

論文

# The Development of Adult Education through Practices of Public Library Program

Shoko Nagata

Hiroshima University, Graduate School of Education

Keywords: Adult Education, Library Services, Outreach Programs, Literacy Programs, United States

## 1. Introduction

The objective of this research is to explore practices of adult education in public library. Throughout the years, libraries have supported adult education and constantly provided programs that were needed for immigrants to thrive in the American society. In this study, the historical overview of adult education in libraries will be examined from library programs that have supported immigrants' learning opportunities.

Libraries have taken the role that encourages civic participation in the community and continues to provide innovative programs for people. In recent years, immigrants are not only encouraged to learn about American culture and society, but about other cultures that are present in the community. Libraries facilitate dialogue among citizens so that they can share diverse views and interact with each other to solve their problems. From the approaches of recent adult education, it is evident that libraries function as sites that promote diversity and civic engagement. However, these programs that emphasize diversity did not develop from the beginning of adult education in libraries in the United States. Since the education programs in libraries reflect the changes in society, the development of approaches of adult education in libraries will be examined in this paper.

## 2. The Emergence of Adult Education in Library

In the United States, libraries have been providing educational opportunities for adults. In this section,

the development of adult education in public library and the library's role to adult education will be discussed.

The public library rapidly expanded in the 1880s and emerged as a site for adult education by the 1920s. The aim of education in libraries can be found in Andrew Carnegie's belief in the role of public library. The Carnegie Organization that was established in 1911 contributed to libraries to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge. According to the organization, there were two reasons for Carnegie's donation to libraries.

Carnegie had two main reasons for donating money to the founding of libraries. First, he believed that libraries added to the meritocratic nature of America. Anyone with the desire to learn could educate themselves and be successful in America like he had been. Second, Carnegie believed that immigrants like himself needed to acquire cultural knowledge of America which a library would enable immigrants to do (Note 1).

The Carnegie Organization recognized the importance of developing educational opportunities outside formal education. They viewed the public library as the place where individuals can acquire knowledge that is needed to make decisions about their lives (Note 2).

Between years of 1881 and 1917, Andrew Carnegie donated over \$41 million to build 1,679 libraries in local communities (Note 3). Library profession

developed during these years, and state and regional associations were organized to promote library expansion (Note 4). Since then, to attract and educate adult learners, libraries have provided not only books but various services to citizens and led to the emergence of adult education in libraries.

As Knowles (1994) noted, “the year 1924 is a distinct turning point in library’s role in adult education (Note 5)”. In 1924, William S. Learned published *The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge*, where he stated library as “community intelligence center” for adults. Influenced by this report, in the same year of 1924, the Carnegie Organization had a meeting to discuss library’s responsibility for adult education. As a result of this meeting, the American Library Association (ALA) formed Commission on the Library and Adult Education in 1924. The aim of this commission was to study the adult education movement, to look into library’s works for adult learning and to give a report about its finding to ALA (Note 6).

In 1926, Commission on the Library and Adult Education published a report on the findings titled *Libraries and Adult Education*. This report had a significant influence on the development of adult education in libraries. According to this report, it became important for libraries to provide: consulting and advisory services regarding book choice; information on other adult education services provided at local communities; and necessary materials for adult education held in other organizations (Note 7). In 1926, Commission on Library and Adult Education recommended ALA council to create Board on the Library and Adult Education. This board was established to “encourage research, stimulate activity and the leadership within the professions in the area of adult education (Note 8),” with support from Carnegie Organization for the first few years.

Another important development in library’s adult

education was that the idea of acquiring the cultural knowledge in 1920’s was inherited to programs such as American Heritage Program (Note 9) in 1950’s. The Fund for Adult Education provided necessary resources for American Heritage Project in 1951. In the project, group discussions about politics, economics, and social problems closely related to the American heritage were organized in libraries. Federal documents such as Declaration of Independence were used to discuss these topics in the project. This project contributed to citizen’s deeper understanding of American culture and society. Additionally, in 1957, Adult Education Board established Adult Services Division in ALA so that ALA can continue to encourage adult education in local libraries. This growth of adult education in libraries is due to not only the result of ALA’s program but due to Library Services Act (LSA) of 1956 (Note 10). The details about LSA and how it played pivotal role in the development of library services for the underserved will be discussed in the following section.

### 3. Library Services for the Foreign-Born and the Underserved

Library services to the foreign born have started in the period of mass immigration in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The libraries provided services for people who were underserved in the American society. This section will discuss about library’s educational approaches towards the foreign-born and underserved.

Plummer (2003) discussed that ALA had supported the rights of immigrant communities through public library services since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. ALA addressed the importance of education for adult immigrants and organized Committee on Work with the Foreign Born (CWFB) in 1918. The librarians viewed immigrants as Americans-in-the-making and provided services and materials to introduce

immigrants to the American society. In these years, for librarians, the term Americanization was defined simply as “teaching English to immigrants and preparing them for naturalization (Note 11).” This understanding of Americanization reflected the librarian’s ideal which helped immigrants adjust to American society in times of integrating immigrants to American way of living.

In the mid-1940s, the librarians’ ideal of Americanization developed and contributed to promote intercultural understanding. During 1945 to 1948, CWFB “accelerated the process of its transition from an organization promoting programs for Americanization of immigrants into an organization working for the improvement of international and intercultural relation (Note 12)”. In 1948, CWFB changed its name to Committee of Intercultural Action, which aimed to foster tolerance and to promote diversity among ethnic groups (Note 13). During the 1940s, ALA emphasized the importance of immigrant education in the way which promoted ethnic diversity. However, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the role of library in providing services for minority became an “accepted part of ‘mainstream’ librarianship (Note 14).”

### 3.1. Library Services to the Underserved

The practices of adult education in libraries continued in the 1960s, and by this time, the idea of equality became an important concern in the United States. The concept of equality of educational opportunity influenced library services. The library became responsible for providing adult education through public library programs to those who did not have access to its services in the past. As Margaret E. Monroe noted:

The special publics (ethnic and national cultural groups, student populations, and elderly retired, the school-age children) have long been singled out

for particular service. The development of outreach services during the 1960s and 1970s heightened the focus on ethnic groups, and the ethnic culture became the bridge of communication upon which library service was established with the neighborhood communities (Note 15).

As Monroe discussed, especially during these years, libraries provided services so that the special publics can acquire necessary information and education services (Note 16). The extended services that developed during the 1960s and 1970s to the people without access to library were known as the outreach services. These outreach services promoted equal access to library services and were intended to serve the disadvantaged adults.

The library services for the disadvantaged were supported by Library Services Act (LSA) of 1956 and Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) of 1964. As Fry (1975) noted, the study conducted by U.S. Office of Education in 1956 revealed that 26 million rural residents did not have any public library service and 300 rural counties had no public library within their borders (Note 17). This LSA of 1956 was significant since it helped provide and improve library services in rural America. LSA was a federal grant program that supported public library services and was administered by U.S. Department of Education. LSA made it possible for state library agencies to carry out leading role in extending and improving public library services.

Another significant improvement in library services was carried out by LSCA of 1964. LSCA was also a federal grant program for public library services and it was administered by U.S. Department of Education. LSCA helped not only to build public libraries in rural areas, but also to improve services in urban areas. The act also provided funding for the underserved and the disadvantage communities. Further, as Fry discussed, LSCA of 1964 and the extension of

this act in 1970 influenced library services to the disadvantaged.

The major provisions of the 1970 amendments are:

- (1) Providing library services to the disadvantaged in rural and urban areas,
- (2) Strengthening metropolitan public libraries which serve as national or regional resource centers,
- (3) Extending library services to state institutions and to the physically handicapped, and
- (4) Improving and strengthening the capacity of state library administrative agencies for meeting the needs of the people of the states (Note 18).

These provisions of LSA and LSCA assisted libraries to improve and provide services to the disadvantaged. In the 1980s, libraries focused on providing information and services that would enhance and enrich lives of individuals. Stern pointed out that libraries continued to support adult education especially in the way which promoted individuals to have “a sense of the community and civic responsibility (Note 19)”. Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) of 1964 was replaced by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) (Note 20) in 1996. LSTA continued to stimulate learning in libraries and expanded services through technology. In the following decades, libraries constantly provided services to immigrants with the focus on the importance of civic engagement. In the following section, current practices of adult education that are organized by libraries will be discussed.

#### 4. Current Practices of Adult Education in Library

Today, libraries provide various services for adult learners. For example, there are programs that help computer skills, job search, business plans, and

literacy. The strength of public library is that it is an institution that has resources, not only collection of books but facilities and technology along with many resourceful individuals. The libraries responded to the needs of public and provided flexible services through the branch library system and outreach programs. To understand the current practices of adult education, this section will explore literacy programs and library programs that encourage civic participation.

##### 4.1. Demographic Factor and its Influence on Library Programs for Adults

The change in demographic factor had a strong influence on library services. Statistics showed that foreign-born population increased in recent years. The 2010 American Community Survey Reports estimated that the number of foreign born population in the United States was nearly 40 million and this represented 13 percent of the total population (Note 21).

When singling out the statistics of immigrant in New York City alone, as can be seen from Figure 1, it showed that the foreign born population rapidly increased. In 2010, 37.2 % of the city’s population was constructed from the foreign-born population. This simply suggested that one of three people in New York City was foreign-born. Many of the foreign born population speak language other than English at home, and have limited English proficiency.

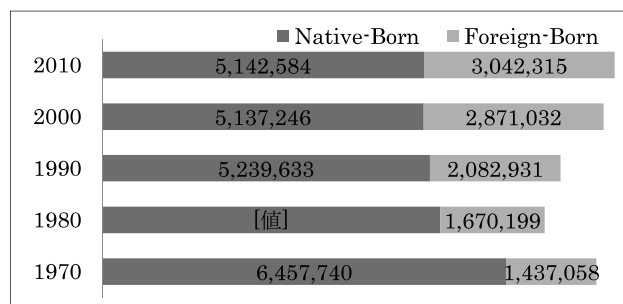


Figure 1 : Total Population by Nativity — New York City 1970s to 2010 (2010) . The % of foreign-born population was: 37.2% (2010), 35.9 % (2000), 28.4%

(1990), 23.6% (1980), and 18.2% (1970).

(Adapted from : NYC Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs(2013). "A Blueprint for Immigrant Integration", p.5.)

Because of the transition in demography, it became increasingly important for libraries to promote equal access to information and services that supported the diverse communities. ALA Policy Manual (2010) stated that:

ALA recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and technologies by all people, especially those who may experience language or literacy-related barriers; economic distress; cultural or social isolation; physical or attitudinal barriers; racism; discrimination on the basis of appearance, ethnicity, immigrant status, religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression; or barriers to equal education, employment, and housing (Note 22).

In this policy manual, ALA stated that libraries should empower diverse populations through library services so that citizens could fully participate in the society. Many libraries tried to accomplish this goal by not only working towards improvement of language program but also encouraging civic participation through adult education programs that fostered dialogue among citizens.

#### 4.2. Definition of Literacy

The definition of literacy is "the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential (Note 23)." There are many different adult literacy programs for learners wishing to improve their language skills. The literacy programs are: Adult Basic Education (ABE) program which focuses on English speakers who want to improve

reading and writing; English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) program for adults of non-native English speakers who want to improve reading, writing and speaking; and other program such as General Educational Development (GED) preparation program which improves reading, writing and math.

The following section will look into current practices of adult education in New York Public Library and how the literacy programs such as the ESOL program encourage civic participation.

#### 4.3. Current Literacy Programs and Civic Participation

Libraries provide immigrants not only materials in their native languages but also literacy programs so that they can learn English. These literacy programs continue to attract the foreign born population to library services. For example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program in New York Public Library offers free English classes for adults and the classes are held twice a week for two hours. ESOL program which started in 2012 in New York Public Library is drastically expanding and by the year 2013, libraries could provide services up to 6000 people (Note 24). In ESOL program, students learn English in the way which fosters understanding of American culture and society. For many immigrants, libraries such as New York Public Library have become important resources to thrive in New York City (Note 25). Through literacy programs, the library provides information that is essential in daily life. The materials that are used in these programs also help immigrants to understand the society they live in.

In ESOL program of New York Public Library, the materials such as *We Are New York* encourage adult immigrants' active participation in the society. *We Are New York* is a television drama series created by New York City's Office of Immigrant Affairs (Note 26). The drama series covers various situations

immigrants face while living in New York City. This material is just one of many materials used in the ESOL program. In the episodes, the importance of civic engagement is emphasized.

What is evident from the episodes of *We Are New York* is that, these materials and programs are designed not only to help immigrants improve English proficiency but to help immigrants learn about American society. The purpose of this drama series is to provide information about city services and to support immigrants' participation in the society. When closely examining an episode such as "Welcome Parents," the story reflects immigrants' concern about parental involvement in the children's education. This episode illustrates that the positive attitude towards community involvement is much more important than individual's English proficiency. The use of this material suggests that New York Public Library supports the view of serving the needs of diverse immigrant communities by enriching immigrants' life in New York City.

This indicates that the current literacy programs have the tendency to emphasize the importance of civic engagement. In recent years, immigrants are not only encouraged to learn the language, cultures, but to take necessary action to solve their problems in the communities. Today, libraries take the crucial role of empowering immigrants to participate in community activities.

#### 4.4. Current Library Programs and Civic Participation

Participation in library programs can be identified as the first step of civic participation. The library programs including literacy programs have responded to the needs for immigrants to participate in neighborhood communities.

In recent research, Kranich (2010) argued that "strong democracy needs libraries to provide informal learning opportunities and space for citizens

to engage (Note 27)." When libraries act as an "active agent of democracy," citizens can make decision and discuss about their concerns. The practices that encourage adults to be involved in the community are provided by libraries. Cohen (1980) stated that library's role was to help ethnic groups build social relations to the community. Cohen (1980) stated:

... strengthening the identity and pride of these ethnic groups will be necessary in developing a consensus for neighborhood coalitions. The library profession can contribute to this advance in human intergroup relations by its concerns, commitment and extraordinary services to the ethnic groups in the urban centers of the United States (Note 28).

An example of how libraries assist immigrants' civic engagement can be seen in the community dialogue programs offered at Hartford Public Library, Connecticut. The Hartford Public Library has two programs, "Citywide (Note 29)" and "Neighborhood (Note 30)" so that immigrants and long-term residents in the community can communicate and discuss important problems in the neighborhood. The "Citywide" program started in 2011 and the "Neighborhood" program started in 2012. In Hartford Public Library, the programs began with initiating discussion between new immigrants and long-term residents to share their opinions and concerns. The purpose of community dialogue is to "dispel stereotypes, build trust, and allow people to work together towards solutions to issues, and launch action (Note 31)." This approach encouraged immigrants to build relationships, to share diverse views and to learn about not only American culture but other cultures in the community.

From these various approaches to adult education, it can be said that libraries provide opportunities to discuss about common concerns by encouraging interaction among citizens. The involvement of

both long-term residents and new immigrants in the program is essential since the residents can learn about diverse ethnic cultures that are present in the community. In current education programs, libraries offer the place where residents can practice democratic skills and participate in their local community. Thus it can be concluded that these library programs focusing on community dialogue support immigrants' engagement in American society.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper looked into how libraries have constantly provided education services for adult learners in the United States. In this paper, the historical development of adult education is discussed through practices of library programs. From the time of public library expansion in the 1880s, libraries have gradually increased the services to adults and immigrants. These services in libraries have always reflected the demands of society. In recent years, providing literacy programs and other programs that encourage civic participation have become an important role of the library. The increase of foreign-born population led to the expansion of literacy programs and services to immigrants in local libraries in the United States. The libraries have provided information, skills and spaces so that adult learners can understand their surrounding communities. Adult literacy programs and community dialogue programs show that libraries nationwide have taken the important role for immigrants to participate in the society.

The adult education in libraries continues to support diverse communities in the United States. By looking into how the adult education in libraries has developed, it is possible to understand the current trend in library education which emphasizes diversity and civic participation. The adult education programs in libraries have committed to provide education

programs that empower the diverse populations. These programs in libraries focus on diversity and promote tolerance among ethnic groups. From these examples of library service in the United States, it is possible to learn about the education programs that can be effectively practiced in Japanese libraries.

In Japan, as *Korekara no Toshokanzou (The Ideal Image of Future Library)* (2006) stated, "Libraries in Japan, as libraries overseas, should carry out education programs and outreach programs to create an attractive library (Note 32)." This report was published by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In this report, the outreach program was defined as providing services to people who could not receive library services in the past. As the report noted, in the future, it is also important to extend library services to "the disadvantage, elderly and multicultural population (Note 33)." When looking at library services in Japan, it is difficult to state that the libraries have reached the ideal. Thus, learning from other country's example of educational services in libraries is required.

The presence of multicultural and multilingual communities in cities today shows the need to support diverse populations in libraries. Therefore, to find how these education programs can be adapted to libraries in Japan, this research that examines the changing services and programs in libraries in the United State is necessary. This overview of adult education for the underserved in libraries can help for finding the possible way to contribute to develop a model of library service for growing number of foreign-born population in Japan.

## Endnotes

- (1) Carnegie Corporation of New York, "Libraries," 2014.
- (2) Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane, "Adult

- Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present”, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994, pp.191-195.
- (3) Malcolm S. Knowles. “A History of Adult Education Movement in the United States”, Krieger Publishing Company, 1994, p.51.
- (4) Ibid., pp.51-52.
- (5) Ibid., p.112.
- (6) Ibid.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Ibid., p.113.
- (9) American Heritage Project was one of the first program that was supported by the Fund for Adult Education. The Fund for Adult Education’s grant to American Library Association continued through the year 1951 to 1955.
- (10) Ibid., 117-118.
- (11) Plummer Alston Johns Jr., “The ALA Committee on Work with the Foreign Born and the Movement to Americanize the Immigrant”, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003, p. 97.
- (12) Ibid., p.105.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Stephen Stern, “Ethnic Libraries and Librarianship in the United States: Models and Prospects”, 1991, p.77.
- (15) Margaret E. Monroe, “The Cultural Role of Public Library”, 1981, p. 27.
- (16) Ibid.
- (17) James Fry, “LSA and LSA, 1956-1973: A Legislative History”, 1970, p.9.
- (18) Ibid., p.20.
- (19) S. Stern, op.cit., 1991, p.95.
- (20) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) of 1996 was a federal grant program for libraries and it was administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). LSTA links libraries and technology in order to expand library services to help learners to access information through technology.
- (21) United States Census Bureau, “The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010”, 2012, pp.1-2
- (22) American Library Association, “B.3 Diversity (Old Number 60)”, ‘ALA Policy Manuals’, 2010.
- (23) American Library Association, “Literacy for All: Adult Literacy @ your Library”, 2012, p.3.
- (24) New York Public Library, “Fiscal Year 2013-Annual Report”, 2014, p.7.
- (25) Center for an Urban Future, “Branches of Opportunity”, 2013, p.7.
- (26) NYC Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Affairs. “A Blueprint for Immigrant Integration”, 2010. p.5.
- (27) Nancy Kranich, “Promoting Adult Learning through Civil Discourse in the Public Library”, 2010, p.15.
- (28) David Cohen, “Ethnicity in Librarianship: A Rational for Multiethnic Library Service in a Heterogeneous Society”, 1980, pp.187-188.
- (29) “Citywide” program started in the library with the support of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Immigrant Advisory Group (IAG). It was established to create better partnership between residents and community leaders, so that both residents and new arrivals can take active role to strengthen the community.
- (30) “Neighborhood” program started in the library with the support of Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association NRZ (AHNA). The program address important issues and concerns in the neighborhood and to involve immigrants and long-term residents in the community
- (31) Hartford Public Library, “Community Dialogues Promote Civic Engagement”, 2014.
- (32) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. “Korekara no Toshokanzou- Chiiki wo Sasaeru Jyouchou Kyoten wo Mezashite, (Ideal Image of Future Library- Towards Information Center Supporting the Community)”. 2006, p.7.
- (33) Ibid., p. 14.



## References

- (1) David Cohen, 'Ethnicity in Librarianship: A Rational for Multiethnic Library Service in a Heterogeneous Society', "Library Trends", 1980, pp.179-190.
- (2) Graceanne A. Decandido, "Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies", American Library Association, 2001.
- (3) John H. Falk, 'Free-choice Environmental Learning: Framing the Discussion', "Environmental Education Research" Vol. 11, 2005, pp.265-280.
- (4) James Fry, 'LSA and LSA, 1956-1973: A Legislative History', "Library Trends", 1970, pp.7-26.
- (5) Plummer Alston Johns Jr., 'The ALA Committee on Work with the Foreign Born and the Movement to Americanize the Immigrant', "Libraries to the People: History of Outreach," eds. Robert S. Freeman and David M. Hovde, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003, pp. 96-110.
- (6) Malcolm S. Knowles, "A History of Adult Education Movement in the United States", Krieger Publishing Company, 1994.
- (7) Nancy Kranich, 'Promoting Adult Learning Through Civil Discourse in the Public Library', "New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, Vol.127, 2010, pp.15-24.
- (8) William S. Learned, "The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge", Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924.
- (9) Margaret E. Monroe, 'The Cultural Role of Public Library', "Advances in Librarianship." Vol. 11, 1981, pp. 2-49.
- (10) Stephen Stern, 'Ethnic Libraries and Librarianship in the United States: Models and Prospects', "Advances in Librarianship", Vol.15, 1991, pp.77-102.
- (11) Harold W. Stubblefield and Patrick Keane. "Adult Education in the American Experience: From the Colonial Period to the Present", Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.

## Webpage

- (1) American Library Association, "Literacy for All: Adult Literacy @ your Library", 2012, Retrieved 10 September 2014. <http://www.ala.org/offices/literacy-all-adult-literacy-your-library>.
- (2) American Library Association, "B.3 Diversity (Old Number 60)", "ALA Policy Manual", 2010, Retrieved 10 September 2014. <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/diversity>.
- (3) Carnegie Corporation of New York, "Libraries", 2014. Retrieved 10 October 2014. <http://carnegie.org/about-us/foundation-history/about-andrew-carnegie/carnegie-for-kids/libraries/>.
- (4) Center for an Urban Future, "Branches of Opportunity", 2013. Retrieved 10 October 2014. [https://nycfuture.org/images\\_pdfs/pdfs/BranchesofOpportunity.pdf](https://nycfuture.org/images_pdfs/pdfs/BranchesofOpportunity.pdf).
- (5) Hartford Public Library, "Community Dialogues Promote Civic Engagement", 2014. Retrieved 10 October, 2014. <http://www.hplct.org/library-services/immigration-citizenship/community-civic-participation/community-participation>.
- (6) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. "Korekara no Toshokanzou-Chiiki wo Sasaeru Jyohou Kyoten wo Mezashite, (Ideal Image of Future Library- Towards Information Center Supporting the Community)". 2006. Retrieved November 10, 2014. [http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/shougai/tosho/houkoku/06040715.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shougai/tosho/houkoku/06040715.htm).
- (7) New York Public Library. "Fiscal Year 2013-Annual Report", 2014.Retrieved May 15, 2014, [https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/NYPL\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2013\\_0.pdf](https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/NYPL_Annual_Report_2013_0.pdf).
- (8) NYC Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs. "A Blueprint for Immigrant Integration", 2010. Retrieved 10 August 2014. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/imm/downloads/pdf/Blueprints/>

introduction-digital.pdf.

- (9) NYC Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs. "We Are New York", 2014. Retrieved 10 August, 2014. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/weareny/html/home/home.shtml>.
- (10) United States Census Bureau, "The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010", 2012. Retrieved 5 September, 2014. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf>.

(Refereed: 査読論文)