Notes

1. In Taiwan, population is often categorized as four ethnic groups: Minnan (Hokkien), Hakka, Mainlander and Aborigine. The former three groups are Han people, while the Aborigines are Austronesian who lived in Taiwan for hundreds of centuries before Han people settled in Taiwan before the fifteenth century. Mainlanders are those Chinese who came to Taiwan after 1949 when the Chiang Kai-shek Nationalist government was defeated in China. For the process of ethnic social mobility of these groups, see Wang (2001b).
2. Regarding Taiwanese nationalism and political change, see Jian Yihua (1998).
3. The reason for the sudden drop in Taiwanese–Chinese cross-border marriages in 2004 is the outcome of a stricter interview policy implemented at the airport, while the drop of foreign immigrant spouses in 2005 is the result of strict one-to-one face interviews implemented in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, which brought about a diminution of 50% of the number of Vietnamese spouses in that year.
4. This guideline was revised in 2006 and has abandoned the population quality chapter, but the term 'quality' is still kept in the preface. Population is constructed as five dimensions to gauge: formation, quality, distribution, development and movement.
5. PRC people are officially considered Taiwan's people, for the Nationalist government always claimed its sovereignty over mainland China after fleeing from China in 1949. The current constitution in Taiwan still refers to itself as the 'Republic of China', and, therefore, it produces a very complex and confusing regulation system toward immigrants from China and other areas. Differential citizenship is thus created for people in different categories.
6. For an example of the work of an NGO not victimizing immigrant spouses and their children, see Hsia (2006).
7. In reality, some children born of Taiwanese–Vietnamese couples are sent back to Vietnam in their pre-school ages to be raised by their maternal relatives, typically the grandparents, to cut down on living expenses in Taiwan. When the children reach the age of five or six, they are brought back to Taiwan to begin elementary school. Others who are, in fact, children of divorced couples brought back to Vietnam by their mothers have access to Vietnamese schools relatively easily. Thus, the story seriously distorted the situation of these children living in the southern region of Vietnam.

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