

Half-blood Princes and Princesses: Identities among Children of New Immigrant Women in Taiwan

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Abstract

In the age of global capitalism, the children of new immigrant women are a growing group. What are the social relationships and identities of children of new immigrant women? This paper discusses some of the relevant literature, various theories and concepts developed in connection with the sociology of childhood, and how these might be usefully developed to explore the lives and experiences of children of new immigrant women from China and Vietnam in Taiwan.

Keywords: Children of new immigrant women, identities, sociology of childhood

Introduction

Taiwan (Official name: Republic of China, Abbreviation: R.O.C.) is an island state located to the south of Japan and north of the Philippines. It is off the southeast coast of mainland China across the Taiwan Strait. Its 23 million residents squeeze into an area no larger than half of Scotland. Taiwan has a long history of immigration. Han people from the south-east coast of the mainland have migrated to Taiwan since the seventeenth century. Another wave of immigration happened when the government relocated from the mainland China to Taiwan, which brought one million soldiers, their families and refugees to this island after losing the civil war in 1949. During the post-war period, Taiwan started its reconstruction and economic transformation. It rapidly transformed itself from an agrarian economy to a newly industrialised economy between the 1960s and 1990s. Taiwan then experienced another flow of immigration in the 1990s. The immigrants of the 1990s moved to Taiwan in two ways: as guest workers and for cross-border marriage. Nearly half a million foreign spouses means that Taiwan holds the Asian record for its high proportion of families involved in spousal immigration (Wang and Bélanger, 2008). Most marriage immigrants involve women immigrants, who come primarily from Mainland China and Southeast Asia, especially Vietnam. With the promotion of the agents who broker marriages, the number of marriage immigrants in Taiwan has increased dramatically in the last decade. Some of the marriage immigrants are known as 'mail-order brides' (Castles and Miller, 2003) or 'foreign brides' (Hsia, 2000; Wang and Bélanger, 2008).

It is a global phenomenon resulting from global inequality that women from less developed countries migrate to marry and to live with men in more developed countries (Castles and Miller, 2003). This is one of the ways that men and women

cope in societies affected by the structural inequalities of global capitalism and increasingly liberal international labour markets (Hsia, 2000). New immigrant women have two important functions for the Taiwanese families they marry into. The first is to increase the family labour force, and the second is that they produce offspring who carry on the patriarchal name (Wang, 2001).

Taiwan's fertility rate was 1.2 children per woman in 2007. According to government data, more than one tenth of newborn babies were born from cross-border marriage families in 2007 (Ministry of Interior, 2007). This phenomenon has changed the ethnic composition of the new generation in Taiwan. The number of children of new immigrants enrolling in primary schools increases 30% each year. However, the Taiwanese Deputy Minister of Education publicly encouraged new immigrant women to 'not give birth to so many babies'. A legislator has commented that Vietnamese women might negatively affect Taiwan's next generation because of the chemicals the US army dropped during the Vietnam War (United Daily, 2006). New immigrant women and their children are stigmatised in Taiwan. The proportion of these new immigrant women involved in the formal paid labour market is relative low. Only 34.6% of foreign spouses and 24.9% of Chinese spouses have a paid job (Ministry of Interior, 2003). Legal regulations in Taiwan make it more difficult for Chinese spouses to get working permits than foreign spouses and this phenomenon can worsen economic hardship in their families.

These children of new immigrant women are often perceived as less competitive than native children because they might have a language problem which inhibits their learning in other subjects since primary school. Much attention has been given to such children's learning and adjustment at school (Chung, 2004; Huang, 2004; Chen, 2004;

Tsai, 2005; Ho, 2006; Tsai, 2007), although little research has focused on their life and identity (Li, 2008). However, the lives and experiences of children who live in families combining two cultures would provide a better understanding of the new generation, and open a window to think about power relationships in the migration world.

My particular research interest is concerned with children in families composed of Taiwanese husbands and new immigrant women whose original nationalities are different from Taiwanese, exploring how they can access social relationships and how they might use social resources to construct their identities. This paper discusses some relevant literature concerned with children, childhood and the identities among children.

Children and Childhood: Some Literature Reviewed

The definition of ‘children’ in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is widely used nowadays. In article 1, it says, ‘a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (United Nations, 1989).’ However, there is not a universal definition of what ‘children’ means. Most countries define children and their rights by their own laws. The Children and Juvenile Welfare Law in Taiwan, for instance, says that ‘children’ are those who are under twelve years old, while those who are between twelve and eighteen years old are called ‘juvenile.’

Munday (1979) suggests an alternative way of defining ‘children’ from an anthropological perspective. She categorises a ‘child’ as either ‘non-adult’ or ‘offspring of parent.’ These terms represent different attitudes toward children and

different interpersonal relationships. 'Non-adult' is a category defined by age and physical maturity. It can be used in a society, like Britain, where individualism is valued, the nuclear family is the basic unit and the kinship system is relatively small. The power and authority of 'growing-up' is determined only by age while parents' responsibility and influence will cease when children grow into adults. On the other hand, the category 'offspring of parent' is defined by the relative relationship with children's parents and the wider family. In this sense, in the eyes of their parents, children can still be 'children' even if they are thirty-years-old or sixty-years-old. This concept can be used to understand children in a society with extended kinship and where extended family lineage is valued. The birth of children commands respect for and increased status of the wife from her husband and other kin. Children have a role to play in the power relationships in the family and the tie between parents and children is stronger and more persistent. The authority that parents have would continue even when their children are physically mature.

This category of 'off-spring of parent' is helpful in understanding the lives and experiences of Taiwanese children. Although most families in Taiwan are nuclear families, nonetheless family history and the extended family are still valued. Collectivism is the foundation of Chinese society and Chinese children are always connected to family. Traditionally Chinese families are extended families. While a family might include a large number of members, a hierarchy is clear and important in the family. Boys' status is higher than girls', at least in part because girls are going to marry into another family and will belong to their husband's family after marriage. Boys, especially the first son, have the responsibility for maintaining the family lineage by having offspring. In this sense, when a woman gives birth to a boy, she can gain respect from her husband's family because she has ensured that the family line

will continue. Children of foreign spouses are the results of this tradition. Men are expected to get married and have offspring so that they can continue the family lineage. Today, Taiwanese women are more educated than before. Their increasing education achievement results in higher employment rate among women. With economic independence, marriage is no longer Taiwanese women's only route for their life planning. The values that Taiwanese women pursue are 'independence' rather than 'tradition', 'submission' and 'femininity'. However, Taiwan remains a patriarchal society in which the traditional attitude favours men over women, and so when Taiwanese men cannot find a partner in Taiwan, they look for one from abroad (Wang and Tien, 2006). In addition, with business investment in China and South East Asia and the promotion of matchmakers, the number of new immigrant women in Taiwan has increased dramatically over the last decade.

From a historical view, the idea of childhood is not a constant and universal concept. It is presented and constructed in a variety of ways under different contexts over time (Aries, 1973). Aries (1973) argues that the present idea of childhood did not exist in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. Children were not sharply distinguished from adults, but were treated largely as miniature adults with the same capacity and rationality. Everyone was a member and took part in adult society except infants because they were too vulnerable and had a high mortality rate. By the sixteenth and seventeenth century in the upper and middle class, however, the images represented of children and infants could be distinguished from adults; and for Aries this indicates that a new understanding of children as different from adults had emerged. In the eighteenth century, Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) portrayed children as pure and innocent, and also emphasised the importance of education to children. Children were viewed as 'natural' but with education, they can be developed as

‘citizens’. In the twentieth century, ideas have continued to change and children are kept safe from public space in Western countries, with childhood here characterised as period of dependency, learning and freedom from economic responsibility (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998).

Work within the ‘sociology of childhood’ framework views childhood as a social construction. ‘Childhood’ is not a biological term, but a social artefact (Postman, 1982) constructed by people (Tucker, et al., 2001). There are ‘childhoods’ existing within different contexts rather than a single and universal notion of what childhood is (James and Prout, 1997; Freeman, 1998). ‘Children’ is similarly a category that is constructed in a particular context (Tucker et al., 2001), and what people think about ‘children’ in Britain might be different from what people think about children in Taiwan. In this sense, children cannot be understood outside of other social variables, such as race, gender, and culture (Freeman, 1998).

Because such core ideas as ‘children’ and ‘childhood’ are socially constructed and vary, there are conflicts between interests and policies (Rogers, 2001). For example, when children are seen as ‘innocent’ and ‘pure’, social policy will endeavour to protect them, but when children are understood as ‘amoral’, then public discourse will tend to impose education and regulation on children. However, thinking about these things through a social constructionist approach also brings opportunities when applied to childhood studies (Rogers, 2001). Social constructionism adopts a pluralist position that no one discourse is better than the other, and does not assume that, for example, professionals know better than the people being researched. Social constructionism also recognises different perspectives

and competing meanings. Therefore, research needs to involve children so that a better understanding of their lives can be gained.

Neil Postman (1982) argues that the idea of a distinct childhood is disappearing because the media obscures the difference between child and adult, and children's life styles are becoming the same as adults'. Similarly, Norma Field (1995) suggests that childhood in contemporary Japan is disappearing because children are like labourers in the education system, deprived of the right to play and leisure, which is listed in the article 31 of UNCRC (United Nations, 1989). A half of fourth to sixth grade school students in the Japanese capital region attend 'cram schools' from 5 to 9 pm after school. Children in Taiwan are facing the same situation, going to school from 7.30am to 4pm, and then after school some attend an after-school club to write their homework and wait for their parents to pick them up, with some also going to cram school in the evening for additional lessons. These are 'schooled' children who spend a lot of time in public and private educational settings and have little free time for play and leisure. This also requires a huge amount of money on the private educational expenditure from the parents. In this context, children of new immigrant women in Taiwan are portrayed by the mass media as 'weak-learners', 'outsiders' (Chang, 2004), 'needing sympathy', and 'having social problems' (Huang, 2006). However, these children have unique and valuable living experiences which they can share with other children. Their identities and relationships with their families are important and it helps explain whether they are socially integrated in or excluded from the society where they live in. By exploring their social networks and how they position themselves, a better understanding of their world can be gained.

In contrast to social constructionism, structuralism views 'childhood' as a structural category like gender, race and class (James and Prout, 1997; Wyness, 2006), and it locates 'childhood' at a macro-level. This perspective gives childhood and adulthood an equal analytical status, and it allows the comparison of childhoods across a wide range of cultural, geographical and historical contexts. And while developmental psychology recognises children's agency, the focus is still very much the individual child. Although children do grow up individually, they are always influenced by a collective social process to which they also contribute (Qvortrup, 2005). For example, children in Britain and in Asia dress, talk and act differently because they grow up under diverse social and culture contexts, and childhood cannot be understood without thinking about the social context.

The sociology of childhood also understands children as social actors. They are seen as active subjects in their own right rather than passive objects of societal force (Prout and James, 1997; Freeman, 1998; Corsaro, 2004). They are able to tell researchers how they understand the world, and the sociological understanding of children as agents will increase as their voices are heard. In terms of the family, Morgan (1996) argues that children are 'doing' family rather than 'being' in the family. 'Doing family' acknowledges children's active role in the family, while 'being in the family' is a passive notion of family life, and it provides a useful way of thinking about children's agency within family life. Song (1996) has provided an example of children in Chinese take-away restaurants helping their family business survive in Britain. These children are not just students at school, but also mediators and workers in the family, and their parents often rely on their translation skills to communicate with the outside world. The parent-child relationship here challenges the traditional thinking of 'dependent' children and 'providing' parents, because such

children are active helpers within the family. And in this connection, it seems likely that in cross-border marriage families, the foreign parent might encounter some language problems in their daily life, and rely on their children to communicate with the outside world to some extent.

And what about childhood in the traditional Chinese society? Hsiung (2000) argues that Chinese children have been distinguished from adults in the arts, poems, stories, books and laws at least since the Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), having their own hair styles, dress, and toys. Paediatric doctors, paediatric clinics and books about how to raise children and keep them healthy were already common in the Song Dynasty (Hsiung, 1995). Children are often seen playing in drawings and paintings. Although children are represented in a different way from adults, Hsiung (2000) argues that Chinese society assumes that the child is a 'person' from birth, with children not technically distinguished from adults by age. Raising and educating children is an ongoing process, with teachings for children focusing on how to be a 'person' rather than being a 'child', although when they become adults, they might still keep a childlike mind to help preserve the character of innocence. The main values that children were taught in traditional Chinese society concerned 'respecting the elders', 'functionalism', 'moral orientation' and 'disciplinary parenting' (Hsiung, 2000). Firstly, Chinese children were expected to respect and obey their parents, teacher and elders; adults make rules and regulations, while children should follow the rules regardless of personal opinions. Secondly, children were expected to learn to be a useful person in the future. Children should avoid 'useless' behaviours, like kicking balls, flying kites and gambling and they should be disciplined so that they can be good people in the future. Thirdly, children were expected to behave and learn to act like a polite person. They should read classic books rather than novels. And also

they should enter national examinations so they could serve in the imperial court. To achieve these goals, parents should use strict discipline. If children misbehaved, physical punishment is seen as required to discipline them.

The old-style private schools¹ in Chinese society can be traced back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C-220 A.D.) (Cheung, 1998), and then they become more common in the Ming and Ching Dynasty. The old-style education system worked for two thousand years until it was replaced by a more western education system in the twentieth century. This traditional form of education had a great impact on Chinese children and Chinese society. Reciting a lesson or a book was an important part of the old-style private education, with students' performance depending on how well they could recite. In the old system, the purpose of study was to use this knowledge in the daily life and to take the national examination to serve in the imperial court. Hence, educational achievement is still highly valued by Chinese people, and children are often judged and categorised by their educational performance. As a consequence, research about the children of new immigrant mothers in Taiwan is mainly concerned with education rather than their life experience.

Family is crucial for children's life and development. The commodification of cross-border marriage in Taiwan brings about different relationships between new immigrant women and their original as well as marital families. Marriage here is more like a trade, in that a Taiwanese man 'buys' a wife rather than marries one, although of course in a trade the buyer and seller do not usually have a relationship after the business between them is done (Wang and Chang, 2003). New immigrant women still have the chance to remain in contact with their original family, but the dynamics and

1 'xue shu' (學塾) or 'si shu' (私塾) in Mandarin.

frequency might be different, and this will influence the relationships of children of new immigrant women and their extended family abroad, raising the question of what extent children of new immigrant women involve in transnational activities and how much these activities mean to them.

Identity

I shall now discuss some concepts and theories about identities. In the second generation of immigrants, ethnic identity and cultural identity are usually emphasised. Two theories, concerning segmented assimilation and the looking-glass self, are often used in understanding the development of the identity among the second generation of Taiwanese immigrants. The concept of diaspora is also useful in the analysis of the challenges and the struggles among the second generation of immigrants.

Identity involves knowing who we are and it influence our interaction with others in our daily lives (Jenkins, 2004), providing a way for people to establish their social location. Hall and du Gay suggests that, “Identification is constructed on the back of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation” (Hall and du Gay, 1996). Identity is concerned with ‘belonging’, as well as ‘differentiation’ (Cohen, 1982), and when people have a sense of belonging, this also entails that they differentiate their self from other people and things.

Identity also involves issues of power and politics (Jenkins, 2004). A better understanding of how people imagine that they share an identity manifested in racial, ethnic and national groups has been an urgent response to conflicts over belonging

and nationality (Gilary, 1997). Bloody conflicts have been caused by manipulating identity as absolute. People lose their agency to act, communicate and make choices. In this sense, identity is objectified as fixed and closed. For example, the ‘ethnic cleansing’ conducted by the Rwandan Tutsis-Hutu conflict has killed millions of people. Today, political conflicts persist and people are still suffering from being marked as ‘different’. The second generation of immigrants in Taiwan are an example. Identity research offers academia an important route towards understanding the struggles and uncertainty of people’s everyday life (Gilary, 1997).

Current scholars agree that identity is a reflexive process and a product of meaning-making through out the whole life as a mode of adaptation to the rapid changes of late modernity (Jenkins, 2004; Cote and Levine, 2002). In late modernity, identities are never unified. They are increasingly fragmented and fractured; and never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. (Hall and du Gay, 1996) Giddens argues that in the pre-modern society life was more structured and stable, but because of industrial capitalism social order was de-structured. However, late modern societies have re-structured in various ways. This re-structuring represents the process of differentiation, taking social action to greater levels of complexity than in previous societies. It demands individuals should have the agency to cope with and construct reality in the increasingly complex world. Thus, in Giddens’ view, “the self becomes a reflexive project” (1991, p.32) for one’s lifespan in late modern societies. This is due in part to the degree of institutional de-structuring (in habits and customs), and in part to continual re-structuring and differentiation. This idea of fluid identity in one’s lifespan allows us to address children’s agency and their own understanding of identity in current societies. For the children of immigrants, the developmental

process can be complicated by experiences of intense acculturative and intergenerational conflicts as they strive to adapt in social contexts that may be radical and culturally dissonant.

Ballard (1994) suggests that ethnic identity is context-dependent and might change according to needs and circumstance. He gives the example of the changing identity of British-Bengali children, concerning a boy who grew up in London who was visiting his parents' country of origin and who experienced cultural shock when he arrived his father's village in Bangladesh, being horrified by the poverty there and wanting to call himself British. In contrast to the example of the British-Bengali boy, whose identity toward the host country was reinforced after the trip back to the country of origin, the second generation of Mexican women researched by Viruell-Fuentes found their belonging in the trip back to Mexico.

Through her in-depth interviews of a total of 40 adult Mexican-origin women, Viruell-Fuentes (2006) examined the transnational practice of second-generation Mexican immigrant women as well as of the first generation. The second generation included those who were born in the United States of at least one immigrant parent, as well as those born in Mexico, but who migrated before the age of 12. The results illustrated that nearly all of the second-generation women were aware of belonging to a marginalized group in the United States. This was gained through exposure early in their lives to messages that marked them as different. These marginalizing messages came from multiple sources. In their schools and neighbourhood, Mexican American women learned that their peers considered them outsiders. Bearing witness to the oppressive treatment of other Mexicans, including their own parents, also made the women aware of their stigmatized status. Further lessons about their status as

'minorities' came from simply living in the racialised society where the message was loud and clear. Thus, they grew up with a painful sense of difference. However, the second generation reported less transnational contact than the first generation, ranging from being nearly non-existent, or limited to once-in-their childhood visits, to having had regular transnational contact growing up and some contact in the present. Yet when it did occur, particularly in the form of in-person visits, it was a valuable resource for the construction of their ethnic identities. Some women felt that their trips to Mexico nurtured their ethnic pride and helped them hold on to a positive sense of themselves as Mexicans.

Transnational interactions may nurture a sense of belonging and connect people to some cultural and psycho-social resources they can use to navigate the tension and contradictions of constructing an ethnic identity. There are many possible factors here, including gender, age or the context. However, the transnational practices and the visits to people's country of origin are still important for identity formation and reformation, providing the second generation the opportunity to experience and understand the culture of their parental country of origin.

Cultural identity is that "component of the concept of the self which is concerned with one's sense of embeddedness in one's family past, present and future and one's place in the wider cultural milieu" (Keats, 1997:87). Cultural identity has its roots in people's ethnic background and also encompasses psychological attributes: it is effective in that it includes feelings; it is conceptual in that it involves the observation of similarities and differences in perceptual cues; and it is cognitive in that it is a concept of what one is. For an individual who was brought up in an ethnically homogeneous country, the possibility that one's cultural identity might differ from

one's ethnic identity does not really arise. But such an identity consensus is not the case in many countries, where international movements of people through travel, sojourning, migration, and refugee flight have created ethnically and culturally heterogeneous populations. For the children living in such circumstances, the struggle between ethnic and cultural identity occurs in their everyday lives (Keats, 1997).

Cultural differences within ethnic groups are often ignored in ethnically based categorizations. For instance, Thomas' (1986) studies in New Zealand with Pakeha (i.e. European) children and children of Maori descent show that the tendency to use simple ethnic categorizations can obscure important cultural differences. Thomas points out that a common categorization used in New Zealand is 'Maori', 'Pakeha' and 'Other'. However, children in fact identified themselves as being Pakeha, Mostly Pakeha, Mostly Maori or Maori, a fourfold ethnic identification which elucidates differences in cultural identity in Maori groups. A test of Maori Knowledge was also administered.² It was found that ethnic Maori children who scored in the higher cultural knowledge group also scored higher on the achievement tests. Thomas concluded that the results emphasized the need to distinguish ethnicity from culture and refuted the notion that being culturally Maori was educationally disadvantaged.

Thinking about identity can help understand whether children think they belong to a society or if they feel different. Children can use various sources for their identities formation, such as important others, place of birth, language, the mass media, and religion, as I go on to discuss.

² This 40-item test contained items about Maori culture and language and the results were related to performance on standardized school achievement tests in mathematics and language. On the Test of Maori Knowledge, scores for the Pakeha children were lowest, the second lowest were the scores of the Mostly Pakeha group, the Mostly Maori group was second highest and the Maori group the highest. These results were related to the achievement score by grouping the ethnic Maori children into those who scored at 'better than chance' levels on the Test of Maori Knowledge and those who showed little or no knowledge of Maori culture.

Important others: Family and friends are important for children's sense of belonging (Nette and Hayden, 2007). Home is usually the first place for children to build their identity. For the second generation of immigrants, home serves as a symbolic connection to parental country of origin (Louie, 2006).

Place of birth: A study of Welsh children found that children would define themselves as Welsh if they were born in Wales, even when neither of their parents were Welsh. In addition, the minority is more likely to refer their identity from their place of birth, such as Cardiff (Scourfield et al., 2006). For children who move throughout their life, place of birth and their passport country are the two strongest indicators of belonging (Nette and Hayden, 2007).

Language: For many people from ethnic minorities, language is regarded as perhaps the most important evidence of their culture identity and is used to preserve their sense culture in the midst of external pressures to conform to the demands of the majority culture (Keats, 1997). Also, possessing an ethnic language is crucial for the second generation of immigrants to learn the culture of their parental country of origin and to connect themselves to it. In Taiwan, while the second generation has limited ability to speak Chinese or Cantonese and their parents cannot speak English well, parent-child communication and children's opportunity to know the Chinese culture is constrained (Louie, 2006). New immigrant women in Taiwan are not encouraged to speak their mother tongue, nor to teach their children this language. Their children might as a result lose the opportunity to learn the culture of their mothers' country of origin.

The mass media: In the era of global consumerism, television, video and the Internet provide children with a wide range of cultural and material artefacts that can become a source of identity-formation (Wyness, 2006). Meanwhile, the Internet serves as a platform for people living far away to connect to each other. The British-born Chinese use the online forum to build collective identity while they are geographically dispersed (Parker and Song, 2007).

Religion: Religion blurs social boundaries and social distinctions (Gilary, 1997). Under religion, there is no difference of gender, race, class and nation and religion can be used in many ways in constructing identities. Regarding religious practice, most of the second generation is less traditional than their migration parents (Ballard, 1994). However, some mixed children find their 'self' from religion : 'Every day of my life I am in a multi-cultural situation at school. I want one place where I can go and be myself.' (Ballard, 1994).

Two theoretical frameworks are useful in the understanding of the development of identity among the second generation of immigrants. One is the idea of segmented assimilation, and the other is Cooley's (1956) looking-glass self.

Portes and Zhou (1993) have suggested that the incorporation of today's new second generation is likely to be segmented and to take different pathways to adulthood, depending on a variety of conditions and contexts, vulnerabilities and resources. Some of the contextual factors that are most likely to shape the prospects of the new second generation have to do with the presence or absence of racial discrimination, location in or away from inner-city areas (and hence differential association with the subcultures of underclass youths), and the presence or absence of a strong receiving co-ethnic community. Contexts that combine the positive features

of these factors are likely to lead to a resilient sense of ethnic identity. By contrast, contexts that combine the negative features of them may be expected to lead to assimilation into the oppositional identity of native racial minorities.

The looking-glass self is the idea that there is no sense of 'I' without also having a correlated sense of others. The self here is seen to have three components: imagining how we seem to the other person; imagining how the other person will assess this; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification. The second element, the imagined judgment, suggests that how other people perceive us makes a difference to our feelings, and in turn our identity (Cooley, 1956). Using the idea of looking-glass self as a theoretical framework, Oikawa and Yoshida (2007) explored how bi-racial adolescents and young people were marked as 'other' in Japan and their reaction toward this. They recruited focus-group participants, having one Japanese biological parent, having lived in Japan most of their lives, and being the age between 15 and 25 years old. The participants start out thinking themselves as Japanese but they experience stereotypical expectations of them, and they reacted in different ways to cope with their identity. They stand out because Japanese society considers them differently. No matter how they look or how they act like Japanese, whenever other children find out they have a foreign parent, they become foreign and no longer belong. Sometimes the discrimination is not overt, but the message is clear that they do not belong because they are not 'pure' Japanese. Oikawa and Yoshida concluded there were three main reactions to being bi-racial: (a) unique me; (b) model bi-ethnic; and (c) just let me be Japanese.³ Taiwan is a relatively homogeneous country like

³ People in the Unique me category are those who did not like to be stereotyped and who wanted to be seen as unique individuals. They think that ethnicity did not really have an effect on their identity. They value self-identity than categorising themselves into any social groups. In contrast to the first group, people emphasis social identity in model bi-ethnic and Just let me be Japanese. Respondents in the category model bi-ethnic were pleased to be associated with prevalent stereotype, most of them being

Japan and the children of new immigrant women here might be marked as 'different' when they start to interact with their peers and neighbourhood people and find out their foreign mother. I would like to explore the process of their identity formation.

Wiley and colleagues (2008) suggests that the pattern of the identity formation varies across ethnicity and generations. They found that collective self-esteem among first- and second-generation varies; meanwhile, ethnic group members respond diversely in the extent to private and public views among their sample in New York. They use quantitative method to examine the extent to which among students two generation of immigrants and different ethnic groups react to stereotypes. They use a sample of West Indian black immigrants to compare first- and second-generation difference.⁴ In this case, the theory of the looking-glass self did not really work out in relation to the second-generation, being more resilient to negative reactions to them. Wiley et al provide three possible explanations: first, it is likely that individuals from stigmatised group are socialised to deal with their stigmatisation and protect themselves from negative evaluations that others may hold of their group. They learn to separate negative public view to their groups from their self-worth. The second possibility is related to reference group and that they might change their reference group. Finally, it is possible that public evaluation is simply dismissed as a source of self-evaluation, with people more influenced by intra-group sources in building self-esteem.

positive of bi-ethnic individuals in Japan. There are many models who are bi-ethnic and many Japanese believe that bi-ethnic individual are better looking and more cosmopolitan than average Japanese. Those in the Just let me be Japanese want to be like everyone else. They did not see themselves as being different from others and wished that people would just let them be.

⁴ This group's first language is English, which give them advantage over other immigrants who must learn a new language to survive in the US. On the other hand, their skin colour might become the basis of discrimination towards them. Results show that the second-generation perceive that others view their group less favourably than do first-generation. Yet, the first- and second-generation do not differ in self-evaluation. The second generation still maintains a positive self-evaluation, and their collective self-esteem is unrelated to other's view.

Wiley and colleagues (2008) have also researched first- and second-generation in four ethnic groups, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latinos, Whites and Black immigrants, to further explore the differences among ethnic groups. Their results indicate differences in public regard across the ethnic groups.⁵ The conclusion to draw from this is that it is important to examine immigrant groups according to their individual situation and need. Hence, my study will focus on the two biggest immigrant groups, Chinese origin and Vietnamese origin, in Taiwan rather than grouping them into a pan-ethnic category like ‘Southeast Asian immigrants’.

Diasporas are the ‘scattering’ of people, whether as the result of war, oppression, poverty, enslavement to the search for better economic and social opportunities, with the result the opening of their culture to new influences and pressures (Gilary, 1997). Since diaspora is an extra-national term, it offers new the possibility of understanding identity by paying attention to intercultural processes. Diaspora is a valuable idea because it challenges the idea that identity is defined by territory and essentialist account of identity formation. Gilary (1997) uses the metaphor of sowing seed to explain Diaspora. It draws attention between seeds in the pocket and seeds in the ground; also plants of the same species vary because of different weather. Therefore, identity is built in different forms under unpredictable social and political change. Diaspora pays equal attention to sameness within differentiation and differentiation within sameness (Gilary, 1997).

⁵ Asian/Pacific Islanders and Whites perceive others to view their group more favourably than do Latinos and Blacks. In addition, Latino and Black second-generation immigrants separate public and private regard to a greater degree and they maintain a positive self-evaluation. Furthermore, among first-generation of low-status groups (Black and Latino immigrants), endorsement of multiculturalism can play an important role to moderate the potentially negative effects of others’ evaluation of one’s group on one’s own evaluation. This result is in accord with segmented assimilation and refutes the pan-ethnic categorisation and showed that different ethnic immigrant group varies in their status in the country of host and it also varies in their attitude and reaction toward their position.

Conclusion

I have discussed various literature concerning how children and childhood have been constructed in Western and Chinese thinking over time. In the age of global migration, more children of immigrant people are living between different cultures, and they are more likely to be tagged as 'others', so they often encounter challenges and a resulting need to construct their own identities. Examples from different contexts showed that the children of immigrant people have a range of ways in which they engage in identity construction. Regarding the children of immigrant women in Taiwan in particular, more research is needed to piece together the jigsaw puzzle of how they do this.

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Brief Biography

I received my Bachelor in Public Health and Master of Science in Health Policy and Management from the National Taiwan University. I participated in a school-based longitudinal study-Children and Adolescent Behaviours in Long-term Evolution (CABLE). Having worked as administrator assistant, research assistant and statistician, I am interested in children's wellbeing. My current research interests focus on children, sociology of childhood and identities.

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