

Understanding the Self, Understanding the Future? The Politics of Identity of Japanese-Filipino Children (JFC) in Japan

Waseda University-Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies Jocelyn O. Celero

Contributing to Japan's ethno-cultural diversity is the presence of children of Japanese-Filipino intermarriages, otherwise known as Japanese-Filipino children (JFC). As these children are reared in Japan, they and their families must deal and identity issues which are linked to the socio-economic challenges they have to face as future members of Japan. This paper aims to explore the profile and self-perceptions of JFC in Japan. Their meanings of being a Japanese-Filipino can have varied implications on how they understand their role and position in Japanese mainstream society.

To achieve these goals, semi-structured interviews with (25) JFC residing mainly in Tokyo were conducted. The data collected focused on their socio-economic characteristics as well as the patterns of their perceptions of identity. Apart from the use of existing literature to strengthen the findings and guide the analysis of their identity perceptions, this study utilized Brubaker's concept of identity as "a way of looking at the social world through "relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated" experiences.

This ethnographic research reveals that they hold contested perceptions of the self, which hold strong implications on their ethnicity, race, and citizenship. Most JFC claim they are Japanese citizens based on their birthplace and name. While the term JFC conveniently defines their dual "racial" parentage, most respondents practice moving flexibly between Japanese-ness and Filipino-ness, depending on their access to resources of identity, which include acquisition of both Japanese and Filipino languages, migration, and educational experiences both in the Philippines and Japan. These resources bring forth ambivalent socio-economic futures for JFC in Japan.

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