

Incubating grounded transnational advocacy networks: the making of transnational movements for marriage migrants

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Abstract

Women in the global phenomenon of marriage migration are known by different labels, including ‘foreign brides’ and ‘mail-order brides.’ Though perceived as unlikely subjects of social movements, marriage migrants have developed transnational activism from the ground up to successfully change policies and laws regarding their rights and welfare. This paper shows why and how transnational movements for marriage migrants have been incubated from the grassroots level and developed into regional and international levels through continuously linking grassroots empowerment to transnational networking. Two types of transnational activism are identified: domestic transnationalism, and cross-border transnationalism. While recognizing the importance of the latter, this paper argues that in the case of transnational movements for marriage migrants, domestic transnationalism is the necessary condition for transnationalism beyond nation-state boundaries, and efforts need to be made to balance and strengthen these two types of transnationalism.

Keywords: transnationalism, transnational advocacy network, marriage migrants, migrant movements, immigrant movements, grassroots

Introduction

In parallel to the trend of labor migration, marriage migration has become another significant form of forced migration whereby women from poorer countries migrate to richer countries through cross-border marriages. Elsewhere, I (Hsia 2015b) argued that the phenomenon of marriage migration results from a reproduction crisis of capitalism, wherein migrant women from less developed countries cross borders to provide reproductive labor for the ‘maintenance’ and ‘renewal’ of productive labor (Burawoy 1976) in the more developed countries.

As capitalist globalization intensifies, the welfare state is in crisis and many social services are being eliminated. Rising living costs, combined with the lack of a comprehensive social welfare system, have led women in more developed countries to seek cheaper surrogates from less developed countries for the care of household needs while they work to provide income for their families. However, the importing of migrant domestic workers serves only as a ‘Band-Aid’ solution to the reproduction crisis, especially as fertility rates in more

developed countries continue to drop due to rapid increases in the costs of childrearing. Moreover, while middle-class families can resort to hiring migrant domestic workers, working-class families cannot afford to hire this type of labor. Consequently, working-class and rural men in more developed countries follow the flight of capital to neighboring, less developed countries in search of brides, who could perform reproductive labor for both the ‘maintenance’ and ‘renewal’ of productive labor (Hsia 2015b).

Many women migrate through marriage to escape poverty and turbulence in their home countries. Yet, they often end up under economic stress because their husbands are primarily from disadvantaged classes (Hsia 2004). Other precarious conditions of marriage migrant women include the lack social networks and support, social discrimination, and obstacles to obtaining formal and substantive citizenship. The women in these transnational marriages are often called ‘foreign brides’ or ‘mail-order brides,’ terms which reflect discrimination against women from peripheral countries in the World System (Hsia 2010).

While marriage migration trends parallel those of labor migration, issues of marriage migrants have not been as recognized as those of migrant workers, particularly their collective activism. Their precarious conditions have led to the assumption that they are unlikely subjects of social movements. One of the dominant discourses has perceived marriage migrants as victims of trafficking. For example, in the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Reports on Taiwan of the U.S. Department of State, the number of marriage migrants is treated as one of the indicators of the prevalence of sex trafficking (U.S. Department of State 2007).

Though feminists have paid attention to the ‘foreign brides’ phenomenon, ironically, their portrayals of ‘foreign brides’ have not often been much different from the mainstream media’s construction of marriage migrants as social problems and passive victims (Hsia 2008b). Some feminist writings have challenged the prevailing victimization discourse and shifted the focus to women’s agency in these cross-border marriages: the courageous pursuit of marriage as an escape from political, economic and cultural constraints to achieve a better future (e.g. Constable 2005). However, we should not perceive agency as merely individual escape from structural constraints. Marriage migrants can go further to form a ‘collective agency’ to transform, not simply escape, these constraints and become subjects of social movements.

However, marriage migrants have not received attention from studies on social movements. Even the more salient collective activism of migrant workers in recent years has only occasionally received public and academic reflection. As Steinhilper (2018) points out, the fact that there are relatively scarce analyses from a social movement perspective on migrant workers’ activism despite proliferation of their political protest by migrants in recent years is theoretically grounded. According to the lens of dominant movement theories, including resource mobilization and political opportunity structures, it is unlikely for migrants to become contentious actors due to legal obstacles, scarce resources, and closed political and discursive opportunities.

Compared to migrant workers, marriage migrant women are even less likely to be imagined as subjects of mobilization since, in addition to the legal, political and social obstacles commonly faced by migrant workers, they are dependent wives of disadvantaged citizens in the recipient countries, mostly isolated in their households, and lacking experience in any kind of activism before their cross-border marriages. Therefore, cases of their emerging transnational activism against all odds deserves reflection from the perspectives of social movement studies.

AMMORE, the Alliance of Marriage Migrants Organizations for Rights and Empowerment, is such case of interest as the first international alliance for marriage migrant issues. AMMORE was formalized in Bangkok in 2017 as an international alliance advocating for marriage migrants' rights and welfare after years of transnational networking in the Asia Pacific region beginning in 2008. The origin of AMMORE dates back to the 2007 International conference held in Taipei, in which one of the resolutions was to establish a transnational network. This was realized in 2008 when the Action Network for Marriage Migrants' Rights & Empowerment (AMM♀RE¹) was formed in Manila. As will be illustrated in the following discussion, the international conference contributing to the formation of AMMORE resulted from a vibrant movement for marriage migrants in Taiwan spearheaded by the AHILRIM, the Alliance of Human Rights Legislation for Immigrants and Migrants, which was composed of both local and migrant activists.

The focus of this paper is to examine the case of marriage migrant women's transnational activism that originated in Taiwan and later expanded to regional and international levels. Taiwan is arguably the site of the earliest activism in the world specifically for marriage migrants, who have been transformed from isolated 'foreign brides' to active migrant activists. With the support of local activists through the formation of the AHRLIM, marriage migrant women in Taiwan have succeeded in reforming several laws and policies to better protect their rights and welfare. They have also been engaged in transnational networking and establishment of the AMMORE to spearhead campaigns for marriage migrants on regional and international platforms.

Unlike many transnational movements triggered by big events such as WTO Summits (Brecher et al. 2000) or facilitated by international laws and legal mechanisms (Kay 2011), transnational activism for marriage migrants has been developed from the ground up without any big events or international legal mechanisms. Additionally, as previously noted, most marriage migrant women are isolated and lack activism experience; therefore, incubating transnationalism from the ground up is a long process. This paper analyses how transnational movements for marriage migrants first took off at the grassroots

¹ The gender symbol was inserted in the acronym to stress the fact that a great majority of marriage migrants was women and this transnational network has clear feminist orientation. AMM♀RE is the acronym when it was a loose network, while AMMORE is the acronym since it became a formal alliance. To avoid confusion, AMMORE in the following refers to both informal network and formal alliance.

level in Taiwan and later expanded as a result of activists' transnational networking.

By analysing the development of AMMORE and illustrating the crucial factor of its precedent, the AHRLIM, this paper demonstrates that this transnational activism for marriage migrants has been developed not only beyond but also within nation-state boundaries, and that the latter is the necessary basis for the former. This paper is based on my long-term action research from 1994 to the present time that has contributed to the empowerment of marriage migrants and movements for marriage migrants' rights and welfare in Taiwan and at regional and international levels (for details, see Hsia 2015a, 2019). This long empowerment process for marriage migrants started in 1995 when I initiated the Chinese classes which resulted in the establishment of TransAsia Sisters Association of Taiwan (TASAT), the first grassroots marriage migrants' organization in Taiwan, in 2003. With the backdrop of my deep involvement in the empowerment of marriage migrants and the development of marriage migrants' movement in Taiwan and transnational networking in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, the data collected for this study include: interviews with key activists (5 marriage migrant activists and 2 native activists in Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, and 5 NGO advocates supporting transnational networking); participant observation of campaigns in Taiwan and at regional and international events; and documents of the movements, including internal discussion and public statements of the two alliances. This paper concludes by assessing the achievements of the movements, including their impacts on immigration policies, and raising recommendations regarding transnational activism for marriage migrants' rights and welfare.

Transnational activism under globalization

As globalization intensifies, research on the internationalization of social movements and activism has consequently gained significance. Transnational collective action or contentious politics may take different forms. Three major types identified by Khagram et al (2002) include: transnational advocacy networks, transnational coalitions, and transnational social movements, all of which involve non-governmental organizations interacting with international norms to restructure world politics.

As Khagram et al (2002) argued, transnational advocacy networks (TAN) are the most common forms of transnational collective action; they involve sets of actors linked across country boundaries, bound together by shared values, dense exchanges of information and services, and common discourses (Keck and Sikkink 1999). Formalized or not, the essence of network activity is the exchange and use of information. Networks do not involve either sustained coordination of tactics, as with coalitions, or mobilizing large numbers of people in the kind of activity we associate with social movements.

This typology needs to be understood as an 'ideal type' since in reality, the structures of transnational collective action may not be fixed and the boundaries

between types are fluid. Moreover, the development of transnational action is not linear. Depending on various conditions affecting the level of vitality of the transnational action, it may take different forms. As the following analysis will illustrate, AMMORE started as an informal TAN exchanging information, gradually became a transnational coalition with coordinated action when collective activism was vibrant with the objective of establishing a transnational social movement in mind, and later returned to a TAN as some of the core member organizations faced internal challenges and lacked energy to be involved in transnational action.

Politics of simultaneity for migrants

According to Caouette (2007), while transnational activism is not a new phenomenon, its intensification and geographic spread has been so unprecedented that some analysts even declared an era of transnational coalitions moving away from state-centric movements. While not all analysts claim that state-centric movements have lost primacy to transnational activism, most scholars on transnational activism tend to perceive domestic activism and transnational activism as separate spheres, while recognizing the interaction of the two (e.g. Porta and Tarrow 2005; Evans 2000).

However, as Smith (1994) suggests, the types of grassroots political practice that have emerged among transnational migrants and refugees do not fit well into the restrictive boundaries of local politics conventionally used in connecting the local to the global. Since migrants' struggles must simultaneously encounter the states of their origins, the states of their workplaces and settlement, and supranational institutions, they are engaged in the 'politics of simultaneity,' or a politics that brings together multiple actors from multiple places. Therefore, Law (2002) considers Hong Kong as one 'site' of transnational activism within a broader 'social space' where new alliances between migrants, feminists, and workers' organizations take place, rather than merely contextualizing the transnational advocacy of migrant NGOs in Hong Kong as a contemporary form of local politics.

Similar to struggles of migrant workers, marriage migrants' struggles also involve in the 'politics of simultaneity,' since their rights and welfare are simultaneously affected by the states of their origins and settlement, as well as by supranational institutions. Moreover, even when marriage migrants' activism is located within the nation-state and the goal is to change policies of the nation-state, it is in essence a *domestic* type of transnational activism since participants are from different nationalities, including both marriage migrants originally from various nation-states and native citizens concerned with issues of marriage migrants, as illustrated by the formation of AHRLIM.

AHRLIM was formed when several organizations joined together in response to Taiwanese government's hasty plan to establish the National Immigration Agency without comprehensive immigration policies. Spearheading the movement in Taiwan since 2003, AHRLIM is composed of actors with diverse

backgrounds, including marriage migrant and migrant worker organizations, and domestic movement organizations of women, labor, and human rights sectors.

According to Hsia (2008b), the reasons why AHRLIM has obtained such diverse membership include the following. Firstly, since the immigrant movement was not yet developed, it was necessary to bring together different organizations interested in marriage migrant issues. Secondly, unlike in the U.S., Canada, and other countries with long histories of immigration and established immigrant communities, marriage migrants in Taiwan were socially, economically, and politically disadvantaged without strong immigrant networks. It was therefore necessary for local activists to provide assistance. Thirdly, while local activists need to participate, the legitimacy of the movement for marriage migrants would be questioned had marriage migrants themselves not been active. Fortunately, long before AHRLIM was established, efforts had been underway since 1995 to develop the subjectivity of marriage migrant women when the Chinese Literacy Program was initiated to empower marriage migrants from different nationalities to break away isolation, build networks to help each other, and eventually form TASAT to advocate for their own rights and welfare (Hsia, 2006).

Since the very first protest initiated by AHRLIM, marriage migrants organized by TASAT have always been active, including participating in internal discussions and speaking at protests and press conferences (2008b). In other words, while the '*domestic transnationalism*' started since the establishment of AHRLIM to launch campaigns, this transnationalism had already been incubating since the initiation of the Chinese program where marriage migrants from diverse nationalities and local volunteers collaborated and developed networks.

As Steinhilper (2018) emphasized, while social movements of all kinds require safe spaces in which trust and empathetic strong ties can be built up in preparation for and during protests, such spaces with particular emotional, relational, and material qualities are especially important for the protection and empowerment of marginalized migrants. Therefore, Steinhilper maintained that a transnational migrant activism, especially for precarious migrants, requires a firm grounding at the local level of the destination where migrants can gain access to safe space and resources. Once local resources can be tapped, migrant activists can reconnect to networks of precarious migrants in different locations, which are rooted in transnational life-worlds and specific grievances inscribed in biographies of forced migration. Such transnational spaces inhabited by these migrants can then be politicized and transformed into what Steinhilper termed '*transnational contentious space*.'

Migrant workers and refugees in Steinhilper's study had built networks of other precarious migrants as they migrated from one country to another, which could be reconnected once they tapped local resources. In comparison, however, most marriage migrants do not have migration experience prior to their cross-border marriages and consequently lack networks with other migrants. Therefore, a

transnational contentious space at the locality of their destination is even more crucial for marriage migrants to develop their transnational activism. As Ms. Chuan-ping Wang, an experienced labor activist and the founding Chairperson of the New Immigrants' Labor Rights Association, a member organization of AHRLIM, stated (Hsia 2008b):

It takes a process for the local activists to empower the new immigrants and help them behind their back. Without this process, I think it would be impossible for the new immigrants to succeed in demanding their rights, because they come to a foreign environment where they don't know much about the laws. The local activists had helped them familiarize with the laws, social atmosphere and come up with strategy to change laws and policies.

As will be illustrated in the following, AHRLIM has served as the transnational contentious space in Taiwan, the '*domestic transnationalism*,' for marriage migrants to develop transnational activism at regional and international levels, the '*cross-border transnationalism*.'

Politicizing transnational space for marginalized migrants

Since most migrants are inherently transnational as their life-worlds and social practices are not bound to one nation-state, migrant transnationalism, particularly migrants' political transnationalism, has been common among migrant communities (Basch et al. 1994; Bloemraad et al. 2008). Studies on migrants' transnationalism focus more on hometown activism (Steinhilper 2018). However, as Rodriguez (2013) and Rother (2018) point out, hometown associations and activism are not automatically counter-hegemonic, critical of the current neo-liberal national and international policies. The process of politicization for marriage migrants therefore deserves further investigation.

Elsewhere I (Hsia 2016) pointed out that though many marriage migrants are active in social activities and even openly express their grievances against prejudices and discrimination in Taiwan, they are not automatically united to counter the injustice systems. Rather, it is in the process of subjectivation which continuously transforms them by broadening their perspectives and worldviews that they can gradually perceive their activism as not only relevant for their own immediate needs but also for the justice for other marginalized people and the betterment of the world. Moreover, in this process of transformative subjectivation, the ability to be linked to migrant organizations in other countries has been considered crucial by marriage migrants organized by TASAT to see themselves as part of the global migrant movement against systematic exploitation and oppression.

In her study on migrants' transnationalism, Rodriguez (2013) highlighted how IMA as a counter-hegemonic global alliance opens up space for new kinds of political subjectivities among migrants. She argued that through IMA's

contentious political engagement and transnational networking, which involve cross-border inter-ethnic and interracial connectivity, migrant organizations cultivate class-based collective identification that transcends homeland-oriented, citizenship-based, and state-supportive forms of migrant political transnationalism, and further develops a new form of political subjectivity, ‘migrant labor transnationalism.’ Such political subjectivity is based on counter-hegemonic nationalisms through which migrants contest their home states’ complicity with globalizing neoliberal agendas.

Similarly, in the following, this paper will show how the AMMORE has served as the transnational contentious space to help marriage migrants cultivate a counter-hegemonic framework critical of policies of both receiving and sending countries, as well as of the dominant policies of neo-liberal globalization. The analysis will also show that such counter-hegemonic TAN first requires a transnational contentious space critical of the policies of the receiving state and within the nation-state, the AHRLIM, to incubate marriage migrants’ transnational activism at the locality of destination.

To analyse the emergence and development of AMMORE, this paper benefits from the insights of Tilly (2004). Accordingly, to understand the significance of transnational networks and social movement organizations, especially those challenging the international capitalist financial architecture, four questions had to be addressed. Based on the developments of TANs for marriage migrants, I restructure Tilly’s concerns into three primary questions: 1. Why does transnational activism emerge? ---What circumstances, processes, and connections promote coordinated transnational action among marriage migrants and their advocates? (Tilly’s first question) 2. How is transnational activism developed? ---Under what conditions and how do marriage migrants and their advocates participate democratically in coordinated transnational action? (Tilly’s second question) 3. What are the assessments for the present and future of transnational activism? ----Under what conditions and how does that sort of coordination produce (or fail to produce) significant benefits for marriage migrants? What are the challenges to maintain and expand the TAN and transnational activism? What processes produce or would produce the equivalent of durable effective democratic consultation on a world scale? (Tilly’s third and fourth questions)

Why does marriage migrants’ transnational activism emerge?

According to Porta and Tarrow (2005), the reasons why transnational activism emerges include the emergence of complex internationalization, the resulting multilevel opportunity structure, and the formation of a new stratum of activists. These three elements also apply to the emergence of transnational activism beyond the nation-state boundaries for marriage migrants.

Emergence of complex internationalization

Three aspects of complex internationalization for marriage migrants are identified: cross-referencing of laws and policies among states of settlement, simultaneous impacts of the states of origins and settlement on marriage migrants' well-being, and increasing supra-national mechanisms and platforms related to marriage migrants' rights and welfare. These factors explain how AHRLIM was transformed from leading a domestic movement to becoming part of the TAN for marriage migrants.

Cross-referencing of laws and policies among states of settlement

As marriage migration gradually became a global phenomenon, many nation-states began to implement new laws and policies. To learn from others or to legitimate their own policies, governmental agencies often borrow from laws and policies in other countries. This is especially prevalent for those states whose tradition of citizenship is based on *jus sanguinis*, such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan (Iwabuchi et al, 2016), since they were not prepared to deal with the influx of immigrants of different nationalities when the phenomenon of marriage migration emerged. Accordingly, activists concerned with marriage migrants' rights and welfare were urged to learn about laws, policies, and experiences of advocacy in other countries. For instance, in the Asia-Pacific Women NGO Forum on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)+10 in Thailand in 2004, a Korean activist visited the Taiwanese delegation and requested to meet delegates who had done work with marriage migrant women. She was introduced to me and was very eager to learn from our experiences in Taiwan because the Korean government had planned to implement laws and policies modified from those of Taiwan. Since this initial contact, this Korean activist and I served as the bridge between Korean and Taiwanese activists for marriage migrant issues and campaigns.

As the first state in Asia to confront the challenges of marriage migration, Taiwanese governments rushed to implement laws and policies to regulate marriage migrants. Since its establishment, AHRLIM has continuously campaigned against the Taiwan government's discriminatory immigration policies and laws (Hsia, 2008b). As AHRLIM's campaigns expanded, the need to reach out to organizations in other countries also emerged.

For instance, increasing barriers for marriage migrants to obtain citizenship had long been criticized by AHRLIM. To defend its reluctance to scrap financial requirements for marriage migrants' applications for naturalization, Taiwan's Ministry of the Interior (MOI) persistently argued that the financial requirement was a 'universal norm.' MOI even purchased a significant advertisement in one major newspaper citing regulations from other countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. Since AHRLIM's members had developed contacts with organizations or individuals in different countries, we were able to collect and verify information from these countries whose policies and regulations were

distorted by MOI for its own defence. In September 2007, to maximize the resources and impacts of the International Conference on Border Control and Empowerment of Immigrant Brides held in Taipei, AHRILM organized a press conference and a dialogue with the Deputy Minister of MOI where the international delegates invited to attend the international conference confronted MOI's distortion of immigration policies in their respective countries. Moreover, in the discussion of the resolutions for this conference, the consensus was to develop an international network to share information regarding marriage migrant issues. This call was realized when AMMORE was formed in the following year.

Simultaneous impacts of the states of origins and settlement

Compared to migrant worker movements which have been constantly challenging the policies of their home countries, particularly labor-export policies, marriage migrant movements have not focused on challenging the states of origin since there are no specific 'bride-export' policies and marriage migrants are assumed to be settled in the receiving countries, while migrant workers are assumed to be abroad only temporarily. Though policies and laws in receiving countries have greater impacts on marriage migrants, their well-being is also affected by those of their home countries. Consequently, the TAN for marriage migrants has also begun to challenge laws and policies of states of origin. For instance, since Philippine law does not allow divorces and only allows legal separation, annulment, and marriage 'voids,' it complicates marriages of Filipinos with foreign spouses. To deal with issues arising from marriages outside of the Philippines, the Family Code was revised in 1987 with the provisions of Article 26 seeming to favor those who wish to get rid of a 'bad marriage' and remarry without needing to file for an annulment. However, Article 26 only applies to foreign divorces initiated by the foreign spouse. If it is the Filipino spouse who initiates or files the divorce, such divorce will not be recognized in the Philippines. For Filipinos who initiate divorce to remarry, they must file an annulment petition in a Philippine court. In the absence of a Supreme Court ruling on implementing guidelines for judicial recognition of foreign divorce decrees, actual court practice of the law varies. Some courts in the Philippines require the personal appearance of the applicant while others do not. According to member organizations of AMMORE in Japan, this puts great strain on Filipino spouses, especially those who are over-stayers or whose visas are about to expire, in addition to the amount of time and money that one must invest to complete the procedure. To amend Article 26 of the Philippine Family Code, Filipino marriage migrant organizations in Japan and South Korea initiated a campaign with the help of AMMORE to lobby members of Congress in the Philippines.

Increasing supra-national mechanisms and platforms

Though no specific supranational platforms and mechanisms are devoted exclusively to the rights and welfare of marriage migrants, there are still international conventions and agreements that should provide protection to the rights of marriage migrants, including provisions under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women. Among these international conventions, the CEDW has been the most commonly used international convention for marriage migrant advocates. By collaborating with women's organizations in their respective states, many marriage migrant organizations and advocates, including AMMORE members, have made efforts to incorporate their observations and recommendations in the shadow reports of CEDAW so that international experts can make recommendations to various governments for better policies and laws.

Opportunity structure to add external pressure on states

Complex internationalization offers resources and opportunities for non-state actors to challenge elites (Porta and Tarrow 2005). The structures of internationalization analyzed above altogether provide resources and opportunities for activists and organizations concerned with marriage migrant issues to form TANs and challenge states. For example, since Taiwan is not a U.N. member state, the Taiwanese government is eager to demonstrate that Taiwan is a 'good model' that complies with international human rights norms and should be accepted as the member of the United Nations. This moral appeal creates leverage for activists to add external pressure on Taiwan's domestic policies (Cheng and Momesson 2017). In addition to using international conventions, international petitions and simultaneous protests in different countries can also be effective means of adding pressure on governments to respond to activists' demands in certain cases. Keck and Sikkink (1999, 93) term this tactic 'boomerang pattern,' 'where governments are unresponsive to groups whose claims may none the less resonate elsewhere, the international contacts can "amplify" the demands of domestic groups, pry open space for new issues, and then echo these demands back into the domestic arena.'

The case of a Filipina 'run-away' migrant worker in Taiwan illustrates why a TAN can help change state behaviors and strengthened AHRLIM's belief in the power of transnationalism beyond nation-state borders. In addition to marriage migrant issues, AHLRIM also took up issues of migrant workers. In August 2012, AHLRIM was requested to help a Filipino migrant, Helen, who had run away from an abusive employer and was arrested by the NIA. Helen was charged for falsifying documents, and was detained at a NIA's detention center for 4 months. While detained, Helen's case was heard, and the court handed down a 10-month sentence which could be converted into fine. Helen expected

to be repatriated home after she paid the money equivalent to the fine of 6 months, because she was informed by the detention officer that her 4-month detainment would have been accorded towards the 4 months of sentenced imprisonment. Surprisingly, Helen was transferred to a women's prison because she failed to pay the penalty equivalent to 10-month imprisonment. After a series of inquiries with government officials, it was found that the reason Helen needed to pay the fine equivalent to 10-month imprisonment was that the prosecutor did not officially request the NIA to detain Helen for investigation, which the court could have considered in the sentence given to Helen. The NIA could supposedly only detain Helen for the mere purpose of deportation, since the prosecutor never requested Helen's detainment. However, the unspoken rule had been that prosecutors would not officially request the detention of 'run-away' migrants (the most common migrant worker legal violation) to evade official procedures, while, for the sake of convenience, detention centers would detain migrants as long as possible so that prosecutors could call on migrants for investigation when necessary. It was only until the 2011 Amendment of Immigration Act, after AHRLIM's campaigns, that a maximal duration of detention was regulated and set at 120 days.

AHRLIM had made many efforts, including calling the NIA Director directly, for more than a month to push the NIA to repatriate Helen without paying the extra 4-month penalty. However, while NIA officers, including the Director himself, agreed with AHRLIM's demands, Helen remained imprisoned without any concrete promise of repatriation. To add more pressure, AHRLIM called for an international petition openly addressed to the President of Taiwan and staged simultaneous protests in front of the NIA in Taiwan and the de facto Consulates of Taiwan in the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong. The petition was circulated via IMA, of which TASAT and AHRLIM's members are also member organizations, endorsed by nearly 60 organizations from Asia, Europe, North America, and Latin America, and presented at the protest in front of NIA and sent directly to the President's office.

Eleven days after the coordinated actions, I received a call from an NIA officer to inform me that the decision was made after the meeting of all 'higher-ups' of governmental agencies related to Helen's case. To resolve the common problems underlined by Helen's case, they would amend some guidelines so that detainees would be deported as soon as all requirements were met (e.g. airfare and travel documents) if the detention centers did not receive formal requests for detention from prosecutors. In regard to Helen's case specifically, the NIA promised to speed up the process and Helen would be repatriated ten days after the call. The release date was set based on a certain technicality they came up with to justify Helen's early repatriation.

In short, the transnational pressure as detailed above effectively overturned the government's decision. Eleven days after the international pressure, government agencies quickly developed a legal technicality to release Helen without an extra penalty; previously, AHRLIM had tried in vain for more than one month to push the government using all available means. Moreover, this

transnational action not only succeeded in changing the behavior of the government of the receiving country, but also that of the sending country. The Manila Economic and Culture Office (MECO, the de facto Philippine embassy in Taiwan) had been indifferent to Helen's case until the simultaneous protests were held, after which the MECO officials contacted Migrante-Taiwan (the grassroots Filipino migrant organization in Taiwan and a member of AHRLIM) and offered to speed up the processing of Helen's travel document and pay for Helen's airfare.

Formation of transnational activists

According to Porta and Tarrow (2005, 237), the new stratum of activists is needed for the emergence of transnational social movements, which they term as '*rooted cosmopolitans*,' the 'people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in regular activities that require their involvement in transnational networks of contacts and conflict.' Many rooted cosmopolitans have been involved in TANs for marriage migrants, including the feminists who attended the aforementioned Asia-Pacific Women NGO Forum in Thailand.

As the first elected chairperson of AMMORE, I can be identified as the 'rooted cosmopolitan' based in Taiwan and engaged in regular activities required for the formation and operation of TANs for migrants in general, and for marriage migrants specifically. Though I am not the only rooted cosmopolitan, my personal experience can illustrate why the formation of rooted cosmopolitans is needed for the emergence of TANs.²

The primary source of the beginning of my transnational activism is the transnational network for the Filipino migrant movement. I was one of the Taiwanese activists contacted by the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos (APMMF) in the late 1990s when they tried to develop a network to support Filipino migrants in Taiwan. APMMF was established in 1984 as a regional research, advocacy, and movement building organization for Filipino migrants in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions, and Taiwan was one of their focus states. APMMF's establishment was the result of Filipino migrant movements that began in the early 1980s as an extension of the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines from the 1970s. As labor migration intensified, Filipino migrant activists became aware that they needed to extend their support to non-Filipino migrants, so in 2002 APMMF was renamed as APMM, Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants, to expand their work to all migrants from different nationalities in the region. Filipino migrant activists recognize the need to simultaneously deal with both sending and receiving countries, as well as the importance of transnational networking, as the Managing Director of APMM explained (Hsia 2009, 129):

² As a long-term action researcher, I have played several roles in the making of this transnational movement, including knowledge production, networking and movement building. For details, see (Hsia 2019).

Not only Filipinos are exploited. Other states also exporting people, so we need to share experiences of organizing migrant workers.... To protect migrants' rights and welfare, we need to deal with both sending and receiving countries.... It is much better to come together with different nationalities, so we can be more powerful.

After the initial contact by APMMF in late 1990s, I was requested for consultation or assistance when there were cases of migrants in need of help. Additionally, I also helped organize activities, including film showings, forums, and conferences, to enrich mutual understanding of Taiwanese and Filipino activists. Subsequently, APMM became the only non-Taiwan-based member organization of AHRLIM. All this effort building contacts, exchanges, and collaboration have contributed to the formation of AMMORE.

How is marriage migrants' transnational activism developed?

The TAN for marriage migrants originated from the 2005 International Workshop for Asian NGOs on Female Immigrants and Migrants held in Taipei and initiated by Awakening Foundation, one of the leading feminist organizations in Taiwan. I was invited to join the Board of the Awakening Foundation to help develop programs for migrant women, and this international workshop was one of those activities. To organize this workshop, I requested that APMM recommend speakers from other Asian countries. APMM was very interested in the themes and became the co-organizer of this international workshop.

After this international workshop, APMM decided to work on issues with 'foreign brides' and invited me to serve as a Board member. To establish a new program, APMM conducted several studies on 'foreign brides' in 2007. To follow up the 2005 international workshop, APMM organized the International Conference on Border Control & Empowerment of Immigrant Brides in September 2007, with the collaboration of TASAT, Awakening Foundation, and AHRLIM. One of the conference's resolutions was to establish a transnational network, with 16 organizations from 9 countries pledging to join. In October 2008, several participants from the 2007 conference held a meeting when the IMA, the first global alliance of grassroots migrant organizations, organized the first International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR) in Manila. To implement the resolution of the 2007 conference, those delegates attending the meeting decided to form the Action Network for Marriage Migrants' Rights & Empowerment (AMM♀RE) on October 31, 2008. After a series of consultations, exchange programs, trainings and conferences, AMM♀RE transformed itself from a loose network to a formal alliance with a constitution and elected officers. After the founding assembly in March 2017 held in Bangkok, AMM♀RE was renamed as the Alliance of Marriage Migrants Organizations for Rights and Empowerment (AMMORE), which includes members in Taiwan, South Korea,

Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia, Philippines, Indonesia, Canada, and the U.S.

To analyze how this TAN developed, two issues need to be addressed: organizational strategies to maintain the effective functioning of the network, and framing strategies to legitimate and motivate collective action.

Organizational strategies

As Fraser (2014) argues, to contribute effectively to the public spheres, TAN need to be both ‘normatively legitimate’ and ‘politically efficacious;’ that is, to operate in an open and inclusive process and to have the ability to exert significant influence over political authority. Since TANs are voluntary and horizontal, the extent of participation depends on the degree to which the actors perceive mutual learning, respect, and benefits within the networks, which makes democratic participation crucial to the lasting of the transnational advocacy (Keck and Sikkink 1999).

In addition to democratic participation, in an alliance composed of those directly affected by the issues and advocates whose rights and welfare are not directly affected, ‘cause affirmation’ is another aspect that affects the durability of the alliance (Beamish and Lubebbers 2008). Studies have shown that the key to develop trust necessary for successful and lasting alliance-building is for the groups directly affected to own the primacy and take the lead in the campaigns (ibid.; Stephen 2008).

Five organizational strategies are identified to ensure both normative legitimacy and political efficacy of AMMORE. The primary principle is to find ways to link local concerns of member organizations to regional and global concerns so that all members can feel that they own the causes of AMMORE. As Caoette (2007, 149) points out, there is nothing automatic or simple in globalizing local concerns and echoing local resistance. AMMORE has made the following efforts to ‘weave local expression of resistance into regional and global campaigns.’

Coordinating body with representatives from each country

As Pieck (2013) points out, for a TAN to sustain itself, it is crucial to balance the emotional elements of mobilization and the bureaucratic demands of transnational coordination. As the result of the successful 2007 International Conference as previously mentioned, the emotion and energy of marriage migrants and advocates were highly mobilized and consequently led to passing the resolution to form a transnational network. While recognizing the importance of members’ emotive level, having such a loose network ensured its effective function by forming a core group of representatives from each country with APMM as the secretariat. This core group was responsible for implementing the plans the network decided to pursue, such as research, exchange visits, conferences, and coordinated campaigns. When an activity or

project was planned, the representatives from each country were responsible for coordinating with organizations in their respective countries for input, comments, and mobilization. In the core group meetings, usually via Internet, country representatives would bring up concerns and suggestions from organizations in their respective countries for discussion and decision-making.

While APMM served as the secretariat responsible for administrative work, each country representative also took shares of work to implement activities and projects. For example, to better understand the situations of marriage migrants in the major receiving countries of the network, AMMORE decided to conduct a comparative study on marriage migrants in the Asia Pacific region, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and Australia. APMM first came up with the concept paper for the research, which was discussed and finalized in the core group meetings. The guided questions for interviews and focus groups were drafted by the representative from Australia, and each country representative was responsible for collaborating with local organizations to conduct interviews, focus groups, compilations of related policies and laws, and analyses of the data collected. After the draft reports were collected from all countries, I, as the representative of Taiwan, went to Hong Kong, where APMM is based, to talk with APMM staff and migrant organizations in Hong Kong about these country reports, and subsequently came up with the overall analyses and framework, which was later published as a book titled 'For Better or For Worse: Comparative Research on Equity and Access for Marriage Migrants' (Hsia 2010).

Collective learning emphasizing empowerment of marriage migrants

From the beginning of AMMORE as a loose network, empowerment of marriage migrants had been highlighted as the priority objective. When formalized in 2017, the Constitution makes it clear that marriage migrant organizations should take the lead. AMMORE as a formal alliance defines two types of membership, regular and associate. Regular membership is given to 'grassroots mass organization or alliance of marriage migrants organizations and their families, or grassroots migrant organization with marriage migrants' programs or policies,' while associate membership is given to 'any institution, network or institutional program that deals on providing services to marriage migrants.' To ensure that grassroots marriage migrant organizations maintain leadership of the alliance, only regular members can vote and be voted in any position of the alliance. This emphasis on the leadership of grassroots marriage migrant organizations as specifically stipulated in the constitution is inspired by IMA as a counter-hegemonic alliance that upholds the values of migrants' rights to 'speak for themselves' (Rodriguez 2013).

However, since the movement for marriage migrants is still relatively new and marriage migrants are not yet fully familiar with transnational advocacy networking, AMMORE made every effort to help its members learn collectively with a special emphasis on empowering marriage migrants. Before

formalization, AMMORE had conducted several exchange visits where marriage migrants visited other countries and participated in various activities, including visiting organizations and legislators, and holding public forums and trainings. Through these activities, marriage migrants not only learned about issues and struggles of marriage migrants in different countries, but also developed personal interactions with marriage migrants in other countries. A sense of empowerment is strongly felt by all marriage migrants participating in these exchange visits, as Manchi, a Vietnamese marriage migrant who has been TASAT's elected officer, explained:

By listening to sharing of marriage migrants in other countries, I realized that the problems are not only faced by us in Taiwan and we need to be united internationally. I felt very empowered.

Moreover, when possible, AMMORE invited marriage migrants to attend and speak at international activities and ensured that advocates familiar with transnational networking could help marriage migrants navigate these international activities, including interpretation, so that marriage migrants could gradually become more familiar with the transnational work and more active in transnational activism.

Supporting each other's campaigns

Even when AMMORE was still a loose network, it was very conscious of advancing its "political efficacy." As previously mentioned, international pressure can be helpful to push governments to respond to demands of movements, so AMMORE developed comradeship within the network to help each other's campaigns. In addition to signature campaigns, AMMORE arranged visits to representatives of Congress during exchange visits in different countries. When visiting Congress members, the international delegates helped the local organizations convince legislators of the urgency of issues and gain support from them. For instance, during the exchange visit in Japan in July 2009, AMMORE members visited a Congresswoman and explained to her the urgency of domestic violence against marriage migrant women in Japan, with a specific case of a Filipina marriage migrant who had not gained any assistance from governmental agencies.³ A few hours after the visit, the staff of the Congresswoman informed an AMMORE member in Japan that they had successfully convinced government agencies to provide assistance to this Filipina marriage migrant. Through this successful lobby of Congress, marriage

³ She was set fire and burned by her abusive husband. The social workers did not allow her to meet her children because they believed that her burned face resulted from the fire would be harmful to children's psychological health. The Filipino migrant organizations had tried all means to protest such cruel decision from the social workers but in vein, until AMMORE visited and lobbied at the Congress.

migrants witnessed the strength of TAN, which encouraged them to increase their commitment to participating in AMMORE. This, in turn, helped further empower marriage migrants.

Coordinated action

To publicize the formation of AMMORE and amplify marriage migrants' issues, AMMORE launched its first international campaign 'unVEIL' to reveal state repression to marriage migrants on Nov. 25, 2008, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. To weave local concerns with the international campaign, the unVEIL campaign served as an umbrella theme on state violence against marriage migrants to which member organizations could link their specific campaigns in their respective countries so that they could 'own' the international campaign. For example, AHRLIM linked this international campaign to its on-going campaign against the financial requirement for naturalization in Taiwan by organizing a protest with AMMORE's statement to demonstrate the international support it had achieved. In countries without specific campaigns for marriage migrants yet, like Japan and Canada, community activities and public forums were organized to raise public awareness of marriage migrant women's issues. In countries where there were existent protest and activities on that International Day, such as the Philippines and Australia, issues of marriage migrants were incorporated and the unVEIL campaign was highlighted so that the women's movements would begin to pay attention to issues of marriage migrant women.

Coalesce-create tactic

Since AMMORE is relatively new and the transnational movement for marriage migrants has only recently developed, it is important to maximize resources to strengthen and expand the network. One strategy is to link AMMORE to other TANs not only to promote marriage migrant issues but also gain opportunities for AMMORE members to meet face-to-face. For example, most AMMORE members also join IMA and bring marriage migrant issues to IMA and its activities, such as IAMR. Even when AMMORE was still a loose network, it organized panels as part of the IAMR programs back-to-back with its own activities so that its members could have face-to-face meetings and consultations. In attending these events organized by other TANs, marriage migrants are further empowered by learning about forced migration and strategies and tactics adopted by other migrant organizations. For instance, Pei-hsiang, a marriage migrant from Cambodia representing TASAT in these events described how she was inspired by attending IAMRs:

I was so excited to know many migrant activists from all over the world. I have learnt not only the knowledge about why people migrate but also the creative methods, such as music and theater, they use to organize migrants and campaign for migrant's rights.

By coalescing with other TANs, AMMORE is able to create space to project marriage migrants' agendas and strengthen its transnational activism. For instance, some AMMORE members are also members of transnational network for women's issues, such as the Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development (APWLD), through which AMMORE also promotes and incorporates marriage migrant women's issues in the global campaigns for women, including campaigns for Sustainable Development Justice.

Even when the energy is low among its core members due to internal challenges within their organizations or some personal difficulties, such as health and finances, AMMORE still managed to stay alive by coalescing with other TANs. Between 2018 and 2021, AMMORE could not maintain active momentum of the alliance because many of the core members encountered difficulties. While the alliance could not afford to hold coordinated action or initiate campaigns, marriage migrants' issues remain present in the transnational contentious space because APMM, as both AMMORE's and IMA's secretariate, manages to incorporate these issues to all possible international mechanisms that IMA is involved in, such as being invited to speak at the Fifth Stakeholder Consultation for the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2021.

Framing strategies

To attract attention and encourage action, and to 'fit' favorable institutional venues,' TAN has to 'frame issues to make them comprehensible to target audiences' (Keck and Sikkink 1999, 90). This framing of issues is not only important to convince people outside of the advocacy network, but also necessary to those within the network because to legitimate and motivate collective action, the framing must involve conscious effort by stakeholders to fashion shared understandings of the world as well as of participant groups themselves (McAdam et al 1996). That is, differently situated actors in the TAN that serves as political space negotiate the social, cultural and political meanings of their joint enterprises, or the causes of their transnational activism (Keck & Sikkink 1999).

Naming

As mentioned above, issues of marriage migrants suffered lack of recognition even within social movement communities. It took years to convince activists in migrant worker movements that marriage migration is part of the global phenomenon of forced migration and that marriage migrants and migrant workers have both common and distinctive issues. One crucial effort was the naming of this 'foreign bride phenomenon' in the global context.

In the aforementioned 2007 International Conference, I raised the issue of naming in the action planning and resolution session, and shared TASAT's

experiences of naming campaigns as follows. Since severe discrimination against marriage migrant women was crystallized in the derogatory label of ‘foreign brides,’ to make their issues comprehensible to the public, one important tactic involves the politics of naming, in which the subjects themselves should be directly involved. To this end, we organized the ‘Let New Immigrant Women Speak for Themselves Writing Contest,’ where marriage migrants were requested to express how they felt when called ‘foreign brides,’ and how they would name themselves alternatively if they disapproved of this term. Marriage migrants were later requested to vote on names suggested by the entries of the writing contest, and the term ‘New Immigrant Women’ (in Mandarin Chinese) received the most votes. Since then, TASAT and other member organizations of AHLRLIM have used all means to publicize this new term. Consequently, the term of ‘foreign bride’ became seriously criticized and has gradually faded from public use ever since.

In addition to sharing the naming campaign in Taiwan, as the co-organizer of the conference, I explained that the conference title used ‘immigrant brides’ knowing that the word ‘bride’ was problematic and planning to raise it as an issue for discussion and debates at the conference. After heated discussion and debates, my proposal of the term ‘marriage migrant’ was accepted. Since then, according to the 2014 evaluation of AMMORE’s development, this term has been promoted by AMMORE at all possible venues and engagements, including U.N. processes. Eventually, the UN also started using the term ‘marriage migrants’ in some official documents.

Frame alignment

One essential component of TAN’s political strategy is the ‘construction of cognitive frame’ (Keck and Sikkink 1999). TAN’s most crucial strategic framing for marriage migrants is to link it to the global issues of forced migration. Since this ‘frame alignment’ (Snow et al 1986) of marriage migration as part of forced migration under neo-liberal globalization has been accepted, issues of marriage migrants have been gradually incorporated into the global movement for migrants, especially IMA and its networks, and thus the TAN for marriage migrants has been developed and expanded.

One vivid example of how ‘frame alignment’ helps is the activities held in Berlin, 2017. Many migrant activists and advocates in the activities organized by the Churches Witnessing with Migrants, a TAN affiliated with IMA to counter the inter-governmental conference on Global Forum on Migration and Development, were unaware of marriage migrant issues. At the rally held at the end of the activities, I spoke as the Chairperson of AMMORE about marriage migrant issues and how marriage migration is part of forced migration. After my speech, several migrant activists told me that they did not realize that they were marriage migrants themselves until they listened to my speech and that they

were eager to be part of AMMORE and would try to organize marriage migrants in Europe.

What are the assessments of marriage migrants' transnational activism?

While the investigation of this paper focuses on AMMORE, the first TAN specifically dedicated to marriage migrant issues at the international level, it is important to emphasize that AMMORE grew out of a vibrant movement spearheaded by AHRLIM for marriage migrants' rights and welfare in Taiwan. It took a long incubating process of creating space for marriage migrants from different nationalities to work collectively at the grassroots level, and later it required linkages with domestic movement organizations to develop marriage migrants' contentious politics that led to 'domestic transnationalism,' a domestic movement evolving into transnational activism within the nation-state because of activists' diverse origins. This domestic transnationalism later develops into 'cross-border transnationalism' as transnational advocacy grows out of activists' purposeful pursuit of collaborating with like-minded activists in other countries. The following analyses will further examine the impacts of transnational activism for marriage migrants, the relationship between these types of transnationalism, and the challenges they face.

International awareness of marriage migrants' issues

In regard to its political efficacy, it is obvious that AMMORE as a TAN has helped the promotion of public awareness of marriage migrant issues. One concrete achievement is that some U.N. institutions and mechanisms started using the term 'marriage migrant' in their official documents. Moreover, cross-border transnational activism also has impacts on policies by adding external pressures on governments to respond to the demands of the movements within nation-states, as illustrated by AHRLIM's success in changing policies of financial requirements for naturalization and detainment of irregular migrants.

Politicizing marriage migrants

As a grassroots-oriented movement for marriage migrants, it is crucial to understand how marriage migrants have made sense of transnational activism. Manchi, originally from Vietnam, was the first marriage migrant to attend the first IAMR that AMMORE joined IMA in 2008, which included a protest action with large mobilization where she spoke as the representative of TASAT. I asked if she was afraid. She commented:

At first, I was a bit worried when I saw such big mobilization. But I soon felt inspired because there were so many people from all over the world united. I

was so impressed and inspired by their passion and commitment. Their bravery made me brave too.

In addition to feeling empowered, Manchi highlighted the new perspectives she gained.

I learned that only unity can make changes. I also had a fresh understanding of the world, realizing that we are not only affected by our own governments and we should not just mind our own business. I realize that our lives are dominated by other powerful countries, like the U.S., and people in other countries are all affected by the superpower.

Participating in transnational activism organized by AMMORE helps broaden marriage migrants' perspectives from perceiving their experiences of marriage migration as a merely personal issue to understanding that it is affected not only by nation-state policies but also by global superpowers. Pei-hsiang, a marriage migrant from Cambodia, who attended activities organized by AMMORE and IMA in New York representing TASAT, pointed to the fact that she has clearly learned the counter-hegemonic framework of understanding the root causes of forced migration.

Via listening to the sharing and presentation of migrant activists from other countries, it helped me to break through from my confined perspectives and see the bigger picture of why people migrate, like globalization. I have learned that people are forced to migrate as the result of a long term and historical problems, such as wars and colonization... There is unequal development among countries. The reason why these countries, like in Southeast Asia where we are from, are underdeveloped is that the super powerful countries invaded us and exploited our rich resources, which resulted in wars and colonization. Even after independence, our countries have been struggling to be rebuilt from the ruins.

Necessary conditions: domestic transnationalism

A sense of empowerment is commonly felt by all marriage migrants attending the transnational activities organized by AMMORE. All of them expressed how they were inspired to participate more AMMORE activities, as a marriage migrant from Mexico to Japan told me several times while attending forums and rallies organized by AMMORE and IMA in Mexico City IN 2018:

I am so happy and honored to be part of AMMORE. I want to attend more AMMORE activities in the future.

However, these inspired marriage migrants all became inactive, except those organized by TASAT, shortly after they attended the transnational events due to

personal or organizational challenges. Although they became inactive in transnational networking, they remain active in their hometown associations.

For instance, a Vietnamese marriage migrant leader living in South Korea was much inspired when she first attended AMMORE's training held in Taipei and was linked to the migrant activist network in Seoul after I introduced her to my Korean activist friends. She was elected as an officer at AMMORE's founding assembly but became inactive shortly afterwards. When I asked her in 2018 why she did not attend AMMORE's meeting, her explanation was that she had been too exhausted and needed to reduce her activity level. However, according to local Korean activists, she no longer participated in the migrant activist network while still remaining active in her Vietnamese association.

Since it is common and understandable that marriage migrants' activism is affected by family matters and interpersonal conflicts within organizations due to their precarious conditions, the question that needs further investigation is why these exceptional marriage migrants organized by TASAT have remained active rather than why the majority of marriage migrants attending AMMORE's activities became inactive.

One factor common among marriage migrants who became inactive is that their activism had been primarily linked with hometown associations that mainly provide social activities and services. They have not been involved in campaigns for their own rights and welfare in the countries of settlement, including Japan and Korea, where movements for marriage migrants' rights and welfare are mainly spearheaded by native activists, with marriage migrants as mostly the beneficiaries.

To analyze if their prior experiences in protest action and campaigns have made a difference for marriage migrants organized by TASAT, I asked them in 2021 if AMMORE's impacts on them would be the same had they not been involved in AHRLIM. Both Manchi and Pei-hsiang believe that their prior experiences in contentious politics in Taiwan have made significant differences. When reflecting on her first experiences in speaking at the large demonstration in Manila, Manchi explained,

Without prior experiences with TASAT and AHRLIM, I would not dare to join protests and even understand why it was necessary to have rallies. In Manila, though there were many armed policemen when we had the big demonstration, I was not afraid. Because I represented TASAT, a member organization of AMMORE and IMA, and I knew if anything happened, they would protect me. I was not alone.

According to Pei-hsiang, there would be two scenarios for marriage migrants without prior experience in protest action after they attended transnational activism.

One possibility is that they are inspired for the first time, but later on they lost it because they do not have their own experiences of activism to share with others. It would be a feeling of emptiness or even ashamed when you can only listen to others' experiences and not being able to share your own in return. The other possibility is that after attending transnational events, they would try to find something to do, like campaigns, so that their organizations can do more than just socializing. But this will not happen automatically. It would need empowerment process.

Pei-hsiang emphasized the importance of empowerment:

Without empowerment, marriage migrants may still be able to stand up to demand rights since they are directly affected. For example, many Cambodians stood up to attend rallies when the government did not give them Taiwanese citizenship. But without being empowered in the process, they would not have a broader understanding of the systematic problems and therefore would not be able to sustain and expand their activism. Their action would only be temporary and issue-based, rather than developing it into movements because they cannot see structural problems, like policies or social environments. They lack analyses of the root causes of the problems.

Manchi also believes in the importance of empowerment and further points out that the roles of native activists are crucial in this empowerment process.

It is simply impossible for marriage migrants alone to become activists daring to initiate campaigns for our rights and welfare. In our home countries, we were not educated at schools or in societies that it's our civil right to protest and to demand to the governments, not to mention language and cultural barriers.

Historically, AHRLIM as a domestic transnationalism was the basis for the emergence of AMMORE, the cross-border transnationalism. The experience of being involved in a form of domestic transnationalism is considered crucial by marriage migrants in Taiwan who have been able to sustain their activism. By comparing marriage migrants' involvement in different countries, it is suggested that a domestic transnationalism is the necessary condition for cross-border transnationalism. While marriage migrants in Japan and Korea still felt empowered by joining AMMORE's cross-border transnationalism, it is necessary to sustain and strengthen such empowerment them through involving them in activism and campaigns, not just social activities. This requires collaboration with native activists and therefore development of a form of domestic transnationalism.

As mentioned, it is common for marriage migrants' activism to be affected by personal and organizational challenges. Manchi and Pei-hsiang have also encountered these challenges. In fact, in addition to personal issues, Manchi

and Pei-hsiang have been exposed to severe organizational challenges since 2018 that almost resulted in the dissolution of TASAT. It is important to understand why Manchi and Pei-hsiang are still determined to continue their involvement in both domestic and cross-border transnationalism despite of these personal and organizational difficulties. For them, it is important to continue the struggle because they have witnessed the values of collective activism that have improved lives of many marriage migrants, and these lessons they have learned need to be passed on to others to create a better world. As Pei-hsiang concluded,

It's like a circle. Everyone in the planet is connected. Even if these issues do not affect me, they could affect my families or friends. To help each other, we need to make best efforts at places where we are located..... Even when TASAT is facing serious problems and it's been frustrating, we still want to continue, because we had experienced success in campaigning and organizing in the past. From our past experiences, we learned the values of organizing and campaigning, and it's important to pass on the heritage of the movements. Just like we learned from senior activists, we have responsibilities to pass on our experiences and lessons to other marriage migrants and future generation.

Moreover, since cross-border transnational activism for marriage migrants has been developed without any big events or international legal mechanism which can be a strong leverage to sustain and expand it, a form of domestic transnationalism is especially important for marriage migrant movements. Unlike migrant worker movements, which have been significantly expanded by several international campaigns, including the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and adoption of the ILO Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, marriage migrant organizations can at present only incorporate their issues into existent international platforms, such as CEDAW, that are related to but not specifically made for marriage migrants. In short, in the case of the movements for marriage migrant rights and welfare, domestic transnationalism is the necessary condition to sustain cross-border transnationalism.

Balance between domestic and cross-border transnationalism

It is debatable whether all the effort and energy needed for developing and expanding transnationalism across the borders is worth it, given that marriage migrant rights and welfare are mostly affected by policies and laws within nation-states and that, after all, international conventions and instruments are often not implemented at the national level. While cross-border TANs do help campaigns within the nation-state, their impact cannot be overstated. In fact, many activists find that local and national struggles are more important than transnational activism when it comes to the concrete impacts on the lives of

marriage migrants, and consequently they do not invest much time and energy in participating in the TAN. Without active participation of activists rooted at the local and national levels, TANs run the risk of being dominated by ‘professional advocates’ whose activism is not grounded and who only project themselves as ‘spokespersons’ of the movement. These ungrounded professional advocates would not only harm the normative legitimacy of transnational movements (Norman 2017) but also the well-being of marriage migrants because the policy recommendations they make to supra-national institutions would be detached from the realities of marriage migrants. Therefore, while recognizing the importance of transnational activism for marriage migrants, this paper argues that cross-border transnationalism should not take primacy over domestic transnationalism. Activists concerned with the well-being of marriage migrants should be constantly reflective of their involvement in transnational activism both within and beyond nation-states and make a conscious effort to balance these two types of transnational activism.

Members of AMMORE have been continuously linking the two types of transnational activism. For instance, inspired by transnationalism within the nation-state developed by TASAT and ARHLIM, members of AMMORE in South Korea and Japan also endeavored to develop and strengthen domestic transnationalism in their respective countries. In both countries, Filipino migrant organizations have been actively reaching out to marriage migrants from different nationalities. In South Korea, AMMORE members and Filipino associations recruited the Vietnamese organization mentioned previously. In Japan, efforts have been made to establish AMMORE-Japan, a grassroots organization composed of marriage migrants from eight nationalities founded in March 2018. One of the goals for AMMORE-Japan is to transform itself from an association to an alliance of marriage migrant organizations with different countries of origin. While efforts have been made in Japan and Korea to reach out to marriage migrants from different nationalities, transnational networking has not been able to sustain itself. Compared to the experience in Taiwan, what is lacking in other countries is that they have not been able to establish domestic transnationalism to campaign for policy and law changes by uniting native activists and marriage migrants of different origins.

In sum, in order to be both ‘normatively legitimate’ and ‘politically efficacious’ (Fraser 2014), a grounded TAN needs to be developed. To this end, AMMORE must simultaneously develop both domestic transnationalism and cross-border transnationalism. On the one hand, marriage migrant issues can be amplified at the regional and international levels via transnationalism across borders, which in turn the national movements can use as ‘boomerang pattern’ tactic to add more pressure on their respective governments to change policies and laws. On the other hand, national movements for marriage migrants must be transnational to be legitimate and effective in affecting policies and laws because the actors need to include marriage migrants themselves who are from

different countries of origin as well as native activists who can assist marriage migrants in developing the movements.

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