

The Identity of the Second Generation Taiwanese Migrants in Japan : Citizens VS Denizens

Chen, Yia-Huei

This research aims to understand the process of identity formation of the second generation of Taiwanese expatriates who emigrated to Japan in the 1970s, especially why many of them have had a different choice in terms of citizenship from their parents'. Via in-depth interviews and field observations, this research tackles with following puzzles. First, the different effect of the first-generation expatriates' choice between two kinds of citizenship in Japan-- "permanent resident" (永住, denizen) and "naturalization" (歸化)--on their children's identity formation. Second, how such a process affects the attitudes of the second-generation expatriates toward the relationship between Taiwan and Japan. Third, how the second-generation expatriates face their alleged "dual membership"? This research argues that, first, though the Japanese migration policy has made the ratification of denizen more difficult than that of naturalization, many second-generation expatriates still choose to be a denizen for its flexibility of being "in between." Such a position enables them to enjoy near full citizenship in both Taiwan and Japan without being strictly tied to either nationalities. Second, those who choose to be naturalized have encountered emotional impacts on their roads of identification. Such a choice are generally affected by their linguistic capabilities and living experiences in Taiwan. These findings improve our understandings of migrants' choice on citizenships. It may also contribute to our knowledge of the identity politics of children under transnational marriage as well.

Keywords : identity, citizenship, denizen, naturalization, dual membership, ethnicity, overseas Chinese